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Kende, Anna; Nariman, Hadi Sam; Ayanian, Arin H.; Halabi, Slieman; Ivan, Claudiu; Karić, Tijana

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# ‘We're still here’: Misrecognition and the quest for dual identification of Roma people

Anna Kende<sup>1</sup>  | Hadi Sam Nariman<sup>1</sup> | Arin H. Ayanian<sup>2</sup> |  
Slieman Halabi<sup>3</sup> | Claudiu Ivan<sup>4</sup> | Tijana Karić<sup>5</sup> |  
Vladimir Mihić<sup>6</sup> | Boglárka Nyúl<sup>1</sup> | József Pántya<sup>1</sup> |  
Caroline da Silva<sup>7</sup> | Nick Hopkins<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Social Psychology, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

<sup>2</sup>University of Bielefeld, Bielefeld, Germany

<sup>3</sup>University of Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany

<sup>4</sup>Centre for Research, Education and Equality of Life Chances, Bucharest, Romania

<sup>5</sup>University of Marburg, Marburg, Germany

<sup>6</sup>University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia

<sup>7</sup>University of Paris Nanterre, Paris, France

<sup>8</sup>University of Dundee, Dundee, Scotland

## Correspondence

Anna Kende, Institute of Psychology, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Izabella utca 46, 1064 Budapest, Hungary.  
Email: [kende.anna@ppk.elte.hu](mailto:kende.anna@ppk.elte.hu)

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## Abstract

Misrecognition describes everyday practices that deny the autonomy of minority members to define who they are and instead impose identities that may diverge from their own sense of self. Being misrecognized is particularly relevant for the historically marginalized Roma people, whose national belonging is repeatedly questioned despite centuries of co-existence and citizenship. Our aim was to understand whether the experience of misrecognition, along with discrimination, would predict identification patterns that represent an obstacle to dual identification among Roma people in three East-Central European countries: Hungary,

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Romania and Serbia. We collected data among Roma participants online and face-to-face with convenience sampling ( $N = 1,325$ ). Latent class analysis revealed three similar classes based on national and ethnic identification scores in all subsamples: (1) disidentification, (2) Roma identification and (3) dual identification. Logistic regression analysis showed that misrecognition and discrimination predicted stronger Roma identity than dual identification in Hungary and Serbia. However, misrecognition predicted stronger dual identification in Romania, possibly as a reaffirmation strategy in response to misrecognition. Our results show that misrecognition can add to our understanding of minority group members' identification with the superordinate category of the nation as well as subgroup ethnic minority identity, and this connection could be key for advancing Roma inclusion.

#### KEYWORDS

discrimination, dual identity, latent class analysis, misrecognition, Roma minority

## 1 | DUAL IDENTIFICATION OF MINORITIES

People belong to many different social categories and develop multiple group identities. Multiple identities can overlap and supplement one another, and exist alongside independently, or they may constitute sub- and superordinate categories (as, e.g., when ethnic minority members identify with both their minority ethnic groups and the superordinate national group as a form of dual identity, e.g., Hopkins, 2011). Dual identification has the most favourable psychological consequences (e.g., Phinney et al., 2001), and it is associated with more positive intergroup attitudes (Zagefka et al., 2007; Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Furthermore, dual identifiers elicit more positive attitudes than those lacking a superordinate ingroup identity (see, e.g., Crisp & Hewstone, 1999). Experimental and meta-analytic findings also suggest that biculturalism (i.e., identifying with two cultures) has psychological and sociocultural benefits compared to having just one culture (Fleischmann & Op De Weegh, 2022; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). However, dual identifiers may also be viewed with mistrust and suspicion of disloyalty toward the national ingroup (see Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2021).

The national ingroup can thus represent a common ingroup identity for both minority and majority members (Gaertner et al., 2000). However, according to the Ingroup Projection Model (Wenzel et al., 2008), the perception of prototypicality of the shared superordinate group reflects an ingroup bias. Specifically, members of the ingroup are seen as more prototypical of the superordinate category than members of other subcategories. Furthermore, status differences favour the majority's perception of prototypicality, which can also be accepted and internalized by minority members. Specifically for Europe's largest ethnic minority group, the Roma, it can mean that their membership in the national ingroup can be questioned both by the majority and by Roma people themselves. Therefore, simultaneous identification with the minority and the national ingroup may be shaped by majority members' recognition of Roma people's belonging to the nation and consequently their dual identification.

## 2 | MISRECOGNITION AND IDENTITY

A hostile intergroup context and negative minority experiences can create obstacles for dual identification and prompt various identity patterns. Minority members may choose individual mobility (Tajfel, 1974) and abandon the negatively evaluated minority identity through assimilation. In fact, they often choose this path in line with the expectation of the majority for assimilation (for the case of Roma assimilation, see Stewart, 2012). This may benefit the individual, but assimilation can result in acculturation stress (Gil & Vega, 1996) and cannot contribute to improving the overall perception or status of the minority group (see Dixon et al., 2010).

Another response may be to invest more in minority identity. The “rejection-identification model” emphasizes the protective function of a stronger minority identity in the face of rejection and discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999). However, such a response can hamper intergroup relations (see Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009) and lead to separation or radicalization (Verkuyten, 2018). This is particularly the case if rejection does lead to not only a stronger minority identity but also disidentification with the shared superordinate category represented by the majority, as described by the “rejection-disidentification model” (Bobowik et al., 2017; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009). Reviewing these strategies, it is clear that whether minorities wish to identify with the superordinate group and/or maintain their minority identity has much to do with their treatment by the more powerful majority.

However, prejudice, intergroup hostility and discrimination (i.e., adverse treatment of individuals based on their group membership) may not be the only experiences that result in a negative social identity and drive members of disadvantaged or minority groups away from identifying with the shared superordinate social category of the nation. The concept of misrecognition aims to capture a range of everyday experiences of minority group members that are not necessarily hostile or discriminative. Instead, misrecognition describes practices that deny the autonomy of minority members to define their own group identities and rather impose identities that may diverge from their own sense of self. It builds on the social psychological interpretation of the concept of recognition (originally put forward in political theory, Honneth, 1996; Taylor, 1994) and refers to the acknowledgement and affirmation of one's own identity by others (see Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011). Simon (2020) even suggested that intergroup conflicts in modern and culturally diverse societies may primarily be about the struggle for recognition and for a respected collective identity. Using qualitative data, Amer (2020) has shown that the absence of recognition/the presence of misrecognition led White Muslim British people to experience identity threats prompting the use of various strategies to assert some control over their identification.

Misrecognition captures aspects of intergroup relations, which bear similarities with the concept of negative identity (Tajfel, 1974), but also deviates from it. According to the Social Identity Theory, people are motivated to positively differentiate their ingroup from the out-group. However, low-status groups may come across obstacles to develop positive distinctiveness, for example, when the ingroup's low status is perceived as a result of illegitimate intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Misrecognition can be conceptualized as a more general obstacle to positive distinctiveness, considering that it stems from the realization that the (high-status) out-group, rather than the ingroup, shapes ingroup identity and intergroup relations.

Misrecognition differs from prejudice and discrimination in multiple ways. Importantly, misrecognition does not always manifest itself in negative or hostile behaviours, and it comprises different experiences. (a) It can be expressed as *categorical misrecognition*, that is, when one's membership of a group is questioned with the implication that can sound like “you are not a real Hungarian/German/American” (see Blackwood et al., 2013, 2015). (b) It can also be manifested in the tendency to focus on just one of multiple identities of an individual. While in some instances, this may be viewed as a recognition of a group membership that the individual values, other times, this can become a *totalizing experience* in which minority group members feel they must represent their minority identity at all times, which then becomes oppressive and burdensome (see Amer, 2020; Hopkins, 2011; Hopkins et al., 2007). For example, this means that people assume that the behaviour and attitudes of a minority member are always formulated on the basis of their minority identity and not based on their individually held values and other social identities (e.g., a Roma person may be offended by inferences, such as this: *You only argue against “Roma criminality”*

*because you are Roma yourself*). (c) Misrecognition has been reported in instances when majority members make assumptions about what it means to belong to the minority group, that is, *content misrecognition*. These experiences can include prejudicial views of the group (see Blackwood et al., 2013) with a similar effect with negative meta-stereotypes about the ingroup (Lammers et al., 2008). Other times, content misrecognition is based on positive stereotypes with which an individual may have a difficult time identifying as well (e.g., the stereotypes about students with Asian heritage having superior mathematical abilities can be a source of stress for individual pupils). (d) Finally, misrecognition can also refer to situations in which the needs of the minority group are *ignored* (e.g., school holidays are held on the religious holidays of the majority; see Hopkins & Dobai, 2020).

Despite the conceptual differences between misrecognition and discrimination, they are likely to co-occur, and simultaneously experienced by members of disadvantaged and minority groups (e.g., Özdemir et al., 2024). This overlap has been shown in a study presenting the discursive analysis of “racist talk” in broadcast interviews and online forums (Xie et al., 2021). The authors identified racialized misrecognition as an addition to the broader concepts of racism. Such misrecognition (i.e., being “labelled in ways which do not accord with a person’s self-identify”, p. 1177) was an important feature of interactions entailing an element of “othering” people based on their “race.” Furthermore, the connection between the experience of misrecognition and group identification has been shown in a recent study. Using measures of ethnic and national identification and misrecognition similar to the current research, more frequent experiences with discrimination and misrecognition predicted lower Dutch national identification among higher identifier members of different ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands (Özdemir et al., 2024). In summary, as misrecognition directly relates to individuals’ identification processes, it may similarly pose an obstacle for dual identification as discrimination, which has been shown to influence minority members’ sense of belonging (Branscombe et al., 1999).

### 3 | ROMA PEOPLE IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Being misrecognized may be a particularly relevant issue for historically marginalized, visible minority groups, such as Europe’s Roma minority. Despite having lived in Europe for centuries, they are neither a properly recognized culturally autonomous group nor seen as an integral part of the national ingroup (Hancock, 2002). They are often treated as secondary citizens (see Ringold et al., 2005), and their belonging to the national ingroup is constantly questioned (Kóczé & Rövid, 2017). Unlike immigrants, Roma people do not have a homeland elsewhere, so their national identity is typically based on citizenship (most frequently also corresponding with the majority language being their mother tongue).

In this article, our aim was to understand the role of misrecognition in identification patterns among Roma people in three East-Central European countries—Hungary, Romania and Serbia—all with a large Roma population. We investigated whether Roma people identify with both their inherited minority identity and the superordinate national majority group, or they identify with only one or neither. Bigazzi and Csertó (2016) found that Hungarian Roma chose between ethnic and national identification to cope with identity threats depending on the presence or absence of an emotional attachment to the minority group. Therefore, we intended to supplement the literature on dual identification of ethnic minorities by showing the role of misrecognition in different identity patterns alongside the role of discrimination.

### 4 | RESEARCH CONTEXTS

The Roma group is culturally, linguistically and socio-economically heterogeneous, and their situation and level of integration vary to some extent from country to country (Marushiakova & Popov, 2004). In the three countries where we conducted the study, the estimated Roma population is between 5 and 10% (for Hungary: Pásztor & Péntes, 2013, Romania: Rughiniş, 2010, Serbia: Radovanović & Knežević, 2014); however, there are no accurate estimations, as Roma people under-declare their ethnicity in national censuses. Under-declaration itself points to the

difficulties of assuming a dual or a Roma identity within these historically hostile national contexts (see Kende et al., 2021; Rostas, 2019).

In Hungary, Roma people constitute the largest ethnic minority group. The Roma population is rather diverse within the country in terms of cultural heritage and language, as well as the level of integration. Overall, they are affected by worse educational and employment opportunities, they are overrepresented among people living in extreme poverty, they experience worse health outcomes and lower life-expectancy, and their political representation is inadequate. Roma people are often subject to discrimination and hate crimes (for a summary, see Király et al., 2021). Anti-Gypsyism has often been used for political mobilization of extreme right-wing voters (Karácsony & Róna, 2011). Still, we find no commitment to Roma inclusion in any political side, and politicians mainly avoid addressing issues concerning social and cultural issues related to Roma communities, most likely because of the broad consensus of anti-Gypsyism as a normatively acceptable attitude in the country (Kende et al., 2017).

The Roma minority is the second largest ethnic minority group in Romania after Hungarians. There is a persistent gap between the Roma and other ethnic groups in terms of education (educational attainment and enrolment), housing conditions, health and employability. Efforts of Roma inclusion often fail because of the high level of anti-Gypsyism manifested in, for example, the association between Roma people and criminality even in official documents (Popovicu & Tileagă, 2020).

In Serbia, the situation is quite similar to Hungary and Romania. A large proportion of the Roma population lives in extremely poor conditions, often in segregated communities within major cities. More than 70% of the Roma are unemployed or have only temporary jobs (Radovanović & Knežević, 2014). Less than 50% finished primary school, and only 0.6% have a university degree (Sokolovska & Jarić, 2014). Finally, almost all of the studies have found that people hold extremely negative stereotypes of them (e.g., Mihić et al., 2016), and they are being discriminated against both institutionally and by individual members of the majority (Bašić, 2021).

## 5 | RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

Based on previous research on dual identification and considering the specific circumstances of Roma people in the three countries of our investigation, we asked how the experience of misrecognition and discrimination would predict different identity patterns for Roma people. We expected that higher discrimination and misrecognition would predict disidentification from the national group based on the rejection-disidentification model (Bobowik et al., 2017; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009). We also expected that discrimination and misrecognition would predict stronger identification with the ethnic minority (Roma) identity alongside a weaker national identity based on the rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999).

## 6 | THE STUDY

### 6.1 | Participants

Recruiting Roma people for the research was challenging because of an absence of ethnic registries and the under-declaration of Roma identity mentioned earlier. Therefore, we relied on convenience sampling and used flexible data collection methods. In Hungary, about half of the participants were recruited using face-to-face interviews and the other half online by two different public opinion poll companies, both aiming to recruit a diverse group of people in terms of age, settlement type, gender and educational level. In Romania, data were collected exclusively online. Here, the survey was disseminated in Facebook groups focused on Roma issues or among Roma people who worked with Roma NGOs. In Serbia, data were collected through NGOs working with Roma people through telephone interviews, face-to-face and online.<sup>1</sup>

**TABLE 1** Demographic information about the three subsamples.

Country	N	Gender	Age (years)	Education	Mother tongue	Political orientation
		Women	M (SD)			Left to right (1–5) M (SD)
Hungary	478	50.8%	41.33 (13.5)	Primary 78.4%, secondary 12.3%, above secondary 9.2%	98.2% Hungarian, 1.8% Romani	2.78 (0.80)
Romania	324	57.2%	33.83 (11.1)	Primary 4%, secondary 21.5%, above secondary 74.5%	84.3% Romanian, 15.7% Romani	2.74 (1.18)
Serbia	523	48.7%	36.06 (13.2)	Primary 58.8%, secondary 28.3%, above secondary 12.9%	40% Serbian, 57.4% Romani, 2.7% others	2.36 (1.16)

We aimed to recruit 500 participants in all three countries but were unable to reach this sample size in Romania. The sample size was determined for other analyses of the project's omnibus survey. Based on the recommendation of Dziak et al. (2014), the lower sample size of the Romanian sample was sufficient for a latent class analysis based on eight items, resulting in three classes. The final sample sizes were  $N = 478$  for Hungary,  $N = 324$  for Romania and  $N = 523$  for Serbia after removing 23 participants from Hungary, 7 from Romani and 16 from Serbia because they did not pass the attention check question.<sup>2</sup> Demographic data are presented in Table 1.

We must note that participants in Hungary and Serbia had much lower education levels than in Romania, which was taken into account in the interpretation of the results. With these differences, the samples in Hungary and Serbia were demographically more similar to the overall Roma population than in Romania.

## 6.2 | Procedure

Data were collected following the ethical approval of Eötvös Loránd University (Permission No: 160/2019) and the University of Amsterdam (Permission No: 2020-SP-11708) between August and November 2020. Data for the current study were collected as part of an omnibus survey investigating the links between misrecognition and other aspects of intergroup relations. The measures were developed to test Muslim people with immigration background in Western Europe and Roma people in East-Central Europe. However, in this study, we only present the measures that are relevant for testing our hypotheses and the Roma group. The languages of the questionnaire were Hungarian, Romanian and Serbian, corresponding to the populations. Scales were translated and back-translated to English by independent translators. Data are available on OSF (variable labels show the base questionnaire in English, not the translated and adapted versions): [https://osf.io/7kqbs/?view\\_only=df14ed5e16eb4ef7ad8768cd395e9173](https://osf.io/7kqbs/?view_only=df14ed5e16eb4ef7ad8768cd395e9173)

## 6.3 | Measures

We measured Roma identification with four items and national identification with the same four items (adopted from Leach et al., 2008; for example, “Being Roma is an important part of how I see myself” and “Being Hungarian/Serbian citizen/Romanian is an important part of how I see myself”, for all items of these scales, see the Appendix A). Both Hungarian and Romanian denote national belonging that can be used in a broader sense than a strict reference to the ethnic majority group, potentially encompassing all citizens. However, in the context of Serbia,

we decided to use the term Serbian citizen to avoid a narrow interpretation of the term referring only to ethnically Serb people. The items were measured on five-point scales from 1 = *very weakly* to 5 = *very strongly*.

Perceived discrimination was measured by a single item: "How often in the past year have you or fellow Roma people experienced discrimination from other Hungarians/Romanians/Serbs?". We used a five-point scale from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*.

The misrecognition scale was developed and pilot tested within the broader international project of Misrecognition of Minorities in Europe (<https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/fakultaeten/soziologie/forschung/projekte/mismie/>). Before conducting the survey, interviews with Muslim-German and Hungarian Roma participants were carried out using a cognitive pre-testing approach (Lenzner et al., 2016). The six items aimed to capture misrecognition as explained in the introduction of this paper (e.g., "I sometimes feel that other Hungarians/Serbs/Romanians treat us as Roma people even when we do not want to be treated that way." For all items of the scale, see Appendix A). Items were measured on five-point scales from 1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree*. Finally, respondents were provided with a five-point single item to indicate their political orientation from 1 = *left* to 5 = *right* and report demographic information.

## 7 | RESULTS

A multigroup confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the measurement invariance of the misrecognition scale in the three subsamples completing the questionnaires in three languages. A one-factor model solution yielded an acceptable model fit for configural invariance, suggesting that the scale was structurally equivalent across the three samples ( $\chi^2$  ( $df$ ) = 122.57 (27), Comparative Fit Index [CFI] = .957, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] = .090, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual [SRMR] = .035, Akaike's information criterion [AIC] = 19,840.89). Descriptive statistics (see Table 2) indicate that the means of Roma identification were above the midpoint in all three samples and significantly higher than national identification in Hungary ( $t(476) = 14.02$ ,  $p < .001$ , *Cohen's d* = 1.21, 95% CI [.67; .88]), in Romania ( $t(323) = 12.30$ ,  $p < .001$ , *Cohen's d* = 0.82, 95% CI [.47; .65]) and in Serbia ( $t(522) = 9.36$ ,  $p < .001$ , *Cohen's d* = 0.88, 95% CI [.29; .44]). Misrecognition scores were above the midpoint in all three samples and even above four points in Romania, suggesting that participants recalled frequently instances of misrecognition as it was captured by the scale. Although the means of perceived discrimination were somewhat lower, discrimination was also a common experience for most participants.

An important difference between the samples was that whereas Roma and national identities were not correlated in Hungary, they were positively associated with both the Romanian ( $r = .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the Serbian samples ( $r = .44$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Higher misrecognition was associated with higher perceived discrimination in all samples ( $r_s > .44$ ), and both of these were associated with higher Roma identification (with misrecognition  $r_s > .26$ , with discrimination  $r_s > .21$ ). In Hungary, misrecognition was negatively associated with national identity ( $r = -.20$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the correlation between national identity and discrimination was not significant. In Romania, national identity was not correlated with misrecognition and weakly positively with discrimination ( $r = .11$ ,  $p = .048$ ). Finally, the association was not significant with either variable in Serbia.

Using MPlus software, version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017), we applied a latent class analysis to classify participants based on their national and ethnic identifications. The classification procedure was based on the eight identity items, measuring participants' level of Roma and national identifications. To control the effects of our covariates (gender, age, political orientation, misrecognition and perceived discrimination) on participants' class membership, we used a three-step latent class method suggested by Vermunt (2010). In the three-step method, a regular latent class model is first estimated based on class membership probabilities. In the second step, the most likely class membership variable is generated. In the third step, the class membership variable is regressed on the covariates, while also any potential misclassification of the participants taking place in the second step is fixed (see Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014).



**TABLE 2** Descriptive statistics, information about the internal consistency of the scales and correlation between variables.

	M	SD	$\alpha$	1.	2.	3.	4.
Hungary							
1. Roma identity	3.75	.87	.83				
2. National identity	2.97	.92	.87	.07			
3. Misrecognition	3.75	.64	.80	.28**	-.22**		
4. Discrimination	3.11	1.01	-	.21**	-.08	.49**	
5. Political orientation	2.79	.79	-	-.06	.17**	-.21**	-.21**
Romania							
1. Roma identity	4.20	.65	.71				
2. National identity	3.64	.79	.82	.37**			
3. Misrecognition	4.13	.61	.76	.32**	-.06		
4. Discrimination	3.28	1.05	-	.37**	.11*	.46**	
5. Political orientation	2.74	1.18	-	-.08	-.02	.04	.03
Serbia							
1. Roma identity	3.68	.86	.77				
2. National identity	3.32	.80	.77	.44**			
3. Misrecognition	3.62	.77	.83	.24**	.02		
4. Discrimination	2.85	1.12	-	.25**	.04	.50**	
5. Political orientation	2.36	1.16	-	-.15**	-.08	-.12*	-.10*

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

To avoid the list wise deletion of the observations, datasets were imputed. Concerning the Romanian and Serbian samples, only age, gender and political orientation variables were imputed since other items contained no missing values (Serbia: 0.2% for gender, 0.8% for age and 2.1% for political orientation; Romania: 7.7% for gender, 8.6% for age and 9.3% for political orientation). In the Hungarian sample, the proportion of the missing values ranged from 0 to 2.3%, and although they were not missing completely at random, we employed a multiple imputation technique because of their low ratio (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2010).

To find the best model solution for each dataset, we first built a two-class model, increased the number of classes up to five and compared the four models. We decided on the best model solution based on statistical criteria, parsimony and interpretability (Nylund-Gibson & Choi, 2018). Four statistical criteria were used: Bayesian information criterion (BIC), AIC, entropy and the Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin (VLMR) likelihood ratio test (Lo et al., 2001; Ramaswamy et al., 1993).

The three-class model was the best solution both in terms of statistical criteria and interpretability in the Romanian and Serbian samples. In the Hungarian sample, the fourth-class model solution fitted the data the best with respect to statistical criteria. However, we decided to choose the three-class model solution as it was more parsimonious and fitted the theoretical conceptualization of the research question. Furthermore, it made the classes more similar to the other two subsamples. Importantly, this three-class solution also showed good fit to the data (for fit comparisons, see Table 3, for the classes based on response probabilities, see Table S1).

In the Hungarian sample, the three classes were named *Roma* ( $n = 177$ ), *Disidentifier* ( $n = 160$ ) and *Dual Identifier* ( $n = 141$ ) classes. Members of the Roma class strongly identified as Roma and weakly with the nation. In the Disidentifier class, participants identified weakly with both Roma and national identities, whereas the Dual Identifier class members strongly identified as both Roma and Hungarian.

**TABLE 3** Model fit comparisons from two-class to five-class model solutions.

Number of classes	AIC	BIC	Entropy	VLMR ( <i>p</i> -value)
Hungary				
2	10,124.848	10,395.873	.88	<.001
3	<b>9,605.898</b>	<b>10,014.520</b>	<b>.90</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>
4	9,302.162	9,848.381	.93	<.001
5	9,131.154	9,814.970	.93	.76
Romania				
2	5,989.183	6,234.931	.85	<.001
3	<b>5,838.413</b>	<b>6,208.926</b>	<b>.85</b>	<b>.03</b>
4	5,735.595	6,230.872	.89	.12
5	5,676.910	6,296.952	.90	.78
Serbia				
2	10,729.469	11,006.341	.95	<.001
3	<b>10,251.738</b>	<b>10,669.177</b>	<b>.90</b>	<b>.007</b>
4	9,984.611	10,542.617	.92	.91
5	9,780.090	10,478.661	.92	.76

Note: AIC and BIC decrease as the model fit improves. The number of classes used for the analysis are highlighted in bold font.

Abbreviations: AIC, Akaike's information criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion.

In the Romanian sample, we named the classes *Roma* ( $n = 75$ ), *Weakly Identifier* ( $n = 117$ ) and *Dual Identifier* ( $n = 132$ ) classes. In the Roma class, although the respondents mostly identified as Roma, some level of national identification was also present. In the Dual Identifier class, the respondents showed strong identification with both Roma and Romanian identities. We did not name the weakly identifiers as disidentifiers (as in the Hungarian sample), because identification was not as low with either of the social categories as in the Hungarian sample, and some degree of positive identification was still present both with the Roma group and the Romanian.

In the Serbian sample, the three classes were again named *Roma* ( $n = 197$ ), *Disidentifier* ( $n = 139$ ) and *Dual Identifier* ( $n = 187$ ). Nevertheless, they were not so clearly distinguishable as in the Hungarian sample. The Roma class members strongly identified as Roma, while their identification as Serbian was not extremely low. Identification of the Disidentifiers was weaker than in the other groups. The Dual Identifier class members identified more strongly as Roma, but the Serbian identity was also relatively important for them. It must be noted that dual identification was moderate rather than strong. To sum up, we chose to name the classes similarly in order to ease the presentation of the results, but across the samples, they did not indicate fully identical patterns.

Table 4 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression analyses for predicting the participants' class membership by age, gender, political orientation as control variables, and perceived discrimination and misrecognition as the main study variables. Model fit indices, the nature of the classes and class membership probabilities, with and without misrecognition, were the same for all three samples. Although perceived discrimination and misrecognition showed medium correlations ( $r < .44$ ), there was no multicollinearity in the regression models (Variance Inflation Factor [VIF] < 1.33).

In the case of Hungarian Roma, left-wing political orientation predicted that a participant would more likely be in the Disidentifier and Roma identifier class compared to the Dual Identifier class, but none of the other demographic variables were significant predictors. Similarly, perceived discrimination did not predict the classification into any of the identity categories. However, misrecognition positively and significantly predicted (more likely) Roma class

**TABLE 4** Results of the multinomial logistic regressions for predicting class membership by the covariates (unstandardized coefficients).

	Hungary		Romania		Serbia	
	Disidentifiers	Roma	Weaker identifiers	Roma	Disidentifiers	Roma
Dual identifiers as the reference category						
Political orientation	−0.53**	−0.47*	0.12	0.003	0.10	−0.06
Gender	−0.06	−0.28	0.44	0.32	0.25	−0.08
Age	−0.02	−0.01	−0.04**	−0.06**	−0.01	−0.01
Perceived discrimination	−0.19	0.02	−0.45*	−0.47	−0.03	0.24*
Misrecognition	−0.19	0.92**	−0.70*	0.82	−0.23	0.15

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

membership in comparison with Dual Identification, suggesting that those who reported more experiences of misrecognition were more likely to belong to the Roma identifier class as opposed to the Dual Identifier class. Such a difference was not found in the likelihood of belonging to the Disidentifier or the Dual Identifier classes.

In the Romanian sample, perceived discrimination and misrecognition were both significant negative predictors of belonging to the Weakly Identifier class compared to the Dual Identifier class, suggesting that dual identification was more likely among those who experienced higher discrimination and misrecognition. Neither perceived discrimination nor misrecognition was a significant predictor of Roma identity compared to dual identity.

In the Serbian sample, only perceived discrimination was a significant predictor of belonging to different classes. Specifically, those who reported higher perceived discrimination were more likely to be classified as Roma identifiers compared to Dual Identifiers, whereas misrecognition was not a significant predictor of class membership.

## 8 | DISCUSSION

We conducted what we believe to be the first quantitative study of misrecognition among Roma people to reveal how this experience (i.e., practices that rely on assumptions about minority identity that minority members do not feel as their own) predicts identification patterns. We only found clear support for our main hypothesis that those Roma people who report more misrecognition experiences would be less likely to have dual identity, in the Hungarian Roma sample. Importantly, in the Hungarian sample, participants with higher misrecognition were more likely to identify as Roma rather than to choose a dual identification in line with the rejection-identification hypothesis (Branscombe et al., 1999). Reporting higher perceived discrimination did not predict different identity patterns among participants from Hungary.

The findings from Serbia indicate a similar pattern, but discrimination not misrecognition drove the effect: reporting more frequent experiences of discrimination led to higher Roma identification over dual identification. This finding is also in line with the rejection-identification hypothesis (Branscombe et al., 1999). One possible explanation for why the pattern is connected to discrimination and not misrecognition in Serbia is that members of the Roma minority can also identify with a subgroup of Roma people rather than a superordinate Roma group (e.g., Egyptian, Goranci, Vlasi). Therefore, when misrecognition items refer to experiences connected to being members of the Roma community, these may not be interpreted as experiences connected to their most salient subgroup ethnic minority identity, but rather to their superordinate ethnic group (i.e., Roma). Thus, despite the fact that zero-order correlations suggest that misrecognition is connected to a stronger Roma identity and not associated with national identity, the overall identity pattern was predicted by the crude experience of discrimination and not the more subtle ways in which minority identity is often misrecognized.

Furthermore, in the multi-ethnic context of the Balkans, national identity does not necessarily mean identification with the Serbian nation. To avoid a direct reference to the Serbian ethnic group, we opted for the term Serbian citizen as a reference to the shared superordinate category, but nonetheless, we may have been unable to capture the different interactions between people's sub- and superordinate identities in the Serbian context. For example, Hungarian Roma living in Serbia can use Hungarian as the superordinate category of identification, while maintaining an identity as citizens of Serbia (Radovanović & Knežević, 2014). Even so, within these two contexts, we identified obstacles to dual identification, which highlight a severe social problem, considering that Roma people have lived in these countries for centuries, they do not have a homeland other than their countries of citizenship, yet they do not identify with the nation when these negative experiences are frequent.

In Romania, higher misrecognition predicted higher dual identification vs. belonging to the weakly identifying group, suggesting that misrecognition actually predicted higher ingroup identification within this sample. However, no differences were predicted by misrecognition between Roma and dual identifiers, so data from Romania did not support our hypothesis. Indeed, these results were more in line with the social affirmation hypothesis set forth by da Silva et al. (2021), who found a stronger national identification following the misrecognition experience among Maghrebi French people. The reaffirmation strategy can be attributed to different psychological resources for reaffirmation, stemming potentially from the higher education level of the Romanian sample. However, unlike for Maghrebi French, national identification is primarily an issue of psychological attachment for the Roma, considering that their citizenship is not being questioned (see Bigazzi & Csertő, 2016).

Positive correlations between misrecognition and Roma identification as well as between discrimination and Roma identification conform to the rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999) and suggest that misrecognition and discrimination are associated with an affirmation of minority identity. We found evidence for that in all three samples. However, only in the Hungarian sample did we find that misrecognition was negatively associated with national identity. This supports the rejection-*dis*identification hypothesis among Hungarian Roma (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009) and may be explained by the attributes and values associated with the Hungarian nation, especially given the political climate in which the study was conducted and which communicates a resistance to ethnic and cultural diversity and inclusion (see Kende et al., 2018).

In summary, we found evidence that among members of the Roma minority, negative experiences (misrecognition in Hungary and discrimination in Serbia) predicted stronger Roma identity and weaker dual identification, whereas, in Romania, misrecognition was associated with stronger rather than weaker identification with both groups. This variation across national contexts is important: intergroup relations are embedded in complex historical webs of intergroup relations that are situationally specific.

## 9 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Because we relied on self-identification, we did not identify a class in which Roma participants selected national identity over Roma identity. Although such a group likely exists, we could not recruit them because of their invisibility to us as Roma people. Nevertheless, understanding the role of misrecognition in individual mobility and assimilation strategies would be tremendously important, and future research should aim to find ways to study this connection.

Emerging classes were similar across samples but not identical. Therefore, we cannot determine whether differences emerged from the different role of the predictors or the different classes created based on identification patterns. Experimental and longitudinal studies could provide answers to this question.

We should also note that the misrecognition scale was a new measure created and validated within Misrecognition of Minorities of Europe project (<https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/fakultaeten/soziologie/forschung/projekte/mismie/>, see also Özdemir et al., 2024), and its cross-cultural validity should be further explored. Future research should investigate whether misrecognition is something that is based on ignorance and therefore solvable

through intergroup contact or it is something that members of the majority group engage in intentionally with strategic purposes. These two possibilities would require entirely different intervention strategies.

Though not ideal, for practical reasons, perceived discrimination was measured by a single item. Considering that discrimination is a commonly used term in connection with the Roma and by the Roma, we believe participants responded in a meaningful manner, and the data distribution supports this assumption.

As for the results from Romania, it is possible that more highly educated participants chose a reaffirmation strategy in the face of misrecognition but equally plausible that we identified differences related to different social contexts. Future research could investigate whether patterns of identity differ among more highly educated Roma populations with greater social capital and more accessible Roma role models compared to lower educated people (for ethnic minority role models, see Allen & Collisson, 2020). Indeed, da Silva et al.'s study (da Silva et al., 2021) was conducted among a more privileged population (i.e., Maghrebi French undergraduate students).

Another limitation of studying dual identification is that we could not capture the complex multi-ethnic contexts of Serbia and Romania. We used closed questions in which participants only had a chance to report their identification with the Roma ethnic group and the nation; however, we are aware of the fact that some Roma participants may have had other salient ethnic and national identities that could have influenced our findings. A more in-depth analysis of the intricate relationship between various sub- and superordinate group identities could bring us closer to understanding the lived experiences of Roma communities.

Our results show that the concept of misrecognition adds to our understanding of minority group members' identification with the larger superordinate group of the nation and with the subgroup ethnic minority. This is important, because our findings suggest that both discrimination and misrecognition are frequently experienced by Roma people, and whereas our theoretical understanding of the psychological antecedents and societal and psychological consequences of prejudice and discrimination is thorough (with clear policy implications), misrecognition is yet to be properly acknowledged as a significant experience for minorities. Our study is the first step toward indicating that there may be a connection between experiencing misrecognition and the specific patterns of identification in terms of simultaneously holding ethnic and national identities. Therefore, these findings supplement the current literature on hostile intergroup relations (i.e., research on prejudice and discrimination by adding misrecognition as a relevant and impactful experience) and further the literature on the antecedents of dual identification. Both areas recognize the importance of different acculturation outcomes in multi-ethnic societies. Identifying the obstacles of dual identification among minority members can have important implications for social cohesion, trust and peaceful cohabitation between minority and majority groups (Fleischmann & Op De Weegh, 2022; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Zagefka et al., 2007), minority acculturation stress (Gil & Vega, 1996) and developing self-representation and engagement in collective action (e.g., Simon & Grabow, 2010).

Beyond the theoretical advancement, there is a practical importance in drawing attention to the issue of dual identification of Roma people, considering the severe marginalization of the community in all areas of social life. Despite the existence of anti-discrimination laws, Roma inclusion efforts often fail (Bojadžijeva, 2015; Sándor et al., 2017). Social psychological research has identified dominant social norms of anti-Gypsyism (Kende et al., 2017; Láštíková & Findor, 2016) and individual-level prejudice (see Kende et al., 2021) as direct obstacles to Roma inclusion. Social policy decisions and the deterioration of democratic political systems have also been identified as causes for the failure of Roma inclusion efforts (Rostas & Kovacs, 2021). The present research indicates that inclusion efforts must focus not only on fighting discrimination but also on the need for Roma people to have their multiple identities valued and recognized. Our study highlights the importance of addressing the fact that Roma people may not feel "at home" in their homelands, because alongside frequent experiences with discrimination, their belonging is also repeatedly questioned, creating obstacles for dual identification. It also highlights the need for social psychology to develop analyses of social exclusion that are multi-dimensional and respect the specifics of the social context in question.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in Open Science Framework at [https://osf.io/7kqbs/?view\\_only](https://osf.io/7kqbs/?view_only).

## ORCID

Anna Kende  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5148-0145>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> We found no differences between responses along any of the demographic variables among participants recruited online and face-to-face in Hungary; however, such comparison of the Serbian data was not possible due to a technical error regarding meta-data.

<sup>2</sup> No attention check question was used in the face-to-face interviews.

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## APPENDIX A

### A.1 | ROMA AND NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

- Being Roma/<name of nationality> is an important part of how I see myself.
- I feel committed to Roma/<name of nationality>.
- I feel a bond with Roma/<name of nationality>.
- I often think about the fact that I am Roma/<name of nationality>.

### A.2 | MISRECOGNITION

I sometimes feel that ...

- other <name of nationality> have no idea what Roma are really like.
- other <name of nationality> say we Roma do not belong to <name of country>.
- other <name of nationality> treat us as Roma people even when we do not want to be treated that way.
- society treats us as if we Roma do not exist.
- other <name of nationality> see us Roma more as Roma than <name of nationality>.
- other <name of nationality> consider us Roma as members of groups we do not belong to (for example, a criminal group).

(We omitted the item: other <nationality> people do not accept that we are both, Roma and <nationality> because it too directly referred to dual identification)