

MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF DEVIANCE – OTHERING OF ROMA MINORITY IN TELEVISION NEWS DISCOURSE

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Abstract

How was the Roma minority represented in the main evening news program *Události* of Czech Television, the public service media, between 2000 and 2015? This article focuses on the visual representation of Roma and the key signs used in television news reports. It presents findings from analysis based on quantitative content analysis and semiotic analysis. Visual representation of the Roma on television news is dominated by images of groups, children and young adults and shots of the environment and places where they live including clutter and ramshackled houses. On the contrary, representations of Roma as authorities are missing. Analysis revealed a long-term repeated thematization of Roma otherness. Although the voice-over is correct, the visual signs used in reports connote negative meanings and stereotypes. Through such visuals Roma are constructed as culturally different. Thus news accentuated and reproduced negative attitudes that a large part of the Czech majority maintains towards Roma.

Keywords

Roma/Gypsy, othering, news discourse, visual analysis, Czech Television

“Roma people have a different mentality than whites, they express themselves differently, and they also look different. They don’t behave like normal people. ... Gypsies should live like us, obey the laws, the rules of the game,” (Leudar, Nekvapil, 2000, p. 488). These are some of the statements from four television debates broadcast between 1990 and 1995, analyzed by Leudar and Nekvapil (2000). According to the authors, the dominant frame used by the Czech media to represent Roma people is the discourse of difference. The predicates reflected the mental stereotypes that Czechs have towards the Roma people. Most were negative towards what the Czechs considered desirable and what they think of themselves. According to the authors their purpose is not to express the truth about the Roma people, but to achieve their social rejection and exclusion (Leudar, Nekvapil, 2000, p. 507).

According to the results of public opinion polls, the Czech population has a long-term tendency to be closed and to a greater degree their concern towards strangers and others (Čížek, Šmídová, Vávra, 2017, p. 180). According to Prudký et al. (2009, p. 248), who has long been researching the value orientation, two-fifths of the Czech population can be described as xenophobic. Among those who have long been least liked are the Roma people. In 2020, almost three quarters (71%) of the surveyed respondents described Roma as (rather or very) unlikeable, while only twenty respondents (Tuček, 2020) said they were likeable. A comparison with the results of previous surveys shows that the relationship with the Roma people has not changed. In a survey by the Institute of Sociology in November 2015 (i.e. from the period after the peak of the so-called migration crisis), Roma people were identified as the most unattractive, immoral, dirty, violent, stupid, law breakers, lazy and indecent. The only exception was the positive assessment of their social cohesion.

At the same time, Czechs have inaccurate information about the Roma population (Čížek, Šmídová, Vávra, 2017, p. 149). Most Czechs only meet the Roma population occasionally and do not know anyone in person;¹ only a fifth of respondents have friends or acquaintances among them (TNS Opinion & Social network 2015). However, the research does not ask the source from which the respondents draw their information about the Roma population. According to a number of authors (e.g. Čížek, Šmídová, Vávra, 2017, p. 182; Poláková, Spálová, 2013; Weinerová, 2015; Kostlán, Ryšavý, 2014) the perception of the Roma population is influenced by the media, as they are a key source of information in the late modern society and in many cases it is also the only source. Stereotypical, biased, racist sensational media messages not only reinforce the Roma stereotypes and negative attitudes, but it also encourages discrimination (The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities 2016, p. 10).

This article is part of a project examining how the discourse on the Roma population was constructed in the main evening news program *Události* (Events) of Czech Television, the public service media and how the representation of the Roma population in this session changed between 2000 and 2015. The analysis was based on a media constructivist approach (Schulz, 2000; Luhman, 2000) and the semiotic tradition of news discourse (Hartley, 1982; Fiske, Hartley, 1996; Dahlgren, 1986). This article is part of the media and public discourse that is constructed in Czech society in connection with this minority. Due to the negative meanings and connotations that are associated with it, I do not use the wording 'Roma issues/problems' in this article. To describe the people, the analyzed news discourse speaks about, I use the term 'Roma' or the 'Roma minority', which refers to the ethnicity and to the disadvantaged social position they occupy in Czech society. It is also unclear how to define who the generalizing designation 'majority' refers to. It is not a specific group sharing a common identity and defined by clear boundaries. It refers to the ethnically dominant population of the Czech Republic.

¹ Those who have friends among the Roma people perceive them more positively (less they attribute negative qualities such as laziness, stupidity, selfishness or irresponsibility) and less negatively evaluate their coexistence (Šmídová, Vávra, Čížek, 2017, p. 162).

Theoretical framework of the study

Representation of Roma in news discourse

Published Czech and foreign researchers on media representation of Roma give similar findings (Erjavec, 2001; Homoláč, Karhanová, Nekvapil, 2003; Růžicka, Radostný, 2006; Sedláková, 2007; Schneeweis, 2009; Homoláč, 2009; Vašát, 2010; Madroane, 2012; Kluknavská, Zagibová, 2013; Křížková, 2013; Kroon, Kluknavská, Vliegenthart and Boomgaarden, 2016; Sedláková, 2022). In general, it can be said that the representation of Roma in the Czech, Slovak, Hungarian or British (news) media contributes to the spread of a one-sided and stereotypical image. Studies point to the unjustified reporting of the ethnicity. Křížková (2013) believes that although journalists are aware of the overuse of the ethnicity of the actors in the events, they work with it as a news value that increases the newsworthiness of the event. Journalists use the ethnicity to increase the attractiveness of the report. Many events would probably not have been printed if journalists could not have introduced the ethnicity of the actors which brings negative meaning to the report.²

The Roma themselves do not usually comment on the events in the media. News related to crime and problematic behavior has mainly been published, according to the findings. Information on other Roma activities, e. g. cultural events, are published less frequently, similar to cases of discrimination against members of a minority (Křížková, 2013). Due to the repeated association of Roma with crime or the difficulties they cause, the Roma representation emphasizes negative connotations. According to Tremlett, McGarry (2013, p. 8) discourses shared by the majority usually construct Roma as a source of the problems. They report on 'Roma problems' or on problems with Roma, not on the problems faced by the Roma. Thus, media representations reproduce the division of society into Us (the majority) and Them (the minority).

Representations of Others reproduced by mainstream media reflect the majority's idea of themselves (Andreasen, 2005, p. 6). An analysis of the news broadcast in the main evening news program *Události* (Sedláková, 2022) revealed that viewers learnt not only about the Roma - about Them, but also about Us. The analysis of the framing of the news reports, their stylistics and syntax shows that a significant part (55 %) of them were framed as activities of the majority. Although the reports referred to the Roma minority, they reported on what the non-Roma thought or did, or what they did for Them, or what they decided about Them. The Roma are only secondary in the news. They are represented as objects of non-Roma activities, such as those on which it is oriented, or those who are affected by the decision. They are the ones that the majority must take care of and spend its resources on. In the news structured according to the opposition Us – They, the Roma are in the position of the Others, with regard to whom members of the majority construct their identities (Sedláková, 2022).

² Cf. Richardson (2006); Kostlán, Red (2014).

Us and the Others

Duality of Us and Them can only be understood in opposition to each other. Them - the Others - are an imaginary entity, a social construct created by Us. Entity to which we define ourselves, and thus at the same time show what we think who we are (Baumann, 1996, 44n; Barth, 1969). We have limited knowledge of the Others usually. However, we are suspicious, prejudicial, and xenophobic towards them because they are not like Us (nor can they ever be). They are strangers and different to us. However, their otherness is emphasized in the social and media representations created by us and culturally shared. News is an example of ethnocentric discourse (Hartley, 1982). In the news discourse, individuals and groups are represented from the majority perspective so the recipients accept this ideology as their own. If the news discourse systematically constructs the Roma as inadaptatable, different Others marginal in our society, as those who do not want to adapt, their otherness and social exclusion is confirmed in this way. According to van Dijk (2000), the end of the 20th century is characterized by thinking and declaring it as anti-racist. However, it is denying the presence of racism in everyday practices and discourses and reproduce racism in the power structure of society. Subtle symbolic discriminatory practices maintained by socially shared representations – stereotypes, prejudices, and ideologies – are tacitly accepted by most members of the dominant majority, including its top representatives (van Dijk, 2000, p. 34). Van Dijk calls it new racism, Blažek (1995) wrote about soft racism in the Czech context. The opposition of Us and Them lays in its core. The Others are not defined by race, but by cultural otherness. They do not have to be members of ethnic groups only, but other minority social groups.

Every culture and social group sets its socio-cultural norms – rules (different customs, moral orders, and legislative measures) that regulate the behavior of its members in certain situations, and under the threat of sanctions require their observance. Things that are historically common are considered as normal and they become the norm in a given society (Vágnerová, 2004). If individuals do not meet these norms, they are considered abnormal or deviant. The line between normal and abnormal is variable, it changes over time and according to the current social context. Although no norm is ever followed exactly and in the same way by everybody, no society tolerates significant social deviations in the long term.³ Adherence to norms is subject to social control. And conduct deviating from the norm is not apriori considered deviant. The deviant is what is called as deviant by the society members. The deviance is not the quality of the act, but as the result of a sanction imposed on an individual by the society (Becker, 1963). However, behavior of certain members is judged less strictly than the same one conducted by the others. In the case of minorities, even a single breach of the norm or deviating from normalcy

³ Behavior that is not conform to the social norm that is accepted by the majority in a given historical period is referred to as social deviance (Janebová, 2013).

can lead to their labeling,⁴ stigmatization, strengthening of social prejudices against them, their subsequent discrimination and social exclusion.⁵

Conformity control is a power tool used to sanction deviant behavior, strengthen social order, and to reproduce the power of the powerful.⁶ It is a tool for labeling, stigmatizing and pathologizing those who do not comply with the norms and may be exposed to discrimination or to social exclusion because they are labeled as the Others. While in stigmatization, labeling usually takes place on the basis of visible differences (Goffman, 2003), otherness can only be ascribed. Particular social norms are social constructs, as well as what is signified as different, other, socially deviant or pathological. As described by Pickering (2001) the selected people are signified as the Others by those who can speak about them publicly in the process of defining otherness. This leads to their symbolic exclusion from our group (Pickering, 2001, p. 48). The exercise of symbolic power and the social exclusion of the culturally inferior and unimportant, or even potentially dangerous, takes place through the processes of signification and classification (Hall, 1997, p. 259). Media are involved in the process of reproducing social norms and labeling Others. In the process of representation media show the desired norms and patterns of action or appearance (Janebová, 2014, p. 19). The repetition of representations establishes difference as natural and naturalizes it. Repetitively issued representations not only create a semblance of universal validity and truthfulness, but they also contribute to the reproduction of the social order (Fiske, 2001).

How about the representation of Roma people in the news discourse of Czech Television? Is it the way of informing about Roma based on the otherness that deepens their social pathologization? I will answer this question on the basis of the knowledge gained from the analysis on the visual part of the news reports from the selected sample of the broadcast program *Události*.

⁴ According to labelling theory, each individual sometimes acts in a deviant way. It depends on the reaction of the society whether it is labelled as deviant. As a result of the of this label, the person in question, under the pressure of social expectations, often acts in a way that is considered deviant. „This phenomenon can be observed, for example, in Romani children, for whom the social expectation that they will act criminally or violently leads to them becoming perceived as „criminals“ and thus begin to act“ (Janebová, 2014, 21).

⁵ Mechanisms of social exclusion allow one group to protect its resources and privileges and to confine itself to members of other groups, based on their power declaration as undesirable. By strengthening the awareness of one's own difference and closing oneself, social boundaries are created between the group of Us and the Others.

⁶ Foucault (2000) writes about the power of discipline, through which specialized institutions (such as school, prison etc.) force humans to obey. Human subjects are formed using partitioning practices based on binary classification: normality - deviation.

Methodology

The findings presented are the result of analysis of all news programs broadcast from 1 January to 31 December 2000, 2012 and 2015. While in 2000 the *Události* program lasted on average 25 minutes, on 1 April 2012 it was significantly visually modified (acquired a new logo and slogan and other graphic changes) and was extended to 45–48 minutes, which was reflected by its thematic agenda. One news report was set as a basic research unit. The sample was created by the sequential monitoring of individual sessions and searching for relevant contributions. The procedure of identification by a third party (Fónadová, 2014), i.e. the so-called attributed Roma, was used to identify the relevant messages. Selection of relevant research units was based on an assessment of the significant features of the depicted people and the environment or context in which they were depicted.⁷ Out of a total of 444 reports meeting the set criteria, 93 articles reported primarily on other topics and the reference to the Roma minority was only a mention⁸ and were excluded from the analysis. In 351 research units, coded as the main and secondary topic (in more detail below), the Roma were marked or depicted repeatedly and a significant share of the report was mainly focused on them. In one tenth (33) of the news, members of the Roma minority were marked only verbally and the report did not contain a visual representation. The following data therefore relates to the 318 news reports in which the Roma were depicted.

In this article I will present part of the results obtained by the methods of content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002) and semiotic analysis (Chandler, 2002).⁹ While the strength of the quantitative approach is the ability to cover large samples, qualitative analysis allows us to pay attention to selected cases in detail (for more details, see Sedláková, 2014). I will focus on the question, how the Roma were portrayed in the main evening news program *Události*. Via the analysis of the visual representation I will point out the types of shots that have been used repeatedly, those that do not usually occur in connection with the majority population and those that refer to the otherness of members of the Roma minority and reproducing stereotypes about the Roma.¹⁰

When analyzing the content of news discourse, it is necessary to take into account that the construction of (audiovisual) news is a relatively arbitrary process. This is structured and limited both by socially shared conventions on the form of news and by standard media routines¹¹ in the production of this type of media messages. The most common

⁷ The two criteria assessed were: i) the presence of a language sign based on the word Roma* in the sense of Roma, Romani or adjectives, or Gypsy in a news report and ii) the presence of signs (in the semiotic sense), most often visual shots, which refer to Roma people

⁸ An example is the listing of the Roma in the list of topics to be addressed by the Chamber of Deputies at its next session at the end of the article Government Meeting in the program Events on June 7, 2000.

⁹ Semiotic analysis (Chandler, 2002) views the analysed documents as texts composed of symbolic signs referring to their speakers, and thus communication meaning. It focuses on the meanings generated by the text and tries to understand the social use of signs in a social context.

¹⁰ The purpose of the analysis was not to assess the factual accuracy of the contributions or the correspondence of the broadcast information with the lived reality of the outside world.

¹¹ The concept of so-called media logic, also known as media / journalistic routines, refers to the internal rules of media organizations operation and conceptualizes the procedures of creating news (Altheide, Snow, 1979).

type of television news report – reportage – is built in the connection of the reporter’s words and quotations of the event’s actors with visual footage. Although it is sometimes assumed that the visuals have an illustrative function in television news, because the main weight of the message lies on the verbal level, Lapčík (2012, 2014) shows how distinctive the visual component is. He proved that the visuals are in many cases appended to ad hoc, which activates the polysemy potential of the used signs and the generation of alternative meanings.

In this text I will show how the visuals contribute to the creation of an overall Roma representation in the public service medium. Public service media coverage aspires to set the bar for professional quality of journalists’ work with its information standards and is legislatively bound by Act 483/1991 Coll. on Czech Television.¹² Based on the acquired knowledge, I will assess the extent to which Czech Television’s news discourse reproduces otherness and contributes to the perception of the Roma as socially different.

Findings – Images of Roma

Visual representation of Roma broadcast in the *Události* are based on group shots that capture Roma as members of larger groups (see Table 1). A fifth of reports (22%) represents Roma as individuals.¹³ Only one person was depicted in a tenth of the reports. In a third (31%) Roma were shown in groups of ten, twenty or more than fifty. These shots are not exclusive for news about cultural events or piety events, but they were often used to characterize Roma’s everyday life: shots from the vicinity of Roma residence, from housing estates, hostels or socially excluded localities, especially in 2012, when the news covered the protests, a higher share of reports with visuals of large groups were evident (see Graph 1).

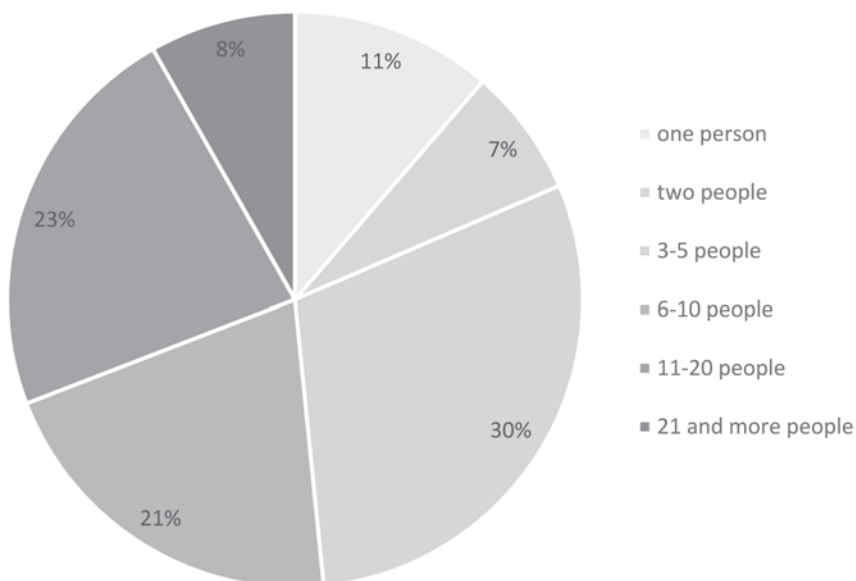
¹² Act 483/1991 Coll. Czech Television imposes in „§2 (2): a) the provision of objective, verified, comprehensively balanced and comprehensive information for the free formation of opinions,... d) the development of the cultural identity of the population of the Czech Republic, including members of national or ethnic minorities,...“

¹³ This does not mean that the report represented only one individual; different people can be displayed in each shot

Table 1 Representation of Roma in news reports

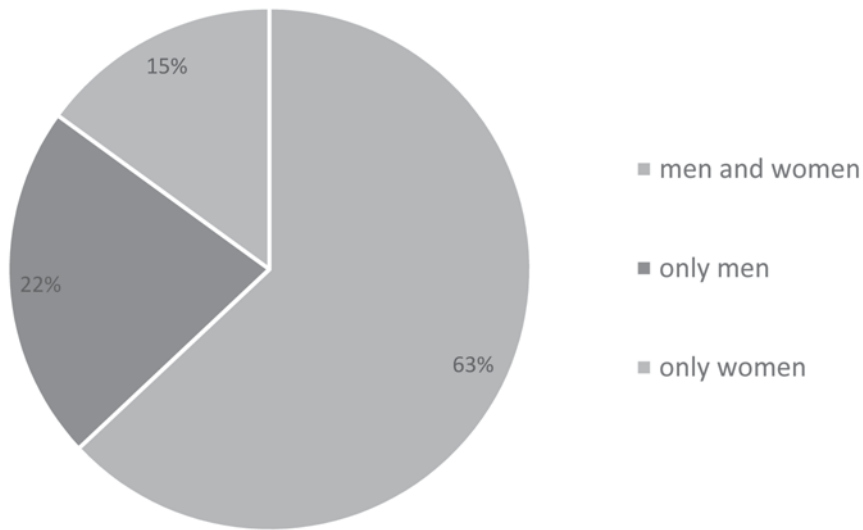
	total		2000		2012		2015	
	absolute frequency	relative frequency	absolute frequency	relative frequency	absolute frequency	relative frequency	absolute frequency	relative frequency
total	318	100%	67	100%	154	100%	97	100%
individuals	71	22%	13	19%	38	25%	20	21%
within a group	87	27%	15	22%	41	27%	31	32%
individuals and groups	160	50%	39	58%	75	49%	46	47%
one person	36	11%	6	9%	16	10%	14	14%
two people	23	7%	7	10%	14	9%	2	2%
3-5 people	95	30%	22	33%	41	27%	32	33%
6-10 people	66	21%	20	30%	30	19%	16	16%
11-20 people	72	23%	7	10%	37	24%	28	29%
21 and more people	26	8%	5	7%	16	10%	5	5%
men and women	200	63%	44	66%	102	66%	54	56%
only men	69	22%	15	22%	29	19%	25	26%
only women	49	15%	8	12%	23	15%	18	19%

Graph 1 Number of Roma represented in news reports (relative frequency)



The majority (63%) of news reports contains visuals in which both men and women are represented (see Graph 2). Men are visually present in the vast majority of the news (86 %). Women are captured by cameras less often and only women were displayed in 49 reports. However, the share of images with women has slowly increasing in the researched period. There is no comparable analysis of the Czech television news, which would indicate the structure of the displayed people in terms of their gender or age. However, analyzes of gender representation in the media stated a general overrepresentation of men over women (see, for example, Renzetti, Curran, 2003; Dines, Humez, 1995).

Graph 2 Gender of Roma depicted in news reports (relative frequency)



News reports generally did not provide information about the age of the filmed people¹⁴ and the categorization of people into age groups was estimated in order to capture the age structure of the represented minority. Most often, in three quarters of the reports, adults were shown, also young adults and preschool children were represented often (See table 2). Teenagers are significantly less frequently caught in visuals; it is possible that when journalists take footage during the day, teenagers are at school and not in public places, so cameras cannot capture them. However, the older people¹⁵ were the least 'visible' group. They were only shown in one-sixth of the news. The absence of older people in the television content is generally documented.¹⁶ In the case of the Roma minority, however, their absence can also be explained by the demographic structure of this population and the lower life expectancy in comparison to the majority. Thus, older Roma people are also missing socially, not only in the news visuals.

¹⁴ Conversely, data on the age are common in the printed media.

¹⁵ At the same time, members of the Roma minority usually look older than members of the majority. The experience of anthropologists and social workers testifies to this, as there are no official statistics on the health of the Roma population.

¹⁶ For example, according to the study *Mass Longevity - a Good Story* (1998), people over the age of 60 make up only a tenth of people shown on television screens.

Table 2 Age groups shown in the news reports¹⁷

	total		2000		2012		2015	
displayed:	absolute frequency	relative frequency	absolute frequency	relative frequency	absolute frequency	relative frequency	absolute frequency	relative frequency
children (approx. up to 10 years)	181	57%	32	48%	96	62%	53	55%
teen (approx. 11 - 17 years)	108	34%	39	58%	40	26%	29	30%
young adults (approx. 18 - 25 years)	193	60%	47	70%	100	65%	46	47%
adults (approx. 25 - 55 years)	238	75%	40	60%	127	82%	71	73%
seniors (over 55 years)	51	16%	7	10%	32	21%	11	11%

I also coded¹⁸ the overall appearance of the represented people. I focused on visuals in which were shown people who differed significantly in appearance from how the members of the Czech population are usually displayed. We are used to see individuals in formal wear (suit, uniform) and with combed hair (or make-up, shaved, etc.) in the news. Even more formal both in appearance and in the form of speech, are the statements of official state representatives from majority or its spokespeople. My goal was not to evaluate the appearance of particular people, but to find out whether and to what extent unusual visuals are present in mainstream news in case of Roma people. Visuals that depicted people incompletely dressed or in dirty clothes, untidy, disheveled, or otherwise unusual in appearance were coded, because such visuals are deviating from the usual standard of representation. According to the established news discourse and unwritten standards of the public service media we assume that represented speakers would act (more or less) formally and their appearance would be well-tended. However, this is not always the case of speakers from the Roma minority. News also contain their informal statements taken at home or visuals of speakers who were not fully dressed, as we would expect from a person being shot with a television camera. An example is the shot of an undressed man from July 2012 (see Fig. 1). However, such visuals were included only marginally in the research sample, and Graph no. 3 shows that the visuals of people who differ from the usual standard are in decline. While in the initial year of the survey untidy people in older, pulled-out clothes, with uncombed hair or bad teeth were shown in a quarter (26%) of news reports, in 2015 in a twentieth (4%) only. Generally, the majority of people were depicted in everyday

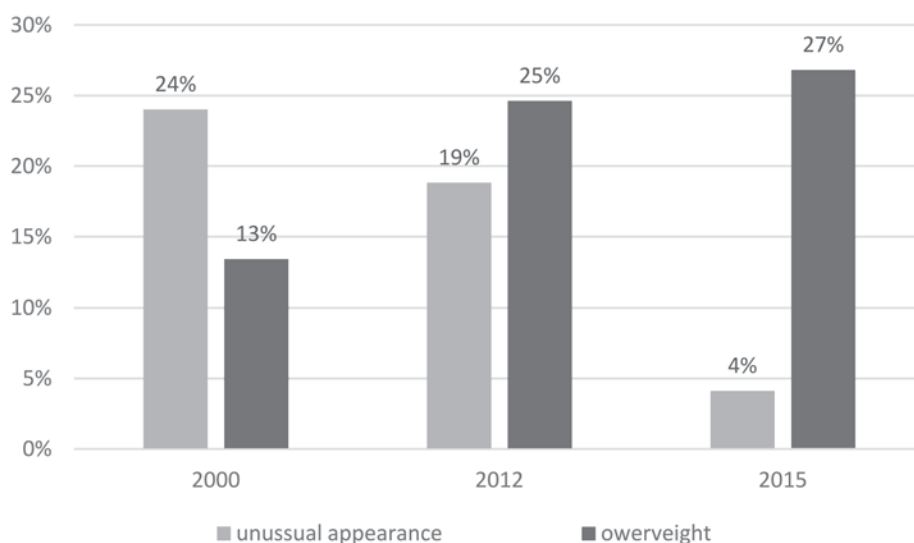
¹⁷ The total exceeds the number of contributions, because different age groups could have been shown in individual shots of the reports. Their (non)presence was coded as dichotomous variables, (e.g. children under 10 years were or were not depicted).

¹⁸ I am aware that any assessment of the appearance of others is subjective.

usually clean and tidy clothes without significant unusual features. The otherness that has been made visible by visuals has disappeared. This trend is so significant that regardless of the subjectivity intervening in the coding of this variable, it is a substantial finding. Two explanations are possible: i) It is possible that the social conditions and standard of living of the Roma population in 2000 were more different from the majority, but over time their living standards and appearance converged to the Czech ethnic.¹⁹ ii) It is also possible that journalists work less with visibly different people, as filming with people who are socialized in the majority culture and meet its standards are easier and less time consuming for them. Maybe the more non-conformed individuals are less available for shooting,²⁰ they refuse to communicate with journalists and shut themselves off from them, for example out of fear of stigmatization or secondary victimization or due to unpleasant experiences. Due to the fact that I do not have any data from the journalists themselves reflecting on the procedures of creating news articles, the explanations given are only hypothetical.

The last quantitatively coded variable measured representation of the Roma population in terms of overweight. It showed a completely opposite trend (see Graph 3). According to available data, the increase in obesity is a current problem in the Czech population; the data on visuals show that it is also the case of the Roma minority.

Graph 3 Appearance of Roma represented in the news reports



¹⁹ At the same time, there may be a process of convergence of the Czechs to a common denominator.

²⁰ Quite analogically, there are only exceptional representations of, for example, homeless people or the disabled in the television news discourse.

I focused on shots that work with similar visual features in the analysis. When monitoring news reports about the Roma minority systematically and repetitively, it is not possible to overlook the visuals in which larger or smaller groups of children and adults, men and women stand on sidewalks in front of houses or sitting on railings, stairs or on park benches.²¹ (see Fig. No. 2) Visuals of people hanging around taken from a greater or lesser distance contained a third of the sample. The presence of Roma in public spaces (in front of houses, in parks etc.) can be described as one of the features systematically used in the construction of reports on the Roma minority. As the data in Table 3 shows, this type of footage is a stable feature referring to the everyday life of Roma across the period studied. It is a sign that connotes meaning: look, they do nothing, hang out on the streets, sit in parks, chat, smoke and waste time. Such conduct is understood at odds with the rationality of modernity and capitalism driven by the slogan: time is money.²² These visuals highlight otherness and distinguish Us – a Western rational advanced society, from communities that are seen as pre-modern in their organization, less developed, emotional and irrational. This sign connects Roma with the freedom to stay outside (in the open air). Its connotations can evoke the non-settled nomads, the associated stereotypes and negative meanings. The possibility that the depicted people probably have nowhere else to spend their time, as they do not possess their own land (garden or cottage), is not thematized nor mentioned in the news. Likewise, the different perception of private and public categories among the Roma population is not addressed. Similarly, the media does not explain the specifics of spending time together in communities that have their own social hierarchy across generations. The significance of Roma footages in the streets and urban areas is the result of the absence of another type of location in which they are (or could be) depicted. While members of the majority usually perform in official positions, e.g. in footage from offices taken in connection with their profession, Roma (with a few exceptions) are not represented in these types of footage. As showed Lapčík (2014), journalists are under pressure to obtain visuals for the reports. It is possible that journalists do not have enough contact to Roma people to be able to address people who can comment on the event / topic, and therefore improvise. As a result, the news reports are supplemented by footage shoot on the streets without direct contact with particular representatives. This partly explains the frequent use of shots of anonymized groups taken from a greater distance.

²¹ Some cities regulate or prohibit similar acts, and as such these regulations are described as discriminatory (see e.g. Figure no 2).

²² Cf. Weber, 1998.

Table 3 Visuals used in news reports

	total		2000		2012		2015	
frequency	absolute	relative	absolute	relative	absolute	relative	absolute	relative
unkempt places, disheveled houses	107	30%	7	9%	65	39%	35	33%
people in public places	117	33%	22	28%	62	37%	33	31%
people on balconies or at windows	60	17%	6	8%	31	19%	23	22%

Another specific type of visuals that was present in the reports is the shots of people at their windows or on balconies, present in 17% of the sample. To some extent, this could be considered as a specific variant of the previously mentioned type. The people represented in this way did not currently show any activity too. At the moment, however, they are not present in public places, but are leaving their privacy. An interview with them in this position is not an exception. It is possible that it reflects the difficulties for journalists to obtain a statement from the minority on camera and this type of shot is a consequence of Roma closure to journalists, who have no choice but to address those who are available, at least in part. These shots were used in a wide range of represented events. This is a specific example of vox populi, where people standing on balconies or at windows comment on the event. Compared to the majority population, representation of these speakers is very non-standard. It is not only a different type of representation of the representatives of the majority and minority, but at the same time a repeatedly used signature shots creating the difference.

The last type of visuals I will discuss is the environment in which Roma are depicted. They show significant similarities in what they show. Although these visuals should refer to the place where the represented event took place,²³ they also carry information about the environment in which Roma live and act and anchor the message in context. They show the living conditions of the Roma population and become important signs communicating meaning of Roma’s everyday life.

A third (107) of the news reports contained visuals of the dilapidated places: houses with doors boarded up by planks, with broken windows, torn beams hanging from the ceilings, ripped out wires, etc. or dirty nooks filled with garbage and broken things. (See Fig. 3 and 4) It is precisely these shots that communicate otherness. At the same time, they were present in the news that did not depict Roma, but referred to them only verbally. As they are associated with the Roma minority through long-term use, they become signifiers of the minority. The use of these shots does not decrease, but on the contrary,

²³ However, some of them have been used repeatedly as illustrative shots.

their presence in the news has tripled compared to the year 2000 sample. It is obvious that at least a part of the Roma population still belongs to the socially weak and live in unsatisfactory conditions that are non-standard for the mainstream Czech population. Anthropologists would probably point out that what is shown in the footage and what is sometimes (mistakenly) associated with the Roma population is the culture of poverty, which established itself in some localities in the Czech Republic after 1989 (Jakoubek, 2008). The Culture of Poverty (Lewis, 1966) is not exclusively bound by nationality or ethnicity, but affects both Czechs and Roma. Even footage from the analyzed news shows that members of both ethnic groups live in such houses or hostels.

Only in half of the cases were shots of such dilapidated places used in news on excluded localities or social work; the second half consisted of reports about crime, social policy, education, racial discrimination, migration and urban policy. The analysis suggests that these visuals are used without a direct connection to a represented event / topic. They serve as a background or filling to complete the visual part of the report which must be present in audiovisual news. They are probably not shots from the place where the event occurred,²⁴ but through the work of journalists, they are related to the event. The use of such visuals in unrelated cases is unjustified and is a manifestation of soft racism. According to Blažek (1995, p. 270), it is characteristic of non-verbal communication and for audiovisual media, which make it possible to present meaningfully divided messages. Although the verbal level of the news is correct, the visual signs used to communicate meaning refer to ethnic stereotypes.

Reports from 2012 on various aspects of housing were characterized with visuals of houses in disrepair (with ripped out wiring, leaking water, smashed windows, clutter, etc.), or the interior of hostels. At the same time, these news reports often contained images of two very contrasting environments: outdoor and indoor. While on the outside the houses were gray, peeling paint, with fallen plaster, walled up windows or boarded up openings, when journalists are allowed to enter the apartments, the cameras show a different world. The interior of the flats and their equipment are not significantly different from the standard of Czech households. Of course, we could find the difference in decoration style, but not in cleanliness or tidiness (see Fig. no. 5). The difference in the cleanness of the external and internal places can be partly explained by the findings of anthropologists about the perception of space by members of the Roma minority. In very simple terms, this is a marked contrast to the Roma's approach to what they understand as their own and what belongs to others' or to the public. While I take care of the first, I am not interested in the second. The most frequently displayed non-residential spaces or common areas of tenement houses are often untended.²⁵ However, at the same time, these are the very places where there is a mess that the cameras show to the viewers of the news.

²⁴ See for example, a report *Belgium warned the Czech Republic* issued on April 10th, 2000 about visa and migration policy.

²⁵ Problems with cleaning of shared non-residential places and reluctance to participate in their maintenance or cleaning is also known from houses managed by the Community of Flats Owners of the non-Roma population.

Lastly, I need to mention a shot of a groomed elderly woman (see Fig. no. 6) cooking on an open fire in an apartment in an opening in a chimney (in a disheveled house in the Předlice locality in Ústí nad Labem). This one was completely unique in the whole sample. But it is precisely this one that acts as an imaginary exception to the rule. The visual is so different from the usual standards of the Czech population that it will not be perceived as a sign of poverty and low social status, but as a stereotype of Roma who destroy flats and cook on an open fire inside.

Conclusion

Visual representation of the Roma population in the main evening news program *Události* of Czech Television between 2000 and 2015 is dominated by footage of groups, children and young adults, their environment and lifestyle. On the contrary, there are no representations of Roma as authorities, people holding a formal position or representing the majority society.

The Roma were often represented in public places, or in the vicinity of their homes, which may refer to the nomadism, being outside, freedom and detachment. The shots of the Roma standing or sitting in public work as a sign that makes them different from the majority population, whose representatives are not depicted in this way. The presence of young children in the visuals can connote not only higher fertility, but they were also unrestrained, unmanageable and noisy. The fact that Roma are often shown in groups connotes their belonging to larger social units - communities, and can create a feeling of danger, especially if mainly (young) men are depicted. The visuals of disheveled houses and unmaintained non-residential places amplify the negative valence of reports. The majority viewer would probably not want to live there. These visuals communicate information about the environment and the living conditions of the Roma population and become important signs of the representation of Roma's everyday life. It is these shots that communicate otherness and emphasize stereotypes about the Roma. Based on the available data, it is not possible to explain whether this happens by accident or whether it is the intention of the journalists.

Due to the high level of non-acceptance of Roma by members of the majority population, it can be said that, from a visual point of view, viewers find clues in the news that allow them to interpret messages within the framework of shared stereotypes. From the point of view of the general representation of the Roma in the news discourse, there is a long-term repeated thematization of their otherness, and thus its symbolic reproduction. It is the visual signs that contribute to the reproduction of negative meanings and attitudes that a large part of the majority maintains towards Roma, and thus can contribute to their discrimination and social exclusion in everyday life.

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Figure 1 Události, Czech television, July 7th 2012



Figure 2 Události, Czech television, April 3rd 2015



Figure 3 Události, Czech television, May 13th 2012



Figure 4 Události, Czech television, August 3rd 2012



Figure 5 Události, Czech television August 19th 2012



Figure 6 Události, Czech television, November 6th 2012



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