



DISCRIMINATION IN THE HOUSING MARKET IN HUNGARY

Veronika Vass-Vigh, Simon Fernezelyi, Ágota Scharle, Bori Simonovits,
Borbála Szczuka

March 26, 2026, Budapest





HOUSING MARKET IN HUNGARY

- **Super homeownership:** 92% of households live in owner-occupied housing (Eurostat, 2024)
- Small and predominantly privately owned rental sector (HfH, 2022)
- Rising rent costs: In major cities (with universities) — especially Budapest (15% increase in the last 5 y. (KSH, 2026))
- High degree of informality and insecurity – missing regulation (HfH, 2022)



DISCRIMINATION IN THE PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET

- Risk aversion in selecting tenants:
 - Exclusion or discrimination of groups perceived as „risky” – e.g. Roma (Váradi et al., 2023) or families with children (Csizmady & Kőszeghy, 2022)
 - Perceived higher social status of the applicants might decrease discrimination (Hanson & Hawley, 2011)
- ➔ H1: *Roma receive fewer invitations to view the property than NonRoma.*
- ➔ H2: *Applicants with children receive fewer invitations than applicants without children.*
- ➔ H3: *Signaling success in employment and/or childcare reduces the likelihood of discrimination.*



DESIGN OF THE EXPERIMENT

- **Applicants**

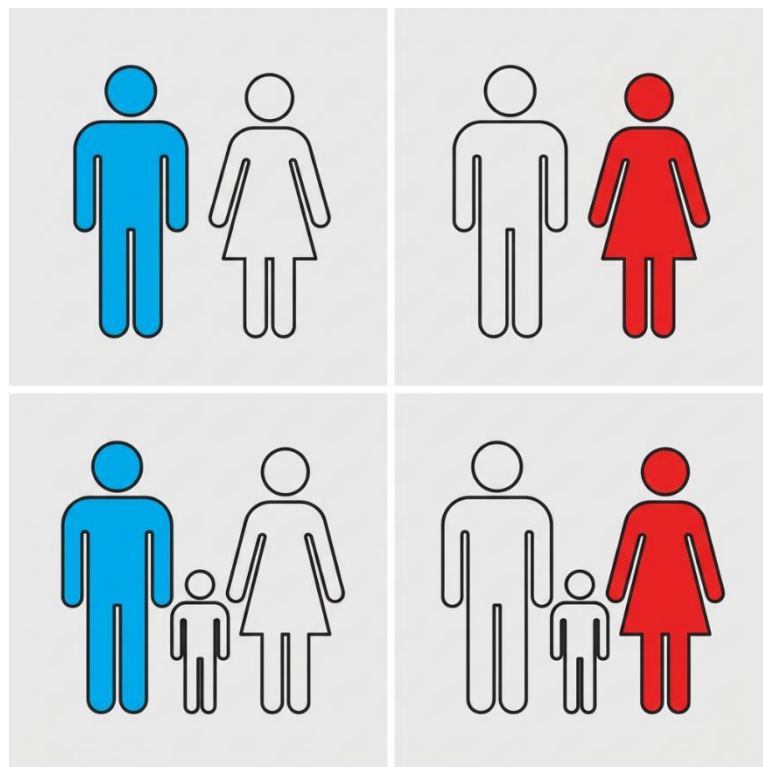
- Random selection
- Roma / NonRoma
- Male / Female
- Parent / Not parent
- Success in employment:

„I recently received a promotion and have a permanent position, so paying a deposit would not be a problem”

- Success in childcare/lack of:

„We have already found a childcare spot relatively close by.”

„We are (also) still looking for a childcare spot in the area.”





DESIGN OF THE EXPERIMENT - MESSAGE

„Good day/ good morning/ good afternoon,

My name is [applicant's name], and I am interested in this property.

My wife/husband, daughter/son and I want to move to the area soon and this place is perfect for us.

[I recently received a promotion and have a permanent position, so meeting income requirements/paying deposit would not be a problem/ omitted].

[We have already found a childcare spot relatively close by/ We are (also) still looking for a childcare spot (in the area) / Omitted]

Could we arrange a viewing?

I am best reached via email.

Thank you in advance!

Kind regards,

[Name]”



DESIGN OF THE EXPERIMENT

- **Sample:** Country-wide
 - Budapest ads undersampled
 - almost 50% of the online ads, in the sample only 15%
 - other regions (19): between 1-11% (depending on supply)
 - Properties (both apartments and houses) that can accommodate at least a family with 1 child
 - Rental price - threshold of 10% and 100% of the median shared net income (Eurostat 2023)
 - Discriminatory ads not included

Mindenhol jó, de a legjobb itt vár rád.

Eladó Kiadó lakás 31 - 304 ezer Ft min. 30 m² min. 2

Új építésű [Részletes kereső](#)



DESIGN OF THE EXPERIMENT



Kaposvár, Somogy megye • 190 e Ft >

Üdvözlöm!

A nevem Kalányos Evelin, és érdeklődöm az ingatlan iránt.

A férjemmel és a lányommal hamarosan a környékre szeretnénk költözni, és ez a hely tökéletes lenne számunkra.

Nemrég előléptettek, ami határozatlan idejű szerződést jelent, így a kaució kifizetése nem jelent számunkra problémát. Még keresünk bölcsődei helyet a gyermekünk számára.

Mikor tudnánk megnézni az ingatlant?

Leggyorsabban e-mailben vagyok elérhető.

Előre is köszönöm!

Üdvözlettel:
Kalányos Evelin



APPLICATIONS SENT

- January-June 2025

Group	N	%
NonRoma	462	50.4
Roma	454	49.6
Parent	440	48.0
Not parent	476	52.0
Female	470	51.3
Male	446	48.7
LM success	484	52.8
No LM success	432	47.2
Total	916	100.0

REPLIES RECEIVED

RESPONSE	Roma (N)	NonRoma (N)	Roma %	NonRoma %
INVITE	107	208	23.6	45.0
MOREINFO	17	19	3.7	4.1
REQUEST CALLBACK	23	48	5.1	10.4
ALTERNATIVE	3	8	0.7	1.7
WAITING LIST	6	5	1.3	1.1
GENERAL	5	4	1.1	0.9
RECEIPT	2	1	0.4	0.2
OTHER	0	3	0.0	0.6
REJECT	69	43	15.2	9.3
NO RESPONSE	222	123	48.9	26.6
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>454</i>	<i>462</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

ANALYSIS : INVITATION AND REJECTION

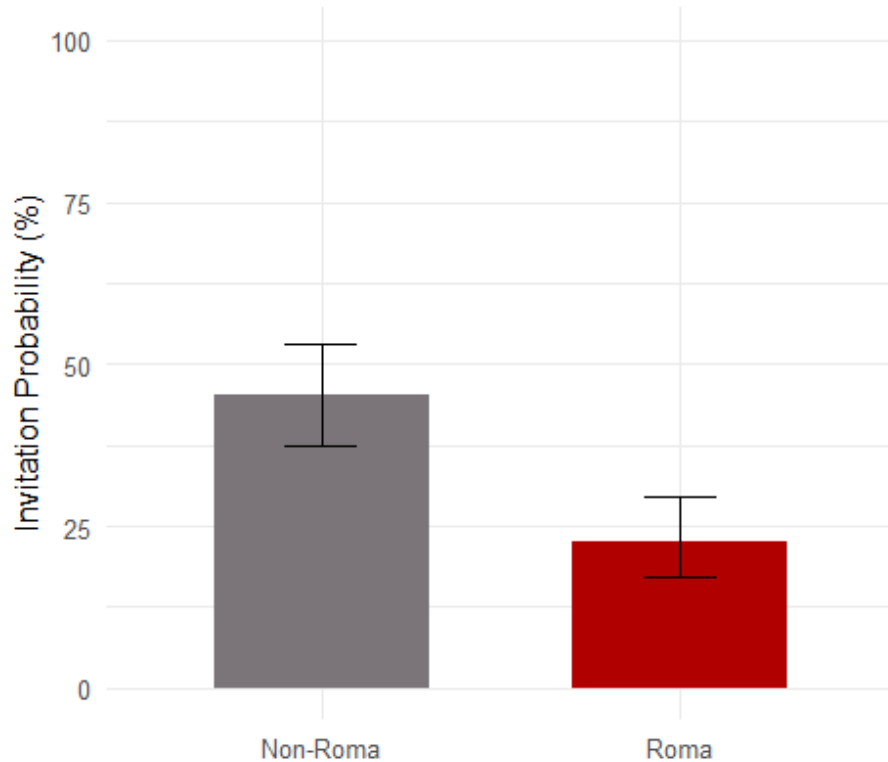
	Logistic Regression Analysis Invitation			Logistic Regression Analysis Rejection		
Variable	Effect (logit)	% point effect	Significance	Effect (logit)	% point effect	Significance
Minority	-1.031	-21.6	***	1.277	+32	***
Parent	-0.381	-8.0	**	0.320	+8	*
Labour success	0.150	+3.1		-0.414	-10	**
Female	0.021	+0.4		-0.131	-3	
Property price (normalized)	0.601	+12.5	*	-1.076	-27	**
Provider agency	0.280	+5.9	.	-0.573	-14	**

*Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, . $p < 0.10$*

RESULTS

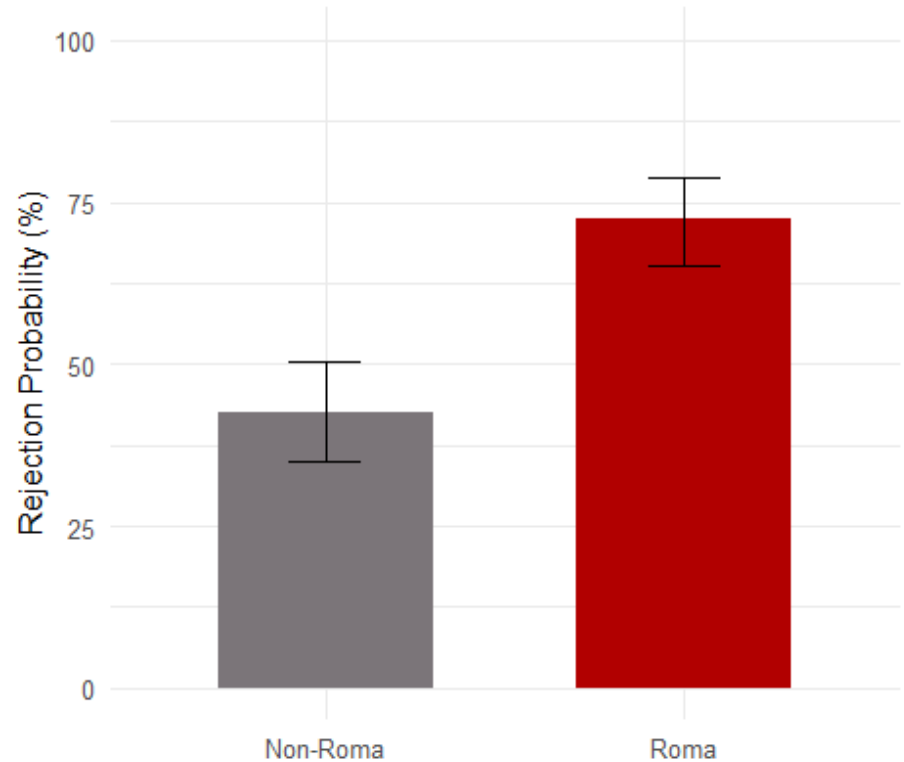
Effect of Minority Status on Invitation Probability

Predicted probabilities from logistic regression
with controls for applicant and housing characteristics



Effect of Minority Status on Rejection Probability

Predicted probabilities from logistic regression
with controls for applicant and housing characteristics



RESULTS: INTERACTION EFFECTS

- Discrimination against Roma applicants is lower among female applicants and higher in lower-rent apartments, with other interactions showing no significant effects.
- None of the tested interaction effects are statistically significant in the case of rejection

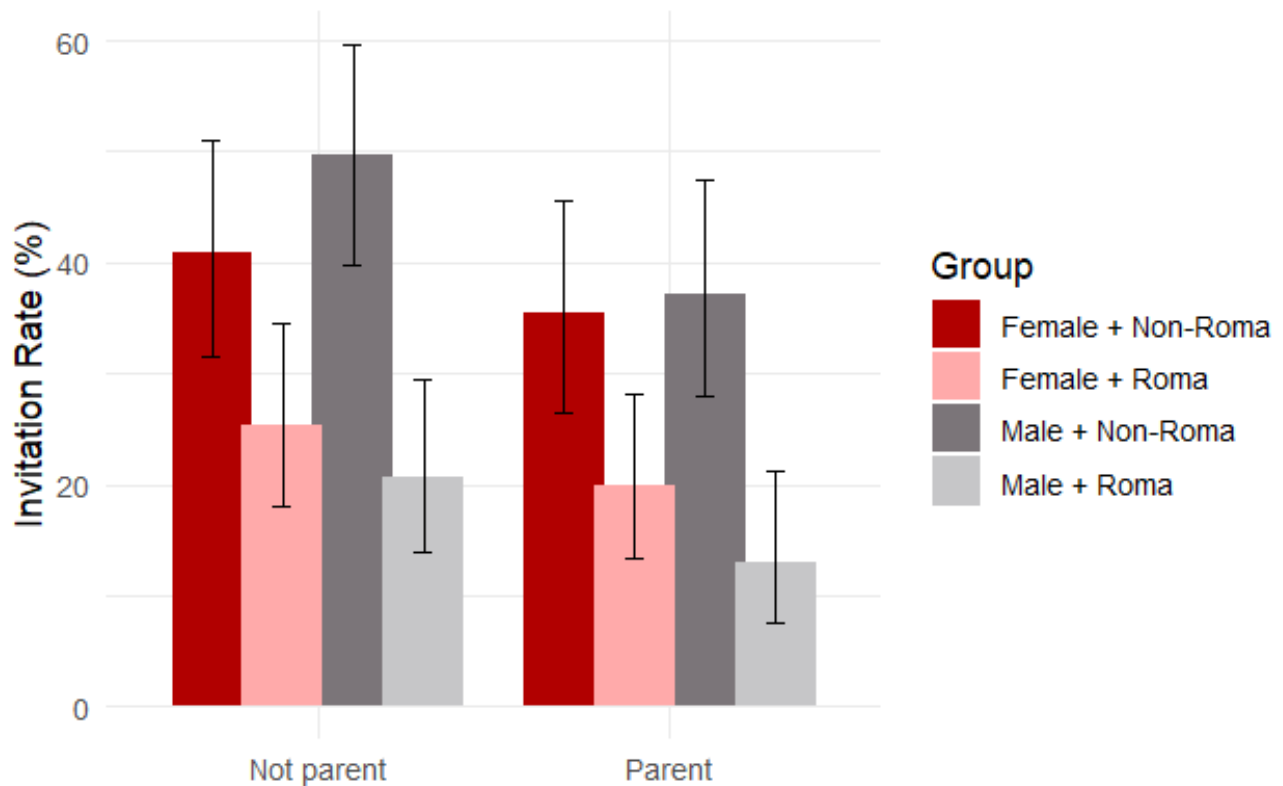
Interaction - invitation	Effect (logit)	Significance
minority:parent	-0.032	
minority:labour_success	+0.380	
minority:is_agency	-0.364	
minority:childcare_success	-0.048	
minority:is_female	+0.579	.
minority:price_above_median	+0.502	.

RESULTS : INVITATION

- Parents are less likely to receive invites
- Gender effects on invitations differ by group: **Roma women are favored**, while Non-Roma women are not
- The gender gap is smaller in case of NonRoma parents
- Not significant

Predicted invitation rates

from a logistic regression accounting for interactions between gender, parental status, and ethnicity, with controls for applicant and housing characteristics.





UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS

- Why are Roma women invited more than Roma men, while among Non-Roma, men receive more invitations?
- Why is this gender-difference absent in rejections?
- Why is there no effect on signalling status in case of invitations?
- Regional and municipality-level differences in discrimination



REFERENCES

- Eurostat 2026: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20260205-1>
- KSH 2026: <https://www.ksh.hu/s/kiserleti-statisztika/kiadvanyok/kshingatlancom-lakberindex-2026-januar/>
- Habitat for Humanity 2022: <https://www.habitat.org/emea/housing-policy-hungary>
- Váradi L, Szilasi B, Kende A, Braverman J, Simonovits G and Simonovits B (2023) “Personally, I feel sorry, but professionally, I don't have a choice.” 1fnfn0001 Understanding the drivers of anti-Roma discrimination on the rental housing market. *Front. Sociol.* 8:1223205. doi: 10.3389/fsoc.2023.1223205
- Csizmady, A., & Kőszeghy, L. (2022). ‘Generation Rent’ in a Super Homeownership Environment: The Case of Budapest, Hungary. *Sustainability*, 14(14), 8929. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14148929>
- Hanson, A. R. & Hawley, Z. (2011). *Do landlords discriminate in the rental housing market? Evidence from an internet field experiment in US cities.* *Journal of Urban Economics*, 70(2–3), 99–114. 10.1016/j.jue.2011.02.003