Friends or Villains? Representation of Roma in Recent Slovak Feature Film

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Abstract

Members of the Romani ethnic group in Slovakia continue to face significant prejudice from the majority population, which adversely affects their lives. Historically, Slovak media, including film, have often reproduced paternalistic, stereotypical, or even demeaning ideas about Roma. Another problem Roma have faced is a lack of presence in the media. Invisibility and the uses of the negative image can worsen the majority-minority relationships and undermine both individual and in-group self-esteem. This thesis examines whether and, if so, how Roma and Roma characters specifically are represented in the 15 most popular Slovak feature films screened in cinemas between 2020 and 2025. Using content analysis and a coding process informed by Grounded Theory, the study identifies and analyzes filmic portrayals of Roma. Of the fifteen films, only six feature a Romani protagonist, and just two of those center their narrative on that character. The films replicate and challenge the prevailing stereotypes, yet neither depicts Roma characters as inferior to the majority. Despite persistent ethnic divisions, the films also portray cooperation and friendships between Roma and non-Roma characters. However, Roma are entirely absent from the remaining nine films, highlighting ongoing issues of representational invisibility.

Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned, Alexandra Dzurillová, candidate for the BA degree in Culture, Politics and Society, declare herewith that the present thesis titled "Friends or Villains? Representation of Roma in Recent Slovak Feature Film" is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright.

I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 24 May 2025

Alexandra Dzurillová

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Introduction

The depth of the problem of prejudice against Roma in Slovakia can be judged by its language. In Slovak, Roma are called "Cigáni" or "Rómovia". The word has more negative connotations than "Róm" and can be colloquially used as a synonym for a liar. The Slovak language even derived a stand-alone verb from the word Cigán, "cigániť", which means to lie in informal language. The word "cigániť" can be used without referring to Roma specifically. However, its inception is obviously grounded in the prejudices towards Roma. When the words derived from the name of an ethnic group describe socially undesired phenomena, it is a good indicator of a problem.

My interest in Roma, their culture, and their societal position was sparked early in my life, as I come from Eastern Slovakia, a region with a sizable Roma population. As a member of the Slovak majority, I grew up witnessing predominantly negative and often racist attitudes toward Roma. The Roma individuals I encountered were typically poor, and their socioeconomic situation was frequently blamed on them by the majority population, without consideration of broader structural inequalities. This personal context sparked a need to understand how ethnic hostility and the exclusion of Roma could be addressed. Roma and film converged during my preparation for the entrance exams to a film school. I began to notice that Roma characters in Slovak films were often portrayed stereotypically, marginalized, or ridiculed, rarely occupying significant or complex roles. This realization prompted me to bring these two interests together in my thesis.

Romani people constitute a diverse ethnic group comprising many sub-groups with histories, languages, and cultures. Currently, Roma live everywhere in the world. They originally migrated from India around the 9th century, and between the 8th and 10th centuries, they entered Europe (Bauer 2007). In Europe, Roma's foreign origin and nomadic lifestyle were

often seen as dubious and difficult to control, which resulted in their legal persecution, as Bauer demonstrates. Subsequently, he argues, the emergence of nation-states, state surveillance, and racial theories in the 19th century brought further negative restrictions regarding Roma's mobility and legal status. The 20th century witnessed a range of attempts to settle, assimilate, and even exterminate Roma, as the author points out.

Today, the problem of discrimination against Roma is especially alarming in Central and Eastern European regions, where Roma constitute up to 10% of the population (ERTF 2007). There, according to the EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS), Roma experienced the most discrimination out of all ethnic groups (Rosenfield 2011). Examples of discrimination are segregated housing, distrust of society and institutions, marginalization in the job market, police brutality, or demeaning attitudes from the majority society. Slovakia, the focus region of the thesis, is one of the affected countries.

Slovak society seems to be stuck in a vicious circle of prejudice, racism, discrimination towards Roma, mutual distance, and therefore a lack of communication between the minority and majority (Mojžišová 2014). Mojžišová explains that a lack of contact with and information about a minority produces an environment in which prejudice, stereotype, and racism thrive, and in which the prejudiced do not have a reason to change their attitudes. Consequently, constant humiliation and ignorance from the side of the majority can damage the self-esteem of the minority, which can have further negative effect on other areas of their life. Added to that, the author argues, the minority distances itself from the majority even more, which leads to less mutual communication and understanding.

Film plays a crucial role in society and can serve as a source of information, disprove myths, and moderate social discussion (Mojžišová 2014). However, Slovak media, including film, shaped chiefly by the non-Roma majority, have been reported to reproduce stereotypes

and negative public opinion about Roma (Kubínyi and Višňovský 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to monitor Slovak media and film developments in this regard.

This thesis aims to analyze the image of Roma in the 15 most popular Slovak films from 2020 to 2025, focusing on Roma characters. To discuss this ethnic group, the terms Roma and Romani (as both noun and adjective) will be used, though the debate about the correct terminology is ongoing (Wódzka 2023).[2] To describe those who are not Roma, I will use the term non-Roma or majority, referring to the Slovak majority society. However, it is important to mention that in Romani language, non-Roma are called "gadjo," which may appear in the films. Paradoxically, the word "gadjo" has also been appropriated by the Slovak language and can be a synonym for a dirty person (often Roma).

The thesis is structured into five sections. The first offers a chronological overview of the political and legal context of Roma in Slovakia and examines the majority population's prevailing perceptions of Roma. The second section, the literature review, outlines the developments and trends in depictions of Roma in European and Slovak cinema and introduces the analytical concepts utilized in this thesis. The third section details the research objectives, methodology, sampling process, and criteria for identifying Roma characters. Fourth, the selected films are presented. Finally, the films are analyzed, with the findings organized around the identified analytical concepts.

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[2] In Slovak the term "Róm" is considered more neutral and correct than "Cigán" (Roma versus Gypsy). However, not all Roma, in Slovakia and internationally, feel represented by the term Roma or accept it as universal.

1   Roma in Slovakia

This section first explains how the crucial turning points in Slovakia's history since its inception as a political entity have influenced the lives of Roma within its territory from a legal and political perspective. Subsequently, it clarifies the current state of the relationships between Roma and non-Roma and the content of the majority's prejudices.

1.1   Political and Legal Position of Roma in Slovakia from 1918 until the 2000s

When Slovakia first became a political entity, specifically within the first Czechoslovak state (1918-1939), the legal persecution of Roma was in full bloom. As Kubínyi and Višňovský (2018) argue, with time, the core elements of their lifestyle, such as nomadic life or horse trade, were more and more restricted. According to the authors, seeking to suppress the cultural identity of the Roma, judged as incompatible with majority standards, the authorities were allowed to separate Roma children from their parents.

During the Second World War Roma suffered in the *Porrajmos*, the genocide of the European Roma and Sinti people by Nazi Germany and its allies. Around 13,000 Slovak Roma were killed, mostly in mass shootings and concentration camps (Krempaský 2004).

The post-war socialist Czechoslovakia, similarly to the pre-war Czechoslovakia, wanted to assimilate and flatten the differences between the majority and minority. Kubínyi and Višňovský (2018) state that the assimilationist practices were mostly forced and included, for instance, destruction of the original Roma settlements, resettlement of Roma closer to the village or town, and compulsory education. Added to that, in 1958, the Communists ultimately banned the nomadic lifestyle (Kubínyi and Višňovský 2018). Although part of society, both Roma and non-Roma, perceives socialism as favorable for Roma due to enhanced social mobility and the integration of some individuals, it is crucial to mention that the non-compliant

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Roma were left behind and further alienated from the majority as well as from the integrated Roma (Grill 2015). Additionally, Cangár (2003) argues that the socialist ideological policies disrupted Romani culture and traditional Roma communities while also reinforcing a negative outlook on Romani people.

The fragility of the success of socialist politics came to light, especially after the regime change in 1989. Grill (2015) explains that since Roma were employed in the lowest-skilled positions, they suffered the largest socio-economic blow once the regime changed and layoffs happened. Many Roma became unemployed and thus turned to unofficial jobs. As the author adds, Roma were blamed for the economic decline of the state as well as for their own poverty, which meant deterioration of the interethnic relations. Roma came to be seen as "uncontrollable subjects," and the public opinion about Romani became more violent and aggressive, as illustrated by Grill. The prejudices that socialists claimed to have overcome resurfaced.

From 1989, it was mostly the EU's demands that led to favorable developments for the Roma. In 1991, Romani ethnicity and nationality were recognized, which meant equalization with other ethnicities and support for their education and culture (Kozmová 2004). Otherwise, Slovak statesmen mostly ignored the problems of Roma, focusing on building the new state (Cangár, 2003). However, from 1998, the need to show readiness for EU accession and respond to other international pressures resulted in more attention being dedicated to Roma, writes Cangár. For instance, media coverage of Roma became more complex, objective, and politically correct. Nevertheless, to this day, violent attacks, horrible living conditions, forced resettlement, segregated living areas, and school segregation (Vatrálová 2023) and discrimination compose the Roma's reality.

1.2 Perception of and Attitudes about Roma in Slovakia

In Slovakia in 2019, approximately 440,000 people were externally identified as Roma, which is 8% of the Slovak population (Ravasz et al. 2019). However, only 156,000 people self-

identified as Roma in the census (Gehrerová and Kerekes 2022). The authors find that one of the reasons for such a difference in data might be the fear of identifying as Roma.

General attitudes of Slovak non-Roma society towards Roma are rather unfriendly and even hateful. "A 2019 survey by the Slovak Academy of Sciences found that up to 64% of a representative sample of respondents identified with overtly negative stereotypes of Roma, and about half emphasized the value of Roma culture," (Krajč 2021, pp. 5): Roma are also a minority group from which the majority keeps the greatest social distance and associates most stereotypes (Mojžišová 2014). Here are the most widespread stereotypes about Roma believed by Slovaks:

- spontaneity, wildness, loudness, Romani language, strong faith, importance of family and family cohesion, strong patriarchy, arranged marriages, large number of children, multigenerationality, talent for business, music, gypsy music, natural talent for music, singing, dancing, poverty, settlements, neglected education, historical nomadism, desire for nomadism, feeble-mindedness, irresponsibility work-shyness, laziness, temporal employment, informal employment, crime (mainly theft or drug related activity), cunningness, addiction, lack of hygiene, and mutual ethnic intolerance with the majority (Krajč 2021, pp. 5; Mojžišová 2014, pp. 97).

One key factor contributing to the perpetuation of negative and stereotypical images of minorities can be the dominant media discourse. It is therefore essential to examine whether media representations—including those in film—reinforce or challenge these portrayals.

2 Literature Review

The thesis builds on the scholarship about Roma representation in European (Mojžišová 2014; Wódzka 2023) and Slovak film (Krajč 2021; Mojžišová 2014; 2022; Škobla 2020). The European film section starts with a chronological account of the representation of Roma in film. Next, it introduces the frequently used filmic tropes and stereotypes related to Roma. While Slovak films use many of the tropes and stereotypes adopted by European films, the Slovak cinematic image of Roma is also particular, due to the effects of its own historical context (Mojžišová 2022). Therefore, the Slovak film section starts with a chronological overview of the representation of Roma in Slovak documentary film, which has been heavily influenced by the politics of the post-war socialist period and then the post-1989 democratic period (Mojžišová 2014). Since the influence of the historical periods has been less significant for the Roma in fiction films, the section continues with an overview of its main characteristics, such as the purpose of the Romani characters in films and stereotypes. The concepts that will inform the later analysis are introduced throughout the literature review.

2.1 Roma in European Film

The early exotic and romantic portrayal of Roma in film was rooted in the Romantic literature of the 19th century (Mojžišová 2014). She argues that romantic and melodramatic topics, imagination, and spontaneity, characteristic of this period, seemed to fit perfectly with the unconventional and unrestrained Roma, as often imagined by non-Roma authors. These Romantic Roma inspired the earlier representation of Roma in film. According to the author, the Romani characters were beautiful, mystical, emotional, and free. Mojžišová asserts that such depiction of Roma is exoticizing, which means that it uses shallow and schematic characters, clichés, stereotypes, and a lack of human complexity. The exoticized Roma were

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used to decorate, making the story more exciting, or later to create contrast with the majority (Mojžišová 2014).

Later, the depiction of Roma in European films oscillated between exoticization and humanism (Mojžišová 2014). Contrary to exoticization, the author characterizes the humanistic approach by enhanced character complexity and development, a focus on shared human experiences, and challenging stereotypes. In the humanistic approach, characters' ethnicity can be pushed to the background to the extent that they are stripped of all cultural differences. Such representation allows Roma to have different roles in the film than being a decorative element or mirror to the majority, as with the exoticised character.

The newer European films aim to be counter-images to the homogenizing and stereotypical portrayal of Roma, as well as a more humanistic version (Wódzka 2023). The author argues that the films attempt to balance the hierarchies between the filmmaker and the story's subjects through filmic practices such as engagement of non-professional actors, a semi-scripted reality approach, and consultation with the local Roma. Furthermore, the films have a more humanistic approach, granting the Roma characters more agency and voice, complicating their identities, and opposing the stereotypes. Wódzka also finds that the themes usually revolve around the vulnerabilities and difficulties of Romani people. Nevertheless, she also claims that the stories are often full of struggle, have a hopeless end, and the characters are (almost) defeated by outside forces. Similar traits, such as realism, humanism, and anti-stereotypical representation, have been identified in recent Slovak films and will be reflected on with regard to the films in the scope of this thesis.

Nevertheless, the stereotypical image of the Roma is so deeply entrenched in cinematic tradition that scholars have created specific cinematic tropes associated with filmic Roma figures. Wódzka (2023, pp. 2) lists the following stereotypes: "thieving, fraud, cunningness, … laziness, work-shy attitudes, poverty and aversion for integration and assimilation," nomadism

or lack of hygiene. She further writes that Romani characters are often fervent, strong-willed, and sexual. They live in large and strong families, follow old wisdoms, fear death, and have an aptitude for music. The author continues that Romani women tend to wear big colourful skirts, rich jewellery, read tarot, or perform other kinds of magic. They are either beautiful seductresses with loose morals threatening men and communities or old crones. In connection with the stereotypical characters, the films often employ the aesthetics of poverty and dirt, travel, nature, excessive decoration, and bad aesthetic taste. Such portrayal of Roma in film is known as the cinematic 'Gypsy' trope.

Another trope connected to Roma is the "Happy Gypsy" trope, the gist of which is to portray Roma as living outside of modernity, temporality, Western nation-state, economics, or rule of law (Wódzka 2023). Instead, they are free, colourful, dancing, singing, enjoying life, wild, and connected to nature, as Wódzka explains. She also adds that the "Happy Gypsy" is either admired for their unconventionality and freedom, or is seen as a threat and must be tamed. The thesis will inspect the presence of these tropes in the newest Slovak films.

2.2 Slovakia-Specific Trends of Portrayal of Roma in Film

2.2.1 Documentary Film

Slovak documentary cinematography and its image of Roma have been heavily influenced by the political attitudes towards Roma throughout history. Škobla (2020, pp. 380) argues that films mirror "a period's ideas about the social order, hierarchies, and how social integration and social advancement of minorities are conceptualised".

To begin with, the image of Roma in the documentary film of the socialist Czechoslovakia (1948-1990) was ideological and paternalistic (Mojžišová 2014). The socialist documentaries served as propaganda, celebrating socialist engineering. For example, as Mojžišová finds, praised "civilization" and the assimilation of Roma by showing happy, hard-working Romani workers, the destruction of the Romani settlements, and ostracizing those who

did not participate in the socialist plans. The socialist documentary, just as the regime, was paternalistic towards Roma, in the way it manipulated them to follow the majority lifestyle and portrayed the socialist non-Roma as their saviour. Although socialism has been overcome, paternalism and racial bias persist in films and will therefore be examined in relation to the new productions.

The regime change in 1989 meant the explosion of artistic freedom, which diversified the themes covered by the documentaries related to Roma and led to more interest in portraying the objective reality. Mojžišová (2014) jokingly suggests that making a documentary about Roma became a must-do for Slovak filmmakers. Many documentaries follow a single individual or a unique story, instead of trying to summarize Roma. Examples identified by Mojžišová include, *Out of the Wheel* (Z kola von: Čo je za tým?, Vojtek 2010); a portray of a former Romani drug-addict or *Gypsies are Standing for Election* (Cigáni idú do volieb, Vojtek 2012) which follows a story of a group of Roma running in municipality elections, or *That Track* (To ta trať, Korec 2002) about the construction of Slovak Railways in which hundreds of Roma participated, many of which were interned in concentration camps. While the post-89 representations eliminated ideology, became more objective, professional, and diverse, they also mainly chose to portray the painful side of the Romani life. The analysis will show what moods and topics prevail in the new films.

2.2.2 Fiction Film

In Slovak fiction film, Roma have been chiefly used as a mirror to the majority society (Mojžišová 2014). Therefore, the films about Roma are, in the end, more about the non-Roma, and Roma occupy only a secondary position. The author specifies that the films often use the contrast between the vastly different lifestyles of the majority and the minority, with Roma being the free, playful, and carefree person. She gives an example of the film *322* (Hanák 1969), which juxtaposes a dying non-Roma man with his difficult existential position with the joy of

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a simple-minded and poor but easy-going Roma. The narrative roles of the new Romani characters will be analyzed based on whether they contrast with the majority, provide comedy, or decoration, as mentioned before, or are more central and complex characters with multiple roles.

Moreover, in fiction films, the Romani characters in primary, supporting, or background roles are abundant in stereotypes. As exemplified by Mojžišová (2014), one persistent trope is the love triangle and unwanted romantic relationship between Roma and non-Roma. Moreover, she adds that Romani girls and women always seemed to be renowned beauties. The author continues that music, musicians, loudness, and wild dancing are rarely left out. "Uncivilized" settlements, boisterous weddings, a fancy car suddenly entering the settlement, stealing, sharp knives, flocks of children, or spirituality, all of these are traditionally used to characterize Roma and as decorative elements in the film. The author concludes that Roma in Slovak fiction films have preordered schemes that they rarely escape. The schematic characters, tropes, and stereotypes will be a significant focus of the analysis.

However, in recent years, a trend toward fostering interethnic understanding, resisting anti-Roma sentiments (Mojžišová 2022), and toward a deeper understanding of the problems of Roma (Krajč 2021) has been noticed in the fiction film. Krajč analysed five fiction films centered around Roma made between 2004 and 2019. He argues that recent Slovak fiction film about Roma relies on the aesthetic of realism and a semi-documentary approach. Roma characters are generally portrayed as economically marginalized and socially excluded, beyond the individual's control. Generally, the society as a whole, both Roma and non-Roma, was blamed, or the blame remained an open question. All of them are portrayed as hard-working, which is a conscious choice to counter the stereotype of laziness. Despite the hard work of the depicted Roma, they are unable to control their lives and depend on non-Roma to achieve better living conditions. Thus, non-Roma appear in the position of saviours, yet some of the saviours

are condemned for their abuse of the Roma's situation. The relationships between Roma and non-Roma are negative or paternalistic, however. On the one hand, the stories about Roma are becoming closer to reality and more complex. On the other hand, they concentrate on poor and suffering Roma, evoking much hopelessness. While they may be building interethnic connections by portraying Roma in a better-informed manner, they also depict a divided society and mostly just economically beneficial interethnic relationships. Like Krajč's thesis, this thesis will examine the complexity of the Romani characters, their economic situation, interethnic dynamics in the selected films, and the kind of portrayals they represent.

Most reviewed scholars (Krajč 2021; Škobla 2020; Wódzka 2023) provide an in-depth analysis and application of chosen concepts to a few films. Only Mojžišová reviews all central, supporting, minor, and background characters. The thesis follows her example since all representations contribute to the image of Roma, which the cinema consumer might internalize.

3 Research Objectives and Methodology

In this section, I first clarify the research objectives and questions guiding this thesis. Next, I demonstrate the suitability of the content analysis method and Grounded Theory (GT) for this research and how they are applied in this thesis. Then, I explain the rationale behind the sample of films. Finally, I present the criteria for identifying Romani characters.

3.1 Research Objectives

To discover how Roma are represented in the popular Slovak feature films produced between 2020 and 2025, this thesis will primarily analyze the Romani characters, but also how the Roma are discussed in the verbal content. To achieve a complex understanding of the representation of Roma, multiple questions will guide the analysis: *How do the films portray the Roma characters, and what roles and purposes do they assign to them? What is the personality and socio-economic background of the Romani characters? What stereotypes are applied to the Romani characters, and how stereotypical are they? What are the interethnic relationships like?* These questions are later translated into concepts that navigate the coding and analytical process.

3.2 Methods

The content analysis method is commonly used in visual analysis and allows for a systematic examination of the films and identification of dominant tendencies. It "is based on counting the frequency of certain visual elements in a clearly defined sample of images, and then analysing those frequencies," and involves coding (Rose 2001, pp. 56).

Grounded Theory (GT) is an inductive method that uses codes, concepts, and categories to analyze the data and uncover patterns (Qureshi and Ünlü 2020). GT inspired the coding strategy and research process of this thesis. The films will first be searched for Roma characters

and mentions of Roma. Next, the films including Roma character(s) will be coded for the concepts informed by the literature review, which, unlike many GT scholars recommend, was conducted before coding. The list of concepts will be revised based on their relevance after the first viewing of the films (the final version can be seen in Table 1). The films will be watched for the second time to apply the revised concepts and ensure better precision. Subsequently, the resulting codes, concepts, and categories will be evaluated together. While the frequency of codes will be considered, the more important goal is to note links and larger tendencies that emerge regarding the representation of Roma in Slovak film.

Table 1: Analytical Categories and Concepts

Categories	Concepts
Cinematic Properties of the Character	Category of the Character • Main character, supporting character, minor character, background character.
	Narrative Function of the Character • comedy, antagonist, exposition of information, plot advancement, decoration, contrast, creation of socio-cultural background, or world-building.
Character's Identity	Complexity of the character
	Character's agency
	Personality of the character
Socio-economic background	Socio-economic status
	Occupation
	Housing situation of the character
Stereotypes	Stereotypes
	Anti-stereotypes
Majority-minority dynamics	Majority-minority dynamics • relationships, paternalism, or discrimination

3.3 Sampling

The initial aim of researching the representation of Roma in recent Slovak films was refined by narrowing the focus to the past six years and selecting only films with a cinema audience of over 100,000. This strategy resulted in a sample of the fifteen most popular Slovak feature films released between 2020 and 2025.

The period of the past six years was chosen because the reviewed literature at least partially examined the production until 2019. I opted for films to be screened in cinemas since cinemas are platforms where new film productions first appear. Films often have to wait for a considerable period to be broadcast on TV. In fact, according to personal observation, most of the films produced in the past five years have not yet been broadcast on TV. Furthermore, the commercial films are more well-known and talked about than the television films, for example, due to the extent of advertising. The Union of Film Distributors of the Slovak Republic (UFD.sk 2020-2025) provided the cinema attendance figures.

3.4 Identification of Roma Characters

For the method of identifying Roma characters, I rely on the following filmic representation tools:

- Dialogues – the Roma character is identified by himself or by another protagonist (or narrator) by being referred to as Roma or Gypsy;
- Language – e.g., the Roma character uses the Romani language, Romani music;
- Combination of stereotypes – e.g., clothing, settlement, poverty, personal characteristics, and others that were mentioned in the literature review;
- Physical appearance.

Ideally, the Romani characters will be represented by a combination of at least two of these indicators. The analysis will address what markers the films use to indicate Roma ethnicity.

4 Introduction of the Analysed Films

Before proceeding to the analytical section, this section briefly introduces each film subject to analysis, summarizes its plot, and describes the Romani characters to provide context for its subsequent analysis. Six of the fifteen films featured one or more Romani characters, and only those will be analyzed.

Table 2: List of Viewed Films

Title in English (Title in Slovak)	Year of production	Fiction/Documentary Film	Category of the Romani Character
Cernak (Černák)	2025	Fiction	Minor character, background characters
Miki (Miki)	2024	Fiction	No
Coffee (Kavej)	2024	Fiction	No
We're Going To Teambuilding (Jedeme na teambuilding)	2024	Fiction	No
Waves (Vlny)	2024	Fiction	No
Once Upon A Time In The East (Vojna policajtov)	2024	Fiction	Minor character, background characters
Invalid (Invalid)	2023	Fiction	Supporting character, minor characters, background characters
Never Say Never (Nikdy nehovor nikdy)	2023	Fiction	No
Perinbaba: Two Realms (Perinbaba a dva svety)	2023	Fiction Fairytale	Minor characters, background characters

Till Summer Comes (V lete ti poviem ako sa mám)	2022	Fiction	No
Happy New Year 2 (Šťastný nový rok 2: Dobro došli)	2021	Fiction	No
Familiar Unknown (Známi neznámi)	2021	Fiction	No
Scumbag (Sviňa)	2020	Fiction	No
Attila (Attila)	2020	Documentary	Potentially main protagonist, minor characters
Tempos (Rytmus: Tempos)	2020	Documentary	Main protagonist, background characters

Invalid (Invalid, Karásek 2023)

The most-watched film in cinemas in 2023 (UFD.sk, 2023) was a dark comedy set in a Slovak town in the wild 90s. Lacko, a hot-tempered museum serviceman, becomes disabled and plans vengeance on the mafiosi who caused him the injury. Simultaneously with the accident, Lacko meets the second most important character of the film, a good-hearted Roma Gabo. Other Romani characters include Gabo's sister, her children, the neighbours from the settlement, and a local usurer, who is also one of the mafiosi. Apart from the comedy and action, the film comments on the situation of disabled people, Roma, the society's prejudices, and politics.

Tempos (Rytmus: Tempos, Klujev et al. 2020)

Tempos is already the second biographical documentary film covering the life of one of the most successful Slovak rappers, Patrik Vrbovský, with an artistic pseudonym Rytmus. The film tells a story about the beginnings of hip-hop and rap in Slovakia, the rapper's musical and personal development. Rytmus has also appeared as an actor, playing a Roma character, or as

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himself in the researched films *Invalid*, *Once Upon a Time in the East*, and *Attila*. While Rytmus himself is Roma, other Romani background characters appear as his family, friends, and acquaintances in the archival footage, staged B-roll footage, and music video clips. Plus, Rytmus interacts with a Romani street musician.

Cernak (Černák, Kroner 2025)

Cernak is the second part of a biographical fiction about Mikuláš Černák, a Slovak mafioso from the 1990s and 2000s. The most important Romani character in the film is Holub, the mafia boss of Eastern Slovakia. The film and Holub's character are based on historical accounts. Holub is also surrounded by other Roma mafiosi, who are only background characters.

Once Upon a Time in the East (Vojna policajtov, Biermann 2024)

The fiction film *Once Upon A Time In The East* is again set in the 90s, this time, in Eastern Slovakia. It tells about a war between a not-yet-rotten policeman and a corrupt police force, a lawless state, and the mafia. The film uses the character of Holub, which is much more loosely inspired by real events than the same character in the film *Cernak*. Holub's name is changed to Berci. Berci is a less substantial character than Holub in *Cernak, appearing* almost exclusively in violent or vulgar scenes. One of his colleagues is Roma, too.

Perinbaba: Two Realms (Perinbaba a dva svety, Jakubisko 2023)

Perinbaba: Two Realms is a fairytale fiction film set in a fantastical world of the past. The main character, Lukáš, is a non-Roma son of a miller who is travelling to find love. On his way, he encounters a travelling circus with a Roma ringmaster. The ringmaster and his seven

daughters perform a story about a hidden, magical land, and Lukáš sets off to find the miraculous country. Apart from the Romani family, a Roma girl plays music in a village market.

Attila (Attila, Větrovský 2020)

The biographical documentary *Attila* delves into the story of a successful Hungarian Slovak MMA fighter. The documentary only discloses Attila's Hungarian ethnicity; otherwise, ethnicity is not discussed. The clues indicating Attila is also Roma are insufficient; thus, he is not considered in the analysis. However, when it comes to Attila's friends, who are interviewed in the film, their physical features suggest they are Roma, and probably would be viewed as such by the audience.

5   Analysis of the Films

To understand the image of Roma presented in the most recent popular Slovak filmography, the films and their characters were examined through multiple concepts (see Annex for codebook). These concepts were informed by previous research on Roma in film (Krajč 2021; Mojžišová 2014; 2022; Škobla 2020; Wódzka 2023). The concepts were clustered under broader categories (see Table 1). The analytical section of this thesis is structured around these concepts and categories.

The analysis has five parts. The first explores the cinematic properties of the characters, starting with the prevalent character categories, then an analysis of the narrative functions of the characters, and ending with a brief discussion of the filmic approaches used. The second evaluates Roma's overall visibility in the films. The third part delves into the identity, meaning personality, complexity, morality, agency, and socio-economic background, of the Romani characters. Fourth, the analysis continues arguing which stereotypes were used the most, their extent and purposes, and whether anti-stereotypes were also included. The last part reveals the predominant qualities of the majority-minority dynamics in the examined films.

5.1 Cinematic Properties of Roma Characters

Most identified Romani characters are either minor or background characters and lack complexity. A Roma appears once in the leading role as Rytmus in *Tempos*, and once in the supporting role as Gabo in *Invalid*. Rytmus is a complex character with proper character development. Although essential for the film and relatively complex, Gabo does not develop as a character.

The primary narrative function of the minor and background characters is to establish the socio-cultural context and reality of the film. For instance, the settlement's residents and the Romani girl playing music in the village market contribute to creating believable scenes. The Roma mafiosi, particularly the character of mafioso Holub and their ethnicity, are crucial for depicting a story based on reality. Thus, Roma are explicitly cast because they are Roma. The films require Roma ethnicity to construct a credible world.

The two Romani protagonists, Rytmus and Gabo, are important to their films and serve multiple functions. Both act as narrators, advance the plot, generate comedy, and Gabo aids in the main character's development. Rytmus recounts his own life story, while Gabo narrates the entire story of *Invalid* retrospectively. Additionally, Gabo assists the disabled main character, Lacko, and provides ideas for his revenge. Lastly, Gabo also serves as a source of comedy, which will be demonstrated in the section on stereotypes.

Among other functions, both Rytmus and Gabo also deliver a commentary on the social situation of Roma, which deserves its own analysis. For example, Gabo talks about how difficult it is for Gypsies to find work. He also mentions: "Only the newspapers write about us Gypsies—and only when it's something bad." Furthermore, police brutality against Roma is addressed in *Invalid* on multiple occasions. In the first scene, one sees the armed response unit storm the museum, where the vengeance took place. Inside, they find innocent Gabo, drag him out, and start to beat him, automatically assuming that the Roma must be a criminal. Soon after, when

Gabo enters the investigators' office, he asks when they will start to beat him. When the police officers apologize to Gabo for the previous behaviour of their colleagues, Gabo says: "That is alright, they were just doing their job." Gabo, despite being a peaceful and kind character, seems used to the violent treatment of the police, and throughout the film, he tries to avoid the police station. Another example of social commentary appears in *Tempos*. Rytmus shows the contradiction between the majority's desire to assimilate Roma and their interest in the Roma rapper singing about the Roma experience, using Romani language. "The biggest paradox is that I rap about the Roma and the White like it," says the rapper.

Both films also use television to comment on Roma's situation. The films contradict what the TV says through its Roma characters, who either respond to the TV or simply by who they are, they refute the image of Roma portrayed on the TV. For instance, *Tempos* uses archival television footage in which the TV anchor mentions maladjusted citizens or the primacy of the Slovak language. The TV footage is followed by Rytmus saying: "As a young boy whose dreams are mocked by the system, you have two options: either you give up and fit in, or you go against the stream." Moreover, although fictitious, television is also used in *Invalid*. A politician talks about the "Gypsy problem" on TV as part of his election campaign. He promises to bring "the final solution to the Roma question". He says, "It is necessary for Roma to finally realize that the laws and obligations apply to them as much as to everyone else." Later in the film, the viewer sees that the politician preaching about law and order is backed by the mafia, which steals, beats, and even kills, as opposed to a good-hearted, and assiduous Gabo. The film asks: *Who is the real problem, the real criminal in this state?*

5.2 Invisibility of Roma

With two major Romani characters and appearances of Roma in six films, it cannot be claimed that they are absent from recent popular Slovak cinema. However, they remain invisible in the other films. The remaining eight films do not feature Roma, even in minor or background

roles. One might argue that, particularly regarding background characters, it is not always possible to determine who is Roma. However, professional Romani actors were also absent from the other films. Nonetheless, my argument emphasizes the invisibility of Roma rather than the insufficient employment of Roma as actors.

The invisibility of Roma in cinematic reality can convey messages that are harmful to society. The portrayal of a homogeneous Slovak reality is not only unrealistic but also perpetuates misconceptions about reality that contribute to the oppression of Roma. Firstly, it seems that Slovaks (and Czechs, since many films are co-created with Czech actors and filmmakers) occupy a privileged position in society. Secondly, the lack of interaction between the majority and the "other" normalizes societal divisions. Thirdly, the absence of Roma sends a message that they are an insignificant part of reality, which does not need to be represented and reflected in the filmic narrative. This issue affects all minorities, who fade from reality on screen. While it is not the film's primary goal to replicate reality, the choices made about who to portray and who to overlook reveal much about the dynamics of dominant society; who deserves to be seen and who does not. These ideas are then conveyed to the audience.

5.3 Identity and Socio-Economic Background of the Roma Characters

Romani characters were generally portrayed neutrally or positively, and their diverse identities ranged from fighters to ringmasters, unemployed musicians, dancers, rappers, and mafiosi. The frequency of the mafiosi characters can be attributed to the recent Slovak filmography abounds with films about mafia and politics.

Nevertheless, the characters can be divided into two categories: 1) poor, unemployed, but amiable characters with restricted agency, and 2) financially secure, capable, confident, and powerful characters. The residents of the settlements, Roma street musicians, Gabo, and his family fall under the first category. On the one hand, they have the viewer's sympathies; on the

other, they seem involuntarily passive or at least constrained by their situation, which begs for the viewer's empathy. Nevertheless, their poverty is addressed superficially, and the dire reality of the poor is hidden behind romanticized images of joy and dancing. Attila's friends, fighters, or coaches, Rytmus, and variations of mafioso Holub, are successful, ambitious, intelligent, and wealthy. The middle-class Roma are generally missing.

5.4 Stereotypes and Their Purpose

While stereotypes are still present, they are used moderately, except in the films *Invalid* and Perinbaba: Two Realms. The former builds its comedy on stereotypes and employs the trope of a Happy Gypsy. Gabo is free-thinking, happy, kind, friendly, but naive and sometimes foolish. The humor arises from his blatant lies or his feigned ignorance to evade responsibility. Another source of stereotypical comedy is Gabo's lack of knowledge; for instance, during the entire interrogation, Gabo wears an SS uniform, which he obtained from the museum while assisting Lacko in preparing for vengeance. He is oblivious to the implications of such a uniform; Gabo simply found it appealing. Furthermore, Roma characters are frequently depicted stealing or discussing ways to skirt the law as if it were their norm. For example, at the start, Gabo's nephews are seen stealing a manhole cover. "Stealing iron" is a very stereotypical image of Roma. When Gabo narrates the story to the policemen, he falsely claims that the kids merely wanted to clean the cover and later return it. Or, during his interrogation, Gabo remarks: "Lacko had a perfect bicycle. I am surprised no one had stolen it from him." Objectively, however, many other non-Roma characters, such as the policemen, the politician, Lacko, and others, are equally portrayed as foolish and stereotypical in this comedy. Moving on to Perinbaba: Two Realms presents a highly stereotypical and exoticized image of Roma, characteristic of a fairytale. The ringmaster, with his secrets, and his daughters exemplify the cinematic Gypsy trope. The travelers arrive at Lukáš's place at night with a traditional wagon and horses. When the girls notice that Lukáš has food, they grab it without asking. Then the

flirty eldest daughter reads Lukáš's future from his hand and predicts that he will find his love. The daughters are also dressed in traditional Romani attire, including red skirts and scarves, and wear flowers in their hair.

Nevertheless, the most commonly used stereotypes are clothing, music, fortune-telling, settlements, poverty, and the multiplicity of children. Gabo's sister, the ringmaster's daughters, and the girl playing music in the village market wear traditional Romani clothes, scarves, and golden jewelry. Roma in settlements are always colourfully dressed. Similarly, the Romani assistants of the mafioso Holub are dressed more colorfully than other bodyguards and wear striking jewelry. Another frequent stereotype is music. In *Perinbaba: Two Realms,* one sees a Romani female village musician, and Rytmus meets a Romani street musician in *Tempos.* In *Invalid,* the residents of the settlement dance, and the Romani music accompanies the scenes from the settlement. Lastly, throughout the film, Gabo talks about how he likes to sing to himself when he gets angry. Moreover, the stereotype of fortunetelling occurs in *Perinbaba: Two Realms,* in which the daughter reads from the main character's hand, and the whole family has a magical atmosphere around them. In *Cernak,* there is a rumour that Holub went to a fortuneteller and asked her to make Cernak die. Holub later admits that he occasionally visits a fortuneteller. Next, although not fortunetelling, strong religiosity is portrayed in *Invalid,* where Gabo's sister is praying in a room full of religious images. Finally, the scenes from the settlements always include many children, and the ringmaster's seven daughters equally support the stereotype of Roma having multiple children.

The stereotypical portrayal has generally three functions within the films: 1) to identify Roma; 2) to create comedy, and 3) to reflect on the stereotypes. To begin with, stereotypes can be used ordinarily to signify the character's ethnicity. For instance, in *Perinbaba: Two Realms*, although the circus travellers are not called Roma at any point, the stereotypes representing them allude to their ethnicity. Equally, the films use the settlement, music, or clothes as a

characteristic of Roma, and "to create the Romani reality". Regarding the comedy, as was already mentioned, stereotypes are one of the primary sources of comedy in the film *Invalid*. Additionally, *Cernak* uses the Romani ethnicity of Holub to create comedy and tension when the non-Roma mafiosi joke about Holub: "…you, Holubs, arrived here in caravans… (referring to the nomadic lifestyle and means of travel of some Roma)"

Stereotypes are also used to be later challenged. Films accomplish this through exaggerated and excessive use of stereotypes, juxtaposing stereotypes with counter-stereotypical representations to complicate reality, and assigning Roma stereotypes to non-Roma characters to reveal society's double standards. These strategies encourage reflection on societal perspectives regarding Roma. For example, Rytmus, who is proud of being Roma, appropriates and exaggerates many stereotypes.

"I don't feel cold, I'm evil, I'm always down

I love street whores, listen to me

I dream of success, getting up from the bottom

I'm full of love, yet sometimes my heart is sick."

(Lyrics of the song *Gypsy Dream* (Cigánsky sen))

The lyrics can be understood as a provocation and an embrace of an identity despite it being undesirable in the eyes of the majority. Furthermore, when all these stereotypes are put together in one space, it makes one question: *Is it not too much?* Such condensation ridicules the stereotypical image, one may believe. Another strategy used in *Invalid* is to juxtapose stereotypes with their opposites. For example, while Gabo is naïve and does not mind skirting the law, he is also meek and kind and is proud of owning a collection of books. His sister is responsible, does not want her family involved in any crime, makes her children speak Slovak, and generally strives for a better life. Her house is spotless and well-decorated. Although her sons are mischievous, her daughter is studious. In addition, she is also courageous, and when the Romani usurer comes, she loudly tells him to clear off. The usurer slaps her. Overall, this

scene both recreates and challenges the patriarchal stereotype. The films *Invalid* and *Tempos* put the stereotypes into perspective by attributing the same characteristics to non-Roma. In *Invalid*, most non-Roma characters, politicians, mafiosi, and Lacko commit horrendous crimes, while on the Roma side, Gabo mentions electricity theft and his nephews steal the manhole cover.

5.5 Portrayal of Co-Existence between Majority and Minority

Although films depict a clear divide between the majority and the Romani minority, they also promote equality and showcase cooperation, friendships, and generally positive relationships between the two groups. Except for Attila and Once Upon a Time in the East, ethnic differences are highlighted through distinctive clothing, lifestyle, language, value systems, or living separately from the non-Roma. Rytmus distinguishes between Roma and Gadjo rap. Additionally, in *Invalid*, the friendship between Gabo and the main character, Lacko, surprises both ethnic groups. "I have never seen a Gypsy that would befriend a Gadjo," Gabo's neighbor claims.

Despite the difference, Roma are shown as equals and create bonds with non-Roma. Rytmus emphasises the value of and respect for every culture and ethnicity, and when he presents the new album, he highlights its colourfulness. "This is the gist of Kontrafakt (name of the rap group). Colours. Ego (fellow rapper) is a gadjo, I am Roma…" Indeed, in *Invalid,* Roma are often met with discrimination, avoidance, derogatory remarks, and racism in police and politics. However, the film condemns them and promotes equality and the possibility of building bridges between the two societies. Lacko overcomes his aversion to Roma and becomes friends with them, accepting their differences and better comprehending their situation. In one scene, the audience sees Lacko complain about how difficult it is to be a serviceman, who everyone keeps at arm's length. Gabo's look says it all. He understands what Lacko is talking about very well. Positive interaction, or cooperation between Roma and non-

Roma, is present in every film, which can be exemplified by the colleagues and friends of Rytmus and Attila, who are of all ethnic origins, multiethnic mafia groups, and the friendship of Lacko and Gabo at the forefront of *Invalid.*

In conclusion, the trends observed in recent Slovak and European cinematography by other scholars (Krajč 2021; Mojžišová 2014; 2022; Škobla 2020; Wódzka 2023), such as Roma-specific cinematic tropes and stereotypes, but also a recent shift towards more realistic representation and cultivation of interethnic bridges, countering stereotypes and anti-Roma sentiments, have also been identified in the films made between 2020 and 2025. On the contrary, the films touched very lightly upon a deeper understanding of the problems of Roma.

Conclusion

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the representation of Roma in the fifteen most popular Slovak films screened in cinemas between 2020 and 2025, this thesis aimed to discover the usual positions of Roma characters within Slovak films, the identities and stereotypes associated with Roma, and how the coexistence between Roma and non-Roma is portrayed.

While six of the viewed films featured a Roma character, the other eight films illustrated a Slovak reality devoid of Romani characters, replicating the dominance of non-Roma and the broader invisibility of Roma. Regarding their position in films, Roma assumed mainly minor and background roles that served ethnic and world-building purposes. Two Romani characters had a central role in the films. Among other functions, they acted as commentators on the Romani situation. Through them, the films opposed prejudiced and hateful practices and rhetoric. Identities of the depicted Roma were notably diverse, although two main types emerged: 1) poor, struggling yet joyful and sympathetic characters, and 2) successful, wealthy, and self-assured individuals. The stereotypes and cinematic tropes related to Roma were observed. Most stereotypical representations were positive, such as representations of clothing or music, while some were derisive towards the characters, such as portraying naivety. The stereotypes were used as ethnic markers, for comedy, or to be subsequently challenged by anti-stereotypical representations of Roma. Lastly, while the distinction between Roma and non-Roma remained prominent, the films either depicted or advocated for interethnic equality and neutral to positive relationships.

Due to limited time and space, the solution to the puzzle that prompted this thesis remains unresolved. Therefore, I will summarize the limitations of this thesis and suggest ideas for future research. Firstly, focusing on commercial mainstream movies does not allow for

drawing broad conclusions about Roma in current Slovak cinematography as a whole. To rectify this, it is vital to explore more cinematic films and other types of content, such as productions from TV and streaming platforms, including shows and series. Secondly, interviews with filmmakers could provide greater insight into their thought processes regarding Romani characters and the challenges they face. Lastly, it would be essential to determine what moods and ideas different portrayals evoke in viewers through surveys, interviews, or focus groups to fully understand which representations should be favored. In this regard, I want to emphasize the importance of learning how Romani viewers think and feel about their own representation.

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Annex: Analysis of the Roma Characters

Table 3: Analysis of the Roma Characters in the Film Invalid

Film Title (EN)	Invalid					
Roma Character	Gabo	Gabo's sister	Gabo's nephews	Gabo's niece	Young mafioso	Residents of the settlement
Category	Supporting character	Minor character	Minor characters	Minor character	Minor character	Background characters
Narrative Function	Opposition to the main protagonist, assistance to the main character, source of ideas, comedy, and commentary on the situation of Roma.	Supports the theme, anti-stereotypical character.	Comedy, exposition of information	Supports the theme, anti-stereotypical character.r	Minor antagonist, represents the bad Roma.	Social and cultural context, atmosphere
Complexity	Moderately complex, but no character development	Simple	Simple	Simple	Simple	No
Agency	Limited by the circumstances and world around him	Limited	-	-	Strong	-
Personality	Good-hearted, loyal, friendly, selfless, helpful, canny, witty, naïve, uneducated, fair in his own sense.	Strict, caring, religious, hard-working, intelligent	Canny, playful	Studious, polite	Violent, immoral,	
Socio-economic status	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Wealthy	Poor
Occupation	Unemployed	Unemployed, mother	Pupils	Pupil	Mafioso, usurer	-

Housing	Shack in the Roma settlement	Shack in the Roma settlement	Shack in the Roma settlement	Shack in the Roma settlement	-	Shack in the Roma settlement
Stereotypes	Music, sings to himself, naivety, stupidity, lying, poverty, stealing, electricity theft, unemployment, lives in a settlement.	Religiosity, colourful clothes with traditional patterns, golden jewelry, poverty, and settlement.	Stealing a manhole cover, cheeky	-	Fancy colourful clothes, fancy car, usurer, jewelry, violent, criminal	Dancing, flocks of children, football, poverty, settlement, colourful clothes.
Anti-stereotypes	Fairness, helpfulness, and a will to work, wit, likes to read, owns books, good-heartedness.	She pressures children to speak Slovak and study, and reprimands them when they steal. She is responsible, intelligent, courageous, maintains a clean and pretty house, takes care of her family, is hard-working, and wants a better life for her children.	-	Studious, the best in her class	Part of the ethnically mixed mafia group	Welcoming to the non-Roma man, although surprised.
Majority-minority dynamics	Became friends with a non-Roma man, who disliked him at first. Non-Roma offend him on multiple occasions. He dislikes police due to the violent and racist treatment.	Allows Gabo's non-Roma friend, who killed someone, to hide in her house.	Help the non-Roma man when asked to.		The mafia group he is part of is ethnically mixed. The group beats the main non-Roma protagonist, who eventually kills them. .	They like Gabo's non-Roma friend but are surprised by his arrival. Later, they have fun with the non-Roma man, dancing, playing football, etc.

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Table 4: Analysis of the Roma Characters in the Film Tempos

Film Title (EN)	Tempos				
Roma Character	Rytmus	Family and friends in the archival footage	Youth in the staged B-roll footage	Roma men in the music video clip	Street-musician
Category	Main character	Background characters	Background characters	Background characters	Minor character
Narrative Function	Narrator, educator, motivator, and moral guidance	World-building	World-building, social, and cultural context	World-building, social, and cultural context	Comedy, social, and cultural context, symbolism, archetypal character, contrast
Complexity	Complex, lack of negative characteristics	-	-	No	No
Agency	Strong	-	-	-	-
Personality	Cool, ambitious, self-confident, proud, modest, independent, hard-working, rebellious, disciplined	-	-	-	-
Socio-economic status	From working class to extremely wealthy	Working class	Working class	Poor	Poor
Occupation	Rapper, actor, celebrity	Dancers, children	-	-	Street musician
Housing	From a block of flats to a big house	Housing estate	Housing estate	Settlement	-
Stereotypes	Stereotypes in the lyrics of Rytmus' songs, embracing and exaggerating them, such as dirtiness, promiscuity, vulgarity, etc..	No	No	Poverty, a flock running after Rytmus	Possibly poverty, music
Anti-stereotypes	-	-	-	-	-
Majority-minority dynamics	He has non-Roma friends and colleagues, is always surrounded by all ethnicities, and advocates for common respect and appreciation. He says that Roma are different, but their differences are valuable. He distances himself from non-Roma (gadjo) and the lazy and dirty people (degeš, often associated with Roma).	Mixed groups	Mixed groups	Living in a segregated area	-

Film Title (EN)	Cernak	
Roma Character	(Róbert) Holub, Eastern-Slovak mafia boss	Holub's associates
Category	Minor character	Background characters
Narrative Function	Advancement of the plot, antagonist, based on a true story character,	Social and cultural context, world-building
Complexity	Simple	-
Agency	Strong	-
Personality	Self-sure, leader, calculating, mischievous, brutal	Silent, brutal, obedient
Socio-economic status	Probably rich	-
Occupation	Mafia boss	Assistants to the mafia boss
Housing	-	-
Stereotypes	Colourful clothing and a patterned vest, visits a fortune-teller, joke about travelling by caravans.	Dressed more colourfully than non-Roma mafiosi
Anti-stereotypes	-	-
Majority-minority dynamics	He is made fun of by the non-Roma mafiosi, who ask him if he came by a caravan.	-

Table 6: Analysis of the Roma Characters in the Film Once Upon a Time in the East

Film Title (EN)	Once Upon a Time in the East	
Roma Character	Berci – inspired by the true character of Holub, an Eastern Slovak mafia boss	Berci's associate
Category	Minor character	Background character
Narrative Function	Antagonist, advancement of the plot, comedy, violence	World-building
Complexity	Simple	-
Agency	Strong	-
Personality	Self-sure, leader, violent, vulgar, brutal	Violent, obedient
Socio-economic status	Rich	-
Occupation	Mafia boss	Assistant to the mafia boss
Housing	Villa	-
Stereotypes	Exaggerated chain with a cross, extravagant clothing	No
Anti-stereotypes	-	-
Majority-minority dynamics	The mafia group is multi-ethnic.	The mafia group is multi-ethnic.

Table 7: Analysis of the Roma Characters in the Film Perinbaba: Two Realms

Film Title (EN)	Perinbaba: Two Realms			
Roma Character	Ringmaster	Ringmaster's eldest daughter	Other ringmaster's daughters	A female musician in the village market
Category	Minor character	Minor character	Background characters	Background character
Narrative Function	Exposition of information, decoration, atmosphere	Exposition of information, decoration, atmosphere	Atmosphere, decoration, symbolic	Atmosphere
Complexity	Simple	Simple	Simple	-
Agency	Does have	No	No	-
Personality	Peculiar, mysterious, confident, persuasive, free, intrusive	Flirty, mysterious	Playful, joyful, uninhibited	-
Socio-economic status	Rather poor	Rather poor	Rather poor	Rather poor
Occupation	Ringmaster, magician, storyteller	Performer, fortuneteller	Performers, children	Musician
Housing	Nomads moving with a wagon and horses	Nomads moving with a wagon and horses	Nomads moving with a wagon and horses	-
Stereotypes	Colourful clothes, wagon, horses, nomadic lifestyle, freedom, mystery	Flirting, fortune-telling, red flower in hair, red skirt, traditional scarf, long black hair	Take the food without asking, red flower in hair, red skirt, traditional scarf, long black hair	Traditional scarf and clothing, music, joy, dancing
Anti-stereotypes	-	-	-	-
Majority-minority dynamics	He is seen as an entertainer by the non-Roma; he is trusted and welcomed by the main non-Roma character	Reads the main character's hand, he is surprised but submits himself	-	-

Film Title (EN)	Attila	
Roma Character	Attila Végh – uncertain whether he is Romani, the only clues are a Hungarian song sung by a Romani author playing in the car, and a jacket with writing *Gypsy*, which Attila wears in a few second shot. Therefore, this character will not be fully considered.	Attila's friends – identified as Roma only by their physical features.
Category	-	Minor characters
Narrative Function	-	Testimony
Complexity	-	Simple
Agency	-	Does have
Personality	-	-
Socio-economic status	-	Probably upper middle class or middle class
Occupation	-	Fighters, coaches
Housing	-	-
Stereotypes	-	No, ethnicity was not at all mentioned or discussed in the film.
Anti-stereotypes	-	-
Majority-minority dynamics	-	Have friends, colleagues, and clients who are non-Roma.