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Roma Representation in Bulgarian News Media

A study on the depiction of Roma in Bulgarian news headlines

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Abstract

This mixed-method investigation examines how the Roma are depicted in Bulgarian news media headlines. The material studied consists of online news headlines collected from bTV News, Blitz, and Novini, from the 1st of May 2011 to the 15th of December 2014. After the data was collected, the headlines were placed into a number of categories representing the various themes addressed in the titles and then interpreted in a quantitative approach (thus showing the frequencies of how many times various themes were addressed) and a qualitative one; namely, Critical Discourse Analysis was used to construe the depiction of the Roma in the headlines. The study concluded that the most common portrayals of the Roma in Bulgarian media were negative: violent, criminal, and rebellious.

Keywords

Roma, discrimination, minorities, Bulgaria, news headlines, media

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1. Introduction

The Roma make up approximately ten per cent of the Bulgarian population (The Local Government Information Network, 2012), and are the third largest ethnic group in the country, as a percentage of the population, after Bulgarians and Turks. This is the highest percentage of Roma of a country's population worldwide, yet in the ample amount of previous research conducted on topics encompassing the Roma, such as representation and human rights violation, there are few studies with specific focus on Bulgaria where Roma representation in the media and Roma integration into society has increasingly raised awareness. While there are several studies focusing on Roma depiction in countries other than Bulgaria, that discuss the idea of negative depiction of ethnic minorities in media and the barrier this has to their integration into society, Indzhov (2012) and Lekov et al. (2011) conduct one quantitative study each focusing on media bias towards Roma in Bulgaria. However, Indzhov's (2012) and Lekov et al.'s (2011) studies do not analyze media discourse on Roma for a longer period of time, but solely over five and six months, respectively.

The European Union has stated that further changes need to be made in order to address discrimination towards the Roma in the nation, with predominant emphasis on combating "anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech" (European Commission, 2014). The Bulgarian government has noted that:

The representatives of the Roma community are deprived of the possibility to have equal access to the national media, both the electronic ones and the press. This fact, as well as the *constant negative and often derogatory tone of the media in the years after 1989, is a favorable ground for the increase of hostility towards the Roma community.* The impossibility to have access to the public sphere through the media puts the Roma in an unequal position with regard to the majority and leaves the development of negative social attitudes without alternative (National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues, emphasis added).

Hate crimes and violence against the EU's largest minority are on the rise; compounded by discrimination and often denied access to decent health care, education, and jobs, the Roma "are victims of racially motivated violence" (EU Observer, 2014). According to World Bank 2011 data, Bulgaria loses over one billion BGN (€500 million) annually due to failed integration of the Roma community (EU Observer, 2014). The fact still remains that in spite of the numerous Roma-integration programs, discrimination towards the Roma is still very much present and does not seem to be decreasing. Thus, it is vital to take further measures addressing the public's opinions and views of the

Roma. After all, how can Roma integration-into-society programs proposed by various governments and the EU prove successful, if the media, which is one of the main forces guiding opinions in society (Van Dijk, 1993: 243) portrays them in a negative light?

2. Aim & Research Question

The aim of this study is to investigate the rhetoric used towards Roma and, consequently, the manner they are depicted in Bulgarian news media, while specifically focusing on the headlines of the news articles from 2011 to 2014. In Article 1, Part 1, of the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights defines the term racial discrimination as, “Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life” (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination). For the purposes of this study, this definition will be used when referring to Roma discrimination.

Therefore, the research question of this investigation is: With specific focus on discrimination towards minorities, how are the Roma depicted in Bulgarian news media headlines?

3. Brief History of the Roma in Bulgaria

It is believed that the first Roma communities arrived in Bulgaria from India around the 12th to 14th century, even though there are speculations that the first settlements were in the 9th century (Balkanologie – Revue d’études pluridisciplinaires, 2000). After this period of time, there were two significant migration waves of Roma to Bulgaria: the Second wave (17th and 18th century), from Wallachia and Moldova; and the Third wave (second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century), from neighboring nations, mainly due to the changing borders as a consequence of the Balkan wars, as well as the first and second World War (Balkanologie – Revue d’études pluridisciplinaires, 2000).

During the Ottoman Empire (15th – 19th century), the Roma had to pay higher taxes than the rest of the population. Following the 1950s, the Roma were included in the new socialist cooperatives, namely; the TKZS (Labor Co-operative Farms) and the DZS (State Farms) (Balkanologie – Revue d'études pluridisciplinaires, 2000).

The Roma community in Bulgaria consists of various tribes - depending on occupation, spoken language (Bulgarian, Romanes, or Turkish), and religion [Christian (Eastern Orthodox or Protestant) or Muslim]. There are a number of well-known Roma individuals in Bulgaria today, such as prominent musicians Azis and Sofi Marinova. In addition, the Roma have their own political party, called 'Civil Union "Roma"', which is part of the Coalition of Bulgaria (Balkanologie – Revue d'études pluridisciplinaires, 2000). Bulgaria has received much criticism from the Council of Europe as to how the Roma are discriminated against in the country. In regards to the current issues the Roma population has in Bulgaria, such as in regards to the high poverty levels and living conditions, the Bulgarian government has stated that:

ECRI has correctly observed that members of the Roma community encounter “serious difficulties” “in many spheres of life”. The rest of this paragraph, however, regrettably contains sweeping, grossly inaccurate generalizations ... Due to various objective and subjective factors, many (but by no means all!) members of the Roma community found it particularly difficult to adapt to the new realities of the market economy. “...Romani mahala-dwellers are still *captives of the past, holding onto and behaving according to preconceptions about the socialist welfare state that clash with the modern realities of a market economy and privatization*” (Skopje Report: 6, emphasis added).

4. Significance of the Media in Relation to Roma Integration

The general public's opinions are based on their interpretations of the news and their first-hand experiences (Lee, 2007). Media drives the general public's opinions and thoughts, thus it is paramount for the Bulgarian government to address the negativity in Bulgarian media towards the Roma in order for the Roma-integration programs to succeed.

The media, sometimes unconsciously, too often consciously, spread anti-Roma feelings. In case of reporting a crime committed by a person mentioning the ethnicity does not have any positive impact. By the same token, patronizing attitude is also harmful. In

addition, media generally do not pay attention to stories in which the Roma are the victims, as it is the case for racist attacks or hate speeches pronounced by politicians towards Roma, all of these acts that media could help to condemn (Council of Europe: 22).

Commonly referred to as the Fourth Estate or Fourth Power, thus showing the media's pivotal role in unison to the powers of the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive, it is needless to say that the media has an immense impact on peoples' perceptions (Boaz, 2004). Not only can the media draw attention to injustices, violations, and help combat and protect human rights and discriminatory inclinations, but the media is also a platform where numerous viewpoints can be expressed to the public.

Nonetheless, the media and its influence can be utilized for less-than-honorable purposes. There are examples today where the media has acted as "propaganda megaphones" for the elite, been "used to incite xenophobic hatred and violence against minorities and other vulnerable groups of people (Hammarberg, 12/09/2011)", and has thus perpetuated Roma or other minority stereotypes. To summarize:

Media play a significant role in the stigmatisation of the Roma minority across Europe. The media may be an important factor in fuelling the witch-hunting against this people minority, but can also be a significant ally in the fight against discrimination and prejudices. There seems to be racism encoded in news reports which serves to distinguish the majority from the ethnic minorities and secure a sense of community, of us, of our home (Petronella, 2011).

In order to help combat discrimination towards minorities, the Council of Europe has suggested that information regarding ethnicity, color, religion, and culture of minorities should not be reported in the media unless that information is crucial to understanding the context of the report (Council of Europe: 5).

5. Previous Research

Previously conducted studies have already highlighted various kinds of discrimination and media bias towards the Roma in Bulgaria. A quantitative content analysis of 743 news articles, from July to November 2011, conducted by Indzhov (2012) revealed that only fifteen articles portray the Roma in a

positive light. The investigation was conducted on five Bulgarian daily newspapers. Indzhov claims that every second article presents the Roma as a threat to society (Mediapool, 03/04/2012).

Lekov et al. (2011) also conducted a quantitative analysis while investigating 1,613 news articles from ten different Bulgarian news outlets, all from January to June 2011. However, the focus of this study was of discrimination as a whole in the media – thus encompassing and focusing on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, and sexual orientation. Similarly, in regards to the Roma, he came to the conclusion that the ethnic minority is most often depicted in a negative manner; he deduced that the Roma are portrayed as a group having non-compliance with rules and laws, and committing crimes and anti-social behavior.

What is lacking in the previously conducted studies, however, is that neither of them take in consideration a longer period of time or focus solely on the Roma.

6. Theoretical Framework

6.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Norman Fairclough's take on Critical Discourse Analysis (hereby referred to as CDA), CDA draws focus on how society is created through social words, ideologies, and the power relations that are formed. Discourse is then seen as a circular process where "social practices influence texts, via shaping the context and mode in which they are produced (Richardson, 2007: 37)", and consequently: "texts help influence society via shaping the viewpoints of those who read or otherwise consume them (Richardson, 2007: 37)".

The ontological and epistemological basis of this paper is constructivist, due to its specific focus on CDA; constructivists claim that reality is socially constructed. Consequently, this means that discourse is formed by society and, in turn, it (re)produces society (Richardson, 2007:28). The general assumption this study adheres to, is that "every aspect of textual content is the result of a 'choice' – the choice to use one way of describing a person, an action or process over another; the choice to use one way of constructing a sentence over an alternative; the choice to include a particular fact or opinion or arguments over another (Richardson, 2007: 38)". When applied to this study, this means that every time the term 'Roma' has been mentioned in any headline, someone at the paper has chosen to use that title rather than abstaining from any mention of the people group the individual may belong to. This

also means that there is specifically chosen meaning behind every term utilized throughout the article and in the headlines, the latter being the focus of this study, meaning that no diction should be taken lightly:

Readers decode the meanings of texts using knowledge and beliefs of the world, and these texts go on to shape (through either transformation or reproduction) these same readers' knowledge and beliefs. Central to each of these discourse processes is *power*: the power of social practices on production; the power of texts to shape understandings; the power of readers to resist such management; and the power of people to reproduce or transform society (Richardson, 2007: 45).

This mode of analysis draws focus on how the discourse used relates to and how it is rooted in social conditions “of production and consumption (Richardson, 2007: 39)”, with specific focus on its relations to the wider society as a whole. Thus the main focus of CDA is social problems; attention is drawn to the discursive features of “social and cultural processes and structures”, with the focal point being “power in discourse and power over discourse” (Richardson, 2007: 26). As previously discussed, discourse is shaped by culture and society, and culture and society are shaped by discourse. With every use of discourse, culture, society and power relations are reproduced or transformed (Richardson, 2007: 26). This dialectical relationship means that since discourse plays such a vital role in the defining of social life, then its role and responsibility ought to also be in strengthening or weakening social inequalities. The focus is drawn on the relationship and tensions between the socially shaped and socially constructive discourse.

6.2 Ideological Role of the Media and Discourse

Norman Fairclough claims that the ideological work of media language is composed of: “ways of representing the world” and “particular constructions of social relations” (Fairclough, 1995: 12). The purpose of language is to generate representations of the world and of concrete situations; when related directly to the public, language holds responsibility for the formation of identities and relations (Fairclough, 1995: 17). It is important to note, that each representation is subject to bias and manipulation, and entails a certain point of view that is heavily influenced by that individual's ambitions and values. In order for a ‘truth’ to be shaped in one's mind, one has to witness representations of it. This may be in the form of observing a situation, experiencing it, or making a deduction from someone else's experience. It is then foolish to assume that all ‘truths’ of a certain event are the same, something that can be applied to the varying stories witnesses to the same crime present, or even reliable, unbiased journalism.

Consequently, discourses are shaped socioculturally but, at the same time, comprise culture and society. This relationship between discourses and culture/society can be described as “transformative” and “reproductive” one (Fairclough, 1995: 34). The media is then defined by the wider society, and are also responsible for the “diffusion of such social and cultural changes”, such as race relations (Fairclough, 1995: 51). Thus, race relations function as a “relationship between the text, its producers and inequalities in society” (Richardson, 2007: 29).

Fairclough claims that a substantial amount of media analysis has showed that “informationally oriented aspects of media output”, such as the news, are and have been ideologically shaped since they “contribute to reproducing social relations of domination and exploitation” (Fairclough, 1995: 44). Ideological representations in discourse tend to be more implicit than explicit, and Fairclough claims that these representations are surrounded by language which helps naturalize and commonsense the discourse for the sake of the audience and reporters (Fairclough, 1995: 44-45). The media, with focus on news reporting, functions in order to politically and socially inform the masses. These discourses operate ideologically in “social control and social reproduction”, “as cultural commodities”, and “reflecting and contributing to shifting cultural values and identities” (Fairclough, 1995: 47-48). Therefore, discourse has the power to call the audience to act upon society; it is an active element that can bring upon desired change by “shaping understandings, influencing audience attitudes and beliefs (particularly through their reinforcement), and transforming the consciousness of those who read and consume it” (Richardson, 2007: 29).

7. Method & Empirics

7.1 Empirical Material

This study is a mixed-method study, in the sense that both qualitative and quantitative components are implemented. The data collected will be qualitative in nature; however, the frequencies of addressed themes will be summarized in a quantitative manner. Thus, the quantitative results of this study will be comparable to Indzhov (2012) and Lekov et al’s (2011), and will show if their results are applicable to this investigation’s. The data will consist of every news article headline accessible online from the 1st of May, 2011, to the 15th of December, 2014, regarding the Roma from the following news websites:

- bTV News

- Blitz
- Novini

Aside for being some of the most popular online news sources in Bulgaria, these news outlets were selected due to having made available a greater number of news articles on their websites than other Bulgarian online news media. Due to the nature of the study, it is vital for the empirical material to consist of as many news article headings as possible as to devise an analysis and conclusion as accurate and representative of attitudes towards the Roma in Bulgarian media as possible. It is also important to note, that bTV News, Blitz, and Novini are private, independent and commercial news outlets, without a known political slant.

The news article headings will be collected by searching for all articles with the tag 'Roma', in the online databases of the three news websites. This will bring forth all articles that have mentioned 'Roma' or have been tagged as to address 'Roma' in each of the three databases; and will facilitate in the data collection process, as only the articles that mention 'Roma' will be placed into their own separate online category. As to eliminate problems or issues that may arise with misplaced 'tags', any headlines which do not mention 'Roma', 'Gypsy', or refer to a specific Roma ghetto by name – such as Stolipinovo, Orlandoftsi, Asparuhovo, Filipovtsi, etcetera - will not be included in the data collection. The tag 'Roma' is synonymous with the 'Gypsy' tag during the data collection, and the news sources failed to produce results while using the official 'Gypsy' tag; there are no additional nouns used in the Bulgarian language for Roma.

In order for a fair study to be conducted, the timeframe for each of the three news sources needs to be the same. The oldest articles found on the Novini news website date back to May 2011. Therefore, the timeframe of the study will be from May 2011 to December 15th, 2014. This provides ample amount of news article headlines to analyze, to be exact: 2,029 articles with "Roma" tagged as a subject from Blitz with the oldest article available online dating back to 2005; 2,922 articles from bTV News, dating back to 2011; and 1,008 news articles from Novini dating from 2011. Once the headings that do not directly address 'Roma', 'Gypsy', or a particular Roma ghetto have been removed, then the amount of news article headings from each website are as follows: 601 headings from Novini, 475 article headings from Blitz, and 354 article headings from bTV News. The discarded headings most often refer to the Italian football club A.S. Roma, or other 'Roma' or 'Gypsy' homonyms.

7.2 Method

Rather than analyzing the entire text in each article, the focus of the investigation will be on the article headings. This will enable the researcher to analyze additional material. In addition: “The headline of a news report formulates the overall theme of a text” (Fairclough, 1995: 29). Thus, the overall impression of an article is derived from its heading.

After conducting a pilot study on 150 news headings, the most frequently addressed themes were recorded and helped shape the categories used for the coding scheme. Each article title will be placed into one of the following categories, depending on the nature of the discourse in regards to Roma portrayal:

1. Roma represented as victims (since focus is then drawn on any injustice done to the Roma rather than the Roma being responsible for a negatively associated act).
2. Focus being drawn to the importance of integration, and/or clear acts of discrimination towards the Roma (with the headlines not condoning the bigotry).
3. Attention being drawn to the Roma’s poor socio-economic conditions that need to be changed for the better.
4. A positive achievement and/or praise to a Roma individual’s accomplishment.
5. Reference being made to the Roma being invaders and/or foreigners.
6. Roma being portrayed as criminals. This includes Roma being portrayed as thieves, and/or deceptive in order to gain money and/or material belongings in illegal manners and also taking part in prohibited activities.
7. Roma being portrayed as rapists. This includes article headings that directly address rape conducted by a Roma individual.
8. Roma being portrayed as violent. This includes articles that state that a Roma individual has committed a violent act, such as: arson, beating, and murder.
9. Roma being portrayed as disruptive and/or rebellious. These are not necessarily illegal activities, but acts that are frowned upon in society. Examples of anti-social behavior are: playing very loud music during the night, rioting, vandalism, abusive language, etcetera.
10. The tenth category encompasses statements made that are directly negative towards the Roma and do not fit any of the other categories.
11. The eleventh category refers to headlines that focus on police intervention and measurements taken in order to counter the Roma activity in question
12. The twelfth category includes headlines that have a positive and negative connotation; positive in the sense that a positive deed is being done, but negative in the sense that the headline

suggests that it is out of the ordinary for a Roma to do such an act, an example being: Roma return wallet full of money! This also includes headlines that are openly mocking the Roma.

13. Another category is for neutral headlines. These statements refer to news article headings, which do not show a positive or negative connotation. These discourses basically just state facts.

These thirteen categories are mutually exclusive, meaning that an article heading can only be placed into one of the thirteen categories. The headlines are sorted into one of these thirteen categories based on the grammatical subject or verb (depending on the topic of the headline) in a sentence, and solely focus on the depiction of the Roma in the headline itself without attention being brought to previous and/or additional knowledge. It is vital for the quantitative aspect of the study, that headlines are only placed in one of these thirteen categories. If an article fits more than one category, then the article will be counted in the category of the grammatical subject or verb of the sentence, however, in the case of compound subjects or verbs, the category will be that of the first subject/verb mentioned. An example of compound verbs is: 'The Roma individual mugged and 'beat' the victim'. 'Roma individual', while being the grammatical subject of the sentence, is not the topic of the sentence, but the actions done to the victim become the topic. Thus, 'Mugged' fits the crime category, and 'beat' the violence one; in this case, the headline would be classified as the Roma being portrayed as criminals, since 'mugged' is the first verb encountered and the creator of the headline has consciously chosen to place that term before 'beat'. In addition to these thirteen mutually exclusive categories, the headlines can also be placed into another two sections simultaneously:

1. Reference to a situation outside of Bulgaria concerning the Roma, such as Bulgarian Roma immigrating to France.
2. The use of 'Gypsy' rather than 'Roma'.

In the analysis of the results, specific focus will be drawn on the use of 'Roma' in headlines where the people group the person in question belongs to is not of importance to the report, videlicet: 'Man breaks into mansion' vs. 'Roma man breaks into mansion'.

Naturally, as with translation from any language, there is a high chance that the full essence of the diction is not fully communicated once translated. This study aims to eliminate that concern by categorizing the headlines into addressed themes from the original language – Bulgarian – by a native speaker. Accordingly, the analysis is conducted from the original Bulgarian, however, for the sake of this paper, translations of the headlines are provided and referred to throughout the investigation. The English translations aim to capture the full significance of the headlines from their original language.

In addition, it is important to note that this investigation is subject to bias from the researcher since the very nature of the study depends on the researcher’s interpretations of the headlines. As previously discussed, Fairclough (1995: 17) highlights the role of language in generating representations of the world and of circumstances, and in the development of identities and relations. The representations, by the journalists responsible for the headings studied and by the researcher, are thus heavily influenced by the points of view, values, and ambitions of the individuals responsible for the writings. Nonetheless, Fairclough (1995: 52) claims that media texts are a, “sensitive barometer of sociocultural change”, and highlights the value these discourses hold for researching changes in society and culture.

8. Analysis & Discussion

*All article headings from bTV, Blitz, and Novini are translated from Bulgarian to English by the author of this paper.

Table Showing the Frequencies of Addressed Themes Regarding the Roma in Bulgarian News Headlines

Theme	Website			Sum
	Blitz	bTV News	Novini	
Portrayed as Victims	26 (5.47%)	16 (4.51%)	26 (4.29%)	68 (4.74%)
Integration/Discrimination	10 (2.11%)	32 (9.04%)	40 (6.61%)	82 (5.72%)
Socio-economic Conditions	2 (0.421%)	7 (1.98%)	8 (1.32%)	17 (1.19%)
Positive Achievement	6 (1.26%)	9 (2.54%)	9 (1.48%)	24 (1.67%)
Invaders/Foreigners	3 (0.631%)	10 (2.83%)	5 (0.826)	18 (1.26%)
Crime	100 (21.1%)	72 (20.3%)	90 (14.9%)	262 (18.3%)
Rape	1 (0.211%)	2 (0.565%)	3 (0.496%)	6 (0.418%)

Violence	160 (33.7%)	77 (21.8%)	134 (22.1%)	371 (25.9%)
Disruption/Rebellion	72 (15.2%)	47 (13.3%)	77 (12.7%)	196 (13.7%)
Negative	10 (2.11%)	7 (1.97%)	13 (2.15%)	30 (2.09%)
Police/Intervention	6 (1.26%)	2 (0.565%)	17 (2.81%)	25 (1.74%)
Positive & Negative, Mocking	13 (2.74%)	11 (3.11%)	7 (1.16%)	31 (2.16%)
Neutral, Fact	66 (13.9%)	62 (17.5%)	176 (29.1%)	304 (21.2%)
Sum	475	354	605	1,434 cases
Other Country	5 (1.05%)	20 (5.65%)	78 (12.9%)	103 (7.18%)
'Gypsy'	65 (13.7%)	0 (0%)	279 (46.1%)	344 (23.9%)

The following paragraphs will summarize the results and highlight the most significant findings in a section attributed to each individual theme.

8.1 Roma as Victims

Sixty-eight headlines, 4.74 per cent of the aggregate, presented the Roma as victims. Blitz and Novini contributed twenty-six of these headlines each, and bTV News sixteen. The few headlines that showed any injustice being done to the Roma simply recounted situations where, in most cases, Roma have been attacked or beaten: “Skinheads beat up two Roma in Blagoevgrad (bTV News, 29/09/2011)”, “Belgian mayor attacks a Roma ghetto with loud techno music (bTV News, 16/07/2014)”, and “Skinheads attack Roma by NDK, mothers with children intervene (bTV News, 03/11/2013)”. It is interesting to note the perpetrators in two of the headings are described as “skinheads”, which also bear negative connotations. In addition, there are no headings in the study that state that “Bulgarians”

have beaten Roma, and thus portrayed the Roma as a victim and a Bulgarian as an attacker – this may be a mark of the Bulgarian righteousness, and, as Fairclough (1995:17) argues, a representation of the media's view of their own people. It is doubtful that the Bulgarian media would want to represent the very people they are addressing as violent and bloodthirsty.

Furthermore, there are a number of headings that refer to the Roma's demolished homes, such as, "A fire burned half a Roma ghetto down to the ground near Paris (bTV News, 11/03/2013)" and "Roma in Stara Zagora sleep under the open sky after their homes were destroyed (bTV News, 27/07/2014)". The former headline portrays a more factual approach, while the second draws more on emotions as the diction refers to the Roma's "homes" rather than "ghettos", and states that the Roma, after their homes were "destroyed", have no place to sleep but under the open night sky.

The majority of the headlines which portrayed the Roma as victims, referred to the Roma as 'Roma' rather than 'Gypsy'. However, there is one instance where 'Gypsy' was used instead: "A Molotov cocktail killed a gypsy in Paris (Novini, 26/10/2011)". In this case, the Roma is portrayed as a victim in the sense that s/he has been murdered by a Molotov cocktail, however, at the same time, the victim is referred to as a gypsy – a term which bears negative connotation.

There are also a number of headlines that refer to the punishment or consequence of harming a Roma, such as in the case of, "A cleaner beats a little Roma. The woman is fired (Novini, 29/09/2011)", "They held 13 individuals in custody in Varna for the attacking Roma (Novini, 25/09/2011)", and "Three Hungarians with a life sentence for the murder of Roma (bTV News, 06/08/2013)". The consequences of which are discussed in the beginning of this section, the nationality of the cleaner and the thirteen individuals are not mentioned. Are they Bulgarians? Foreigners? However, the nationality of the three Hungarians is clear. This further separates Bulgarian citizens from violence and from the capability of attacking someone, especially a Roma individual. Headlines such as these further strengthen the thought that any harm caused by the Roma to Bulgarians is undeserved. These headlines not only communicate harm done to a member of the Roma community, but also convey the gravity of the following consequences. In addition, there is an instance where the headline shows measurements taken in order to protect the Roma community from coming to further harm: "The Gendarmerie is in a Montanian village because of a shooting at Roma (bTV News, 30/09/2014)". After noting the lack of identification of the ones responsible of the shooting, it is interesting to see that headlines such as this portray Bulgaria in a heroic and protective role to the Roma, who, coupled with their depiction in other headlines, commit crime and violence to the undeserving Bulgarians who choose to help protect them. The race relations and social relations Fairclough discusses (1995: 29, 44,

51), become evident in such cases. It is also interesting to note, the tendency of ideological representations being implicit rather than explicit (Fairclough 1995: 44-45), thus it is important to note the undertones of the headlines in portraying the Roma and Bulgaria's role and treatment towards them.

8.2 Integration and/or Discrimination

Eighty-two headlines (5.72 per cent) addressed the topic of integration and/or acts of discrimination towards the Roma (with the headlines not condoning the bigotry). Blitz and Novini focused on the topic in question in ten more articles than bTV News, namely twenty-six instances each.

A number of these headings draw attention to legal action undertaken to counter Roma discriminatory acts, such as "Social worker fired; refused aid to Roma (Blitz, 26/04/2013)" and "French minister in court due to speaking against the Roma (bTV News, 11/10/2013). Few of the article headings addressed successful Roma integration, but a significant amount highlighted the failures of the Bulgarian nation in integrating the Bulgarian Roma population and in decreasing instances violating their rights. Headings such as, "Funds for the Roma have not been spent on the Roma (Novini, 21/03/2012)", "Bulgaria's problems – the rights of the Roma, corruption, and censorship (bTV News, 28/02/2014)", and "German media: Measures in Bulgaria for Roma integration are marked by failures (Blitz, 22/03/2013)" highlight the severity and lack of successful integration of Roma in Bulgaria itself, without focusing on their situation in other nations.

In addition, some of the headlines addressed statements by politically active individuals in Bulgarian society, such as the current Bulgarian President, "Plevneliev: People are not interested in the topic 'Gypsies-Bulgarians' (Blitz, 30/09/2011)", and by a Ministry of Interior Official, Tsvetan Tsvetanov, "Tsvetanov: Understand, in Bulgaria we are all Bulgarian citizens (Novini, 27/09/2011)". These statements draw focus on the topic of integration and of Roma-Bulgarian ethnic relations. Both Plevneliev and Tsvetanov highlight the lack of comprehension regarding the importance of the topic; with the former drawing focus to there being a lack of interest in Roma-Bulgaria relations, and with the latter stating, and through the use of "Understand", urging the audience to grab hold of the synonymy between Roma and Bulgarians.

The use of the term 'gypsy' in some of the headings throughout the investigation, such as in, "Bulgarians have become more tolerant towards Turks and gypsies (Novini, 15/11/2013)" is quite questionable. In the example just mentioned, primarily, attention is drawn to the tolerance increasing toward the minority groups. However, tolerance in its very nature suggests accepting to endure the existence of something one disagrees with and/or dislikes; the term tolerance holds a negative

connotation towards whatever is being “tolerated”. Secondly, the term “gypsy” holds no positive connotation but the contrary.

Nonetheless, news article headings addressing productive integration, while few, were still present, such as: “Successful integration of Roma children (bTV News, 28/06/2013)”. In addition, a headline referencing successful integration techniques by the French existed as well: “The French authorities integrate the Roma with wooden houses and language courses (bTV News, 02/08/2012)”.

8.3 Socio-economic Conditions

Seventeen articles, 1.19 per cent of the total, drew attention to the Roma’s poor socio-economic conditions that are in much need of improvement. Blitz accounted for two of the articles in this category, bTV News for seven, and Novini for eight. The twenty-four headlines that gave prominence to the minority’s socio-economic conditions mainly addressed the current, poor situation of the Roma’s living environments. Two headlines directly focused on the living conditions of the Roma: “Life in a Roma camp (bTV News, 02/01/2013)” and, “The housing of the Roma in “Shekera neighbourhood”, ten years later (bTV News, 16/10/2013)”. These two article headlines do not state much regarding the actual day-to-day life of the Roma, highlight the dire need of improvement, or mention any detail at all, however, they do bring attention to the topic of living conditions of the Roma. Furthermore, there are headings that recount certain parts of the Roma’s lives, such as, “Gypsies from Kazanlak: We bathe in pits (Novini, 14/11/2014)”, “Roma make their own sewage systems (Novini, 22/07/2011)” and, “Frogs flowed from the taps in the quarter “Iztok” in Ihtiman (Novini, 23/04/2014)”. Clearly, these three headlines do not portray a comfortable lifestyle for the Roma, but draw attention to the poor conditions they live in. However, it is interesting to note the use of gypsy, which, when utilized, bears the negative connotation that gypsies are dirty and dangerous, something which the simple statement that they bathe in pits strengthens, as the sentence structure does not offer an explanation as to why the Roma bathe in pits. Is it due to them not having access to plumbing? Or is it because they want to? The headline offers no explanation, even implicitly. Furthermore, it is necessary to know that the Iztok quarter is a Roma ghetto area. The last headline example clearly denotes further repulsive living conditions the Roma live with.

8.4 Positive Achievement and/or Praise

Simply by highlighting the ethnicity of an individual in a headline builds upon the assumption that the activity addressed is out of the ordinary for that ethnic race. It is important to distinguish between instances where a Roma individual has been identified and shown to have done a heroic act and where a headline addressing a Roma individual, still identified as doing something positive, seems to mock or insinuate that the positive act is abnormal for a member of that ethnic group. Examples of headlines fitting the former description are: “Roma brothers save an 85 year old woman (Blitz, 06/09/2014)”, “Someone buried a mother and son, successor of Roma Baron saves them (Novini, 21/08/2012)”, and “The son of Roma boss saved a mother and child, which were buried alive (Blitz, 21/08/2012)”. These headlines do indeed draw attention to the Roma individual’s ethnicity, but in these instances, it is likely that if it were a Bulgarian man saving the mother and child then the race would still be mentioned. There are twenty-four headlines that highlight a positive achievement a Roma individual has done. bTV and Novini accounted for nine headlines each, while Blitz accounted for six cases.

The headlines in this category cover a wide range of topics, such as: the success of a Roma restaurant: “Roma restaurant – a hit in Budapest (bTV News, 24/04/2012)”; achievements in the political sphere, “For the first time, a Roma party will fight for representation in the Czech Parliament (bTV News, 23/10/2013)”, “Two Bulgarian gypsies are ministers in the Global Roma Parliament (Blitz, 07/06/2014)” and, “‘Ataka’ raises a Roma candidate as Mayor of Haskovo (bTV News, 27/09/2011)”; and attainment for students; “Roma medicine students will take part in advocacy training (bTV News, 10/02/2013)”. These examples show the increasing presence of Roma in the political scene, either through parties or individuals, and individual accomplishments in the realm of education and business. It is also interesting to note as to how Blitz refers to “Bulgarian gypsies (07/06/2014)”, thus directly linking the two Roma to Bulgaria and, in a way, identifying them as “Bulgarians”.

8.5 Roma as Invaders and/or Foreigners

Eighteen (1.26 per cent) article headlines portrayed Roma as invaders or foreigners; Blitz in three instances, bTV in ten, and Novini in five. This depiction is evident in titles such as, “Invasion of Roma in Protopopintsi, the mayor complains to Tsvetanov (Blitz, 17/12/2012)”. The use of the term “invasion” further strengthens the Roma stereotypes as unwanted, undesired, plundering groups. Perhaps the percentage does not seem to be significant, however, as Richardson (2007: 29) claims, discourse, and thus media, has the ability to call the audience to act upon society and can bring about change through its shaping of understandings and attitudes. The media’s influence can also be used for negative purposes, and regardless of how minor such instances seem, their effect is still felt in society

and society's perceptions, especially when paired with other negative depictions of the same minority group.

8.6 Roma as Criminals

One of the most commonly addressed themes in this investigation is crime; namely, the depiction of Roma as criminals. Criminals in this sense refers to Roma being portrayed as thieves, and/or deceptive in order to gain money and/or material belongings in illegal manners and also taking part in prohibited activities. Blitz contributed 100 of these headings, bTV seventy-two, and Novini ninety. There are numerous headings referring to Roma and gypsies mugging individuals and stealing objects, such as: "Roma stole the water meters in an entire neighborhood and sold them for scrap (Novini, 28/01/2014)", "Roma pretend to be refugees, so that they can take money from the EU (Blitz, 04/09/2013)", "Father Ivan shelters 18 Roma children, they mug him (Blitz, 22/11/2013)", "Mugged granny in shock: Roma were threatening her to cut her head off! (Blitz, 02/04/2014)", "Roma entice the elderly to buy their iPhones (Blitz, 28/03/2014)" and "A village in Vidin screams from Gypsy robberies (Blitz, 03/01/2013)". As previously mentioned, in some of these headings you can see a positive act being done by one party (such as Father Ivan sheltering Roma children), and the Roma responding in a negative manner – as in the case of Father Ivan, by robbery. The Roma are also mentioned to be stealing money from the EU; money that is meant for refugees – in this case, the Roma are not only stealing from the EU but also taking money that should be for the refugees. These headlines mention the Roma mugging the elderly quite often, and this creates an even stronger sensation of anger towards them when reading the headline, especially when it is in response to a kind act. In addition, there are an ample amount of headlines addressing the Roma stealing and taking apart buildings for iron they can sell (or scrap, as in the case of the water meters); examples include: "Underage Roma rummaged through 15 graves for iron (Blitz, 27/02/2014)", "Roma desecrate tombs for TVs (Blitz, 27/01/2014)", and "Roma take apart a school centre (Blitz, 30/12/2011)". In these three examples, the Roma, even the underage ones, are portrayed as stealing from the dead (graves and tombs), and preventing students from going to school by taking their centre apart.

These headlines only strengthen the stereotypes of the Roma as criminals and deceptive. Not only do they strengthen these stereotypes when mentioning the ethnicity, the headings also generalize the events to the majority of the Roma population. An example of this is in headlines such as: "We won't pay for our electricity (Blitz, 23/11/2011)". The grammatical structure of this sentence and the lack of explanation make it seem as if this saying is from the entire Roma population – that the entire Roma population in Bulgaria is unwilling to pay their electricity bills, the paper has made no attempt to confine headlines such as these to single, individual events. Furthermore, one headline says, "Shock

and horror grip citizens from the suburbs – psychopaths, Gypsies, and drug addicts rampage unpunished (Blitz, 02/12/2011)”. This headline likens psychopaths and drug addicts to gypsies; it suggests that these three groups are unleashing trepidation in the suburbs. This sentence intensifies negative stereotypes of the Roma, while even associating them with “horror”, “psychopaths”, “drug addicts”, and “unpunished rampage.”

8.7 Roma as Rapists

Rape was the least common theme addressed in the headlines studied. Six (0.42 per cent) headlines addressed Roma conducting rape; one of these instances was reported by Blitz, two by bTV News, and three by Novini. An example of such a headline is, “30 Roma raped Czechs in prison (Novini, 13/11/2014)”. This example and the remaining of the headlines addressing this topic refrained from the use of ‘gypsy’ and remained factual, and emotion-less. However, it also important to note that perhaps the few instances of addressing the topic are due to rape not being mentioned as much in media.

8.8 Roma as Violent

The most commonly addressed subject found in the newspaper headlines incorporating Roma was violence – 25.9 per cent (Blitz accounted for 160 cases, bTV for seventy-seven, and Novini for 134 cases). A copious amount of headings read that Roma “beat” or “attacked” individuals. It is also interesting how frequently the headlines make a clear distinction between Roma and Bulgarians. This is apparent in headlines such as: “Massive brawl between Gypsies and Bulgarians in Kableshkovo (Blitz, 31/05/2012)”, “Gypsies and Bulgarians fought each other in Karlukovo (Novini, 10/06/2013)”, “War with rocks between Bulgarians and Roma (Blitz, 15/12/2013)”, “Bulgarians and Roma in a deadly clash (Blitz, 24/09/2011)”, “Five destroyed after mass fight between Roma and Bulgarians (Blitz, 10/06/2013),” and “Roma received only a 3-year sentence for a brutal murder of a Bulgarian! (Blitz, 13/07/2014)”. This created gap is also evident in headlines that address a Roma individual harming a Bulgarian citizen. One has to keep in mind, that the Roma population in Bulgaria are Bulgarian citizens. If the Roma in Bulgaria are Bulgarian citizens, then why should any headline insinuate that the Roma are not Bulgarian? Headlines such as, “Three Roma beat and mugged a Bulgarian (Blitz, 31/05/2013)”, and “Insufficient sentence for a Gypsy who slaughtered a Bulgarian (Blitz, 22/10/2013)” are commonly found. A clear distinction is formed between the two ethnic groups, and forms a Bulgarians vs. Roma mentality, and, simultaneously, a mutually exclusive relation between Bulgarians and Roma. In addition, the use of the term “slaughter” in the previous example

further enhances the view that Roma are murderous and vicious people who are not to be associated with the normally-peaceful Bulgarian citizens. The only time Bulgarians are referred to in a violent setting is when they are fighting *with* the Roma; thus, it seems that the Roma are the ones responsible.

There are also headlines that do not mention the ethnicity of the victim, however, those headlines do highlight the race of the attacker(s), such as: “Roma attacked doctors in Blagoevgrad (Blitz, 26/08/2013)”, “Roma gang broke a man from Botevgrad’s ribs (Blitz, 11/06/2013)”, “Unrest in Trun! Roma attacked Bulgarian houses, threatening with murder (Blitz, 11/06/2013),” and “Roma attacked TV SKAT’s team with rocks (Photos) (Blitz, 28/05/2013)”. In addition, a number of headlines draw focus to the victim of a Roma’s violence. While doing so, a number of the headlines portray the victim in a sympathetic light and portray the Roma as not only an individual causing harm, but also one who is preventing the victim from helping someone else. A clear example of this is: “Medics help a pregnant woman; Roma beat them up (Blitz, 02/09/2013)”. One has to ask oneself, is it really necessary to mention ethnicity in such headlines? What does this use contribute to, other than strengthening stereotypes? How significant is the difference between, “Gypsies beat up a man in Blagoevgrad (Novini, 06/08/2014)”, and ‘A gang beat up a man in Blagoevgrad’? The latter dissociates ethnicity from the brutality, rather than portraying the “Gypsies” as violent and cruel.

Another significant headline is, “Gypsies tied a dog to a car and dragged it until it died! (Novini, 13/08/2014).” Firstly, one has to note the use of ‘Gypsies’ rather than ‘Roma’; secondly, the exclamation mark used is also notable as it signifies tenacious emotions; and thirdly, one has to ask oneself whether it is necessary to report such an action, despite of how inhumane it may appear to some. Is it likely that mainstream news sites such as Novini would report that a Bulgarian man tied a dog to a car and dragged it until it died? - Most probably not. This headline not only highlights the ethnicity but also refers to the Roma in question as ‘Gypsies’, a term which bears negative connotation in itself. The use of the exclamation mark places this heinous act in the foreground and further stresses the absurdity of the situation. Another animal-related incident that was reported is, “New atrocity from a Roma from Krusharska – they blew a snake up with a pump (Blitz, 22/10/2012)”. In this case, the term gypsy is not used and neither is an exclamation mark. However, by the use of “new” the second headline suggests that there are an ample amount of previously conducted “atrocities”.

Numerous headings such as, “Gypsy attacked a bus driver with an axe (Blitz, 31/01/2013)”, “Gypsies jumped with an axe towards a police officer in Teteven (Blitz, 08/07/2013)”, “Roma broke a man’s head in Apriltsi; they set him on fire as to remove evidence (Blitz, 11/01/2014)”, and “Action in Petrichko: Roma brawl with swords and knives (Blitz, 27/04/2013)” portray the Roma as violent individuals without a conscience, while generalizing that the entire Roma population is the same as

those that the media aim to portray and gradually influencing the readers of these headlines to construct their views of the Roma from these violence-infused headlines.

8.9 Roma as Disruptive and/or Rebellious

196 of the headings portrayed the Roma as disruptive and/or rebellious; Novini accounted for seventy-seven of the cases, Blitz for seventy-two, and bTV for forty-seven. The majority of these articles focus on anti-social behavior, such as the Roma disrupting trains by being on the rails and rioting. There are also instances where the Roma were portrayed as scapegoats, in the sense that they “[Roma] hinder tourism in the park Bachinovo in Blagoevgrad (Novini, 22/06/2012)”. In addition to portraying them as scapegoats, headlines such as, ““Block of horrors” in Pleven because of the tenants – Roma (bTV News, 27/03/2014)”, portray them again in a very dark light and simply reinforce the stereotypes readers have heard throughout their lives. In order to be a “Block of horrors”, what kind of people must live there? The heading gives a simple answer – Roma. This sentence hardly encourages individuals to be accepting of the Roma population.

In another instance, Novini refer to the Roma as “our Roma” in: “Our Roma stopped Macedonia’s electricity (22/04/2014)”. This headline indicates that the Bulgarian Roma are not just after disrupting the life of Bulgarians, they are unscrupulous and do not hesitate to interrupt the daily life of other countries’ citizens and steal from them. Furthermore, the headline suggests that the Roma’s criminal acts have no boundaries, literally and geographically. In addition, there are instances where headings such as “Roma built a neighborhood on top of our graves (Novini, 28/04/2014)”, become very personal. This heading suggests complete disturbance on the resting dead in that grave, which the heading so delicately suggests is “ours”. Also, they refer to the those having built the neighborhood – something which means quite a number of Roma must be involved since it is an entire neighborhood – as Roma in the plural form.

8.10 Negative Statements

There are thirty instances of headings that are directly negative towards the Roma and do not fit into the other categories. Blitz accounts for ten of these instances, bTV for seven, and Novini for thirteen. Examples of these include: “Citizen erupts to the Roma in ‘Asparuhovo’: Parasites, inhuman scum! (Blitz, 25/06/2014)” and, “Termites from Roma origin gnawed an entire building (Blitz, 10/04/2014)”. In the latter headline, the title states that termites (the insects) are from Roma origin and links that to an entire building being gnawed from the bugs. It is hard to believe, that such a headline would be

present in a newspaper today. This headline not only feeds Roma stereotypes, but also worsens them. The former headline, on the other hand, is an open statement against the Roma, but it has been quoted from someone. However, it achieves the same effect as the latter headline.

8.11 Police/Intervention

Twenty-five headings addressed police action and intervention in countering any kinds of Roma activity. Seventeen of these instances were documented by Novini, six by Blitz, and two by bTV. Most of these headlines have to do with legal forces being obliged to go into Roma ghettos with police escorts, due to electricity bills not being paid by the Roma, or due to violence escalating in the ghetto itself: “Tensions escalating in Petrich, gendarmes and berets occupy the ghetto (Novini, 07/10/2014)”. These headings highlight Bulgaria’s role and need in securing communities, individuals, or even the Roma themselves, from the Roma. They also show the extent to which one must go through in order for the Roma to pay for electricity – that the Roma need to be forced to pay, while in the company of police as to protect the “legal forces”.

8.12 Positive & Negative, and/or Mocking

There are thirty-one instances of headlines suggesting a positive action on behalf of the Roma, and then immediately dismissing it by substituting it with a negative, and/or openly mocking the Roma or their action(s). Examples of this include: “God-fearing gypsies return a large sum of money (Novini, 07/08/2013)”, “Plovdiv is a candidate for ‘Capital of Culture’ and doesn’t hide ‘Stolipinovo’ (bTV, 26/08/2014)”, and “Roma children return found wallet with 300 Leva (bTV, 24/01/2013)”. It is important to note that Stolipinovo is a large Roma ghetto in Plovdiv, this is significant because it means that the headline is implying that in order for Plovdiv to win the annual title of “Capital of Culture” for Europe, then it ought to hide its largest Roma ghetto. The first and third headlines highlight that these “gypsies” and “Roma children” chose to do the right thing and return a wallet/money. However, the structure of these two headings and the mentioning of the ethnicity show that this act of returning found money is unordinary for the Roma, and it is something so unique that it even makes the news.

8.13 Neutral Headings

21.2 per cent of the headlines fit the description of the neutral category. These headlines do not show a positive or negative connotation in regards to the Roma, but simply state facts. Examples of neutral

headings found in the study include but are not limited to: “Gypsies settled in Europe 900 years ago (Novini, 29/12/2012)”, “People from Burgas rose against the construction of an apartment block – they don’t want Gypsies for neighbors (Novini, 08/03/2012)”, and “Tsvetelin Kanchev – Scribblers in forums add fire to the hatred between Bulgarians and Roma (Blitz, 20/03/2013)”. Novini accounted for 176 neutral articles, while Blitz and bTV News accounted for sixty-six and sixty-two, respectively. While these headings may be reporting an event in itself which may seem negative to the Roma as in the second example, it is important to note that the heading itself is not negative towards the Roma, but the action reported is. In the case of the second heading, it remains neutral since there is no negative or positive connotation on behalf of the headline towards the Roma, but it is part of the event that the paper is reporting that is negative.

8.14 Reference to Other Countries

In 7.18 per cent of the articles countries other than Bulgaria, and the Roma situation in those nations, are the subject and theme of the headline. The majority of these headings discuss how various nations have caused the Roma immigrating into their countries to leave, and further strengthen the view of the Roma being unwanted and problematic. So much so, that nations other than Bulgaria desire for the Roma coming from Bulgaria to leave their nation and go back to where they originally came from. It is also implied that Bulgaria is portrayed in a better light than the nations forcing the Roma to leave, since Bulgaria has not attempted to cause the Roma to leave the Bulgarian nation.

8.15 Use of ‘Gypsy’ Rather than ‘Roma’

In the 1,434 headings examined, 344 of them referred to the Roma as ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Gypsies.’ It is interesting to note, that the titles collected from bTV News does not consist of a single use of ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Gypsies’. The news source that attributed to 81.1 per cent of the cases addressing ‘Gypsy/ies’ was Novini; 46.1 per cent of Novini’s headings referred to Roma as Gypsies. On the other hand, Blitz utilized the term in sixty-five cases. The exact significance of the term’s usage is debatable, however, the term does hold a negative connotation. It is interesting to note that the majority of the uses of the term ‘Gypsy’ were when addressing themes such as violence, crime, and rebellion. These connections enhance the negative view of the Gypsy/Roma community, and further depict them as inherently different from the law-abiding Bulgarians.

8.16 Overall Results

If one separates the mutually exclusive categories into positive, negative, and neutral criteria, then the categories are as follows:

- Positive
 - Portraying the Roma as victims. This is due to focus being drawn on injustice done to the Roma rather than the Roma committing a negatively associated act.
 - Integration/discrimination. This is due to focus being drawn to the importance of integration, and/or clear acts of discrimination towards the Roma (with the headlines not condoning the bigotry).
 - Socio-economic Conditions. This is due to attention being drawn to the Roma's poor socio-economic conditions that need to be improved.
 - Positive Achievement and/or praise to an accomplishment.

- Negative
 - Invaders/Foreigners.
 - Crime. This is due to the Roma taking part of illegal activities, such as stealing, which is clearly negative.
 - Rape. This category refers to a Roma individual conducting the rape, not a Roma individual being a victim of rape.
 - Violence.
 - Disruption/Rebellion.
 - Negative.
 - Police intervention.
 - Positive & Negative, Mocking.

- Neutral

Once placed into positive, negative, and neutral categories, the results show that:

Table Showing Amount of Positive, Negative, and Neutral Cases

	Blitz	bTV News	Novini	Sum (cases)
Positive	44 cases (9.26%)	64 cases (18.1%)	83 cases (13.3%)	191 (13.2%)
Negative	365 cases (76.8%)	228 cases (64.4%)	364 cases (58.4%)	956 (65.9%)
Neutral	66 cases (13.9%)	62 cases (17.5%)	176 cases (28.3%)	304 (20.9%)
Sum	475 cases	354 cases	623 cases	1,451

58.4 per cent of Novini’s headings were negative, 28.3 per cent were neutral, and 13.3 per cent were positive. 64.4 per cent of bTV News’ headlines were negative, 18.1 per cent were positive, and 17.5 per cent were neutral. 76.8 per cent of the Blitz’s titles were negative, 13.9 per cent were neutral, and 9.26 per cent were positive. These results show that the majority of the headings in each of these three news sources portrayed the Roma in a negative light. Novini had the most neutral cases at 28.3 per cent; and bTV News had the most positive at only 18.1 per cent. It is also interesting to note that bTV, which had zero instances of the term ‘gypsy’, had the least number of negative headlines – namely; 228 instances, meaning 64.4 per cent. While Blitz had 364 instances and Novini had 346 instances, Blitz utilized ‘gypsy’ in sixty-five cases, Novini in 279 cases.

Overall, the most commonly addressed theme varied depending on the news source. For Blitz, the top three most commonly addressed themes under the period of 2011 to 2014 were: violence, crime, and disturbance/rebellion; for bTV News: violence, crime, and neutral/fact; and for Novini: neutral, violence, and crime. When combining the results of each individual news source, the results show that 65.9 per cent of all of the headings addressing the Roma are negative, and only 13.2 per cent are positive.

9. Limitations

A limitation found in the investigation is in regards to the data collection. Since the entirety of the headlines analyzed were placed under a Roma ‘tag’ on the website, it is possible that there were additional articles and headlines that directly addressed the Roma or a Roma ghetto by name but were not found in the database search due to a tag being misplaced unknowingly or even deliberately.

Furthermore, it can be argued that the majority of news articles and thus headlines are negative, simply because of the function of news media and that positive instances tend not to be as controversial – which would explain the high rate of negative headlines on the Roma, and would mean that there should be a similar amount of negative headlines regardless of the Roma being mentioned or not.

10. Conclusion

The research question this study aimed to answer is, “With specific focus on discrimination towards minorities, how are the Roma depicted in Bulgarian news media headlines?” After analyzing and categorizing the headings of three major Bulgarian online news sources, namely: Blitz, bTV News, and Novini, the discrimination and negative portrayal of the Roma is evident. As Fairclough stated:

Language use – any text – is always simultaneously constitutive of (1) social identities, (2) social relations and (3) systems of knowledge and belief (corresponding respectively to identities, relationships and representations in the terms introduced in Chapter 1). That is, any text makes its own small contribution to shaping these aspects of society and culture. In particular cases, one of the three might appear to be more important than the others, but it is a sensible working assumption that all three are always going on to some degree. Language use is, moreover, constitutive both in conventional ways which help to reproduce and maintain existing social identities, relations and systems of knowledge and belief, and in creative ways which help to transform them. Whether the conventional or the creative predominates in any given case will depend upon social circumstances and how the language is functioning within them (1995: 55).

Indzhov’s (2012) study shows that 2.02% of the articles he studied from July to November 2011 depict the Roma in a positive manner, and that 50% portray the Roma as a threat to society. Similarly, Lekov et al.’s (2011) study from January to June 2011 concluded that the Roma are most often depicted in a negative manner: mainly as non-compliant to rules and laws, criminal, and committing anti-social behavior. These results go hand-in-hand with the conclusions reached by this investigation, namely: in the majority of media cases in Bulgaria, Roma are depicted in a negative light. As Lekov et. al (2011) deduced, some of the most commonly addressed themes were crime and disruption/rebellion (which he referred to as anti-social acts). However, violence was the most commonly addressed theme in this investigation and the amount of positive depictions has increased by 11.3% from the time of Indzhov’s (2012) study. These results show that while there is

improvement in the positive depiction of Roma, the amount of instances portraying the Roma in a negative manner has not decreased.

It is clear by the lack of positive portrayals and the frequent references to negative connotations, such as violence, crime, rebellion, and the use of “gypsy”, that the media in Bulgaria are not contributing to eradicating stereotypes and discrimination towards the Roma. In order to change the current perception of the Roma in Bulgaria, and to thus aid in integrating the minority group in the nation, this clear prejudice needs to be addressed. The media in Bulgaria, and in other nations, need to use their influence wisely and to set an example to society as to ensure the protection of minority rights, the acceptance of all ethnic groups, and the obliteration of discrimination.

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