

From Parliaments to Newspapers: The Roma Narrative in The Carniolan Provincial Assembly, Parliamentary Debates of First Yugoslavia and in Slovenian Newspapers

Abstract:

The research focuses on the political and media narratives surrounding the Roma and is based on the *Carniolan Provincial Assembly corpus* (1861–1913), *Parliamentary corpus of first Yugoslavia* (1919–1939) and Slovenian newspapers [e.g. *Dolenjske novice* (1885–1919), *Slovenec* (1873–1945), *Jutro* (1920 – 1945), *Slovenski narod* (1868–1943)]. Through the analysis of parliamentary debates and media reports, the study aims to determine whether these two discourse spheres co-constructed the dominant narrative about the Roma or whether they clashed. Part of the analysis also addresses the interaction between political power and media influence. Were media reports mere reflections of parliamentary debates, or did they serve as independent agents in shaping public opinion? By tracing linguistic patterns, recurring stereotypes, and rhetorical shifts in political speeches the study examines how myths about the Roma were formed, sustained, or challenged within the Slovenian speaking territories. Through an interdisciplinary approach combining historical analysis and corpus linguistics, this study breaks down how political institutions and journalistic representations shaped public perceptions of the Roma in the years between 1861 and 1939. The study employs corpus linguistics tools, such as concordance analysis, keyword extraction and collocation patterns, to identify dominant themes and linguistic structures used in political discourse. To obtain a comprehensive media perspective, the research examines newspapers published during the period, assessing how press narratives aligned with or diverged from political discourse.

Keywords: Roma, political discourse, media representation, stereotypes, corpus linguistics

Introduction¹

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Roma were often the subject of stereotypes and prejudices propagated through political debates and media publications. This article explores how the Roma were depicted in the records of the Carniolan Provincial Assembly and the National Representation of as well as how they were portrayed in Slovenian newspapers of the period. The main research question is whether the political and media discourse on the Roma complemented each other, conflicted, or functioned as independent narrative streams. Historically, the term Gypsy was widely used to describe Roma populations. However, due to its negative and often derogatory connotations, it has been gradually replaced by the term Roma. Consequently, this article adopts that term throughout. The analysis is based on two historical digital corpora. Kranjska 1.0,² containing records of the proceedings of the Carniolan Provincial Assembly and Yu1Parl 1.0,³ which includes the proceedings of the National Representation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Additionally, the study examines a selection of Slovenian newspapers from the same period. This approach transcends a chronological analysis, instead revealing the structural characteristics of political and media language that shaped perceptions of Roma. The combination of digital corpora, archival materials and contemporary newspaper sources offers an insight into the representation of this minority group in historical contexts. The study is structured into five main sections. It begins with a presentation of NoSketch Engine and the corpora utilized, providing an overview of the digital tools and linguistic datasets fundamental to the analysis. This is followed by a brief historical overview of the Roma, offering contextual background. The third section conducts a comparative analysis of Roma representations within parliamentary and media discourse. Special focus is placed on the years 1886 and 1934, which have recorded the highest relative frequency of Roma related terminology in corpora. The fourth section is dedicated to keyword analysis, identifying lexemes that are statistically prominent in Roma related texts. Finally, the study concludes with an examination of collocations, revealing recurring linguistic patterns associated with Roma narratives.

¹ This paper was originally presented at the International Conference for Young Scholars *Vestigia: Myths & Narratives*, which took place between 24 and 26 April, 2025 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb.

² Alenka Kavčič, Aleksander Mundjar, Matija Marolt, *Provincial Assembly Corpus Kranjska 1.0*, Slovenian Language Resource Repository CLARIN.SI, 2023, <http://hdl.handle.net/11356/1824> (accessed May 10, 2025).

³ Alenka Kavčič, Aleksander Mundjar, Matija Marolt, *Parliamentary Corpus of First Yugoslavia (1919-1939) yu1Parl 1.0*, Slovenian Language Resource Repository CLARIN.SI, 2023, <http://hdl.handle.net/11356/1845>. (accessed May 10, 2025).

NoSketchEngine and used corpora

Linguistic corpora are systematically curated digital collections of textual data, designed to support the empirical study of language patterns. Datasets include compilations of written material and are enriched with detailed metadata and encoded using internationally recognized standards, such as extensible markup language (XML) and the text encoding Initiative (TEI).⁴

This study uses NoSketchEngine, a platform for linguistic analysis accessible through CLARIN.SI, to examine the representation of Roma in political discourse. NoSketchEngine allows systematic analysis of large text corpora, making it ideal for identifying language patterns in historical texts. Among the linguistic processes applied in this study, lemmatization proved particularly useful. This process involves mapping each word form to its base or dictionary form. This method proved beneficial for languages with complex morphological systems, where a single lexical item may appear in numerous inflected forms depending on grammatical case, number, gender, or tense.⁵ The analysis employs three key methods. Concordance analysis reveals how specific terms appear in context, providing insights into how they were described, labeled, or framed. Keyword extraction identifies statistically significant terms that occur more frequently in the analyzed texts, highlighting dominant themes, recurring stereotypes, and ideological constructs. Collocation analysis detects words that frequently appear alongside a target term, uncovering semantic associations. Although NoSketchEngine is an effective tool for linguistic analysis, there is a possibility that some concordance entries could be missed due to misspellings or OCR errors present in the texts.

The Carniolan Provincial Assembly corpus Kranjska 1.0 contains meeting proceedings from the Carniolan Provincial Assembly, covering the period from 1861 to 1913 and containing 694 session records, amounting to 15,353 pages and approximately 10 million words. The corpus is bilingual, containing approximately 58 percent Slovenian and 42 percent German texts. The Parliamentary Corpus of First Yugoslavia Yu1Parl 1.0 contains meeting proceedings of the National Representation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, between the years 1919 and 1939. This corpus is comprised of 714 session records spread across 15,403 pages and amounting to approximately 13 million words where 59 percent of the sentences are in Serbian, 38 percent in Croatian and 3 percent are in Slovenian. Corpus Yu1Parl 1.0 contains the debates and deliberations of the Temporary National Representation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1919–1920), the Legislative Committee of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1921–1922) and the National Representation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1931–1939). The following corpus does not include records of the National Assembly between 1923 and 1928. Consequently, those years are also not included in this research.

⁴ Darja Fišer, Kristina Pahor de Maiti, “»Prvič, sem političarka in ne politik, drugič pa ...« Korpusni pristop k raziskovanju parlamentarnega diskurza,” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 61/1 (2021): 147.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

Historical Paths of Roma

The Roma originated in northwestern India and began migrating westward in the early 10th century. Early descriptions frequently portrayed Roma as a nomadic group distinguished by vibrant clothing, a unique language and a communal lifestyle centered around constant mobility. They typically traveled in groups, residing in tents or temporary shelters, and seldom remained in one location for extended periods.⁶ Sources from the earlier periods reflect a dual perception of the Roma shaped by both fascination and repression. They were frequently romanticized for their musical talents and perceived exoticism, as seen in accounts of performances in 15th-century Hungary.⁷ At the same time, evidence of systematic persecution is documented. The first recorded instance of Roma being sold into slavery occurred in Romania in the 14th century,⁸ while expulsion orders were issued in Meissen in 1416.⁹ In Hungary, a similar pattern developed. By 1476, Roma were compelled into forced labor by royal decree, becoming property of the Crown. They were primarily assigned to work as blacksmiths or in weapons production.¹⁰ Under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Roma were often treated as the property of landowners, with some tasked with administrative roles, such as tax collection among their own.¹¹ The Habsburg Monarchy intensified its efforts to control Roma populations by implementing a series of assimilation policies beginning in 1758 under Empress Maria Theresa.¹² Between 1758 and 1773, a series of decrees imposed compulsory settlement, military service, taxation and forced labor on Roma, with little regard for their cultural values. The most severe measure, introduced in 1773, allowed authorities to remove Romani children over the age of five from their families and place them in Christian households, aiming to assimilate them through religious and cultural reeducation.¹³ Emperor Joseph II expanded these assimilation policies, prohibiting the use of their language, banning traditional Romani clothing, mandating surname changes and imposing strict labor discipline.¹⁴ These efforts aimed to integrate Roma into the settled majority society but achieved limited success. Rather than fostering inclusion, these policies reinforced the marginalization of the Roma, casting them as outsiders and convenient scapegoats for social anxieties. This became evident in 1782 when a larger group of Roma in Hungary

⁶ *Romano them*, 1996, vol. 1, issue 1, 2.

⁷ Donald Kenrick, *Historical Dictionary of the Gypsies (Romanies)*, vol. 7, *Historical Dictionaries of Peoples and Cultures* (Lanham, Toronto and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, 2007), XX.

⁸ *Romano them*, 1996, vol. 1, issue 1, 2.

⁹ Kenrick, *Historical Dictionary*, xx.

¹⁰ Ian F. Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution* (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1987), 49.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹² Kenrick, *Historical Dictionary*, xxiii.

¹³ Studen, *Neprilagojeni in nevarni*, 83.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

were accused of cannibalism, specifically of consuming Hungarian peasants. They were arrested and tortured, although the charges were later dismissed by Joseph II as unfounded.¹⁵

Despite widespread exclusionary attitudes, the late 18th century also marked the beginning of scholarly interest in the Roma. This interest was sparked by a 1776 article published in Vienna describing the findings of Hungarian pastor Istvan Vályi, who discovered similarities between Sanskrit and Romani languages.¹⁶ The discovery attracted the attention of German linguists Jakob Rüdiger and Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellmann, with Rüdiger confirming a connection between Romani and Hindustani in 1782.¹⁷ Grellmann's publications in 1783 and 1787 had a profound impact on perceptions of Roma, categorizing them as a distinct ethnic group defined more by nature than by culture or civilization. His work became a foundational text for the emerging ethnological discourse on Roma, shaping perceptions of them for decades.¹⁸

Most 19th-century reports concerning Balkan Roma conveyed ingrained prejudices and negative stereotypes. An exception is the notebook of Samuel Gardner, a member of the Royal Geographical Society, who traveled through Southeastern Europe in 1856.¹⁹ In his account, Gardner highlighted the extreme poverty faced by Roma communities, as well as the frequent use of corporal punishment and symbolic forms of humiliation, including iron collars and masks imposed for minor transgressions. He interpreted such representations as manifestations of entrenched bias and systemic stigmatization.²⁰

By the late 18th century, some Roma communities in Slovenia were transitioning from predominantly nomadic lifestyles to more permanent settlements.²¹ Migration into the region followed three principal routes. The Roma who settled in Prekmurje, often referred to as Hungarian Roma, arrived through the Hungarian lands. The Roma who settled in Dolenjska, commonly called Croatian Roma, entered from the southern Habsburg provinces. Meanwhile, the Roma who inhabited Gorenjska, identified as German Sinti or Roma, were part of migratory streams from German-speaking territories.²² Quantitative records from the late 19th and early 20th centuries offer a clearer understanding of the Roma population in these regions. During the 12th session of the Carniolan Provincial Assembly in 1912, member Hladnik claimed that in 1886 there were 281 Roma individuals in Carniola, most of whom resided in Lower Carniola, but he acknowledged in the same speech that the

¹⁵ Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 51; Kenrick, *Historical Dictionary*, xxiii.

¹⁶ Kenrick, *Historical Dictionary*, 220.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Studen, *Neprilagojeni in nevarni*, 15–16.

¹⁹ Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 29.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Romano them*, 1999, vol. 4, issue 5, 4; Vera Klopčič, „Zgodovinski viri o Romih v Sloveniji,“ *Razprave in gradivo - Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja* 48 (1990): 40–41.

²² *Romano them*, 1997, vol. 2, issue 3, 2.

actual number was likely higher.²³ The Austro-Hungarian census conducted on 31 January 1893 recorded a total of 4,073 Roma residing in regions of Carniola, Carinthia, Styria and the Littoral. After the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the 1921 census recorded 34,919 individuals who identified Romani as their mother tongue.²⁴ A decade later, the 1931 census recorded 70,424 individuals who identified Romani as their primary language and 65 thousand, who explicitly declared Roma ethnicity.²⁵

Frequency of Roma mentions in the Carniolan Provincial Assembly corpus *Kranjska 1.0*

To examine the frequency and contextual patterns of references to Roma in parliamentary discourse, this chapter conducted a corpus-driven analysis using the historical parliamentary corpus *Kranjska 1.0*.²⁶ Focusing on identifying references to Roma using the lemma *cigan.*|zigeun.** which captured all morphological variations of the term in both Slovenian and German texts. Query identified a total of 209 concordance entries, with a relative frequency of 16.57 occurrences per million words. To gain a clearer understanding of the diachronic distribution of these references, the analysis used the corpus metadata variables *session.date* (session date) and *session.year* (session year).

Year 1886 emerged as the most prominent for Roma related mentions within the *Kranjska 1.0* corpus, displaying the highest relative frequency of the lemma based on the metadata variable *session.year*. Specifically, it recorded a total of 76 occurrences, with a relative frequency of 236.70 per million words. Further analysis using the *session.date* variable revealed that the session on January 16, 1886, exhibited the highest density of Roma-related terminology, with 75 occurrences and a relative frequency of 4,133.37 per million words. A secondary peak in lemma frequency appeared in 1901, with 46 occurrences and a relative frequency of 180.27 per million words based on the *session.year* variable. When sorted by *session.date*, the second most frequent session occurred on July 23, 1901, recording a frequency of 45 with a relative frequency of 2,418.70 per million words. This secondary increase can be attributed to the 1891 state code, which permitted individuals who had continuously resided in a municipality for at least ten years without receiving poor relief to apply for domicile rights.²⁷ In 1901, many Roma who had settled in Carniola met this criterion, which likely resulted in increased administrative attention and a rise in Roma mentions in official records.

²³ *Obravnave deželnega zbora kranjskega v Ljubljani*, February 22, 1912, vol. 48-1, no. 11, Ljubljana: Deželni odbor kranjski, 397.

²⁴ David M. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 213.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 216.

²⁶ Kavčič, Mundjar, Marolt, *Carniolan Provincial Assembly Corpus*, <http://hdl.handle.net/11356/1824> (accessed May 10, 2025).

²⁷ Studen, *Neprilagojeni in nevarni*, 95.

Parliamentary Debate and Media Discourse in 1886

Highest relative frequency of Roma related terminology in Kranjska 1.0 corpus, was held on January 16, 1886. The session was centered around the Report of the Economic Section, which assessed the implementation of previous resolutions regarding measures against Roma.

In his opening statement, assembly member Dr. Maksimiljan Samec expressed frustration over the government's inaction. He pointed out that of the five resolutions adopted the previous year, three had been implemented, while the two related to establishing forced labor facilities (slov. *prisilna delavnica*)²⁸ and transforming expulsion stations into holding centers and labor colonies remained unfulfilled. He further emphasized that no Roma individuals had been sent to a forced labor facility.²⁹ In contrast, *Dolenjske novice* presented Samec's opening speech with a more moralizing tone, reframing his proposal for forced labor facilities as an issue of discipline and character, implying that Roma were inherently disinclined to work.³⁰ The debate continued with assembly member Hren, who, like *Dolenjske novice*, viewed Roma as resistant to work. In his speech, he repeatedly described Roma as a nuisance, portraying them as a population whose presence allegedly undermined rural stability. Instead of addressing the legal and administrative shortcomings highlighted by Dr. Samec, Hren framed the issue as one of moral failure, depicting Roma as a disruptive element whose itinerant lifestyle burdened local communities.³¹ Hren's main argument was grounded in the 1885 law,³² which divided responsibility for controlling vagrancy among municipal, judicial and political authorities. Municipalities were tasked with directing idle individuals to work, courts with imposing forced labor sentences and political authorities with enforcing these decisions. For Hren, this framework was not just an administrative measure but a moral imperative to discipline those deemed unwilling to work. He illustrated his point with an anecdote about a landowner

²⁸ The forced labor facility in Carniola was intended primarily for the re-education and supervision of beggars, vagrants, the unemployed and prostitutes. The operation of the facility was supervised by the authorities, who determined the classification of inmates, the duration of their stay and the conditions for their release. The state covered the costs of maintenance, which were later recovered from the forced laborers themselves or their guardians.

²⁹ *Obravnave deželnega zbora kranjskega v Ljubljani*, January 16, 1886, vol. 25, no. 15, Ljubljana: Deželni odbor kranjski, 257–258.

³⁰ *Dolenjske novice*, no. 3, 1886, 18.

³¹ *Obravnave deželnega zbora*, no. 15, 257–259.

³² Under the 1885 law, vagrancy was defined as a criminal offense for individuals without work or income. Begging in public spaces and soliciting social assistance were prohibited, if done to avoid work. Municipalities were required to provide work for the unemployed and refusal to accept such work was punishable by imprisonment. Courts were authorized to send vagrants to forced labor facilities, with penalties for vagrancy increased to a maximum of three months imprisonment under strict police supervision. For a more refined explanation, see Studen, *Neprivilegirani in nevarni*, 98–99.

who offered food in exchange for labor, only for the vagrant to refuse.³³ Such stories served Hren as evidence of Roma reluctance to engage in honest work.

The debate then shifted to assembly member Pfeifer, whose speech combined administrative concerns with openly hostile stereotypes. He concentrated on the presence of Roma in his district, particularly in Novo Mesto.³⁴ He described some Roma as musicians who traveled from village to village, implying that their performances served merely as a pretense to avoid work. Meanwhile, newspapers occasionally reported on Roma bands performing in urban venues.³⁵ He alleged that Roma were responsible for spreading disease among livestock in the municipality of Krško by scattering contaminated straw.³⁶ He further accused Roma women of aggressive begging and exploiting the gullibility of peasants through fortune telling.³⁷ Similarly, *Dolenjske novice* advised readers not to trust Roma women, claiming that only God knows the future. Similar narratives appeared in *Slovenec*, which recounted a case from 1880 in Styria, where a Roma family was accused of murdering a gendarme. Despite the absence of conclusive evidence, they were sentenced to six years in prison. Over time, it became clear that they had been wrongfully convicted. One Roma woman died in Begunje, devastated by the trauma of imprisonment, while another was released only after completing her sentence, suffering lasting physical and psychological consequences.³⁸ In addition, *Dolenjske novice* reported an alleged wine theft in Čatež, attributing the crime to Roma without providing any supporting evidence.³⁹ The association of Roma with criminality was so deeply ingrained that, in reporting a jewelry store robbery, *Slovenec* concluded with the remark that there was “no trace of the Gypsies”, despite no evidence linking Roma to the crime.⁴⁰ Although Pfeifer acknowledged the need for forced labor facilities, he expressed skepticism, fearing that Roma labor might undercut the earnings of local artisans and impose additional costs on the state.⁴¹

Hren began his second intervention by proposing that the resolution from the Economic Section be divided into two distinct points. He emphasized that the Ministry of Justice could not directly influence court decisions because of the constitutional principle of judicial independence. Instead, he suggested that the Ministry should instruct state attorneys (*državno pravdnništvo*) to ensure that courts strictly applied the 1885 law when sentencing vagrants, including Roma, to forced labor facilities. Hren also acknowledged Pfeifer’s radical suggestion of imprisoning all Roma for life, describing it as

³³ Obravnave deželnega zbora, no. 15, 259.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Slovenski narod, June 25, 1886, vol. 19, no. 142, 3.

³⁶ Obravnave deželnega zbora, no. 15, 259.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *Slovenec: političen list za slovenski narod*, June 4, 1886, vol. 14, no. 126, 3.

³⁹ *Dolenjske novice*, April 15, 1886, no. 8, 6.

⁴⁰ *Slovenec: političen list za slovenski narod*, January 4, 1886, vol. 14, no. 2, 3.

⁴¹ Obravnave deželnega zbora, no. 15, 259.

perhaps the only truly effective solution. However, Hren emphasized that the Assembly should remain within its legal authority and focus on measures it could realistically implement, encouraging his colleagues to support more practical proposals.⁴² The session concluded with a series of decisions that reaffirmed the Carniolan Assembly's commitment to control the Roma population through legal and administrative measures. The Assembly voted to renew its request to the Ministry of Justice, urging it to ensure that courts applied the 1885 law on forced labor for vagrants, including Roma. The Assembly also maintained its request to compile an official register of Roma families and individuals. Debates revealed a spectrum of perspectives. From Samec's legalistic focus on state authority to Hren's moralizing view of Roma as inherently idle and Pfeifer's portrayal of Roma as a social and economic threat.

Frequency of Roma Mentions in the Parliamentary Corpus of First Yugoslavia (1919–1939) Yu1Parl 1.0

Using similar methodological framework as in the Carniolan case study, I applied the lemma *cigan*.^{*} to capture all morphological variants in Yu1Parl 1.0 corpus. The query returned a total of 108 concordance entries, corresponding to a relative frequency of 7.04 occurrences per million words. This represents a reduction of over 50% compared to the frequency observed in the Kranjska 1.0 corpus. To trace trends, I analyzed the distribution of mentions using the metadata variables *speech.year* (year of speech) and *session.date* (date of session).

The year 1935 exhibited the highest relative frequency, reaching 306.04 occurrences per million words. The highest density of Roma-related terminology in an individual session occurred on March 25, 1934, with 18 occurrences of the lemma and a relative frequency of 3,301.15 occurrences per million words.

Parliamentary Debate and Media Discourse in 1934

In 1934, a significant shift occurred in the representation of Roma, marked by the rise of biologically based racism, which replaced earlier paternalistic narratives. This transition is most clearly demonstrated in the speech of Senator Dr. Oton Frangeš, delivered at the 18th regular session of the Senate of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on March 25, 1934, in Belgrade. Frangeš's rhetoric reflects the influence of eugenic thought and illustrates how discourse surrounding Roma shifted towards framing them as biological and public health threats.

Frangeš began his speech by depicting Roma as a community of uncertain origin, accusing them of avoiding civic duties through deception, such as registering boys as girls to evade military service. He characterizes them as culturally stagnant, arguing that they remain at the same level of development despite broader societal progress.⁴³ This perspective reflects the evolutionary

⁴² Obravnave deželnega zbora, no. 15, 260.

⁴³ SI AS 2058/10, Stenografske beleške Senata Kraljevine Jugoslavije, XVI. redovni sastanak, March 25, 1934, Beograd, 1934, 234.

hierarchies, which portrayed certain groups as inherently incapable of moral or intellectual progress. He further emphasized a direct link between Roma and criminality. He alleged that Roma are frequently involved in theft, robbery and violent crime, implying that their presence often coincides with the most severe offenses. These stereotypes extended beyond political rhetoric, frequently appearing in Slovenian newspapers. An article in *Slovenec* described how, when two nearly new bicycles were found in a ditch near Glinščica, the police immediately suspected Roma, who had recently camped nearby, despite the absence of any concrete evidence.⁴⁴ Something similar was found in another article in *Slovenec* that discussed burglaries. This article mentioned that half of the suspected burglars admitted to stealing, while the other half claimed they had purchased the stolen goods from the Roma.⁴⁵ This proves again that the Roma were often used as convenient scapegoats, with criminals easily shifting the blame onto them. A particularly telling example is the story of Alexander Lendvaj, described in the press as the most dangerous thief in Hungary.⁴⁶ The article in *Slovenski narod* recounts his evolution from an ordinary criminal to a sophisticated bandit. The emphasis on Lendvaj's Roma identity is central to the narrative. The article mentions his ethnicity three times as well as in the headline. Instead of portraying Lendvaj as an individual criminal, the narrative emphasized his ethnicity, framing his actions as evidence of an allegedly inherent Roma nature. This pattern extends beyond major crimes to more mundane offenses. A report in *Jutro* recounted an incident involving an elegantly dressed, well-spoken man of Roma appearance, who used deception to defraud a cashier in a Ljubljana store, tricking her into giving him 400 dinars.⁴⁷

Beyond criminal accusations, the Roma were also depicted as a social burden. An article in *Slovenec* mockingly described a violent altercation among the Roma, highlighting how one injured man, with a shattered arm, would now "enjoy" two months of warm hospital care during the winter.⁴⁸ By presenting the incident as a calculated advantage for the injured Roma, the article subtly implied that their suffering was an opportunity to exploit public services. This cynical portrayal reinforced the stereotype of Roma as a burden on society, mirroring Frangeš's depiction of them as parasitic and unproductive.

Expanding on this portrayal, Frangeš transitions from cultural stereotypes to biological claims. His argument escalates with the claim that the Roma possess a natural immunity to poisons lethal to others, portraying them as biologically distinct.⁴⁹ Such perceptions were not confined to the Senate. In

⁴⁴ *Slovenec: političen list za slovenski narod*, February 7, 1934, vol. 62, no. 31, 4.

⁴⁵ *Slovenec: političen list za slovenski narod*, January 9, 1934, vol. 62, no. 6a, 3.

⁴⁶ *Slovenski narod*, January 20, 1934, vol. 67, no. 16, 5.

⁴⁷ *Jutro: dnevnik za gospodarstvo, prosveto in politiko*, January 25, 1934, vol. 15, no. 19, 4.

⁴⁸ *Slovenec: političen list za slovenski narod*, January 3, 1934, vol. 62, no. 2a, 3.

⁴⁹ SI AS 2058/10, Stenografske beleške Senata, 234.

April, an article in *Jutro* reported an incident in Remete, where the Roma were accused of attempting to consume the carcass of a cow.⁵⁰ The report claimed that the Roma defended this practice by arguing that properly seasoned carrion posed no harm to them. Despite its sensationalist tone, the article echoed anxieties similar to those expressed by Frangeš, depicting the Roma as unhygienic and biologically distinct. Later in his speech, Frangeš proposed confiscating Roma draft animals, a measure intended to restrict their mobility. Deprived of means to travel, they would be compelled to settle permanently or face expulsion. This approach escalates from basic control to a targeted restriction of Roma mobility. It embodies the principles of a subtly coercive eugenic policy, which Frangeš frames as a humane alternative to the harsher methods allegedly used in Hungary, where the Roma were marked for identification.⁵¹ To support his argument, Frangeš cited examples of local administrators who, he claimed, reduced Roma presence through forced haircuts, which allegedly discouraged them from returning.⁵² Presented as pragmatic solutions, these examples normalize exclusionary practices while obscuring their coercive and discriminatory nature.

Keyword extraction

Keyword extraction is a corpus analysis technique that identifies words that are significantly more frequent in a target corpus compared to a reference corpus, highlighting the most distinctive vocabulary of the analyzed texts. The reference corpus is usually a large, representative collection of texts in the relevant language, but it can also be any other corpus chosen as a comparative baseline.⁵³

For this analysis, I created subcorpora within both the Kranjska and Yu1Parl corpora. Each subcorpus was defined by selecting all texts containing any form of the lemma *cigan.*|zigeun.** for the Kranjska corpus and *cigan.** for Yu1Parl 1.0. These subcorpora isolated texts containing the term for Roma, enabling a focused analysis of its context and associated vocabulary. To extract keywords, I focused the analysis on the subcorpus I created, meaning that only texts containing lemma the *cigan.*|zigeun.** were analyzed. The entire Kranjska 1.0 corpus served as the reference corpus, ensuring that the distinctive vocabulary of the focus subcorpus was highlighted in comparison to the general language of the corpus. The reference subcorpus option was set to *none*, meaning the entire Kranjska 1.0 corpus functioned as the comparative baseline. The same process was applied to the Yu1Parl 1.0 corpus, where I created a focus subcorpus using the lemma *cigan.** and set the Yu1Parl 1.0 corpus as the reference. This method enabled the generation of keyword lists for both corpora, highlighting words significantly more frequent in Roma focused texts than in the general language of each corpus.

⁵⁰ *Jutro: dnevnik za gospodarstvo, prosveto in politiko*, April 19, 1934, vol. 15, no. 88, 3.

⁵¹ SI AS 2058/10, Stenografske beleške Senata, 234.

⁵² SI AS 2058/10, Stenografske beleške Senata, 235.

⁵³ Fišer, Pahor de Maiti, "»Prvič, sem političarka," 163.

With that it was possible to identify the most statistically significant words that co-occurred with mentions of Roma in the Carniola Provincial Assembly debates. The first group of keywords centers on legal status and social control. Terms like *provincial citizenship* and *vagrancy* indicate a focus on Roma as legal outsiders. They were not citizens with full rights but rather individuals subject to administrative control. The second group highlights the criminalization of Roma. Keywords such as *burglary*, *burglar*, and *gang of burglars* suggest a frequent association between Roma and theft or organized crime. These associations were reinforced by terms like *gendarmierie station* and *guard* reflecting a persistent focus on policing and surveillance. The appearance of the keyword *Jews* alongside Roma related terms suggests that both groups were occasionally framed in similar ways.

The corpus analysis of Yugoslav Parliament debates reveals a markedly different discursive pattern regarding Roma compared to the Carniolan Assembly. While the Carniolan corpus emphasized legal-administrative terminology and depicted Roma as a social nuisance, the Yugoslav parliamentary corpus shifted toward themes of violence, exclusion and ethnonational conflict. One of the most prominent keyword clusters is associated with concentration camps and wartime violence. Terms such as *hunting*, *camp* and *massacre* indicate that Roma were increasingly discussed in the context of political violence and systemic oppression. This reflects a political environment where Roma became entangled in broader narratives of militarization, state control and ethnic persecution. Equally notable are terms such as *to execute* and *killing*, which further demonstrate the intensity of discursive violence. Roma were no longer merely depicted as marginal or criminal but were increasingly portrayed in contexts of ethnic cleansing.

Analysis of Collocations

For corpus Kranjska 1.0 lemma *cigan.*|zigeun.** was used and in corpus Yu1Parl 1.0 lemma *cigan.** was applied. Primary focus was on the lemma and the analysis was set to extract collocations within a range of three words to the left and three words to the right of the target lemma. This range was chosen to capture immediate modifiers and relevant contextual terms, ensuring a balance between specificity and context. The statistical measure applied for this analysis was LogDice, a metric in corpus linguistics for identifying semantically significant collocations. LogDice was selected because it effectively balances frequency and significance, highlighting words that are not only frequent but also contextually important. The analysis focused on words that appeared at least five times as collocation candidates, with at least three co-occurrences alongside the target word. In the Kranjska corpus, the most frequent collocations of the lemma *cigan.*|zigeun.** included words such as gypsy, harass, domicile, families, residing, assistance, plague, lineage, individual and nuisance. These words reveal that the term gypsy is often associated with themes such as family (families, lineage), welfare measures (assistance) and negative connotations (plague, nuisance, harass). In contrast, the Yu1Parl 1.0 corpus presented a different set of collocations, including bag, to play music, gypsy,

Gypsy, vagabondage, Adi, gypsies, black, bridge, you, village and they. These collocations suggest a more neutral or varied representation of the term, where Roma is connected with personal names, geographical markers, exoticized cultural figures and other neutral terms.

Conclusion

This study has explored the complex interplay between political and media discourses on the Roma in Slovenian speaking territories between 1861 and 1939. By examining the Carniolan Provincial Assembly and the National Representation of the First Kingdom of Yugoslavia alongside Slovenian newspapers, the research has revealed both convergence and divergence in the portrayal of Roma. Parliamentary debates often emphasized administrative control, legal regulation, and stereotypes of Roma as a social threat. In contrast, media narratives oscillated between sensationalism and moralizing, further reinforcing negative stereotypes. The comparative analysis demonstrated a gradual shift from legal-administrative discourse in the 19th century to biologically driven racism in the early 20th century. This transition, particularly evident in the Yugoslav parliamentary corpus, highlighted the increasing use of exclusionary and racialized narratives, portraying Roma as a biological and social menace. Media reports mirrored these developments, frequently framing Roma as criminal or socially burdensome, thus amplifying discriminatory perceptions. Overall, both parliamentary debates and press reports functioned not merely as reflections of social anxieties but as active agents in shaping and perpetuating exclusionary narratives. By integrating corpus linguistics with historical analysis, this study reveals how institutional and journalistic discourses were deeply intertwined, collaboratively constructing enduring stereotypes that marginalized Roma, excluding them from full societal belonging and effectively treating them as foreigners in their own country.

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Od parlamenta do novina: narativi o Romima u Kranjskoj regionalnoj skupštini, parlamentarnim debatama Kraljevine SHS/Jugoslavije i slovenskim novinama

Sažetak:

Istraživanje je usredotočeno na političke i medijske narative o Romima i temelji se na korpusu Kranjskog pokrajinskog zbora (1861–1913), parlamentarnom korpusu prve Jugoslavije (1919–1939) i slovenskim novinama (npr. *Dolenjske novice* (1885–1919), *Slovenec* (1873–1945), *Jutro* (1920–1945), *Slovenski narod* (1868–1943)). Analizom parlamentarnih rasprava i medijskih izvještaja, nastoji se utvrditi jesu li ova dva diskurzivna prostora zajednički oblikovala dominantni narativ o Romima ili su se međusobno sukobljavala. Dio analize također se bavi interakcijom između političke moći i medijskog utjecaja. Jesu li medijski izvještaji bili samo odraz parlamentarnih rasprava ili su djelovali kao neovisni čimbenici u oblikovanju javnog mnijenja? Praćenjem jezičnih obrazaca, ponavljajućih stereotipa i retoričkih promjena u političkim govorima, studija istražuje kako su se mitovi o Romima oblikovali, održavali ili osporavali na slovenskom govornom području. Kroz interdisciplinarni pristup koji kombinira povijesnu analizu i korpusnu lingvistiku, ovo istraživanje razlaže način na koji su političke institucije i novinarske reprezentacije oblikovale javnu percepciju Roma u razdoblju od 1861. do 1939. godine. U studiji se koriste alati korpusne lingvistike, kao što su analiza konkordancije, ekstrakcija ključnih riječi i obrasci kolokacija, kako bi identificirala dominantne teme i jezične strukture korištene u političkom diskursu. Za postizanje sveobuhvatne medijske perspektive, analiziraju se novine objavljene tijekom tog razdoblja, procjenjujući u kojoj su mjeri novinski narativi bili usklađeni s političkim diskursom ili su od njega odstupali.

Ključne riječi: Romi, politički diskurs, medijska reprezentacija, stereotipi, korpusna lingvistika

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