

*Paper prepared for the Euroacademia International Conference*

*Re-Inventing Eastern Europe*

*Vienna, 17 – 19 May 2012*

*This paper is a draft*

*Please do not cite*

# Enemy within: constructing social exclusion in the Czech media, 2010-2011

Drawing from Didier Bigo's concept of ban-opticon, Loïc Wacquant's analysis of neoliberal governance, Ole Wæver's securitization theory and the concept of pollution presented by Mary Douglas, we analyse the interpretative frames imposed by the mass media in the Czech Republic during the years 2010 and 2011. Using CAQDAS tools (MAXQDA), we will focus on the categories representing the "post-socialist banlieus" and their inhabitants: "socially excluded areas", "ghettoes", "socially excluded communities", "the unadaptables" and "parasites", i.e. the "human detritus" scattered around the urban spaces of post-socialist society that went through neoliberal social and economic transformation. We will view the proliferation of these meanings as a symptom of a wider transformation of discourses and practices of governance, constantly signifying a presence of polluted places within the domestic territory and imposing on their inhabitants the meaning of a liminal Other to be concentrated, segregated, regulated, profiled, controlled and suppressed by the repressive and penal apparatus of the state. This construction of an enemy within, the periodic moral panics about various aspects of urban marginality (crime, disease, drug abuse, extremism) and the discourses and practices purporting to deal with the pollution it represents serve as a significant resource of legitimacy which political actors and moral entrepreneurs might exploit and compensate for the losses brought by neoliberal socio-economic transformation.

Keywords: ban-opticon, securitization, pollution, neoliberalism, exclusion, urban marginality, media

"...words and deeds proclaiming to fight crime and assorted urban disorders must be methodically orchestrated, exaggerated, dramatized, even *ritualized*. This explains why, much like the staged carnal entanglements that fill pornographic movies, they are extraordinarily repetitive, mechanical, uniform, and therefore eminently *predictable*."  
(Wacquant 2009, xii)

"...the more virtuous the intention, the more we must virtualize the enemy, until all that is left as the last man is the criminalized demon."  
(Der Derian 2009, 100)

## From the superstitious native to the fearsome Westerner

In her introduction to the classic *Purity and Danger* (2001), Mary Douglas eloquently summed up the stereotypes structuring the Western perceptions of the so-called primitive cultures:

„The nineteenth century saw in primitive religions two peculiarities which separated them as a block from the great religions of the world. One was that they were inspired by fear, the other that they were inextricably confused with defilement and hygiene. Almost any missionary's or traveller's account of a primitive religion talks about the fear, terror or dread in which its adherents live. The source is traced to beliefs in horrible disasters which overtake those who inadvertently cross some forbidden line or develop some impure condition.“ (Douglas 2001, 1)

Trying to overcome these misreadings of non-Western, exotic cultures as overrun by fear and superstition and trying to "vindicate the so-called primitives from the charge of having a different logic or method of thinking" (Douglas 1992, 3), Douglas presented a fascinating account of the role that the meanings expressed in the notions of dirt, contagion, pollution, taboo and danger and their inherent ambiguousness play in the reproduction and renegotiation of the structure and boundaries of cultural systems. Returning to her work on pollution and taboo in *Risk and Blame* (Douglas 1992), she refocused her attention to the similarities between the cultural and political mechanisms of "taboo-thinking" present in pre-modern societies and the Western, modern, seemingly technical and rational notions connected with risk, pollution and danger. Her seminal ethnologist exercise in „domesticating the exotic“ (Bourdieu 1988, xi) has thus over the years evolved into an even more interesting avenue of research, turning the analytic gaze from the exotic toward the familiar, and shifting the focus of her investigation toward the political and cultural mechanisms of risk and blame operating in contemporary Western societies. These mechanisms, hiding their huge symbolic loads and the political/moral concerns they express behind the veil of pure neutrality and objectivity (cf. Douglas 1992, 39), love of technology, and individualistic fallacies (cf. Douglas 1992, 56), appear to operate on a similar basis as the "taboo-thinking" of the "primitives". The former distinction between "native superstition" and "Western rationality" may thus itself be considered the product of a specific kind of Western magical thinking:

"This mood of enthusiasm for technology accounts for why the difference between them and us appeared to be a cognitive problem, a matter of knowing the real causes of things. Somehow, it was thought that science had really made things different for us. We were supposed to be able to recognize real dangers, whose causes are objectively identified, backed by the authority of valid experiment and theory. Chance, mystery and malice lurked in small corners not yet claimed by science but, generally speaking, thanks to our accurate knowledge of the world and our powerful technology, our blaming

behaviour went direct to real causes instead of being deflected to the constitution-supporting function it performed elsewhere. For us, the line of reasoning implied, what you could call 'real blaming' was possible. Real blame was so guaranteed by its objective basis in knowledge that it could not be harnessed to the sordid work of ideology." (Douglas 1992, 7)

## **(In)security and symbolic pollution: from the fearsome Westerner to the *ban-opticon***

Mary Douglas' words about the terror, dread and fear stricken "primitive cultures" seem to resonate surprisingly well with the large body of literature concerned with the recent (post-Cold War) transformation, expansion and rise of cultural and political significance of the symbolic worlds of security (cf. Lipschutz 1998, Williams 2007, Bigo and Tsoukala 2009, Lupták 2011) that appear to provide Western societies with an almost bottomless pit of fears and terrors to structure and govern much of social and political life. The burgeoning discourses of international political sociology, (anti)criminology, critical security studies and communication studies have produced a substantial amount of concepts and approaches to the analysis of the mechanics of the transformation of politics, social order and governance in Western societies. The rise of discourses and practices revolving around the categories of domestic and international threats and fears has drawn the attention of some analysts to the extent that they decided to term it the "politics of fear" (e.g. Massumi 1993, Offe 2002, Altheide 2002, 2006), a concept that made its way into popular culture with Adam Curtis' documentary *Power of Nightmares*, "governmentality of unease" (Bigo 2002), "politics of insecurity" (Huysmans 2006) or "politics of exception and unease" (Huysmans and Buonfino 2008). Other strains of social analysis focused on the constantly re-emerging public scares and moral panics, drawing from Stanley Cohen's classic work *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Cohen 2011) and other processes and mechanisms explaining the rise of political and cultural significance of certain categories and meanings produced within these discourses, with particularly interesting results drawing from the research of "fear of crime" (e.g. Callanan 2005, Lee and Farrall 2009), a cultural trope that became a staple of public discourse and political campaigns since the early seventies (cf. Loo 2009), and the process of securitization, i.e. the social construction of threats (cf. especially Buzan et al. 1997, Wæver 1998, Balzacq 2005, Stritzel 2011, 2011a, VillumsenBerling 2011). Cohen himself, while attempting to tackle Ulrich Beck's notion of "risk society" (Beck 1992), speaks in the introduction to the third edition of his *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* of a "wider culture of insecurity, victimization and fear" (Cohen 2011, xxv) that appears to have embraced and included the notions of probabilistic and technically sounding risk-assessment and risk-management to fuel the reappearing explosions of moral panics, resonating with Mary Douglas' words about Western (techno)magical thinking obfuscating the moral and political bases of all notions of danger:

"The global scope of the risk society, its self-reflective quality and its pervasiveness create a new backdrop for standard moral panics. Perceptions of heightened risk evoke images of panic. And in populist and electoral rhetoric about such issues as fear of crime, urban insecurity and victimization, the concepts of risk and panic are naturally connected. The realm of political morality, however, is just about distinctive enough for the BSE ('mad cow disease') or foot and mouth disease panics not to be *moral* panics. Only if risk analysis becomes perceived as *primarily* moral rather than technical (the moral irresponsibility for taking this risk) will this distinction wither away. Some argue that this has already happened. The story of HIV-AIDS shows how the clearly organic nature of the condition can be morally constructed and result in changed value positions about sexuality, gender and social control. The demography of risk was informed from the outset by the ascription of moral failures to homosexuals and other groups." (Cohen 2011, 31-32)

In a similar vein, Loïc Wacquant points at the pervasive symbolism and ritualism of the contemporary law and order politics in his sweeping analysis of what he terms the neoliberal "centaur-state", liberal at the top, toward the highest strata of society, and paternalistic, punitive and authoritative at the bottom: "presenting radically different faces at the two end of the social hierarchy: a comely and caring visage toward the middle and upper classes, and a fearsome and frowning mug toward the lower class" (Wacquant 2009, 312). The seemingly technical, scientifically based and rational policies claiming to be a response to the expanding dangers of postmodern urban life, resonating with the periods of moral panics and shielded from critical reflection by fancy-sounding scientific slogans of *zero-tolerance* and *broken windows theory* (cf. Wacquant 2009, 243-269) may be viewed as fulfilling crucial symbolic functions, presenting a dramatized performance of transforming social orders and hierarchies:

"...the authorities responsible for law enforcement in the different governments succeeding one another in a given country, or within different countries at a given time, all combine, in the same staccato rhythm and with only a few minor variations, the same mandatory figures with the same partners: they go down to patrol and extol anticrimemeasures in the subway or on an inner-city train; they visit in procession the police station of an ill-reputed neighbourhood; they slip into the team victory picture after an unusually large seizure of drugs; they hurl a few virile warnings to the outlaws who had better "keep a low profile" now or else; and they train the headlights of public attention on teenage scofflaws, repeat

offenders, aggressive panhandlers, drifting refugees, immigrants waiting to be expelled, street prostitutes, and the assorted social detritus that litter the streets of the dualizing metropolis to the indignation of "law-abiding" citizens." (Wacquant 2009, xii)

The symbolic transformation performed in these public rituals appears to endow certain segments of population with complex sets of qualities associated with pollution: fusing the meanings of the criminal, the violent youth, the drug and welfare abuser, the unhygienic, the insatiable rapist, the fanatic unwilling to conform or the extremist into a single category, Nicolas Sarkozy's infamous *racaille*, the urban scum, with the isolation of the ghetto serving as its breeding ground, and calling almost automatically for more force, more control and surveillance, tougher rules and ostentatious withdrawal of any public assistance provided to this segment of the population. Mary Douglas' famous account of medieval witches and lepers points at a strangely familiar process of fusing several categories of pollution under the labels of leprosy and witchcraft, applying the labels almost exclusively to marginals and thus serving as a basis for their deprivation of any rights, to the extent that later historians had to deal with the baffling problem of an apparent epidemic of leprosy:

"Lepers were now held to be highly infectious, the disease was thought to be transmitted by sexual penetration. Endowed with an inordinate sexual appetite, lepers were incestuous, lepers were rapists, lepers sought to spread their condition by forced sexual intercourse with healthy persons. Segregated for the public good, they were not allowed to move freely in London streets, they were not able to prosecute at law, nor to inherit land, nor to transmit land rights that they might otherwise have had by inheritance. They were effectually stripped of citizenship." (Douglas 1992, 96)

Explaining to a large extent the mechanisms of the discursive production of the *racaille*, Didier Bigo presents in his investigation of the relation between the mechanisms of security, surveillance and control and the situation of the migrant in the post-9/11 era, a fascinating account of what he terms the *ban-opticon dispositif*. The trans-institutional and transversal logic of the *ban-opticon*, refocusing the panoptic logic of surveillance and control to populations deemed to be problematic, is presented as a combination of three interrelated basic logics fed by the burgeoning discourses of (in)security: "the exceptionalism of power (rules of emergency and their tendency to become permanent)", exclusion of "certain groups in the name of their future potential behaviour (profiling)", and normalization of "the non-excluded through its production of normative imperatives, the most important of which is free movement (the so-called four freedoms of circulation of the EU: concerning goods, capital, information, services and persons)." (Bigo 2008, 32) Successful operation of the *ban-opticon* therefore requires constant moral panics imposing the meanings of emergency/pollution/danger and exploiting the anxieties of the public, as well as a proliferation of techniques of categorization, classification, measurement, prediction and quantification of risk, that is, the production of potential targets of the surveillance, profiling and repression. Pollution thus serves as a crucial symbolic device, with the techno-magical language of risk management and security used as a disguise to hide the symbolic load and allowing for the attribution to, and concentration of meanings of pollution within selected categories of population.

Inspired by this rich and rather heterogeneous body of work, we feel that it might be interesting to combine Mary Douglas' insight with some of the above mentioned concepts from securitization theory, theory of moral panics and Wacquant's and Bigo's political sociology of neoliberal governance to turn our attention to the Czech localization of cultural and political mechanisms operating in contemporary Western societies. We will focus on the meanings that seem to be relevant for at least one strain of contemporary "taboo-thinking", namely, the meanings that are connected with the categories of social exclusion and its local representatives, the *unadaptables*, i.e. the urban and sub-urban *racaille* of Central European post-socialist societies (cf. similarly oriented papers by Hejnal 2011 or Kavaliauskaite 2008). The notion of dirt as "matter out of place" (Douglas 2003, 41) seems to be closely related to the concept of social exclusion, which may become a kind of a "polluted well" out of which the various types of pollution as meanings imputed to various aspects of exclusion may be drawn (cf. Fangen 2010, 135-137, 147). Given the richness and the still rising political significance of public discourses concerned with urban marginality and the social problems it is supposed to signify (from crime and violence through unemployment, infectious disease and "abuse" of welfare to extremism), the categories of social exclusion and the *unadaptables* appear to constitute (at least in the Czech Republic and Slovakia) one of the richest symbolic reservoirs from which potent political and moral motives are drawn.

Using collective representations of "polluted" spaces, people or forms of practice as an explanatory tool (Meylakhs 2009, 388) we will attempt to reflect on the mythologies woven from motives of pollution/danger in terms of the functions they fulfil in setting new social boundaries delimiting marginal and liminal spaces as well as the content of the social hierarchies defined by these boundaries. We will concentrate on the conflicting narratives of pollution that are connected with social exclusion, with a special emphasis on the narratives resonant promoted by or resonant with the current government, as these, though contested, constitute the symbolic basis for the legitimation of practical policies of those who rule. We assume that such conscious attempts to „exoticise the domestic“ (Bourdieu 1988, xi) or "making the mundane

exotic” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 68) may provide us with insights into some of the less visible cultural functions that these meanings may play in the reproduction and renegotiation of our current social (dis)orders. As one may consider the mass media to be among the main institutions through which meanings are imposed, negotiated and diffused in Western societies, holding a “de facto monopoly on the large-scale informational instruments of production and diffusion of information” (Bourdieu 1996, 46), their messages appear to be an interesting research field for such attempts.

## Data construction

Our data comes from both qualitative and quantitative content analysis of all relevant newspaper articles (n=776) published between January 1, 2010 and December 6, 2011 in five Czech major nationally distributed newspapers (excluding newspapers of openly tabloid status) and their regional supplements (Právo, Hospodářské noviny, Lidové noviny, Mladá fronta Dnes, Haló noviny). The sample was constructed with the help of Anopress IT electronic media database and coded using CAQDAS software (MAXQDA 10). The coding process was divided into three basic stages moving gradually from data construction to interpretation. In the first stage, we attempted to employ inductive coding in order to map and grasp the various layers of meanings and cultural tropes connected with the category of social exclusion and with the attribution of pollution and danger to spaces and populations that this category claims to include. In this stage we examined specific text segments for their meanings and attempted to assign these to emerging categories of codes. In the second stage, we performed a re-reading of coded segments in selected categories in order to prepare a basic outline of discursive strategies imposing specific meanings of pollution and danger. In addition to that, we focused on the levels of incidence of selected codes and their possible relations with others, with a special focus on their socially differentiated interpretations (cf. Bean 1981, 592-593). In the third and final stage, we attempted to interpret the results of the previous two stages in terms of the aforementioned discussion about the post-Cold War societal changes, drawing heavily especially from Didier Bigo’s analyses of the field of (in)security and his concept of *ban-opticon* (Bigo 2008) and Loïc Wacquant’s analysis of the dualizing nature of neoliberal governance (Wacquant 2009). In our quantitative analysis, we attempted to map the coincidence of certain strings that represent particular codes by means of an extended lexical search. Due to difficulties of translation and due to the large extent of the analysed material, we will only use direct quotations selectively and restrain them to situations when they hold illustrative value for specific topics or relations.

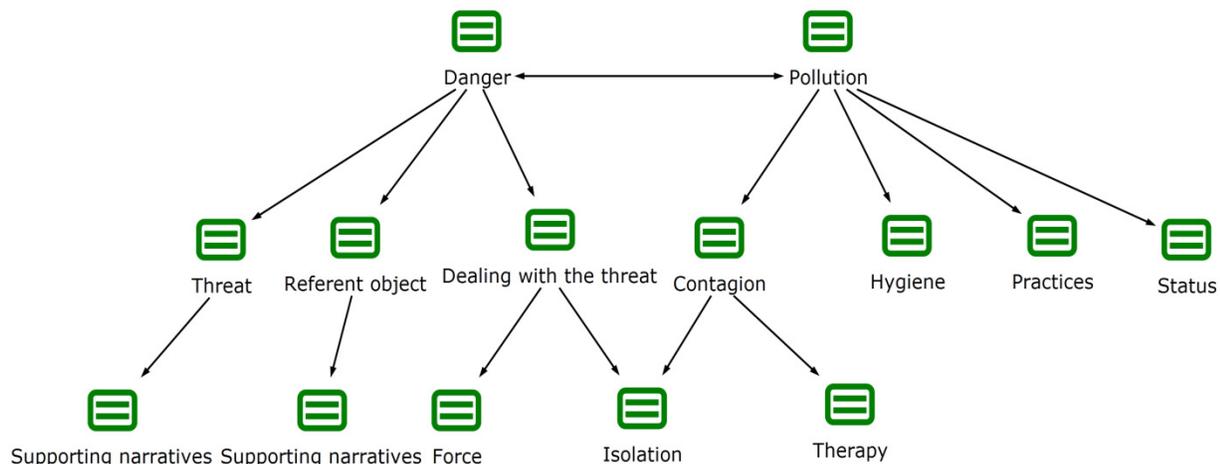


Figure 1: Coding tree

The final structure of our coding tree (Figure 1) included two overlapping categories of codes (Pollution and Danger), each with a set of inductively created subcategories (Hygiene, Practices, Status, Contagion and Threat, Referent Object, Dealing with the threat) and an unsorted array of supporting tertiary categories for some of the subcategories. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of articles concerned with social exclusion by month – the high figures from August to October 2011 with a peak in September reflect the moral panic triggered by the series of events connected with the “Šluknov unrests”, that is, the two violent incidents attributed to the *unadaptables* in August and a series of demonstrations in the North Bohemian towns of Varnsdorf, Nový Bor and Rumburk in August and September. Due to the position of this moral panic, we will use its build up and spread as the basic time-frame of our paper. The slightly higher figures in March, June and September 2010 are indicative of “law and order” activities of municipal and regional authorities attempting to fuel and capitalize on the fears of the general public connected with the progressing ghettoization and rising homelessness. The striking difference between the numbers of articles published by individual newspapers, with 56,44 per cent written for Mladá fronta Dnes<sup>1</sup>, may be explained by Mladá fronta’s more complex network of regional supplements, more willing to deal with urban problems of local nature than papers attempting to appeal to the general public, as well as by a moderate

preference for the political programmes connected with “law and order politics” displayed throughout the articles, and last but not least, by its hybrid half-tabloid character allowing MladáfrontaDnes to boast significantly higher circulation rates than all other papers claiming “serious”, non-tabloid status.

Month/Medium	MladáfrontaDnes	Právo	Lidovénoviny	Hospodářskénoviny	Halónoviny	Total
<b>2010</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>315</b>
January	9	3	1	0	2	15
February	13	3	2	1	4	23
March	13	4	6	3	3	29
April	22	4	6	1	3	36
May	8	2	4	1	3	18
June	25	8	5	0	4	42
July	13	2	1	0	0	16
August	14	4	2	1	3	24
September	23	4	5	4	3	39
October	22	2	4	1	3	32
November	7	4	5	1	4	21
December	13	1	4	2	0	20
<b>2011</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>461</b>
January	13	1	6	2	0	22
February	13	4	6	2	1	26
March	17	1	3	0	0	21
April	12	1	4	2	1	20
May	17	4	6	0	2	29
June	18	2	1	1	0	22
July	9	3	3	0	0	15
August	23	10	8	4	3	48
September	59	27	20	11	14	131
October	42	15	8	1	6	72
November	22	8	8	0	1	39
December	11	1	1	0	3	16

Figure 2: Incidence of texts concerned with social exclusion in analysed newspapers

### The build-up and eruption of the moral panic

Our interpretation of the data has revealed a trend of increase in incidence and variety of meanings of danger in connection with social exclusion through the years 2010 and 2011. From the starting point of using social exclusion dominantly as a term meaning an alternative (carefully non-ethnic, non-individual, non-essentialist) framing of the problems of urban marginality, usually denoting a local social problem that is to be dealt with by educational mechanisms and social services at the local or regional level, and stressing the motives of solidarity and correction of structural injustice, later articles increasingly constructed the category of social exclusion as a growing bundle of threats with wildly varying referent objects, calling for various forms of solution by force, and, after the first truly “national” moral panic in August 2011, of increasingly national character. In an article from February 2010 (Wallerová 2010), for example, the author speaks about the problem of Roma being transferred almost automatically into special schools due to the prejudice about their inherent inability to cope with normal education, framing it as a result of structural factors to be dealt with by legislative changes targeting segregation and programmes of tolerance and inclusion and intensified education of teachers as well as of the wider public. Social exclusion is less associated with the dangers (crime, violence, drug abuse, epidemics or extremism)

that pervade later articles and the polluted status is attributed to prejudice which must be eliminated through the rituals of tolerance programmes and inclusive education, as well as to the sources of exclusion, real-estate speculation or municipal authorities' movement, concentration and warehousing of the poor. In a series of articles from January 2010 (Vácha 2010, Tonarová 2010), the problem of urban poverty is presented mainly as a suitable target of solidarity, stressing the role of education, integration and the positive results of NGO fieldwork and the local "neighbourhood watch". The community centre that is supposed to help the urban poor is constructed as a space of purity, firmly embedded in the local context, precluding any transition to the national level. The alternative narratives concentrating on fear of crime and dodging of payments (Tonarová 2010a, Frouzová 2010), are also framed as local and to be contained by local programmes with standard national financial support, with the exception of certain municipalities (e.g. Chomutov, Černý 2010) framed as successful in imposing their own versions of zero-tolerance punitive policies targeting the inhabitants of the ghettos.

The shift in scope and nature of the meanings of danger and pollution might be explained by the strictly local focus of the majority of earlier articles, which for the most part of the investigated period were published usually in the regional supplements of the newspapers and dealt with practical problems of mundane character and limited scale. The second reason for this trend might be connected with the increasing prominence of law and order politics, first at the regional level, in connection with the municipal election campaign in summer and autumn 2010, fuelled by the already established political tropes of insecure cities and fear of crime to be contained by tough policies (with Chomutov and similar municipalities serving as examples of success), and later spreading to the national level through the moral panic. The gradual rise of the motives of law and order and increasing presence in the public discourse of moral entrepreneurs framing the lower strata of society as parasites or criminals abusing the welfare system prepared the ground for the explosion during the "Šluknov unrests". The ensuing moral panic has made it much more interesting for the national media to dramatize and expand the local scope of urban problems, converting them to national headlines and connecting them with recycled stories of alleged crime, drug abuse, homelessness, and radical politics or right-wing extremism, which has in past years provided the public with its own folk devils in the form of nazi-scares. Similarly, former strategies of framing the problem of social exclusion as local, usually refusing the moral panic and promoting educational and solidarity responses, had to adapt to the national scale and their numbers rose in resistance to the proliferation of punitive "parasites and criminals" constructions of the problem, fuelling the moral panic further, and building the space for a different vision of social order with its own meanings of pollution.

Highlighting the deep connection between social exclusion and extremism (in addition to violent crime) seems to serve as the most common strategies of threat amplification and the analysed material shows that the initiative for the imposition of this connection regularly comes from above (analogous to the fear of crime issue in the seventies in the USA, cf. Loo 2009), from mid to high-level regional and municipal authorities, usually connected with law-enforcement. In April and May 2010, after a special report of the police has been published, pointing to rising crime in a district of Prague with a significant Vietnamese minority and presenting it as a "security threat for the country" (Jas, vrk 2010), the local mayors send an open letter to the Czech Ministry of the Interior, threatening with the prospect of a local militia taking the matter into their own hands (DCHA 2010, Jas, vrk 2010), eliciting an immediate increase in articles connecting the motives of ghetto, maladaptation and crime (especially drug abuse).

## **Ethnicization of poverty: the spectre of the "undeserving Roma"**

After the break represented by the moral panics, the danger is usually presented as growing or lurking, dramatizing it through metaphors of ticking time-bombs, avalanches traveling through Czech towns, high-tides, rising dragons, small sparks starting great fires, wildfires spreading across the land or deadly epidemics. The narratives of polluted practices, matter and status appear to fuse into a single category. While in earlier articles remarks pointing to the "problematic Roma minority" were condemned as a "populist or racist" (Neff 2010) transgression, with the rise of moral panic the threshold for symbolic rejection is getting higher. Though fiery statements by political figures labelled as extremist, e.g. "the genocidal rhetoric" of Tomáš Vandas, the leader of the notorious Workers party of social justice, calling for the use of cleansing force against the "unadaptables" during one of the public protests associated with the Šluknov unrests (Jareš 2011), were still framed as problematic or dangerous, the essentializing argument of "inverted racism" and discrimination against the whites became more common and directly related to the logic of expectation of law and order approach, as this statement by a local training school teacher illustrates: "Local inhabitants are becoming the targets of larceny, threats and assaults on a daily basis. People are angry because they are measured by a different yardstick, and the taxes that the working people pay are used to pay the ones who behave like they behave. The word tolerance has vanished from here and, unfortunately, for this ethnic group it is an alien and distant term." (Sokolová 2011)

Among the mechanisms of proliferation of both the pollution and the danger, two are the most significant: first, contagion, i.e. spreading the pollution through contact with the clean, and second, invasion, i.e. replacement or pushing out of the clean by the polluted, usually by form of "unadaptable Roma" movement leading to new ghettos. The main mechanisms of defence against the dangers presented by the pollution of social exclusion include two main strains, strangely resonant

with the above mentioned catastrophic tropes of epidemics or wildfires: isolation and purification by force, with the former alternative strategies hinting toward inclusion and educational work weakening in the process.

The supporting threat narratives usually included statements of municipal, educational or law-enforcement authorities or anonymous neighbours, concerned with the ghettoization, spread of diseases, crime, unemployment, extremism or violent behaviours, and the former hesitation to use the category of Roma slowly faded out. The mayor of Rotava, a small North Western Bohemian town, attempting to defend a controversial municipal regulation, forbidding the citizens to sit in public spaces, speaks of the dangers represented by the Roma “unadaptables”, trying clumsily to cover the racist assumptions underlying the regulation: “The proportion of 500 Roma out of 3.400 inhabitants is frightening. There are three things that bother decent people as well as the Roma who live a decent life. The trouble-makers, regardless of the colour of their skin, don’t go to work, don’t pay their rent, don’t pay their debts and their public behaviour is awful.” (Zeman 2011).

According to quantitative analysis of the most frequent terms present in the articles and coincidence of specific terms within a single construction of meaning, there is a trend of strengthening of the relation between the category of Roma and social exclusion, deepening especially during the explosion of moral panic, and manifested by a pervasive tendency to use the category of the Roma as a synonym for ghetto inhabitants or the urban and sub-urban poor (and the other way around). This ethnicisation of poverty appears to serve at least partly as a facilitating condition of securitization (cf. Buzan et al. 1998, 31-33), drawing from and enriching the deep pool of implicit meanings connected with the stereotypical Roma, refusing the previous carefully anti-racist strategies of framing and allowing for essentialist and deterministic explanations that incline toward solutions by identification, classification and segregation, followed by activation of punitive mechanisms. Analogously, the connection between the Roma label and the various constructions of dangers presented by urban and sub-urban marginality also allows for the attribution and reproduction of the polluted status of the Roma, transferring the pollution from ethnic or racial prejudice to its targets, calling for different purification rituals and making comprehensible new mechanisms of possible contagion and containment. This spiralling symbolic exchange allows for the construction of the spaces of exclusion – the ghettos, the projects – as “condemned places, synonymous with social indignity and civic relegation” (Bourdieu 2002, 141) as well as spaces of danger and pollution.

## **Building the *ban-opticon***

The process of ethnicisation also calls into attention a different conception of social order negotiated through the fusion of different notions of “matter out of place” into a single category which subsequently becomes the primary vessel concentrating several significant types of pollution. These ideal “unadaptables” or “undeserving poor”, neither able nor willing to submit to societal norms, are a natural target for repressive and penal mechanisms which monitor their actions with deep suspicion and increase the regulation of their lives in the name of order. Though this category is ostentatiously constructed as “ethnic”, it usually bears implicit biological meaning, the assumption of an unchangeable Roma substance shared by all the bearers of the Roma label (cf. Jakoubek 2004, 217-218). This racializing tendency seems to be particularly strong at the municipal and regional level, with some of the mayors or regional political parties frequently releasing openly racist remarks. At a meeting of North Bohemian mayors, for example, one of them explained the core of the ethnic problem rather frankly: “The Roma are not willing to work, they are not willing to learn and not even if we had a thousand jobs for them, they would not work. For most of the Roma who didn’t work for twenty years, this trade [of unwillingness to work] is passed from the father to the son.” (Šebelka 2011) The mayor of Nový Bor, the stage of one of the violent incidents that triggered the 2011 moral panic, speaks again of “inverted racism”, leading to the creation of a privileged class unwilling to work and ungratefully siphoning the public resources (Dvořák 2011) and a regional political party from Ústí nad Labem, part of the ruling municipal coalition (its partners being two major national parties), wrote an open letter to the prime minister, complaining about the stealing, raping, drug abusing Roma parasites and asking him to act to “calm the situation down” (Horák 2011).

This ritual mystification (cf. McLeod 1999, 362), evoking an illusion of order in the imposition of a radical dichotomy between the spectre of pollution and its mirror image of law abiding, industrious citizen, fulfils an interesting role in the political discourse. Not only it presents a new vision of social hierarchy and its underlying values, but at the same time creates a universal scapegoat, a ready target for the channelling of public anxieties. Last but not least, it serves well as an instrument of control of urban marginality, underlying the repressive policies targeting a specific segment of the lower strata of the population. During the “time of reform” in autumn and winter 2011, when the neoliberal government of Petr Nečas attempted to capitalize on the moral panics, focus the attention of the public away from corruption scandals, as well as legitimize the austerity measures targeting mainly the lower strata of the population, these postmodern lepers played a crucial symbolic role. Since his personal entry into the moral panic, prime minister Nečas, one of the most frequently cited moral entrepreneurs, presented his repertoire of solutions as consisting of more police, more strict punishments for minor offences and a central registry of offenders to help control their movement, more surveillance and classification to identify the problematic segments, more regulative powers and more (hygienic as well as behavioural) rules to be enforced, and provision of support to the urban poor strictly on the basis of their work and their children’s school attendance, underlined by the logic of his government’s austerity package approved during the summer of 2011. Visiting one of the hotspots of the unrests, a lodging house in Varnsdorf, and admitting that he would not like to live there, he appealed to the public: “I

worked my whole life so that I don't have to live like this. The Roma parents should see to their children school attendance, so that they will be able to get work." (Šebelka and Smrž 2011)

This configuration of solutions to the problem of the polluted well of social exclusion represents a vision of order marrying the *ban-optic* logic of classification and control with the punitive drive of neoliberal government of social insecurity. It is the essentialized (Roma) individual who is solely responsible for his own fate, who through investment into education and through diligent work is able to overcome any obstacles. This system imposes a socially differentiated interpretation of behaviours indicating submission as well as resistance against it. It is only by submitting to the imperatives of work-fare, regulation and surveillance that the Roma may participate on the cleansing rituals, demonstrating respect to the higher castes as well as to the neoliberal vision of social life, and their willingness to "adapt" and overcome their Roma essence (which, however, is framed as unchangeable and will remain the reason for surveillance and control despite their efforts). Failure to do so is a refusal of social order as a whole, a source of pollution and the responsibility of the "unadaptable" Roma. In order to be able to shield the law-abiding citizen from the polluted, it is essential to construct mechanisms of containment and purification, operating through their identification, supervision, evaluation, classification and strict punishment for transgressive behaviours. The zones of exclusion must be carefully mapped and populated by mechanisms of surveillance and coercion, systematically targeting high-risk populations and thus staging performances of transgression and punishment, allowing the pulsation of moral panics to legitimize permanent states of emergency and produce symbolic resources for normalization of the non-excluded populace. The spectre of the "undeserving Roma" thus becomes both a key target and a crucial instrument in the localization of the neoliberal *ban-opticon*.

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<sup>1</sup>Právo 15,2%, Lidovénoviny 15,33%, Halónoviny 8,11%,andHospodářské noviny 4,89%.