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"Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves": Examining Representations of Roma Culture in 70 Years of American Television

Adina Schneeweis[1] and Katherine A. Foss[2]

Abstract

Most Americans know little about the "Gypsies," or Roma, other than what they learn in the media. Although research shows that media have perpetuated stereotypes, there is thin anthological attention to the representation of Gypsies in American media. This study examines portrayals of Gypsies in fictional and reality television programs 1953-2014, and reveals that American television has reinforced stereotypes, suggesting that Gypsies are consistently different, a closed ethnic community resistant to change. More recent representations convey that Gypsies may be misunderstood due to their cultural history, yet this considerably less visible depiction emerges as a mere nod toward tolerance.

Keywords

Gypsy/Roma, fictional television, reality television, textual analysis, gender, ethnicity

In 1971, Cher topped the Billboard charts with her number one hit "Gypsys [*sic*], Tramps & Thieves" about a nomadic Gypsy girl and her tribe of swindlers (Stone, 1971), reinforcing most Americans' perceptions of the Roma peoples, commonly known as the Gypsies. This "Gypsy" archetype has been a staple of American popular culture. Even with an estimated 1 million people who identify as Roma in the United States, most Americans have had little firsthand experience with the group and instead

[1]Oakland University, Rochester, MI, USA
[2]Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, USA

Corresponding Author:
Adina Schneeweis, Department of Communication and Journalism, Oakland University, 317 Wilson Hall, Rochester, MI 48309, USA.
Email: schneewe@oakland.edu

learn about them from the dominant media and social system—particularly through television, which stands as an information source and a model to emulate (L. Gross, 2001; Merskin, 1998; Webley, 2010). In recent years, a number of television genres have embraced the Roma as a new topic for representations (for instance, *My Big Fat American Gypsy Wedding*, *Gypsy Sisters*, *American Gypsies*, or *The Riches*—all of these produced and broadcast since the 2000s). At the same time, research has repeatedly documented media representations of Gypsies to be stereotypical (Belton, 2005; P. Gross, 2006; Imre, 2015; Iordanova, 2001; Kabachnik, 2009; Lemon, 2000; Malvinni, 2004; Schneeweis, 2012), and wider advocacy and human rights have decried Roma discrimination (Mohanty, 1991; Schneeweis, 2014; Vermeersch, 2006; Zare & Mendoza, 2012). Scholars have argued that such images "can harm a group of people already under scrutiny" and inter-ethnic living most generally, "since people know so little about [the Roma] and yet think they know so much" (Marafioti, 2012). Given the limited opportunity for Roma–non-Roma interaction in the United States, and the noted stereotypes, the continued success of television programs today suggests that there is an image of "the Gypsy" that inhabits a larger space in the American imagination than within U.S. community life. This study grapples with the trajectory of the representations of the Roma on American television, seeking to further understanding about the possible effects on public opinion and popular culture about the Roma.

Evaluations of American media portrayals of Roma are limited. While abundant scholarship has documented problematic media depictions of Native Americans (e.g., Merskin, 1998; Raheja, 2011; Rollins & O'Connor, 2011), Arab Americans (e.g., Gavrilos, 2002; Said, 2003; Suleiman, 1999), Asian Americans (e.g., Kawai, 2005; Nakayama, 2002), and Hispanic and Latino minorities (e.g., Mendible, 2007; Valdivia, 2000), few have attempted similar anthological efforts for the representations of Gypsy/Roma. This study begins to fill that gap, contributing to scholarship on ethnicity and race in the media, and asks, who are the Gypsies in the American mediated imagination? How has this knowledge-production evolved in time in the media? The study focuses on the constructions of "Gypsies" in American fictional and reality TV programming, which constitute, while not exhaustively, a genealogy of representations. This study offers an evolutionary tale, from the mid-20th century golden age of television to the present, even though it is difficult to identify an entrance point for the construct of the Gypsy on the U.S. cultural scene.

This study is theoretically grounded in cultural studies research that examines texts as complex discursive strategies located in, and productive of, specific ideological and cultural assumptions (Saukko, 2003). Away from traditional interpretations of representation as *re*-presentation of an out-there, real-world referent, cultural studies scholars have drawn from the landmark work of Stuart Hall (1997a) to conceive of meaning and knowledge only once represented, and stereotyping as a representational practice that fixes meanings. Michel Foucault's (1990) theorization of knowledge and truth production is used here, which asserts that the frequency of certain imagery is significant, because knowledge is produced by repetition, emphasis, and explanation, and by linking new information to commonly held truths.

Gypsies in the Media

"Age-old" representations of Gypsies include characterizations such as lazy, poor, dirty, unreliable, dangerous, dishonest, untrustworthy, irresponsible, and promiscuous (Cohn, 1973; Csepeli & Simon, 2004; Erjavec, 2001; Hancock, 1985, 1987, 2008; Kabachnik, 2009; Lemon, 2000; McVeigh, 1997). Differently, Western media, arts, and literature have painted bohemian, romantic, nomadic, and artistic Gypsies, who sing and dance, live in colorful wagons, tell fortunes, and are in touch with nature, artistic, free spirited, and romantic (Charnon-Deutsch, 2002; Cohn, 1973; Hancock, 2008; Lemon, 2000). The two seemingly dissimilar approaches to representation are intertwined, where contemporary discourses of exclusion build on romantic depictions of traveling Gypsies (Charnon-Deutsch, 2002) or of the *other* within, and anti-immigration sentiments collapse Roma migrants to other non-nationals (Schneeweis, 2014), further reinforcing White ideology of racial supremacy (Imre, 2015).

The representation of the Gypsy woman has been traced to the mistreatment of women in medieval societies, when it was not uncommon for women to be subjected to severe laws and punishment, including death. The media have portrayed Gypsy women both as oppressed and as free spirited, idealized into "a symbol of female strength, cunning, and independence" (Radulescu, 2008, p. 203). Many "Spanish Gypsies," like Hugo's Esmeralda or Carmen, have been represented to be non-White, beautiful, kind, hopeful, and naïve (Charnon-Deutsch, 2002). This abstract Gypsy girl/woman has become a commodity in a popular culture, void of any real-world meaning, and transformed exclusively into an object of gaze (Schneeweis, 2014), and for such reasons, the analysis pays specific attention to the gendered representation of Gypsies.

Popular Television and Perception

Research has demonstrated the profound effects that television can have on public perception of race and underrepresented groups (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Heavy viewers of television are more likely to believe ethnic stereotypes than those who watch fewer hours of television (Lee, Bichard, Irey, Walt, & Carlson, 2009). Viewers of comedic sketches that perpetuated negative stereotypes are far more likely to judge subjects of news stories by race (Ford, 1997), whereas fans of TV news tend to hold more negative attitudes toward African Americans than light news viewers (Northup, 2010). In another study, participants who viewed stereotypical depictions of Black women held more negative perceptions of African American over Caucasian women (Brown Givens & Monahan, 2005). These effects are more profound when people have limited interaction with an underrepresented group; for example, Caucasian people who learned about Latinos from television were much more likely to believe negative stereotypes, compared with those with personal interaction (Dong & Murrillo, 2007).

Studies on reality television demonstrate similar effects. Since the genre's bloom in the 2000s, it has been used to portray subcultures largely ignored in mainstream media,

showcasing the lives of "little people," polygamous families, and, of course, Romani culture. This genre encourages escapism and voyeurism, and its appeal is driven by curiosity and the temptation of the world between that which "is" and what "could be," especially when shows feature people vastly different than themselves (Barton, 2009; Lundy, Ruth, & Park, 2008; Reiss & Wiltz, 2004; Schroeder, 2006). Some reality programs, like *Little People, Big World*, arguably use the show "as a platform to educate the public and advocate for people with dwarfism" (Backstrom, 2012, pp. 694-695)—For instance, Matt Roloff, who is a little person, narrates the program and is credited as an executive producer. Yet even in this context, Backstrom noted somewhat conflicting messages about dwarfism in the show—positive self-identity while showcasing limitations of his condition. Psaila (2014) pointed out that Roloff's affluence makes the depictions unrealistic. Moreover, Backstrom (2012) argued that another reality show, *Ruby*, blames and stigmatizes those who are morbidly obese, despite giving voice to a representative of this marginalized group. Even with offering different perspectives of underrepresented populations, such programs perpetuate stereotypes, domination, and oppression of non-mainstream groups, who are usually depicted as homogeneous (Cooke-Jackson & Hansen, 2008; Schroeder, 2006; Squires, 2008; Wang, 2010). Given the substantial "decontextualization of social issues in reality TV portrayals" (Andrejevic & Colby, 2006, p. 196), and the lack of interaction that most non-Roma have had with Romani communities in the United States, it is assumed here that depictions in U.S. television have shaped and continue to influence the beliefs about this culture for mainstream Americans.

Method

As we sought to examine the genealogical trajectory of Roma representations on American television, we asked the following questions to guide the research: How have Gypsies/Roma been constructed on American television? How is gender constructed in these representations? How have these depictions of Gypsies/Roma changed over time? To what extent do reality programs of Gypsies/Roma fit into these fictional portrayals? This study seeks to contribute to academic knowledge of ethnic representations over time, given theoretical and critical observation in scholarship about changing stereotypes and societal perceptions of gender, race, ethnicity, and otherness in general. Where do the Roma fit along the representational continuum between invisibility, otherness, and normalcy?

To address such questions, a textual analysis of fictional and reality television programs was conducted. The method is useful to explore "the social practices, representations, assumptions, and stories" depicted in media texts (Brennen, 2013, p. 194), which are read closely, evaluated within other discourse—what Fairclough (2003) called "'interdiscursive analysis,' that is, seeing texts in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together" (p. 3). Fürsich (2009) further argued,

> Media texts present a distinctive discursive moment between encoding and decoding that justifies special scholarly engagement. The narrative character of media content, its

> potential as a site of ideological negotiation and its impact as mediated "reality" necessitates interpretation in its own right. (p. 238)

Recognizing that texts are not regarded as fixed mirrors of society, but as fluid, ideological, and speak of power relations at the same time, the analysis examined images, dialogue, body language, costumes and makeup, mise-en-scène, and visual composition (Hall, 1997a). Less explicit meanings were also sought, drawing from Saukko's (2003) conceptualization that, beyond verbal or written statements and their "formal or aesthetic features," (p. 99) texts must be considered *con*textually, in their historical, political, and social circumstances. In other words, to study texts, including television programs, is to analyze the ideological products of a specific moment in time (Larsen, 1991). Therefore, looking at shows from different eras can provide insight into shifts in stereotypes and other indicators of change.

The genres of fictional and reality television programs were chosen as they have yielded much higher viewership than news broadcasts. For example, an average of 19 million people watched the program *House, M.D.* in 2007[1] (Johnson, 2007) compared with an estimated 8.4 million viewers who watched the top-rated news program of the time, *NBC Nightly News With Brian Williams* (Ariens, 2007). Furthermore, people watch entertainment programs long after broadcast, through syndication, online streaming, or on DVDs, meaning that texts created decades earlier continue to be part of contemporary popular culture (Mittell, 2010).

The Programs

The analysis used a purposive sample to identify fictional representations from the beginning of popular American television to present time. An Internet search[2] using the keywords "Gypsy," "Gypsies," "Roma," and "Traveller" yielded 84 episodes from 36 fictional TV programs, with the first identified representation broadcast in 1953,[3] and through 2014[4] (see Table 1). The two reality programs examined were *My Big Fat American Gypsy Wedding* (*Wedding*, from here onward), broadcast on The Learning Channel (TLC), and *American Gypsies*, which ran for one season on the National Geographic Channel (NGC). *Wedding* built on the already successful British program *My Big Fat Gypsy Weddings*,[5] and followed different American Gypsy communities, as they plan weddings, baby showers, birthday parties, and other events. The program *American Gypsies* featured the Johns family of New York (patriarch Bob Sr., matriarch Tina, their five sons, daughters-in-law, several grandchildren, and the first great-grandchild), and each episode centers on the conflict between two sons, Bobby, the voice of adaptation to U.S. culture, and Nicky, an ardent protector of Roma tradition. The analysis included 17 hr-long episodes, eight of *Wedding* and nine of *American Gypsies*, originally aired in the summer of 2012.

The analysis used a coding guide built on the literature review, which included identifying representations of tradition (e.g., nomadism, arranged marriage, or psychic shops), "bohemian" traits (such as flouncy clothing, singing, or dancing), criminal characteristics (like stealing, thieving, or scamming), and alternative depictions. Characters identified as Roma, Travelers, and Gypsies were analyzed for their

physical appearance, speech, mannerisms, and behavior. The narrative function of the Gypsy characters (central or peripheral), the language used (including accents and/or poor grammar), and interactions between Gypsies and with non-Gypsy characters, as well as symbols and metaphors, were also noted. The sample was divided between the two researchers, who also jointly examined episodes from each genre to ensure consistent interpretation.

Findings: Representations of Gypsy Culture

The textual analysis of the 84 episodes of fictional TV programs and 17 episodes of reality shows revealed specifically contoured Gypsy characters, explained through both Gypsy and non-Gypsy voices (see Table 1). Most Gypsy characters only appeared in single storylines, which often included a "Gypsy" reference in the episode's title,[6] for instance, "Gypsy Destiny" (Lamb, Mulford, & Abrahams, 1953), "Gypsy Eyes" (Bellisario & Wharmby, 1998), or simply "Gypsy," "The Gypsy," or "The Gypsies" (Bullock, Allen, & Kinon, 1970; Hamner, Savage, & Harris, 1973; MacLane & Rafkin, 1966; *Night Court*, 1984; Upton, Marcus, Gerard, & Newland, 1960). Only five programs had serial storylines with Gypsy characters, extending beyond a single episode: *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012), Season 2 of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Davies, 1998), FX's *The Riches* (Paterson & Kurta, 2007-2008), the series *Crash* (Mazzara, Mann, Kim, & Bookstaver, 2008), and the fifth season of *The Vampire Diaries* (2013-2014). People identified as Gypsies appeared in all episodes of the reality shows studied.

The first research question asked how Gypsies have been represented on American television. Five constructed themes emerged from the analysis (see Table 1): the ethnic *other*, Gypsy tradition, the swindler, the magical and irresistible fortune-teller, and the misunderstood. Both fictional and reality programs clearly convey that Gypsies are a different group, a closed ethnic community, resistant to change and with its own internal dynamics. The second research question asked whether Gypsies' constructions have changed over time. Throughout the time period studied, the role of Gypsies as outsiders and peripheral characters persists, accompanied in contemporary depictions by the more politically correct construction of "the misunderstood" Gypsy, albeit still limited and presented as an outsider.

The Ethnic Other

All American programs between 1953 and 2014 rely on the physical depiction of Gypsy characters, how they speak, how they dress, and the physical environments where they live to signify "Gypsies," a group that is perceived as frightening and undesirable to the non-Gypsy protagonists, reinforcing existing stereotypes. Gypsy[7] communities are presented as closed-off, separate, and isolated from mainstream America, and engage in non-American, non-mainstream, non-normal behaviors, exotic-looking dancing, cooking over a fire, or lounging near their wagon, and, often, criminal behavior. Most Gypsies embody similar physical characteristics, with dark

Table 1. Representations of Roma in Fictional American Television.

Program (season.episode number)	Year	Ethnic *other*	Tradition	Swindler	Fortune-teller	Misunderstood
The Gene Autry Show (3.7)	1953	x	x	x		x
I Love Lucy (2.5)	1954	x				
Bonanza (1.31)	1960	x	x	x	x	
One Step Beyond (2.34)	1960	x		x		
Car 54, Where Are You? (1.9)	1961	x				
Dennis the Menace (4.6)	1962	x	x	x	x	
Mister Ed (4.19)	1964	x			x	
Honey West (1.24)	1965	x		x		
The Andy Griffith Show (6.23)	1966	x	x		x	
The Big Valley (2.14)	1966	x	x	x	x	
The Monkees (1.16)	1966	x	x	x	x	
F Troop (1.24)	1966	x		x	x	
The Wild Wild West (2.18)	1967	x		x	x	
Hogan's Heroes (6.13)	1970	x				
The Waltons (1.19)	1973	x	x	x		x
Kojak (2.18)	1975	x	x	x	x	
Kojak (4.25)	1977	x	x	x	x	
Night Court (2.16)	1984	x		x	x	
Married With Children (3.8)	1989	x			x	
Beverly Hills, 90210 (6.8)	1995	x		x	x	
Highlander (4.22)	1996	x	x	x	x	
Buffy the Vampire Slayer (2.13-2.22)	1998	x	x		x	x
JAG (4.1)	1998	x	x	x	x	
Charmed (5.6)	2002	x		x	x	x
Law & Order: Criminal Intent (2.21)	2003	x	x	x		
House (3.13)	2006	x	x			x
The Riches (1.1-2.7)	2007-2008	x	x	x		
Crash (1.5)	2008	x	x	x		
Criminal Minds (4.13)	2009	x	x	x		x
It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia (5.2)	2009	x		x		
Mad Men (13.11)	2009	x				
Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (13.9)	2011	x	x	x		x
My Big Fat American Gypsy Wedding (1.1-1.8)	2012	x	x	x	x	
American Gypsies (1.1-1.9)	2012	x	x	x	x	x
The Glades (4.7)	2013	x	x	x		

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Program (season.episode number)	Year	Ethnic *other*	Tradition	Swindler	Fortune-teller	Misunderstood
The Vampire Diaries (5.1-5.22)	2013-2014	x	x	x	x	x
Supernatural (9.13)	2014	x		x	x	

Note. Shaded cells help visually separate the decades.

hair and olive complexions. Particularly in earlier programs, the ethnic characters use broken language, heavy accent, or poor grammar, communicating in simple, short sentences or in monologues with nonsense words about "the moon and the stars" (for instance, Upton et al., 1960). This narrative technique that reifies their difference is not unfamiliar to critical scholars (e.g., L. Gross, 2001; Said, 2003).

Bohemian-styled costumes set these Gypsy characters apart: The women wear long, flowing skirts and blouses; kerchiefs; and heavy accessories of hoop earrings, necklaces, and bracelets, and frequently carry tambourines or crystal balls. Even in the 1990s programs, there seem to always be shawls and long skirts, if not a headscarf, too. The men also wear blousy shirts, kerchiefs, or dark-hued fedoras, and a single, large hoop earring; often, they wield large knives. In the reality program *Wedding* (Herman, 2012), the unique, non-traditional clothing serves as part of the show's appeal. Here, the Gypsy women wear over-the-top, extravagant outfits for weddings, baby showers, birthdays, and other mundane gatherings. The narrator, dressmaker Sondra Celli, who is not a Gypsy, explains their fashion choices: "They want the biggest, the biggest, the biggest dress that they can get, the most bling-bling-bling . . . The Gypsies live, live, live for more bling, more everything." The style is so gaudy and over-the-top, that they "never wear clothes they buy in a store until they get suitably 'Gypsified,'" in Celli's interpretation, that is, embellished with "bling" (jewels and rhinestones). The Gypsy women's need for extravagance is contrasted in the narrative to the impracticality of the "Gypsified" gowns, which often bruise the women due to their massive weight. The attention given to the women's bodies (lingering camera pans, extreme close-ups, and scenes of dressing and undressing) constructs Gypsy women and girls into objects of male gaze, sexualized from childhood (see also Jensen & Ringrose, 2014). At the same time, the inappropriate, over-the-top dress—that signifies in the context of the show what it means to be a true Gypsy—also symbolizes a lower socioeconomic class (see also Tremlett, 2014).

The traveling lifestyle of TV's Gypsies furthers the distance between them and the mainstream. Many programs convey that Gypsies are nomadic, traveling in a horse-drawn wagon in earlier representations, and later in recreational vehicles (RVs).[8] Enhanced by gaudy interior decoration (carpets, blankets, beaded hangings, and heavy curtains), the Gypsies' wandering nature has been a consistent tenet of the non-Gypsy imagination (Charnon-Deutsch, 2002; Schneeweis, 2014). It is only in the 1990s that

American television starts depicting Gypsies in homes and residential areas, and even those appear in segregated neighborhoods. FX's *The Riches* draws specific attention to segregation and otherness in the extensive story twists of the Gypsy family's failed attempts at living and blending in mainstream suburbia (see Kabachnik, 2009). The stereotyped traveling lifestyle is depicted as an instinct that cannot be overcome by wanting to settle down for love (Lawrence & Allen, 1960), nor can it be "tamed" by jailing (in Upton et al., 1960), and contradicts the "American Dream" and ideals in other dominant societies, which idealize permanent residence. In the supernatural drama *The Vampire Diaries* (2014), nomadism is caused by a powerful witch's spell, explained by the lead Traveler: "[T]he witches put a curse on our tribe so nature would turn against us should we ever attempt to settle as a people. We have lived without a home, roaming like cattle." At first glance, such statements appear sympathetic, yet they reify otherness, comparing the Gypsies with livestock, and missing opportunities to further the understanding of the reality of nomadism, a diverse and non-generalizable practice among the Roma (see McVeigh, 1997).

The literature has recorded that discriminatory practices include ethnic "lumping," collapsing, and confusing Roma communities to be "Black" or other *others* (Blasco, 2002; Lemon, 2002). Non-Gypsies easily "become Gypsies"—simply by wearing a "Gypsy" costume, which includes a crystal ball (see Bullock et al., 1970; Elliotte, Finn, & Barton, 1962; *I Love Lucy*, 1954; Weiner, Noxon, Humphris, Gordon, & Getzinger, 2009), scarves, and trinkets (*The Wild Wild West*, 1969). In several of the TV programs, non-Roma characters misidentify Gypsies as Indians (Lawrence & Allen, 1960), "Princess Jasmine" (Kripke, Charmelo, Snyder, & Sgriccia, 2014), Italians (*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, 2009), or Spanish or Hispanic or Latino, as seen in this exchange in *Crash* (Mazzara et al., 2008):

> Kenny: You're a Gypsy? A fortune-teller? I thought you were Hispanic.
> (Later, to his partner) Kenny: I thought she was Latina.
> Hispanic co-worker (correcting him): Hispanic.
> Kenny: They don't even look like Gypsies are supposed to look, you know? They don't even have flashing eyes.

Kenny's comments can be read in several ways; they may suggest cluelessness about politically correct terms; the comments may be indicative of failing popular stereotypes that no longer easily identify difference; and, more problematic, they may demonstrate cultural insensitivity that falls along the lines of racist perceptions that "they all look the same."

Gypsy Tradition

American fictional and reality television defines and emphasizes the importance of "Gypsy tradition"—a tight-knit collective community, clearly separated from the non-Roma, and defined by strict and fixed gender roles. The TV shows invoke tradition in plot and dialogue and, in the reality programs, through on-camera interviews,

voiceover, graphics, and the non-Gypsy dressmaker Celli's interpretations, which serve as translations for audience members. The frequency with which tradition is addressed reinforces the reality shows' purpose—to introduce American viewers to the world of the Gypsies. As defined on American TV, the Gypsy family, the collectivistic community, and tradition must be protected from outsiders at all cost, including murdering their own if they try to break away from the family (e.g., Wolf & Martin, 2003). As such, the ways in which the Gypsies are shown to stick to tradition constitute signifiers of otherness, and not markers of cultural diversity in an American landscape.

The Gypsies are depicted as closed-off to non-Gypsies, who they call "gadje," "gajo," or "buffers," and resistant to inter-ethnic mingling. In a 2006 episode of *House, M.D.*, a teenage Gypsy patient tells the doctors, "You can't go to my house. You'll pollute it." Likewise, in *The Glades* (Campbell, Garrigus, & Underwood, 2013), a Gypsy objects to the detective's presence, stating, "You're gadje. You make our home unclean," as she frantically sweeps behind him. Or, in *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012), "In all the history of the world, the gaje lifestyle and our lifestyle does [*sic*] not mix," says one of the protagonists. This strategy—of the *other* keeping the community apart from the dominant group—is common to media representations of minorities, racial, ethnic, sexual, or otherwise (L. Gross, 2001), and a consistent theme of American television, fictional and reality programs alike, yet the framing emphasizes a judgment that the Gypsies are freakish, unorthodox, and suspicious for their privacy.

The way of the Gypsies, often defined as Romani law in *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012), receives screen time consistently, and it includes a host of practices that mostly fall outside dominant ideology in American society: arranged, often underage, and/or incestuous marriage; the forbidding of inter-ethnic marriages; depictions of the Kris (Gypsy court); its divorce and extramarital affair rulings; "an eye for an eye" actions; debt-paying practices; distrust of non-Gypsies and their institutions; and other internal-to-the-family rules to conduct business, as conveyed in numerous programs.[9] NGC's *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012) spends most plot time on the Gypsy way of doing business, a central tenet of the conflict between the protagonist brothers, and frequently accompanied by concerns over the legality of their business endeavors. Again, the programs reinforce an out-of-the-norm status, the shadiness of tradition, reminding American viewers, "Being married in the Romani community does not hold any standing in the American legal system" (Kriss & Lipera, 2012).

Gypsies adhere to fixed and rigid gender roles, as evident in some fictional programs (Fickling, Barrett, Fickling, & Brown, 1965; Kearney & Szwarc, 1975), but even more so in the reality shows, in which Gypsy women are defined by their ability to serve their families: "They cook, they clean, they dress their husbands, they're good," says the matriarch Tina in *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012). Likewise, dressmaker Celli states, "Today was Shyanne's dream day. Tomorrow is Gypsy reality: She'll go home to clean and cook and taking [*sic*] care of a husband and raising Gypsy babies" (Herman, 2012). Frequently, the Gypsy woman lives in a very controlled, male-dominated world, in which she is not allowed to go to school, engage in

mainstream extracurricular activities, work outside the family business, or speak to boys outside of the family. She must be must be chaperoned while in public and attend a Kris court only if invited. The Gypsy woman is an object, "the perfect accessory to any powerful man's arm" (Herman, 2012); her family and community judge her worth by how well wedding traditions are followed and by the size of the dowry. A Gypsy woman in *American Gypsies*'s (Kriss & Lipera, 2012) last episode tries to explain the custom to negotiate the price of a bride:

> Samantha (bride): To the gaje, it probably looks crazy. It looks like you're being sold as a housewife. But that's not what it is. It's just about respect for my father. "You're blessing us with your daughter, so we owe you something for that."

Samantha's words constitute a rare explanation about the group's interpretation of a particular ritual—yet are also edited in juxtaposition to a rowdy crowd arguing about her value. The images annul her reasoning, as the scene entertains viewers with conflict and bickering. *Wedding* (Herman, 2012) also depicts two inter-ethnic marriages. Once again, the framing misses the opportunity for meaningful dialogue about intercultural and inter-ethnic experiences, offering instead simplistic gender portrayals that remind audiences of the *difference* of the Gypsies, and of their unusual customs and rules (as the non-Gypsy sacrifices her career aspirations to become accepted by the Gypsy community).

Wedding (Herman, 2012) constructs many of its plots around the Gypsy woman's virginity, claimed to be central to matrimonial decisions and can even allegedly risk canceling a marriage, which are usually arranged during adolescence[10]:

> Mother: A Romni girl's reputation is everything. They are expected to be virgins when they get married . . . The first kiss should be in front of the altar.
> Teenager Hope: If Romni girls kiss a boy, you're done.
> Young Roma man: A Romni girl's got to be a virgin or you don't want to marry her.

At the same time as the reality programs depict the necessity of chastity and good morals, they also represent a sexualized and commodified female Gypsy body at the center of "traditional" practices. *Wedding* showcases numerous Gypsy women wearing dresses so low-cut that their bodies are sometimes covered by a censored blur. The joint focus on purity and sexualized commodification further objectifies and *others* the Gypsy woman—as does the excessive focus on skimpy clothing.

The Swindler or "Gypsy Style"?

Fictional and reality television also stereotype Gypsies as criminals through well-articulated and frequent representations of swindlers, thieves, impostors, drug addicts, con artists, and even murderers, justifying main characters' mistrust toward the Gypsies. The *othering* of the ethnic characters is powerfully done through the eyes, voice, and interpretation of the trusted non-Gypsy main characters, who perform the labeling: For instance, a Gypsy is labeled "a con artist, a fake, a charlatan" (Moye,

Leavitt, Gurman, & Cohen, 1989). Likewise, in *Criminal Minds* (Davis, Bruner, Ly, & Matheson, 2009), an FBI agent is not surprised that the suspect is a Gypsy, stating, "Makes sense. A lot of Romani make their living as petty thieves." These images become all the more powerful when confirmed by episode plots and the non-Gypsy characters' verbal condemnations.

The Gypsy criminal stereotype is pervasive enough that protagonists consistently approach Gypsy characters with apprehension, even before they have committed a crime. In *The Andy Griffith Show* (MacLane & Rafkin, 1966), for one, the sheriff assumes that the Gypsies have poor intentions because, "Last year, we had some Gypsies through here and they went around and started cheating people." Or, in *Bonanza* (Lawrence & Allen, 1960), after the town doctor examines the "Gypsy girl" (as they call her), he instructs the other characters to deliver her to the sheriff, for the only reason that she is a Gypsy and *may* do something illegal:

> Joe: What for? She didn't do anything.
> The doctor: She will. Boy. She will. Just give her a chance. She's a Gypsy, isn't she?
> Hoss: Is that as bad as being an Injun[11]?
> The doctor: Sometimes it's worse.

Here, the doctor's assumption about an unconscious woman showcases his prejudice, confirmed later in the episode, when a fellow Gypsy attacks one of the main characters. It is rare for the TV show plots to overturn the perception of criminality, and the Gypsies do turn out to be swindlers as they cheat, attack people, steal, or just threaten to do something (to name a few, see Garner, Caruso, Silverman, & Frawley, 1966; MacLane & Rafkin, 1966). The crimes tend to be attributed to the Gypsy characters as innate, unavoidable, and a consistent aspect of their lives, to be expected. For instance, in the police drama *The Glades* (Campbell et al., 2013), detectives call the Gypsy's storage locker a "bat cave for con artists" and another officer establishes a business just to "fight Gypsy scams." When TV programs do show the other side—that Gypsies have been only *perceived* to be criminals—the viewers are led through empathy and sympathy, but with little substance to inter-ethnic healing, as shown below.

The analysis reveals a slight shift in the depiction of criminality across time periods, from petty crimes and general swindling in the 1960s, to more complex and brutal contemporary portrayals since the 2000s. A 2009 episode of *Criminal Minds* that includes Gypsy murderers elevates the level of deviance typically seen even in the crime dramas of this era (see Foss, 2012). In this program, a Gypsy family brutally slaughters parents and abducts their daughters to become wives for their sons. Here, the profilers note the exceptional level of violence, label it unnecessary, and emphasize the young, non-Gypsy girl's horrific experience—thus positioning the audience to empathize with the victim, further *othering* the Gypsy villains.

Some programs use the rhetorical strategy of "Gypsy style" to excuse, explain, justify, and dismiss vices and rule-breaking acts not condoned by mainstream society (i.e., gambling, close-kin marriages, overspending, excessive drinking, cheating,

breaking apartment building codes, and being late). Episodes of *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012) *repeatedly* use this justification:

> Val (opening a box of cookies before paying for them in a grocery store): I'm opening them up, hey, Gypsy style. ("Love for Sale")
> Tina (illegally smoking in the apartment building staircase): I don't care about the rules, Bobby. We're Gypsies, Bobby. We break every rule there is. ("Ritual Slaughter")
> Bob Sr. (patriarch in Johns family): I don't need a seatbelt. That's our tradition. ("My Big Fat Florida Wedding")
> Tina: It wouldn't be a Gypsy wedding unless there's trouble. ("My Big Fat Florida Wedding")

Physical fighting and aggression[12] is also presented as *cultural*, as the police are brought in to stop Gypsy brawls (Herman, 2012; Kriss & Lipera, 2012). Furthermore, the marriage of blood relatives is depicted as a *frequent* practice of the Gypsies, despite recognizing it as unlawful and unhealthy. A young Gypsy woman jokes, "[M]y first husband was my third cousin. Our family believes in incest . . . Maybe that's why we're all a little off, you know, because of your blood's too close" (Herman, 2012). What emerges is an image of a barbaric, uncivilized, backward Gypsy community, a familiar colonizing technique (e.g., Spurr, 1999).

The Magical Fortune-Teller

The stereotype of the Gypsy woman as fortune-teller is also perpetuated. Consistently and irrespective of time period, as soon as one is identified as Gypsy, the question follows, "You're a fortune-teller?" (Mazzara et al., 2008). Shawls, headscarves, heavy necklaces, beads, crystal balls, cards, and palm reading define the depiction, visible in two thirds of the episodes sampled.[13] Although the visual appearance of the fortune-tellers is certainly less sexualized than in other genres (see Hancock, 2008; Schneeweis, 2014), the Gypsy women also appeal sexually to the men on the programs. For instance, the satirical sitcom *F Troop* (Julian & Reynolds, 1966) depicts three fortune-teller Gypsy sisters who mesmerize an army outpost with their charms. The stern and incorruptible detective Kojak succumbs to the allure of a smart and beautiful Gypsy who helps him solve a case of attacks on prostitutes (Kearney & Oliansky, 1977). An interesting, standout representation features in *JAG* (Bellisario & Wharmby, 1998), where the Russian Gypsy who helps the navy officers wears a short flouncy skirt, exposing bare legs for the first time in this sample. It is also the only time viewers see—in a dream—a nearly naked Gypsy emerging wet from a river; the camera lingers on her feet and legs, then zooming to a wider angle when she is attacked (while naked) by soldiers. The objectification of her body—to make a narrative point about the Gypsy's clairvoyance—is unnecessary, and reminds of historic stereotyping of the brown woman (Charnon-Deutsch, 2002; Hancock, 2008; Schneeweis, 2014).

Consistently, the fortune-teller is conveyed as magical—with "real" or imagined visionary powers, including the ability to "curse" people (for instance, Bellisario & Wharmby, 1998; Davies, 1998; MacLane & Rafkin, 1966; McCarthy, Sarkar, & Brinckerhoff, 1995; *Night Court*, 1984). Gypsy curses are used to cause harm to others, as retribution or revenge, connecting the fortune-tellers' magic to criminality, collectivity, and other stereotyping traits. In *The Glades* (Campbell et al., 2013), "My clan is the only thing I care about, and for bringing trouble to my family, I curse yours," a Gypsy murder suspect says. In more recent supernatural programs, Gypsies' magical powers seem aligned with other mystical traits and creatures, yet the narratives position the Gypsies as particularly ruthless and selfish villains in contrast to the "good" supernatural beings (for instance, *The Vampire Diaries*, 2013-2014).

Cultural Struggles and the Misunderstood

This final theme has characterized representations that are more culturally sensitive, yet still continue to firmly establish Gypsies as outsiders to mainstream culture. For instance, as early as the 1950s, a non-Gypsy protagonist stands up for Gypsy characters in the Western series *The Gene Autry Show* (Cooke & Archainbaud, 1953). Similarly, *The Waltons* (Hamner et al., 1973) shows expressions of sympathy and trust toward the "wanderers," as called on this program. Mother Walton in this program invokes the oppressed past of the Roma to explain a somewhat standoffish attitude of the Gypsies: "That's just their way. Most people have been mean to them, they don't trust anybody."

At the same time, these seemingly positive messages must be weighed in the programs' context, alongside images of Gypsy wagons, "wild catch" fortune-tellers, superstitions, backward healing cures that do not stack up to modern medicine, and remorse at abandoning the community. As such, the analyzed programs continue to *other* the Gypsy community. To illustrate, in *Charmed* (Burge, Parres, & Marshall, 2002), a Gypsy woman decides to embrace her family culture and magical powers, despite an initial break from the community when she became an emergency room doctor. Her change of heart signifies empowerment and sincerity in the context of this show (that features an all-female cast and plot lines about leading normal lives while having supernatural powers). Even in cases such as these—that may be deemed to be signifiers of discursive change—the Gypsy backwardness is an undercurrent that still grounds the imagery in otherness. As such, when the Gypsy doctor returns to her community, she is there to help those without health insurance (a statement on the culture and its assumed poverty), she uses an RV as an "office" (invoking the image of nomadism), and her clothes now mimic earlier flouncy-dress depictions. Likewise, Mother Walton's sympathy toward the wanderers must be weighed against the other images shown in the same program—Gypsy wagons, "wild catch" fortune-tellers, superstitions, and backward healing cures that do not stack up to modern medicine.

The theme of cultural struggle appears in very few of the TV shows, and most deal with the history of the Holocaust or with contemporary discrimination superficially. We see in an episode of *House, M.D.* (2006), for instance, a Gypsy patient who

explains his mistrust in health professionals: "Sharing information with outsiders has not gone so well for my people"; his Gypsy family refuses to consent to experimental treatment because, "[their] people have been experimented on before"; no further context accompanies the scene. Similarly, in *Criminal Minds* (Davis et al., 2009), the Gypsy protagonist explains the past of the Roma, "In history, warriors invaded towns, killed the men, women, and boys, but kept the girls for themselves. You exist because your ancestors did what was needed for you to survive." Although the explanation is meant to justify why the Gypsy man abducts girls, the scene does not promote cultural understanding given that he is a brutal serial killer of girls' parents.

Such juxtapositions—sympathy and context, alongside brutality and poverty—denote a certain push-and-pull in the process of changing representations. More sensitivity is evident on TV in recent years, yet many scenes emerge as mere nods toward political correctness. In a *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* 2011 episode:

> Cop: These people, they don't trust our precinct.
> Detective Benson: Maybe they don't like to be called "these people," or Gypsies even.

The remark goes unanswered, and the plot unfolds with an abundance of references to Gypsies being thieves, untrustworthy of outsiders, unstable, "weird," nomadic ("They come and they go, you know, they're Gypsies," one character says, even though the Gypsies in this program live in homes like all other New Yorkers shown), superstitious and victim-like, led by a "rom baro," and clannish in an unhealthy, unnatural way ("His tribe is circling," about neighbors, inferred to be Gypsies, peering at the police officers on the scene). In other words, detective Benson's remark emerges as a formality to include in a 2011 TV program, and not a serious consideration of discrimination. The two reality programs use a similar technique of juxtaposing statements about discrimination with shots of inebriated, unruly Gypsy guests, who yell at authorities, are quick to fight, damage property, and leave weddings in handcuffs (Kriss & Lipera, 2012). Although the theme of the misunderstood Gypsy does emerge in the sample, it is argued that it is far from a complex narrative of historical trauma.

The sincerest attempt at meaningful dialogue about inter-cultural difference and cohabitation is in *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012), which positions issues of cultural adaptation, integration, and assimilation as plot strategies to dramatize family and inter-ethnic conflict, embodied by two brothers who perpetually argue over protecting tradition or adapting to American culture. The following illustrates a typical brawl:

> Bobby: I think it's time we adapt to times, like every other culture has.
> Nicky: You're the guy that's gonna break 100-year law?
> Bobby: I'm not trying to break 100-year law, Nicky, I'm just trying to bend it.
> Nicky: Don't bend nothing under my family's name. ("Rivals at War")

Other examples include the family's outrage when Bobby takes his daughters to acting lessons (a non-Gypsy activity, in the family's eyes), a young man's attempts to resist marrying a Gypsy girl ("I might be a Gypsy, but I spent the last 18 years as an American"), and a son's mockery of his mother's superstitions ("[A]fter 30-something

years of silly superstitions, I can go a freakin' day without throwing salt over our shoulders"). One exchange between Nicky, representative of the voice of tradition, and his daughter Brittany constitutes a poignant example of what this program brings to popular culture:

> Nicky: You're a Roma. Make sure, be proud of what yous [*sic*] are. We're an endangered species . . . There's no one else like us that holds respect and honor for one another. Be proud of being Roma . . . [D]on't be like Bobby's kids. Don't be like Bobby. Hold our culture. Hold who we are.
> Brittany: He is who we are.
> Nicky: Hush. Listen to me. It's very important. Listen to me. I'm your father.

The teenage daughter's reaction is particularly interesting in this case, and somewhat different than Samantha's comment cited earlier. Brittany's more modern take on cultural adaptation and change—"[Bobby] is who we are"—is silenced by her traditional father. As argued before, the reality program is centered on the otherness of the Gypsy family; yet with scenes such as these, *American Gypsies* also innovates in the way it draws attention to taboo issues, offering alternative interpretations to be weighed alongside stereotypes.

Discussion, Limitations, and Implications for Further Research

The messages conveyed by over 60 years of television representations paint a consistent picture of the Gypsy as an outsider—sometimes feared, sometimes pitied, but always separate from mainstream culture. At the same time as the textual analysis yielded age-old stereotypes and confirmed existing literature in a variety of disciplines (e.g., Belton, 2005; Charnon-Deutsch, 2002; Iordanova, 2001; Kabachnik, 2009; Lemon, 2000; Malvinni, 2004; Schneeweis, 2012), this study contributes additional insights into ethnic lumping and stagnant discourses. The reality shows studied here continue to other the (American) Roma communities, revamping old stereotypes (materialism, violence, and deviant lifestyle). Under the guise of "new representations," otherness is updated to contemporary symbols, as RVs replace caravans, the criminal Gypsy is no longer stupid and petty, but a gruesome serial murderer, and the exotic, romantic Gypsy woman in a bohemian dress is now a loud, materialistic Gypsy bride, wearing a gaudy, "blingtastic" gown, with its accompanying significance of lower class. Updated, but, nevertheless, still distinctively different and apart from mainstream American culture.

The representations of Gypsies are consistently positioned in contrast to the American "norm," both in fictional stories and in the reality programs, a genre that "is particularly conducive to making intercultural comparisons" (Imre & Tremlett, 2011, p. 3). Gypsy culture reflects and perpetuates a collectivist society that thrives on tradition as the ethnics are portrayed in groups, upholding the customs and superstitions passed down from generations. According to Kohls (1984), who studied value systems

of American immigrants, this type of culture "value[s] stability, continuity, tradition, and a rich and ancient heritage—none of which are valued very much in the United States" (p. 2), which celebrates individualism and personal agency (see Bellah, 2008). While fictional and reality TV emphasize the importance of tradition for Gypsies, it is often with a negative tone that distances this group from mainstream culture. Minimizing attention to voices that attempt to ground inter-cultural differences or try to adapt to the American mainstream culture on their own terms confirms a condescending treatment of the Gypsies on the part of American media. Lumping races and ethnicities is performed casually and without any retribution. The ease with which non-Roma "become Gypsies"—by changing their outfits, pasting on a mustache, and carrying around a glass ball—is reminiscent of problematic appropriation of Native American cultures and misrepresentation of the historic Pocahontas figure (see Ono & Buescher, 2001). Furthermore, the reality shows, which aim to "explain" the "Gypsy way" and are somewhat expected (by audiences) to be more "realistic," further highlight these stereotypes, presenting a materialistic and aggressive group that justifies social deviance as tradition.

In the context of research on race and ethnicity, this study finds the TV constructions of the Roma straggling. Hall (1992) remarked that stereotyping follows sheer invisibility—and the inclusion of Gypsy characters can be seen to mimic the trajectory of Black representations in American popular culture: The Gypsy continues to be represented "in a way that majorities can enjoy and minorities can't (shouldn't) complain about" (L. Gross, 2001, p. 253; see also Gray, 1986). Even contemporary TV perpetuates ethnic stereotypes about Gypsies that would be unheard of for other cultural groups, similar, say, to including a "mammy" in a modern-day show, or featuring characters in "Black-face." In one sense, older representations (1950s-1960s), while troubling, reflect scores of observations about distorted images of underrepresented groups and mirror the popular culture of the time (Brislin, 2003; Ganje, 2003; Poindexter, 2011). The development of the theme of the Gypsy as a misunderstood other signifies change, a form of adaptation to contemporary times, yet such representations are still tentative, ambiguous, and often contradicted by the context of the TV programs, as shown above. In this light, why have images of Gypsies not kept pace with changes in the representation of other racial and ethnic groups? Why is it still acceptable, tolerated, and "the norm" to continue to broadcast and perpetuate the *othered* Gypsy representations as prevalent—or at all? Others have suggested that the blame lies with authorship and voice, and the fact that few images compete in popular culture with those created by non-ethnic, dominant representations (i.e., Kabachnik, 2009), while others suggest that alternative images cannot compete even when they do exist because of the political economy of media in general and of U.S. media in specific (e.g., Abrahamson, 2004). Given the overt stereotyping of Gypsies, it would be difficult for mainstream American viewers to positively perceive, accept, or be truly hospitable toward, this ethnic group. "Unconditional hospitality" comes with the risk of the unexpected and the unknown, and of the different *other* to come close, inhabit *our* space, and "blur the borders" (Derrida, 1999, pp. 70-71, 73). Given the vast difference between "the Gypsy way," as defined in fictional and reality television programs,

and American ideals, it is likely that viewers tune in for voyeuristic pleasure, out of curiosity, and for the "pseudo-documentary display of ordinary people" (Imre & Tremlett, 2011, p. 7) more than for true learning about difference, character identification, or parasocial interaction (Barton, 2009; Lundy et al., 2008; Reiss & Wiltz, 2004). Yet, to challenge the Gypsy stereotypes by diversifying the representations would possibly detract from the mystique that draws in viewers. Without the swindlers and the fortune-tellers, these shows and the competition for ratings would hardly be compelled to include Gypsies at all. To return to Stuart Hall's theorization of representation, the fascination with Gypsy difference is more indicative of the non-Roma imagination than of what Gypsy/Roma really mean in contemporary cultures. Being American non-Roma seems to depend on constructing a clearly different *other* Roma, and the representational move lies specifically with the plot choices to frame otherness in the words of Gypsies themselves (for instance, in Kriss & Lipera, 2012). Gypsy difference is, to borrow Hall's words, "fundamental to cultural meaning" (Hall, 1997b, p. 236).

This purposive study focused on textual messages about Gypsies in fictional and reality television, and other projects could explore news or online material, or expand the research to examine audience reception studies. Do viewers perceive these stereotypes or are they visible only to an eye that is familiar with the literature, or historic images? Questions around the stark stereotyping of this ethnic group, despite other developments and changes in media content about other minority groups, must continue to be studied, engaging audience research and production voices as well.

Conclusion

This study examined representations of Gypsies in American fictional and reality television, contributing to an anthological understanding of the knowledge-production of this ethnicity for U.S. audiences. Although one might dismiss these texts as merely entertainment, it is important to remember that most Americans do not have firsthand experiences with Roma people or their communities. Therefore, these "glimpses," however inaccurate and stereotypical, may provide most of the information about this cultural group to the American public.

Negative perceptions of a cultural group have real-world implications. If people regard Gypsies as violent and aggressive (as perpetuated in the media), they may be more likely to discriminate against them in employment, housing, event rental, air travel, and other important interactions. Stereotypes of Gypsies as "swindlers" could negatively affect potential business partnerships or lead to heightened security in retail stores. Messages about Gypsy traditions that include acts considered "deviant" by the dominant American culture (i.e., marrying one's cousin) likely further ethnic *othering*. As violence against the Roma continues in various European locations, nothing prohibits the manifestation of such hatred on this continent, especially amplified by contemporary conflict around immigration (see, for instance, Benson, 2013; Nail, 2015). Given the objectifying of the American Roma as a separatist group that refuses to adopt mainstream practices, values, and social norms, it would be difficult for non-Roma viewers to positively perceive or accept them. Given the vast difference between

"the Gypsy way," as defined in these programs, and American ideals, it is likely that viewers tune in for voyeuristic pleasure and out of curiosity more than for character identification or parasocial interaction (Barton, 2009; Lundy et al., 2008; Reiss & Wiltz, 2004). Yet, without the rhinestone bras, dresses that exceed the wearer's body weight, superstitions, jabs and punches, and rigid gender roles, these reality programs would hardly attract high ratings. Therefore, the best challenge to television's stereotypes may be through fictional representations. Diversifying the type of characters identified as Gypsies through serial protagonist roles would help bolster cultural understanding, without losing the tradition and history of this "hidden" community.

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Notes

1. Included in the study.
2. To attain a list of fictional television programs with Roma depictions, the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com), TV.com, and google.com were used.
3. Commercial television existed before this time, but this was the first Gypsy depiction identified.
4. Only fictional American programs that aired between 1953 and 2014 on network or cable programming and ranging from half-an-hour sitcoms to 1-hr series in length were included. Programs were accessed on Youtube.com, Amazon.com, Hulu.com, and Netflix.com, where they were available for free viewing, for rent, or for purchase.
5. *My Big Fat Gypsy Weddings* garnered instant popularity, leading to three seasons, a 2011 Christmas special, a paperback insider book.
6. It should be noted that the Gypsy-themed titles helped identify these episodes in the keyword search. Therefore, episode titles without these keywords may have been missed in the search, even with the examination of show summaries.
7. The characters refer to their ethnic group interchangeably, as both "Rom," "Roma," "Romani," or "Romanichals," and as "Gypsy" or "Romanichal Gypsy."
8. The exception to this timeline is *JAG*, which depicts Russian Gypsies traveling in a wagon despite its 1998 broadcast date; this representation arguably makes sense as Cold War rhetoric of backward Russian villages and easily duped Russian police, contrasted to the high-level espionage of the American navy (see Rawlinson, 1998).
9. See *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012); *Crash* (Mazzara, Mann, Kim, & Bookstaver, 2008); *The Gene Autry Show* (Cooke & Archainbaud, 1953); *Honey West* (Fickling, Barrett, Fickling, & Brown, 1965); *Kojak* (Kearney & Oliansky, 1977); *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* (Wolf & Martin, 2003); and *Weddings* (Herman, 2012).
10. The only exception to the abstinence-before-marriage rule is glossed over: When *American Gypsies*'s Val elopes with his Gypsy girlfriend, her virgin status (or lack thereof) is no

longer of interest in the plot; the marriage proceeds, and the episode dwells on the absence of a traditional wedding. Once again, the opportunity to normalize the American Roma is missed.

11. An offensive term that refers to American Indians.
12. Clips of the reality program *Wedding* showing women fighting went viral on youtube.com and The Learning Channel's (TLC) website.
13. See *Car 54, Where are You?* (Webster, Hiken, & Hiken, 1961); *Dennis the Menace* (Elliotte, Finn, & Barton, 1962); *Mr. Ed* (1964); *Honey West* (Fickling et al., 1965); *F Troop* (Julian & Reynolds, 1966); *The Andy Griffith Show* (MacLane & Rafkin, 1966); *The Wild Wild West* (1969); *Hogan's Heroes* (Bullock, Allen, & Kinon, 1970); *Kojak* (Kearney & Szwarc, 1975; Kearney & Oliansky, 1977); *Beverly Hills, 90210* (McCarthy, Sarkar, & Brinckerhoff, 1995); *JAG* (Bellisario & Wharmby, 1998); *Charmed* (Burge, Parres, & Marshall, 2002); *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* (Wolf, Martin, Matthews, & de Segonzac, 2011); *American Gypsies* (Kriss & Lipera, 2012).

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Author Biographies

Adina Schneeweis is an associate professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism at Oakland University. She specializes in the critical analysis of ethnic and racial representations in international, advocacy, and media communication. Her research focus is on the construction of the Gypsy/Roma communities in the press and popular culture, within the activist movement for Roma rights, as well as in intervention campaigns. Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Communication Inquiry*; *Communication*, *Culture & Critique*; *Women's Studies in Communication*; *International Communication Gazette*; and other peer-reviewed journals.

Katherine A. Foss is an associate professor in the School of Journalism at Middle Tennessee State University. Her research focuses on breastfeeding discourse in media (from advertising to entertainment television), constructions of health responsibility, and representations of deafness and hearing loss. Her past research projects have examined gender and victimization in *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and *Criminal Minds*, the discourse of television theme songs, pioneer medicine in television, and portrayals of journalists in comic book films. Her work has appeared in *Health Communication*, *Disability Studies Quarterly*, *Women & Health*, *International Breastfeeding Journal*, and other peer-reviewed journals.