'Inadaptable Gypsies' and 'Dangerous Antiziganists'

Struggling and Mirroring Folk Devils

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Introduction

The riots in London in August 2011 had broad coverage in the Czech media. At the same time, in the Šluknov region, an area near the northern Bohemian border with one of the highest unemployment rates in the Czech Republic, events started that were described by some actors as a 'Czech London'. On 7 August in Nový Bor in the Pivní Pomoc (Beer Aid) Bar, an argument broke out between a waitress and some young Roma who had been driven out by bar guests. There followed an attack by a group of Roma with sticks and a machete. Several further violent incidents followed. The cases led to wide media coverage and protest events. While some media tried to discuss it in a colour-blind way, after a declaration by some local Roma activists who tried to trivialize the machete incident, and after a long-time pro-Roma activist became the attackers' lawyers, the framing of the issue as a 'Roma issue' definitely prevailed. The protests followed, organized by locals themselves. Gatherings of mothers

or a meeting of local Social Democrats gradually developed into anti-Roma marches in which participants attempted to reach Roma accommodation. The violent and hateful character of these events caused police intervention. The neo-Nazis joined in, and they soon began to organize their own events.

Roma are among the traditional folk devils. Although as such they have some stable attributes, they are evoked in changing contexts, and as a result the content and significance of these attributes also change. On the basis of an analysis of moral panic at violence connected with Roma in a poor region of north Bohemia, this text shows not only what characteristics were ascribed to Roma but how the moral panic was extended to some of their opponents and how these, in some cases, were ascribed characteristics analogous to those that they themselves ascribed to the 'inadaptable' Roma. This chapter attempts to describe this situation in detail, explain its discursive logic and also discuss what these mean for the concept of moral panic.

Europe, according to Michael Stewart, has since the mid-2000s been swept by a new wave of anti-Roma mobilizations in both the west and east of the continent, affecting Hungary and Romania, Italy and France (Stewart 2012). The new anti-Roma populism combined with the economic crisis in 2008, and Roma became for Eastern, and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe one of the key folk devils. This follows on from older stereotypes concerning their depiction, conflictual relationships and problems of coexistence.

In the Czech context, the new anti-Roma mobilizations came only a few months after the crisis broke out. The crisis coincided with neo-liberal austerity governments that accented a discourse of hard work on the one hand and misuse of social benefits on the other hand. Greece 'abusing' European solidarity and unemployed people abusing social benefits became two important images of who was to blame for the problems of the crisis. However, significant parts of the left also participated in the stigmatization of the 'voluntarily' unemployed.

Their emblematic start of the anti-Roma mobilizations was the street battles on the Janov estate in Litvínov, where on 17 November 2008 neo-Nazis from the Workers' Party and the National Resistance, with the active support of a number of local inhabitants, set off street clashes with police in an attempt to get to local Roma. Similar anti-Roma mobilizations were then repeated several times in 2008–2013. The largest of these took place in north Bohemia in August and September 2011 in reaction to several widely publicized stories of violent crimes.

The region was characterized by a high rate of unemployment, one of the highest in the Czech Republic: 14.97 per cent in August 2011, with the average for the country at that time being 8.2 per cent (Böhmová 2013).[1] The region is perceived by its inhabitants as not only poor (and unattractive to the necessary middle-class professionals such as medical doctors) but also as suffering social problems such as crime and drugs (ibid.; author's interviews with local inhabitants). The strong presence of Roma in the region is considered by local people

to be partly the result of migration and transfers of Roma from richer regions by developers (ibid.), but this claim is widely disputed (Kafková, Sokačová, and Szénássy 2012; see also below).

The subject of Roma violence and anti-Roma protests gained considerable media coverage and gradually became one of the main events covered by the media during that time. A number of public authorities expressed their concern – politicians, leading newspaper commentators and experts. A key role was played by fears of further violence and public protest, and of racism. This gave further significance to voices from the area. These can be divided into voices of unspecified locals that legitimize the criticism of Roma, and concretized opponents who also undergo stigmatism.

It is this symmetry of analysis and the focus not only on Roma but also on antiziganists that is the main intent of the text. Its aim is to show that the narrative of a stigmatized minority is insufficient. As a number of critics of the concept of moral panic have shown, most recently since the 1990s (McRobbie and Thornton 1995), in a diversified society we see a whole range of mutual demonizations. Even at a time when a major social mobilization is taking place, conflict and *mutual* demonizations are present. It is the dynamics of this mutual demonization that forms the basis of my analytical perspective in this chapter. I call for the development of a relational perspective in the study of folk devils, and for the symmetric development of their images to be traced.

Symmetry does not mean equality, however. The existence of stigmatizing images or even their similarity does not mean they have the same position of power in society. A relational approach to the study of folk devils has the potential to reveal several power disbalances and inequalities: if the image of a racially delimited minority and that of a politically delimited group within the majority are set against each other, it means at the same time even greater stigmatization of the minority as compared to the majority.

The following chapter analyses the image of Roma and the related image of antiziganists. In the analysis of the image of Roma, it thus builds on two analyses of news reports from the period in question (Kluknavská and Zagibová 2013; Křížková 2013) and my own dissertation thesis, which analyses the discourse of both news reports and commentators, focusing on the ways in which opinions and the preferred reading of news is created, and above all on the heavily symbolic aspects and their interpretation.[2] The discourse that I shall attempt to reconstruct is not the only one that was present in the debate over these events. Neither do I have the quantitative instruments to show whether it was dominant. The discourse often framed itself as suppressed, as the expression of a forbidden truth, and above all in its fringe parts it could certainly be based on the justified idea that it was facing pressure from the anti-racist discourse, which on another level dominates. In reality, however, this stigmatizing discourse came not just from marginal bloggers or statements by regional actors but also from the major media and from statements by government and

opposition politicians. It was as if certain figures and metaphors travelled between news reporting, marginal blogs and journalists' questions and commentaries right up to statements by politicians at the centre. Together they created a definition of a situation to which even those who did not agree had to react and to a certain degree conform to.

This chapter will be based on a presentation of the analysis of a composite image of 'inadaptable' Roma and its key aspects: migration, violence and social benefits. Finally, the analysis focuses on an overall description of the situation and at the image of local Czechs and above all antiziganists. In conclusion, it will compare this analysis to other cases of symmetric 'folk devils' and formulate more general conclusions for further research.[3]

Composite Image of 'Inadaptable Roma'

Convincing descriptions of the Romany 'folk devil' can be identified in the characteristics that form his 'composite image' (which according to Cohen is a key element of the 'folk devil'; Cohen 2011 [1972], 30). The elements of this 'composite image' have three roles: a) they *characterize* the given folk devil through a reduction to a few stable and highly stereotyped elements; b) they *explain* his supposed pathological nature and subordinate position in the moral economy of society by means of schematic, simplifying explanations that are meant to be applicable to the whole of the given group; c) they *symbolize*: they compress both preceding elements into transferable symbolic expressions with a high degree of expressiveness and intensity.

The basic schema of this moral panic can be found in the joint letter from mayor of the town of Rumburk and Senator Jaroslav Sykáček (independent for the Social Democrats) and parliamentary deputy Jaroslav Foldyna (Social Democrats) addressed to the interior minister. The authors warn that 'inadaptable citizens have started to attack our fellow citizens' (Sykáček and Foldyna 2011). They go on to give examples of these attacks, clearly identifying the perpetrators as *Roma*. The word 'inadaptable' and 'Roma' are used to a considerable degree synonymously, for all that the authors construct a casual discursive alibi by occasionally dividing 'Roma' and 'inadaptable' and talking about 'the issues of the Roma community and the inadaptable community', while elsewhere stating that 'those Roma who want to live together with the majority in peace and quiet' are paying for the situation. A degree of explanation as to who is meant by 'our fellow citizens' can be read in the statement that 'decent and hard-working citizens of the Šluknov region' now have to be afraid of violence (ibid.). While 'our fellow citizens' are defined by work, decency and belonging to the region, the word 'citizen' in the term 'inadaptable citizens' sounds like a reproach: these people, too, are citizens, although they do not work, do not play by the rules and have no ties to the region in which they live.

The composite picture of inadaptable Roma has three basic features: migration, crime and the violence associated with it, and social welfare benefits.

Migration

Migration is evoked using the phrases *wave of incomers*, *flood* and *tide of inadaptables*, plus other metaphors evoking a natural catastrophe (see e.g. Angermannová 2011; Jakubec 2011; Zprávy 12, 17 August 2011). It functions as an accessible explanation for otherwise inexplicable behaviour, and as a discursive alibi for all those involved, while at the same time it allows them to point to previously good relationships and to defend themselves against accusations of racism. The image of migration allows the debate to be transferred to social problems, usury and the accommodation racket, and to talk about problems without portraying the Roma themselves as a problem but instead playing off newcomers versus long-time residents. This enables Roma themselves to participate in the stigmatization – it gives them the ability to define themselves in opposition to other Roma.

The discourse on Roma migration is thus highly ambivalent – it allows racism to be articulated (it enables Roma to be labelled a problem and even to be described using the language of natural catastrophe) and yet also to be criticized (Roma are not the problem; we live in harmony with 'our' Roma who have lived in the area for a long time; the problem is with the newcomers). It allows social and spatial inequalities to be brought into play – and at the same time it allows them to be worked with rhetorically as a functional replacement for racist discourse. It makes it possible to talk about 'problems with Roma' while at the same time having a replacement bogeyman to hand in the form of 'wily developers' (Schulz 2011).

Migration changes the nature of the space on which it has an impact. This is symbolically seen in the alteration (presumably in protest) of the sign at the entrance to the town of Rumburk to Romburk, and in material terms manifests itself in a sharp fall in property prices (Martinek 2011a; Štětka 2011). The place becomes another place: it functions according to different norms. In the words of Czech radio commentator Lída Rakušanová, 'local people rightly have the feeling that the newcomers are squeezing them out. This is because the rules are changing along with the newcomers. And the majority society is evidently not capable of defending its own rules' (Rakušanová 2011).

Although migration functions as an important explanation, there are also those who cast doubt on it. From the start, the Agency for Social Integration, in particular, has pointed out that the image of major waves of migration into the Šluknov region does not correspond to reality: rather than thousands of people pouring into Šluknov from all over northern Bohemia, and maybe also from other regions, it was a case of a few hundred people migrating mostly from one part of the Šluknov region to another (Kafková, Sokačová, and Szénássy 2012).

The mayor of Šluknov, Eva Džumanová, says, for example, that in her town '80 percent of criminal activity, above all property crime, is carried out by citizens of Šluknov, not the newcomers' (Policejní posily… 2011).

However, the inadequacy of the migration explanation rarely causes preference to be given to other social explanations of crime, such as poverty and debt (and, even more, drugs). Sometimes, such an explanation is even considered amoral. The journalist Petr Holec, who found himself having to admit non-government organizations were partly right on the issue of migration, rejects arguments relating to the social problems of poor Roma. He symmetrizes the situation of the poor with that of others (everyone is worse off in a crisis) and thus casts it in a moral light that is all the fiercer: they have chosen crime. 'NGOs ascribe the wretched and tense situation to hard economic times and social cuts; they are right in part, we are all worse off. But we don't all steal as a result' (Holec 2011).

Crime

Crime is evoked above all through images of violence. This violence is frequently connected with deceitfulness, predominance and brutality (Křížková 2013, 33). In two key cases, the violence concerned was characterized by brutality – in the first case by the use of an unusual weapon (a machete) and in the second also using weapons (telescopic truncheons) and massive predominance. The descriptions of the crimes take away from the perpetrators their human characteristics – in the words of one regional journalist, they become more of a 'pack of hounds in human bodies' (Sedlák 2011).

In addition to the deceitful use of force in the event of predominance, the Roma are intensively portrayed as making deceitful use of weakness – using children, who are not criminally responsible, to steal. According to some authors, the children are trained by their parents, while other descriptions evoke autonomous behaviour by wild children – *MF Dnes* thus describes the 'gang of a ten-year old Roma' who 'among his peers had earned the nickname of "terrorist"' (Janoušek 2011a). Society's powerlessness is recognized and played up to by the juvenile criminals: 'During interrogation the children openly talked about the other things they had got up to. It almost looked as if they were boasting about them' (ibid.). A few weeks later it is stated with satisfaction that the 'terrorist' had ended up in a diagnostic institute (Stínil and Vančura 2011).

Some of the more sober voices in the debate, such as that of the director of the Agency for Social Integration, Martin Šimáček, have pointed out that, in spite of the sharp growth in crime, there has not been a growth in violent crime; indeed, the number of violent crimes has been falling in the region. The two brutal attacks, continually pointed to, were a visible and symbolic proxy above all for theft and other types of minor crime. However, the very word 'minor' offended some local people, who saw it as detracting from their problems: 'It

may be referred to in police jargon as "minor crime", but if any of our ruling politicians were to suffer repeated minor thefts, they too would be likely to find themselves experiencing a marked increase in hatred towards the thieves' (Schulz 2011).

Social Welfare Benefits

Welfare benefits are a defining feature of the 'inadaptable Roma'. Although they have no direct connection with crime and problems of coexistence, they very rapidly find themselves at the centre of the debate as a key part of the definition of 'problematic' or 'inadaptable' Roma. In the words of Czech radio commentator and mayor of the village of Doubice Martin Schulz,

> the social welfare system … allowed a new type of fellow-citizen to be created. We call them 'socially inadaptable', which is inaccurate. As far as I can judge, some of them have adapted all too well to a 'social system' that allows them to draw tens of thousands of crowns in benefits for the simple act of spawning children, without even having to a) find some sort of work and b) take care of their offspring like the rest of the population does. And this has been going on for several generations (Schulz 2011).

'New type of fellow-citizen' has connotations of a major, even biological division: although we are 'fellow citizens' with Roma (the use of the term is, both here and elsewhere, ironic in its semantics), at the same time they are a foreign species that has been created through adaptation to specific circumstances – it has sprung up, almost like some sort of vegetation, in reaction to favourable living conditions (the way the social system is structured). The problem has a generational dimension: in the words of the mayor of Nový Bor Jaroslav Dvořák, 'a significant proportion of young Roma see work as a punishment, because they are used to living off benefits and petty theft' (Dvořák 2011). If for generations society was brought up to believe that 'work ennobles', then benefits deform – and doubly so in the case of people who have grown up in an environment deformed by benefits since childhood.

  Benefits also bring a relationship to the majority, who are defined as working and productive, as those who pay the taxes from which the benefits are paid, and thus ensure Roma their livelihood. Even authors who portray themselves as opposed to racism consider this argument a highly cogent one: '"Why should we support them?" – this is the muffled question, a question that seems in some way to be justified,' says Petr Příhoda in an article that closes with a call to positive discrimination and for the Czech majority to examine its attitudes (Příhoda 2011). In this context, it is then the participants in anti-Roma demonstrations who ask the question, not in a muffled way but out loud, for example

in the words of a demonstrator on the private TV Nova news: 'We have to work to support those blacks. If we stopped going to work, the blacks would drop dead in two weeks' (Televizní noviny, 27 August 2011)

The central and often-quoted slogan of the anti-Roma demonstrations is not related to the violence and crime that is given as the main reason why the demonstrations were called. Instead, what is shouted is 'Send the gypsies to work!' (Rozhlasové noviny, 26 August 2011; Reportéři Deníku 2011 and many others). In this context, work is seen as punishment for their previous undeserved, work-free existence.[4] In the language of some politicians, too, such as Radek John (Věci veřejné), work is also a punishment, or at the very least compensation for previous unfair advantages: 'Those who are on benefits will just have to work, do community service, and not be the winners in the whole system' (Události, 11 September 2011). The attempt to make benefits conditional on work aims to make sure that the unemployed 'don't win' over the rest of society, which is defined by the fact that it has to work. In this concept, forced labour is needed to lower the apparent success of those on benefits and to defeat them. When Prime Minister Nečas announces, in a newspaper title in *Hospodářské noviny*, that 'we'll send two thousand benefit claimants to work', in this context it has the significance of a report announcing victory in a match (Honzejk and Šídlo 2011). Nečas can use the confident plural – he is talking not only in the name of the government but for all of society, defined as a society of working people. It is they who will be the victors, not 'benefit claimants'.

At other times, but also frequently, the 'claimants' are not described as victors but as losers and victims. Work seen in this way is no longer a punishment but a civilizing value, something of which the unemployed are deprived. Only once work has an effect on them can they be 'someone' in society. Nečas himself, in reaction to accusations that forced community service is undignified, says that he cannot imagine anything more dignified than to earn one's living through work. He thus points to the value of work for the person carrying it out (Události, 17 September 2011). The loss of work habits and related self-discipline are described as harming the Roma themselves, as a trap into which society has cast them. This is considered the real crime committed against the Roma, unlike the discrimination and racism that are at other times stressed: '[The current system of social care] makes only one demand of the benefit claimant: to claim benefits. This is something that would do serious damage to even the hardest-working of citizens' (Steigerwald 2011). Right-wing commentators have a comparison available for the ineffectiveness and indignity of benefits – development aid:

> Just as poor countries are not helped at all by the billions of dollars that the Western world sends to them, so problematic Roma are not helped by fine words and arms full of support. Because it is lords who

condescendingly give charity to the poor. People will never feel digni-
fied if all they ever do is receive, but have no responsibilities and find
themselves outside any sort of society. (Hamšík 2011)

The comparison with the poor countries of the global South makes the Roma
exotic. They now stand not only outside the nation but outside the whole of
Western civilisation. At the same time, this comparison articulates the problem
of dignity and power. Even unpleasant 'responsibilities' towards society become,
in this concept, acts of benevolence, because they represent a tie to that society,
something binding. Those who get out of these ties are definitely not 'victors
over the whole system' but more like victims of its apparent generosity.

Combinations of Attributes

Of key importance are the points at which the characteristics are joined. Some-
times, as in the letter from Foldyna and Sykáček, all three are joined: migration,
crime and benefits. The authors write of the Roma who are moving to
the region:

Few of these people are looking for work. In fact, the reason why they
move here is often precisely because there is no work here and neither
will there be in the foreseeable future. This means they have no choice
but to live off benefits and support themselves by theft and burglary, in
which there has been an extreme rise this year. (Otevřený dopis… 2011)

Migration is 'portrayed in this case as a flight from work and the upright exist-
ence connected with work. It becomes in itself a moral choice, one that leads to
parasitical and criminal means of earning a living. Benefits are in this picture a
motif of migration, and crime is their complement.

  In most cases, the themes of benefits and crime are, of course, joined. Crime
committed by Roma is made even more reprehensible by the dependency of
non-working Roma on benefits, the source of which is, in this picture, heavily
racialized (as if the benefits were not paid for by the taxes of working Roma as
well but were provided exclusively by the white majority to the Roma minor-
ity). Leading economic journalist Pavel Páral shows it clearly with a metaphor
in the subtitle of his commentary on the events: people in the Šluknov region
are, in his words, angry that 'the person they are feeding bites their hand quite
shamelessly' (Páral 2011). The metaphor not only underlines the double amo-
rality and thus irrationality of Roma violence (Roma do not 'bite' just any per-
son but specifically the person who is offering the means to survive) but is
also a vivid image borrowed from the relationship between people and animals
(most often dogs). It is a metaphor that is not only heavily hierarchizing but can
also be read as dehumanizing.

At the same time, the moral tone prevents other connections from being made between benefits and crime – that they can be defended as prevention against crime caused by social deprivation. When the former Social Democrat prime minister Jiří Paroubek tried it and pointed out that welfare benefits are a public good, thanks to which society does not need to fear crime caused by immediate want, a number of politicians deemed what he said to be unacceptable. He was accused of defending them as a form of 'extortion' (Wirnitzer 2011).

Local Czechs on the Battle Line: The Other Actors

The antithesis of the demonized 'inadaptable' Roma are the individual actors of anti-Gypsy protest. These are described in a similarly schematic way, and at the same time they fall into several categories. On the one hand are the local people, for whose problems sympathy is expressed and who are most frequently described in terms of these problems. Local mayors, as their representatives, gain greater actorship. Their voice becomes markedly authoritative even when it is openly anti-Gypsy, partly because it is possible to refer to the anonymous local public. The actual threats connected with the protest are largely separated from their actors, and are described in impersonal fashion. This changes at the point when it is possible to identify the actors as 'radicals' or 'extremists'; these are depicted as a clear threat (Kňapová 2015).[5] Protest leader Lukáš Kohout found himself in a position like this after having been revealed as a political adventurer and fraudster. His image gained a number of characteristics that brought him closer to the Roma 'folk devils'.

Some characteristics of the threat are impersonal. A key word used to describe the situation in Šluknov becomes 'tension'. In my sample, a total of 605 uses of the word can be found, of which 35 are in headlines. Towns are described as 'ticking ghettos', the conflict 'smoulders' and the authors ask whether the excluded locations will 'explode'.[6] 'Things may get much worse in the north than they are today. What sparks may cause a major fire is hard to predict,' a leading journalist in a national daily (Karel Steigerwald in *MF Dnes*) warns in an article entitled 'Is the North on Fire Yet?' (Steigerwald 2011). Local actors, such as the mayor of Rumburk and senator Jaroslav Sykáček, give this terrifying unpredictability more concrete contours: 'The region is threatened by a security and social collapse. People really are getting fed up with this. And I am afraid they might pull out sticks and there will be lynching' (Zprávy 12, 17 August 2011).

Images in which 'tension' grows into uncontrollable escalation of violence create a classic spiral of amplification (Cohen 2011 [1972]) in which actors react not only, not even for the most part, to the development of the situation thus far but to the expected development that threatens, its urgency transmitted by expressive reports and structuring metaphors. In the newspaper headlines, Šluknov

is 'threatened by a wave of violence' (Chlebná 2011). The final point of this escalation is war, which for some commentators becomes a source of key metaphors, the aim of which is also to draw attention to the seriousness of the situation and the inadequacy of current approaches: 'There is no time or place for stories about patient and gradual integration of "social inadaptables". A number of places … are gradually becoming battle lines' (Schulz 2011).

Empathy towards local people sometimes even manages to cross the threshold of condoning violence, especially in cases where police make a violent intervention in order to prevent violence. When the police defend Roma, the media note the indignation of local people: 'I have two small children, and those people that you're protecting steal their pocket money on the way back from school.' 'You're beating Czechs? Well, you are heroes, aren't you?' 'It's worse than under the communists! We had all sorts of experiences with them here, but they wouldn't have allowed this,' the daily *Lidové noviny* quoted demonstrators as saying (Martinek 2011b, 2011c). Some media also saw the situation as absurd. Journalist Barbora Tachecí, for example, said on TV Prima's programme *Fakta*:

> We have a paradoxical situation here whereby the ones who were at the start of it all, the inadaptables, are laughing to themselves and enjoying the situation, and not getting angry, because they're protected, while the other ones are almost beside themselves with anger and basically feel like doing terrible things. (Fakta, 16 September 2011)

The definition of a situation in which the guilty party are the 'inadaptables' even allows a journalist on national television to describe it as a 'paradoxical situation' that the police are protecting Roma who are under threat of physical attack from the crowd.

In addition to the angry local people, the second group of people to express opposition to the Roma are the 'extremists' and Lukáš Kohout as the eccentric leader of the local protests. The situation understandably ratchets up a notch when the feared 'extremists' (local radicals and later also the neo-Nazis from the Workers' Party for Social Justice) really do appear on the scene and the demonstrations become violent. 'Half the people are so angry that they would most like to lynch the local Roma. And the other half is afraid not only of aggressive Roma, but of the extremists as well. They are afraid there will be a war here,' *MF Dnes* quotes Michal Němeček, a demonstrator and one of those attacked in Rumburk, as saying, putting his final sentence into the headline (vik, art 2011). The threat of 'race war in the north' finds its way into the headlines.

A clear distinction of legitimate and illegitimate targets of repression is also provided by the governor of the Ústí region Jana Vaňhová (Social Democrats, ČSSD), who recognizes the need to suppress the 'extremi sts' with police force but refuses to suppress the 'legitimate demands of the decent and productive majority' and to 'accept state violence against citizens who are damaged

long-term by the behaviour of the non-productive and inadaptable minority' (ape, vor 2011). The image of the 'extremists' is stable – they are disgusting in part because they can be joined to the legacy of Nazism, and in part because they do not hesitate to use violence. Another reason why they are rejected is shown in Kňapová's analysis of the protests: protest is perceived in Czech political culture as something abnormal that can be understood only under the pressure of circumstances. If a political opinion is connected with considerable participation in street demonstrations, that is enough to make it considered strange or 'extreme' (Kňapová 2015).

At the same time, it seems that the image of the 'locals' is even more homogenized than that of the Roma. The demand for conflict is usually saturated by the tension between the locals and the Roma or the conflict between the demonstrators and the police. In the category of locals, not much emphasis is placed on tension and differences, and, where there is, it is on the friction between the mayors on one side and, on the other, the locals, who accuse them of insufficiently assertive positions. It is as if the towns were united in opposition to the inadaptable Roma on the one hand and Prague's ignoring of the situation on the other. If an internal opposition exists within them, it is not very visible in the coverage of the situation. The name Pavel Danys, for example, an opposition member in Nový Bor, a critic of the anti-Roma atmosphere and repressions and the author of alternative solutions based on understanding between Czechs and Roma, appears minimally in my sample, only four times (and in the same media). In the first case, his name appears after he is referred to by Roma leader Stefan Gorol, who himself refuses an interview (Pluhař 2011; see also Danys 2011; hs 2011; Šebelka 2011).

On the other hand, a huge amount of attention and the status of an emblematic figure is gained by the organizer of the Varnsdorf protests, the provocateur and convicted fraudster Lukáš Kohout. Some ten years earlier, Kohout had become famous for his travels to exotic destinations at parliamentary expense in his role as fake assistant to parliamentary deputy Jan Kavan. In media coverage of the protests, he became an attractive figure, despite being repeatedly described as a convicted fraudster surrounded by controversy (see for example art, ves 2011; Konrád 2011; oce 2011; Veselý 2011b). Journalists warn against him, and at the same time they emphasize his similarity to the 'inadaptables' against whom he is protesting:

> As a clown and also an extremist he enjoys the attention of the cameras, feeding off the attention between the Roma and the majority in the Šluknov region. I think that in terms of stealing from the state he did a lot better than those who 'merely' abuse welfare benefits and do not work, those against whom he intends to lead the stressed-out inhabitants. Has Kohout paid off all the debts he racked up? How does a leader of the mob earn a living, anyway? (Veselý 2011a)

A full stop on this interesting narrative comes not only with the finding that Kohout is still being prosecuted for fraud but that his wife has run off with a Roma man. 'It's Lukáš who's inadaptable,' a tabloid quotes his ex-wife as saying (Anonymous 2011), and the serious media quote the story. Pointing to the similarities between the fraudster and the 'inadaptables' whom he denounces allows easy discreditation of the protests and racist attitudes.

His role in the protests is also an indicator of the extreme nature of the situation. A journalist from a leading daily who filmed an interview with Kohout (Tachecí 2011) writes:

> As far as I can tell, the only people who would choose him as a leader are totally desperate people whom no one has helped for years. I listened to Lukáš Kohout … and more and more I cursed all those who let things go so far in Varnsdorf that this guy could become a straw for drowning people to clutch at.

A similar indicator of despair are the otherwise widely condemned neo-Nazis and the 'extremists'.

Both violence and the abuse of public funds are features that connect Roma and antiziganist folk devils. The motif of migration takes something of a back seat, although to a certain extent it divides the 'legitimate' antiziganists in the media discourse from the illegitimate ones: the first are 'local' people, whose antiziganism allegedly reflects their local experience. Neo-Nazis and other 'radicals' then come to the place, importing their violence and ideology into it. Similarly, Kohout came to the region only relatively recently. Nevertheless, the image of migration does not in this case have such significance and force. This corresponds to the analyses of van Baar (see for example van Baar, Ivasiuc, and Kreide 2019), according to whom the migration of Roma is also construed as problematic in contexts where migration is otherwise viewed neutrally or even positively, as for example in the EU with its 'free movement of people'.

At the same time, it is true that, while the inadaptable Roma is widespread as a group characteristic, the antiziganist folk devil is differentiated from the majority and either individualized (in the case of Kohout) or politicized (in the case of neo-Nazis and other 'extremists'). The 'inadaptable Roma' is a characteristic that is transferred by culture or race. The threshold for being an inadaptable antiziganist is much higher: an individual from the majority becomes one. In order to become one, it is not enough to have aggressively antiziganist opinions (these are in the case of 'local people' automatically legitimized); one has to engage in further political activity (the organization of rallies, the threat of violence). A Roma in effect becomes 'extreme' and a 'folk devil' by birth, while a white member of the dominant ethnic group becomes 'extreme' and a 'folk devil' by choice.

Conclusion

After being called on to do so a number of times, the neo-liberal prime minister Petr Nečas visited the Šluknov region on 20 September 2011. During the visit, announced on the morning of the same day, Nečas met mayors and visited, for a few minutes, a hostel in Masaryk Street in Varnsdorf. Some children sang a song for him, but after a few minutes he left by a back entrance because Lukáš Kohout and other demonstrators were waiting for him by the front entrance with buckets of manure. 'I say very openly that I would not like to live like that, and that is why I have worked all my life, so that I don't have to live like that,' Nečas said, summing up his impressions of what he had seen at the hostel (Události, 19 September 2011). It was a declaration of personal loyalty to the civilization of work and the expression of distance from the problem based on declared merit.

During September and October the demonstrations petered out, as did the moral panic to a certain extent, having earlier been partly transferred elsewhere. The moral panic had concrete results: the machete attack was found to be attempted murder, and its adult perpetrators were given prison sentences of 17.5 years for the alleged leader of the attack and 15 years for the other two participants. Some towns declared that they would be introducing public policy in the spirit of 'zero tolerance' (which often meant various degrees of bullying of Roma by municipal authorities – for broader context, see Walach 2014 and Pospíšil 2019) and a law was passed allowing local councils to institute residence bans for repeated offences.

In the image of the Roma as folk devil we have seen not only stigmatizing characteristics but also complicated relationships in terms of tension and expectations between the 'decent and productive majority' and the 'inadaptable minority'. Given that decency means complying with norms defined by the behaviour of the majority, the minority is at the very least an object of suspicion from the start. Given the interchangeable nature of the words Roma and inadaptable, it is not only expected in advance that each 'inadaptable' will be a Roma (and sometimes this expectation is overturned) but that it is also up to each Roma person to make it clear that he himself is not an 'inadaptable'. The image of the folk devil thus means an intensive and racialized burden.

The antiziganists themselves gradually appeared as a further folk devil in my sample. At the same time, there was a difference here: local people were perceived as articulating justified dissatisfaction and frustration, even when they displayed racism or talked about violence. The real folk devils were the extremists and neo-Nazis, on the one hand, and on the other the fraudulent leader of the crowd Lukáš Kohout. He could be ascribed some of the characteristics connected with the 'inadaptables', as well as an objectionable and laughable motivation. The antiziganist protests thus became the area for a battle between two folk devils.

This stigmatization of antiziganists may look like a counterbalance to the stigmatization of Roma, and often it is motivated by an anti-racist approach, or by the desire to calm down the conflict. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that this kind of stigmatization has often reinforced the stigmatization of Roma (by underlining the unacceptability of the characteristics attributed to them, as well as because the Roma were stigmatized as an ethnic or social group, while the antiziganists were stigmatized as individuals or a political group). The moral asymmetry between the minority and the majority may have been stressed as a result of being condemned by part of the majority, but it was not challenged.

Doubt has frequently been cast on the concept of moral panic and folk devils, partly because it narrates the melodramatic story of the stigmatization of one group by the majority. The stigmatized group, however, often has supporters who 'can and do fight back' and sometimes even in various ways capitalize on their position as 'folk devils' (McRobbie and Thornton 1995). In reaction to the contemporary stigmatization of 'inadaptable Roma' and 'violent' or 'fraudulent antiziganists' we can propose another, *relational folk devil schema*: stigmatization becomes to a certain extent symmetric, with both sides of the putative dispute being stigmatized as 'folk devils'. This then merely strengthens the position of the 'healthy centre', which in this case is a middle-class subject sharing the values of a civilisation of work, whether that be the prime minister in Prague or a local man disgusted by the behaviour of his Roma neighbours in the Šluknov region.

I have had analogical results from research into moral panics around rave in the Czech Republic and the refugee crisis. In the case of rave, we saw a cyclical moral panic at the annual Czechtek technoparty and calls for police intervention. When it came in 2005, we saw a sharp reaction on the part of the liberal media. Two folk devils clashed in the public space: ravers, connected with wildness, noise, drugs and the violation of norms, and prime minister Paroubek, connected with repression and conservative values (Slačálek 2018; Kolářová 2008). Similarly, during the refugee crisis we saw on the one hand fear and stigmatizing images of a 'wave' of refugees connected with violence (including sexual violence), foreign culture and militant religion, and on the other hand images of 'fascists', opponents of migration connected with nationalist bigotry, racism and violence or the threat of violence, and brutalization (Slačálek and Svobodová 2017, 2018).

In all three cases we see a slide. Moral panic in response to a clear 'folk devil', where it is possible to talk about a certain level of social consensus, at least on the level of the mainstream, has become a rivalry between moral panics, with two different and opposite folk devils.

These folk devils in a number of cases take on characteristics from each other. It even seems that, in the creation of these folk devils, it is a key triumph to attribute to them the characteristics of which they accuse the rival folk devil:

to describe an antiziganist as 'inadaptable', to describe an opponent of Islam as violent, bigoted and fanatical. The new moral panics are thus a rivalry of moral panics and folk devils, which includes in itself a mirroring and mutual taking on of characteristics from each other. The criterion of consensus, which was important for classic theories of moral panics, becomes lost.

The absence of consensus and the frequent crumbling of the mainstream make it tempting to imagine that these new moral panics are essentially symmetrical. However, as we have seen in our analysis of the moral panic relating to 'inadaptable Roma', mutuality definitely does not have to mean symmetry. If what we have is an ethnic (or cultural religious) folk devil, against which there stands a folk devil defined as a political position or even as its extreme, then the false symmetrization of these others represents merely a further disadvantaging of an ascriptively identified minority.

This relational schema thus is evidence not so much of the plurality of Western liberal societies, as it may still have seemed to Angela McRobbie and Sarah Thorton (1995), but rather of their polarized nature and of the fact that their xenophobic or conservative pole has considerable force, even if it is necessary to consider it only one of the poles. In these various conflicts, it may be true to say that folk devils 'can and do fight back' or rather find allies to back them, but this changes nothing with regard to their low social power and possibilities of broad stigmatization. That one of the few effective answers to racial stigmatization seems to be the invocation of moral panic in the opposite direction is rather evidence of the closed nature of the situation.

The invocation of local moral panic on the part of local actors can be interpreted as one of the few effective ways of drawing the attention of nationwide elites to their social problems (including the problems of coexistence with those Czech Roma who face multiple exclusion). If in this case antiziganism is a tool of those who feel they are left with no other possibilities (although local elites belong to them), then we could say something similar about responding to this panic by demonizing antiziganist 'folk devils'.

The antiracists are unable to confront the deeper social problems that lie behind antiziganism, or the confrontation of these deeper problems does not provide an answer to the acute situation. The discrediting of antiziganists with a partial mirroring of their image of the Roma is then one of the few accessible strategies with which to 'fight back', although it escalates the conflict rather than calming it.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Statistics of unemployment are not very reliable; in particular, the number of long-term unemployed persons is often not completely covered as they are not always in official evidence.

2 The text of this chapter is loosely based on the text of my unpublished dissertation thesis (Slačálek 2014).

3 The material for my analysis consists of media production. I used the Anopress database, which provides extensive monitoring of the national periodic press, television and radio news and commentary, and the regional press. In particular, the presence of the regional press was a welcome corrective – it is frequently here that variants on opinions from the national media are formulated in a more direct and less sophisticated form.

For the period 7 August–22 September 2011, I found a total of 3,140 articles in which the word Roma appeared (again, in various forms). For complexity of analysis it would, of course, be possible to combine this sample with others, where the word in question is replaced by another and the object of panic evoked indirectly. Although I considered this variant, in the end I did not consider it suitable for the type of analysis chosen. The analysis does not aim to present an exhaustive catalogue of the various possible evocations, but the main ways in which the theme is reflected, the basic discourses and structuring metaphors of which it might be expected that, in the event of their significance, they will sooner or later find their way into my sample. I filtered out texts that were clearly irrelevant, and the remainder I coded into various thematic categories with the use of the program Atlas.ti. In keeping with the character of the discursive analysis, I then combined an attempt to find the more common characteristics in a larger group of texts with detailed analysis on the level of individual formulations in a limited number of texts, which appeared either characteristic or significant for the discourse in question.

My analysis was based on the tradition of discursive analysis, above all on critical discursive analysis and Foucauldian discursive analysis (cf. namely Hansen 2006; Meyer and Wodak 2001). I have combined the individual concepts of these methodological traditions in a markedly pragmatic way. My analysis may have looked at ways in which language was used, but this was only a means for it. Its main aim was to reconstruct key argumentational topoi, not, however, in an attempt to make them subordinate to general argumentational categories but on the contrary in an attempt to reconstruct them in their concrete dynamic, with concrete references and structural metaphors and in their symbolic quality.

4 For the insight regarding work as punishment I am grateful to a discussion with Martin Škabraha.

5 The author writes explicitly about a 'double standard' caused by the media taking on an antiziganist view of the protests. This legitimises the racist attitudes of ordinary people but not ideologically motivated extremism.

6   'Ticking Ghettos?' was the title of a debate on the Czech Television news programme *Události, komentáře* on 23 August 2011, while on 22 August 2011 presenter Jan Bumba asked on Radiožurnál's Radiofórum programme whether 'a serious social or indeed ethnic conflict is simmering in the Šluknov region' and on 24 August 2011 tabloid *Blesk* announced that 'race war smoulders' (oce, ČTK 2011). The governor of the Ústí region, Jana Vaňhová, works with the metaphor of explosion when talking about the deployment of police forces: 'In the Ústí region there are 63 problematic localities. They are spread all over the region. If you weaken an area, it can explode,' quoted in Janoušek 2011b. 'When will it explode?' is asked, for example, in Holec 2011.

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