1. Introduction

It has been an undeniable fact that the influence of the mainstream media in all Central and East European countries has been a predominantly negative one, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudice and creating the basis for ethnic hostility and conflict. Therefore, we consider it as necessary to present the effects of such media and their dominant representation alongside good media practices. Attention will be shifted mainly to the Bulgarian press and the representation of the Roma riots in Stolipinovo in 2002 by the mainstream dailies.

The research aims to explore the structural, discursive and ideological conditions for the negative media representation of the Roma. Several analytical approaches will be employed in order to fulfill this task. Firstly, it is necessary to recognise the contribution of media cultural studies as a whole, as it attempts to provide a comprehensive and exhaustive picture of the multiple influences in the creation of media discourses. This presupposes the study of the complex relationship between media institutions, media texts, politics, audiences and the socio-cultural context (Kellner 1995: 37). The analysis of media institutions requires directing the attention to the

1. Вовед

Неоспорен е фактот дека влијанието на водечките медиуми во сите земји од Централна и Источна Европа е претежно негативно, дека ги засилуваат стереотипите и предрасудите и создаваат основа за етничко непријателство и конфликт. Оттука, сметаме дека е неопходно да се изложат ефектите на таквите медиуми и нивните доминантни прикажувања, напоредно со добрите медиумски практики. Вниманието ќе биде насочено главно кон бугарскиот печат и на тоа како водечките дневни весници ги претставуваа ромските бунтови во Столипиново во 2002 година.

Истражувањето има за цел да ги проучи структурните, дискурзивните и идеолошките услови за негативното медиумско претставување на Ромите. За да се исполнат оваа задача, ќе бидат применети неколку аналитички приоди. Прво, неопходно е да се признае придонесот на медиумските културни студии како целина, бидејќи се обидуваат да обезбедат разбирлива и искрпна слика на повеќекратните влијанија во создавањето на медиумските дискурси. Ова претпоставува проучување на сложените врски меѓу медиумските институции, медиумските текстови, политиката, публиката и социо-културниот контекст.
patterns of ownership and control in the new Bulgarian media, to media legislation, media ethics and questions of media regulation and accountability.

Secondly, critical discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1998) of media texts will be applied with the purpose of deconstructing surface meanings and embracing the underlying assumptions of their political effects, encoding for or decoding by particular targeted audiences. The framing\(^1\) of the texts will be discussed. Textual interpretation will be pursued in terms of relationships between texts, the context, within which they occur, the oppositions they enter into and the discourses they are encoded by (McQuail, 2000, 325-327). The detection of ideological bias and the latent meanings, as well as the practice of agenda setting performed by the media need further attention. The distortion of reality and media bias are most explicit in reporting issues related to race, ethnicity, crime and violence (ibid., 322). The link between short-term media effects, such as framing and agenda setting to long-term effects, as collective reaction, social control, reality definition and effects on social integration must be established (ibid., 425-428).

All the aforementioned objectives will be pursued by means of comparing the media content of some of the highest circulation newspapers in Bulgaria in the late 1990s and the beginning of the new century. The main argument is that the botched reform in media regulation and the lack of appropriate means for accountability have exerted a negative effect on journalistic ethics. Market ac-
врз новинарската етика. Пазарната оправданост и потрошувачката се сметаат за најсилни фактори за постоенчия степен на пристрасност и стереотипизиране. Убедливоста на медиумските дискурси за Ромите е наметната од искористувањето на механизми на општественото познание, кои целат кон особени очекувања, норми и вредности на публиката и ги врамуваат Ромите како крајно Другиот, како жртвено јагне неправедно стигматизирано како паразит и нарушувач на мирот во контекст на политичката и економска нестабилност. Особено медиумите и печатот постојано се обидуваа да ги исклучат Ромите од јавниот дискурс со тоа што преку јазикот и двосмисленото претставување наметнуваа класификувачки нормативен ред врз реалноста. Ова доведе кон пристрасна, искривена слика која, во услови на општествени конфлиktи, беше засилена и со која лесно се манипулираше.

2. Сопственост, регулativa и контрола на медиуми

Може да се смета дека структурната организација на масовните медиуми, постојните шеми на сопственост и контрола ја условуваат интеракцијата помеѓу политичките, економските и медиумските елити и така влиjaат врз конструирането на медиумските дискурси изразени во различни облици на медиумско врамување, предизвикувајќи разновидни ефекти и реакции. И покрај фактот што бугарските медиуми надминаа голем дел од негативното наследство на тоталитарното новинарство, новата слика за медиумите изобилува со аргументи дека тоа и понатаму зависи од државните, политичките или економските сили.

На исключителната политичка зависимост на медиумите беше посочено во неколку државни извештаи countability and consumption are seen as the strongest determinants for the existing degree of bias and stereotyping. The persuasiveness of media discourses on Roma is dictated by the exploitation of mechanisms of social cognition, of targeting particular expectations, norms and values in audiences, and framing the Roma as the ultimate “Other,” a scapegoat stigmatised as a parasite and peace-violator in a context of political and economic instability. The media and the press, in particular, have continuously attempted to exclude the Roma from public discourse by imposing a classifying normative order on reality through language and ambivalent representation. This has led to a biased, distorted image, easily manipulated and reinforced in the conditions of social conflict.

2. Media Ownership, Regulation and Control

The structural organisation of the mass media, the existing patterns of ownership and control, can be considered as preconditioning the interaction between political, economic and media elites, thus, influencing the construction of media discourses expressed in different forms of media framing, causing a variety of effects and responses. Despite the fact that the Bulgarian media have overcome many of the negative legacies of the totalitarian press, the new media picture is replete with arguments of the continued dependence on state, political or economic powers.

The extreme political dependency of the media has been pointed out in several country reports (Kapital, #13 April,
The hasty media reform in the work of the NCRT and the pressure for amendments to the Media Law are seen as some of the first steps undertaken by the ruling National Movement Simeon II (NDSV) for conquering the state media (Popova, Kapital, #39, Sept. 2001; Kapital, #05, Feb. 2002). The successor of the NCRT, the Council for Electronic Media (CEM), instead of being a supervisory body is seen as exerting direct control (ibid.). On the other hand, its work is not found to be efficient in solving the problem of political control and censorship (ibid.).

Political interests seem to merge together with economic, supported by legislative means especially in the case of appointing managerial staff and media supervisory bodies (Popova, Kapital, #10, March, 2002). Thus, for example, changes in media legislation have been slow and accompanied by a number of scandals, related to the procedures of electing members of the NCRT, CEM, the BNT and the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR), and to the legitimacy of their work (Kapital, #42, Oct. 2001; #43,
The functioning of the media has often been claimed to have been obstructed by legislative measures or by the mere lack of implementation of the measures posed by legislation. One example is the problem of the public service model in the Bulgarian National Television (BNT), which has been in a cul-de-sac for several years now. This means that special legislative safeguards have not been provided to oppose any state or governmental interference. Further measures in this direction also concern the protection against oligopolistic and monopolistic market structures. The delayed and inefficient work of the Monopolies Commission in the context of a complete absence of established monopolistic regulation, has allowed for the establishing of several monopolistic cases on the media market. Certain progress in the public service model has been achieved only in the representation of ethnic minority issues and the broadcasting of the ten-minute daily news in Turkish language on the BNT. Still, the BNT is seen as dependent, since it is directly funded by the state.

Despite the constant demands for amendments to the existing Media Law drafted in 1997, it provides for several important issues concerning ethnic minorities: the equal protection of the culture and interests of all Bulgarian citizens, without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity (Art. 6(3)), the provision for the culture and language...
Press regulation has been a point of concern. Despite several proposals to draft a Press Law in the early 90s (Rangelov in Bulgarian Media Knowledge, 1996:193), recent developments in the press debate have led almost to a mutual consensus that self-regulation is the only desirable and efficient form of voluntarily imposed control (Lozanov and Behar in BMC Website (http://bmc.bulmedia.com), Session 3, 1-15; Naidenov, Kultura, #07, Feb. 2002). The Bulgarian Media Coalition (BMC) has also recently issued a declaration in which it stated its determination to oppose any governmental or political intervention in the form of a Press Law (Sega, July 29, 2002). Self-regulation presupposes the independence of the press from any governmental, political or legislative form of control and strengthening forms of professional and public accountability. Nevertheless, the efficient functioning of the recently adopted Journalistic Code of Practice to regulate press activities still remains only a vague idea with no precise understanding of the principles of media ethics and non-statutory advisory bodies it should be accountable to. The long absence of established professional rules of media ethics can be ascribed to different reasons. On the one hand, journalists had been seen as too passive and slow in taking the issue in their hands (Lozanov, ibid., Session 3:7). On the other,
the increasing lack of professionalism within the realm of journalism and the lack of appropriate journalistic training can be seen as a plausible reason (B. Borisov, ibid., Session 3, 24).

Media freedom and responsibility are central problems, especially in conditions of political, economic, legislative and editorial pressure (Lozanov, ibid., Session 3, 1). Thus, for example, media legislation until recently provided for excessive measures in cases of libel and defamation, such as imprisonment for up to three years. The vulnerability of investigative journalists to criminal groupings, in this case, provoked a massive campaign for amending several articles of the Criminal Code and for the adoption of a well-defined Code of Practice for journalists. However, no significant changes have occurred for more than four years now, when libel cases provoked serious concerns on national and international levels. The only change so far has been the replacement of the prison sentence with excessive fines for journalists.

Despite the adoption of certain Rules of Journalistic Ethics by the Union of Bulgarian Journalists, some problematic areas concern the fact that unlike other journalistic codes, such as that of the British Press Complaints Commission (PCC) (on the BMC Website), Bulgarian journalists bear the whole responsibility for their actions. It has been argued that it is necessary to accept the rule of editorial and institutional responsibility rather than personal, as the individual journalist can hardly be held

И покрај тоа што Унијата на бугарски новинари прифати одредени Правила на новинарската етика, некои проблематични области се однесуваат на фактот дека за разлика од други новинарски кодекси, каков што е оној на Комисијата за поплаки на британските новинари (РСС) (на веб странцата на БМЦ), бугарските новинари ја сносат целата одговорност за своите постапки. Се тврдеше дека е неопходно да се прифати правилото за уредничка и институцио-
Another problem is the necessity to state explicitly that the mentioning of a person’s race, ethnicity, age and gender is justified only when such information is strictly relevant (as specified in the British Code of Conduct in the BMC Website). The adoption of a Code of Ethics, regulated by the Media Law (1998, Art. 49) has generally been seen as a totalitarian measure by journalists (Cholakov in BMC Website, Session 2, 7). On the other hand, it has been acknowledged that certain political and media elites enjoy the privilege of having better accessibility to the mass media (ibid.).

Some media experts consider the question of media ethics as a central but still unresolved problem (Tabakova; Lozanov in BMC Website, Session 3). They also point out that the Bulgarian mass media does not contribute to the process of liberalisation in society. Georgy Lozanov, former member of the National Committee for Radio and Television (NCRT), defines the situation in the Bulgarian mass media as a process of “draining” media power by other forms of power, such as the economic, the political and the legislative (ibid.). On the other hand, even if the power of the media is considered not that excessive, mass media are still viewed as the most important tools for producing and materialising a new social reality, characterised by the dominance of quasi-mafiotic structures (ibid., Session 3, 2-3).
realnost, koja se odlikuva so dominacijata na kvazi-mafiјашките структури (ibid., sesija 3: 2-3).

All economic and legislative barriers could be held as accountable for the lack of adequate professional behaviour and the decline of media values and ethics in contemporary Bulgarian media (Stamov in Bulgarian Media Knowledge, 1996: 159).

Сите економски и законски бариери можат да се сметаат за одговорни за недостигот на соодветно профессионално однесување и за опаѓањето на медиумските вредности и етиката во современите бугарски медиуми (Stamov in Bulgarian Media Knowledge, 1996: 159).

The liberalisation of the press market has led to another typical phenomenon of the 90s – the advent of foreign capital and the concentration of media ownership (Spassov, in Lozanov et al. 2000:103; Fileva, 1999:38). The most conspicuous example is the German consortium Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ), which bought the highest circulation Bulgarian newspapers: Trud (Labour) and 24 Chasa (24 Hours), and by such means established a monopolistic position within the Bulgarian newspaper market by taking favour of the imprecise monopolies legislation. It attracted about one-third of the readership of the whole Bulgarian press and commands 38.5% of the advertising market (Kapital, #24, April, 2002). The skilful market and legislative manoeuvres of the consortium have provoked continuous legal procedures against WAZ, starting as early as 1996. In 1996 WAZ newspapers waged a media war against the rest of the press by lowering their prices. John Downey (in Thussu ed., 1998, 56) interprets the strategy of WAZ as an example of Western colonisation of the press in Bulgaria, similar to other countries, such as Hungary and the Czech Republic. The economic dominance of WAZ press is further unravelled by Alfandari (2000, 143) as a well-disguised political manipulation with the purpose of changing their editorial policy by simulating bankruptcy and finding new owners. For him (ibid, 144), this meant a continuation of the previous state monopoly on the
To summarise, despite the adopted measures, the existing problems in the media concerning the observation of media ethics and journalistic behaviour are still problematic. There is lack of sensitisation of audiences to particular cases of discrimination, labeling or stereotyping in the media. Furthermore, the media are hardly held accountable for their misdemeanors in this respect. Their undecided status between state and public service media, the precariousness of the free market and poor legislation are some of the reasons for the delay in media reform and the continued practice of journalistic excesses. Only the recently adopted Anti-discrimination legislation gives certain hope for improving and controlling media discourses concerning the Roma. Overall, the problems in the Bulgarian media are related to political
3. The Politics of Media Representation

The structural forms of media ownership and control and the values of professional journalistic ethics find a direct expression at the symbolic level in the media framing of news. It is within the power of the media to create mythologised information, blurring the distinction between illusion and reality and provoking numerous interpretations and subject positions by discursive means (Miševa, *Kultura*, #30, Aug. 4, 2002). They often present an exaggerated picture of reality “fixing on and magnifying traumatic spots” (ibid.). Similar interpretations focus not on the communicational and informational function of the media, but rather on the ritualistic function they perform, creating a particular worldview and actor positions (Carey, 1989 in M. Vassileva, 2000, 8).

The analysis of media texts directs the attention to both the nature of texts and the modes of interpretation by audiences, as well as to the particular psychological mechanisms that presuppose their consumption. Contemporary media theory emphasises the dialogic nature of the relationship between texts and audiences (Tester, 1994, 58) and the polysemy of meanings they create. For Fiske, (1987: 14 in Tester, 1994, 68), a media text is “a site of struggle for meaning that reproduces the conflicts

pressure, the market and chaotic media legislation as in most of the Eastern European countries (Braunnbauer, Grandits, 1999).

3. Политиките на медиумско претставување

Структурните форми на сопственост и контрола на медиумите и вредностите на професионалната новинарска етика на симболичко ниво директно се изразуваат во медиумското врамување на вестите. Медиумите имаат моќ да креираат митологизирани информации, со дискурзивни средства заматувајќи ја дистинктивијата помеѓу илузијата и реалноста и предизвикувајќи бројни толкувања и субјективни позиции (Мичева, *Култура*, #30, авг. 4, 2002). Тие често покажуваат претерана слика на реалноста „фиксирајќи се на трауматичните места и преуvelивања ги“ (ibid.). Сличните толкувања се фокусираат не на комуникативната и информативната функција на медиумите, туку посакува на ритуалната функција што тие ја вршат, создавајќи особен светоглед и актерски улоги (Кари, 1989 во М. Василева, 2000: 8).

Анализата на медиумските текстови го насочува вниманието и на природата на текстовите и на начините на кои јавноста ги интерпретира, како и на посебните психолошки механизми кои ја претпоставуваат нивната потрошувачка. Современата теорија за медиумите ја нагласува дијалошката природа на врска-та помеѓу текстовите и публикуте (Tester, 1994: 58) и повеќезначноста што го создаваат. За Фиске (Fiske) (1987: 14 во Tester, 1994: 68), еден медиумски текст

ските дискурси кои се однесуваат на Romite. Сè на сè, проблемите во бугарските медиуми се поврзани со политичкиот притисок, со пазарот, со хаотичните закои за медиуми, како што е случај и во повеќето Источноевропски земји (Braunnbauer, Grandits, 1999).
“...mesto na bорба за значење кое го репродуцира конфликтот на интереси помеѓу производителите и конзумантите, што се создава во самиот процес на читање или толкување” (ibid.). Стјуарт Хол (Stuart Hall) (во Stevenson, 1995: 35) тврди дека масовните медиуми ја претставуваат главната идеолошка институција во современото општество, обезбедувајќи символична област за создавање на доминантиот консензус. Според Хол (во Morris and Thornton eds., 1996: 57-61), декодирањето на значењата на медиумските текстови зависи од врската помеѓу институциите, техничката опрема и професионалните кодекси и процедурите. Нивното толкување може да се согласува со имплицитното хегемонистичко значење, да му противречи или да создава договорно толкување.

Racist discourses are ideological, dominant discourses, which rely on a variety of strategies for imposing a preferred meaning on audiences in the mainstream media. The new type of racism is often not explicit but subtle, symbolic and covert in nature (van Dijk in Cottle, ed., 2000, 34). It relies on enstrangement and the lack of information about the targeted ethnic or racial subject. Racist media discourses are especially powerful in cases where there are no alternative sources of information or a more close experience of the readers with minorities (ibid, 36). The polarisation of Us and Them discourses and the emphasis on difference can be further seen as a part of an identity construction process.\(^6\) In addition, in a context of a weak and powerless minority, with restricted media access, the discursive and cognitive hegemony of racist discourses is almost complete and reaches a level of consensus (ibid: 37). Facts in news discourses are well-structured in particular topics and rely on different strategies and stylistic rhetorical devices. Topicalisation is selective and biased in racist texts. They rest on a number of authorities to confirm the veracity of the
теми и се потпираат на различни стратегии и стилски реторички средства. Во расистичките текстови тематизирањето е селективно и пристрасно. За потврда на вистиноста на понудената информација, тие се потпираат на голем број авторитети. Негативно претставување и кодифицирањата на особени зборови или речничка селекција, како воениот речник, се средства за воспоставување на одредени локални значења (ibid., 39), со цел да се создаде посакувано прикажување. Други значајни средства за дешифрирање на идеолошки импликации на еден расистички текст се самата структура на текстот, неговата кохерентност, функционалните врски, улогите кои им се доделени на учесниците и контрастите на генерализациите (ibid., 40). Анализите на дискурсот понатаму го претпоставуваат разгледувањето на графичката поставеност, стилистичките елементи, синтаксата и реторичките фигури и стратегиите на артикулација (van Dijk, 1993:12).

Расните и етнички стереотипи, како дел од расистичкиот дискурс, функционираат во хегемонистички поредок, конструирајќи различни позиции на субективот, на зависност или отпор (Bhabha, 1994:66). Тие се потпираат на „постојаноста“, на лесното размножување и идеолошкото конструирање на другоста, овозможувајќи вистиност и веројатна вистина (ibid.). Питер Бергер (Peter Berger) и Томас Лукман (Thomas Luckmann) (1967 во Dyer: 246), сметаат дека особеното уредување на реалноста е управувано од моќта, со оглед на тоа дека окупирачките, доминирачки општествени позиции имаат повеќе средства да наметнат особен поглед на реалноста, која е упростена и лесно сфатлива и разбирила форма на претставување (ibid., 246-247). Општествената функција на стереотипите е определена како „покус пат“ за упростување на реалноста. Моќта на стерео-

Racial and ethnic stereotypes, as part of racist discourses, function in a hegemonic order by constructing different subject positions of dependence or resistance (Bhabha, 1994, 66). They rely on the ‘fixity’, easy proliferation and the ideological construction of otherness, providing veracity and probabilistic truth (ibid.). The particular ordering of reality by stereotypes is also seen as power-ridden by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967 in Dyer, 1996, 246), since those occupying dominant social positions have more resources to impose a particular vision of reality, which is a simplified form of representation, easy to grasp and comprehend (ibid., 246-247). The social function of stereotypes is defined as a ‘short cut’ simplification of reality. The power of stereotypes operating in a hegemonic order lies in their capacity to provide consensus about certain values and social groups (ibid., 248). Besides, invoking such a de-
greek of agreement, one of the most important functions of stereotypes is to define social boundaries, insisting on their rigidity, especially where none can be observed (ibid., 250). Dyer emphasises the role of stereotypes in rendering what is invisible and fluid visible (ibid., 250) as a means of awareness-raising of the lurking dangers, created by the Other, intending to transgress the stable order of the Self/Same. The rigidity of a stereotype is revealing of the extent of threat it presents to a given perception of the dominant social order (ibid.). Therefore, ambivalence could be seen as most dangerous to the strictly delineated categories prevalent in a society.

The stigmatisation and negative stereotyping of Gypsies are not recent phenomena. Chronicles dating back to the early 15th century (Liegeois, 1994, 134-135) described the newly settled Gypsies as the “most ignoble savages,” dirty, lazy and brutish. Collective forms of denigration defined them as pilferers, swindlers and wranglers, which was reflected also in the pejorative designations for Gypsies in different languages (ibid., 203). A contrary, though an equally harmful image is that of the romantic Gypsy, passionate, artistic, creative, beautiful, leading a care-free existence, but only as a part of a mythic world of art and folklore (ibid., 205). Contemporary film and fiction contribute to a great degree in the sustaining and proliferating of this image. Stereotyping, ambivalence and liminality can also be constructed by political and legal means.
Ethnic categories and the position occupied by the Roma in Bulgarian society, in particular, could be perceived in such a light. On the other hand, ethnic difference observable in the appearance, way of life and language of the Roma are sufficient prerequisites for identifying them as an alien element in society. Nevertheless, persistent homogenising state practices have denied their status of a national minority, both before 1989 by the communist government and in the post-communist period, when despite ratifying the Framework Convention on National Minorities in 1999, Parliament attached a declaration to safeguard against harming the territorial integrity of Bulgaria (Minorities in Southeastern Europe, Roma of Bulgaria, Aug. 2000). The existence of ethnic minorities is also denied in the Constitution of Republic Bulgaria, only to be replaced by the designation “Bulgarian citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian” (BHC, 1999, ibid.). The Roma, having no actual country to support their interests, were the first not to fall into the category of national minorities. On the other hand, they have been seen as a subject of integration, according to the new ideologies. Simulated policies of integration have also proved inefficient and negatively highlighting ethnic difference, rather than improving the conditions of the Roma. A further glance at the imagologically created position of the Roma in Bulgaria link them culturally to oriental, Turkish or Asian traditions, while at the same time associating them with a Western order by the imposed ideology of multiculturalism and ethnic favouritism, thus discriminating against the impoverished Bulgarian citizens in general. Contrasts between Roma and non-Roma have additionally been exacerbated by the aggravation of the social conditions. Thus, a combination of legislative, political and cultural measures has contributed to the construction of the liminal position of the Roma standing between East and West, Orient and Occident, by “orientalising” them and at the same time
4. The Roma in the “New” Bulgarian Press

In this section I would like to contrast the representation of the Roma in the highest circulation Bulgarian daily press and in several quality newspapers of the last five years and the changes that have subsequently occurred in the new social and political context.

Firstly, I want to present a summary of the findings of a previous research of mine on the representation of the Roma minority in the Bulgarian press as the basis of comparison with contemporary forms of representation (Georgieva, 2000). Our argument is that the exacerbation of social relations between Roma and non-Roma in 2002, goaded to a great extent by the ‘new’ Bulgar-
Several points can be made about the press representation of the Roma in the period between December 1997 and February 2000. The information was organized in a number of topics: social integration, discrimination, criminality, culture, elections, poverty and unemployment, according to the frequency of their occurrence. It was usually published on the front pages or in specialised sections for crime and sensation, highlighting the curious, scandalous, exotic or tidbit information about the Roma. Furthermore, criminality was perceived mainly as an ethnic category, as in established racist discourses, providing a link between criminal behaviour and ethnicity. Roma were treated as both acting in compliance with or as victims of a number of criminal groupings. An important point is that the victimisation of the Roma was also presented in terms of unjust or imprecise legislation, police brutality or social circumstances. Many of the articles were presented in an ambiguous manner, with an obvious contradiction between headlines, and the content of the text. The prevailing image of the Roma in the daily press was that of the outsider, the hardened criminal, liable to social control, dangerous, brutal and irrational, associated with other marginal figures, or the victim and naïve ‘Other’, who does not deserve any serious attention. Even occasional attempts at more positive or constructive representation of the minority proved feeble and inefficient as they directed the attention towards ethnic exoticism or the difficulties of reaching any viable outcome in social policy.
The quality press, in contrast, although addressing similar topics showed greater concern for the ethnic Turkish minority. Minorities in general were put in the limelight in election contexts and often treated as objects of political manipulation. Nevertheless, the Bulgarian “ethnic mode” was frequently “advertised” to provide a contrast to the raging Kosovo crisis and legitimisation to EU accession aspirations.

Overall, the predominant discourse on the Roma emphasised the image of the dirty, aggressive, illiterate, lazy, dishonest, and rowdy Rom, leading a carefree existence and sponging off society. In sum, the entire world that the press constructed in the period under study perceived the Roma in graphic lines: on the one hand, the dismal reality of crime and privation, but on the other, with a certain vision of a brighter, but still indeterminate future of reform and integration.

The recent development of events has sustained the established pattern of negative media representation of the Roma. Nevertheless, representation can be seen as diverging sharply in several respects. Firstly, heightened inter-ethnic tensions have aggravated negative perceptions, leading to the conviction of the immutable defecion of the minority, shaken by serious internal conflicts, being potentially dangerous and posing an imminent threat to Bulgarian society by constant riots. The prevailing opinion negates the possibility of any efficient positive solution of the problem of the Roma, who, as it was
assumed, undeservedly pose further social demands. By turning the problems of the Roma not only into an endless media serial, but directing and manipulating public discourses on Roma, the Bulgarian press has exercised the full sway of its power, conducting the development of interethnic relations.

A significant shift has occurred in the importance laid on the image of the Roma in the Bulgarian press. It has completely overtaken that of the ethnic Turk in terms of expected danger by means of negative representation. Although still seen as victims to political manipulation, by both Bulgarian and Romani elites, the Roma are represented as a potential tool for plotting against and destabilising the state. The dominant status of victim has become a category to be applied mainly in the case of the majority Bulgarian population. As constantly emphasised by the press, the latter have been discriminated against, despite their similar condition of destitution and privation. Such an assumed privileging of the minority has provoked fierce nationalistic and even neo-Nazi reactions, directed not only against the Roma but also against Jews. The rising inter-ethnic tension has provoked further implications for a possible scenario repeating the success of the extreme right in Central Europe against the background of the Le Pain crisis (Sega, April 23, 2002).

The reason for the rising hostility towards the Roma has been the decision of the National Electric Company (NEC), the electric state monopolist, to disconnect the
electricity of the Roma neighbourhoods in several Bulgarian towns for failing to meet their dues for quite a number of years. This has resulted in the massive disturbances in the Roma ghetto of Stolipinovo in the town of Plodiv, the blocking of streets, kindling of fires and threats of blocking roads and blowing-up petrol stations. The main participants in the events that broke out on February 18, 2002 and continued until March, with certain periods of intermission, were the Roma, the minority ethnic Bulgarians living in the neighbourhood and the police forces attempting to tackle the situation. Different authorities, such as the Mayor Ivan Chomakov, the District Governor Gioka Hadzipetrov and the Manager of the Board of Directors of NEC, Valentin Kirchev, as well as anonymous Romani leaders, were among the main protagonists in newspaper stories. Other individual figures, though of no less importance for presenting details and providing emotional tinting were the shopkeepers of the two groceries the Roma broke into and looted, the trolleybus driver, who was beaten and whose trolleybus was overturned and broken, the two policemen with minor injuries as well as some individuals, usually anonymous Roma or Bulgarians.

The story occupied the front pages of the highest circulation dailies: the WAZ Trud, 24 Chasa, Sega, as well as those of Standart, Demokratsia, Monitor, and Republika and the qualities Dnevnik and Kapital. The predominant frame of representation repeated well-established patterns of racial violence and social turbulence, familiar from the Western media, focusing on sensationalism and the negative effects, rather than on the underlying reasons for the discontent. Particular attention was given to the ethnic character of the riot and the peace-violators, highlighted in headlines and illustrated by rich photographic material.
Different types of argumentation, following Brunner (in Brunner et al. 2000, 139), such as the use of facts, generalisations from single cases, quotations from authorities and experts, and stereotypes, served as a basis for the legitimisation of truth. Multiple rhetorical strategies and tools were also employed for achieving the desired effect of a newspaper discourse. In addition, open and hidden ideological techniques were made explicit in the use of lexicalisation, syntax and the selection of information and layout.

In all of the newspapers under study, the majority of headlines of materials dealing with the riots reflected the case of over-lexicalisation of war rhetoric, aiming to direct attention to the scale and extremely threatening nature of the incidents. Apart from “war,” “riot,” and “rebellion,” the synonym cluster was further elaborated by adding to it: “excesses,” “bloodshed,” “unrest,” “turbulence,” “aggression,” “disorder,” “protests,” “vandalism,” “scrimmage,” “arson,” “rattle” and “cannonade.” It has been further qualified as “an emotional protest,” an “explosion” or a “rude attempt to disturb ethnic peace,” “street pressure” and “Gypsy revolution.” A typical technique to amplify the desired effect, the use of metaphors of natural disasters, was also applied to illustrate the consequences of the Roma pogrom, such as that of a “tornado,” “torrent” or “hailstorm.” The excessive use of verbs in short active constructions emphasises the impression created by the aggression and the dynamics in the development of the event.
The number of the rebelling Roma was often stressed, although it varied according to different sources from over 500 (Sega, Feb. 22, 2002), 900 (Sega, Feb. 20, 2002; Demokratsia, Feb. 20, 2002; Republika, Feb. 20, 2002), and 1,000 (Standart, Feb. 20, 2002), to 2,000 (Trud, Feb. 20, 2002). The sense of impending danger, of being merely ‘swamped’ by Gypsies was implied by providing additional information about the number of the people living in Stolipinovo, the “Gypsy Capital of Europe” (Trud, Feb. 20, 2002, 3), coming up to about 50,000, and the constant inflows of Gypsies to the town because of the free electricity, food and benefits provided for the Roma (Monitor, Feb. 20, 2002, 4).

The Gypsy neighbourhood was presented as a battlefield of hostilities between Roma and the police, the precise chronology of which was provided in special newspaper sections. It was further depicted as a dark, remote and dangerous place to enter. Such a danger was amplified by providing a description of the unruly, raging multitude of people in the streets of the ghetto, a “horde” and a “raging mob” of “angry citizens” (Demokratsia, Feb. 20, 2002).

Quotes from anonymous members of the Gypsy crowd were used to attest to the real intentions of the Roma, drawing a parallel with other places of unrest around the world, often referred to by the media. “We are going to wage a war if they don’t connect the electricity”, threaten Roma in Trud (Feb. 20, 2002). “It’s like in Argentina,” a policeman describes the event in 24 Chasa (Feb 20, 2002:1-3). “We are going to turn Plovdiv into Afghanistan! We’re going to kill and smash everything all around, until they restore the electricity” (ibid.). “They’ve turned us, peaceful people, into Talibans. They made us vote, then they turned us into Roma, and now they have all betrayed us” (ibid.).
The journalists themselves sometimes made the comparison with Argentina explicit in headlines (“We are Almost Coming Level with Argentina” in 24 Chasa, Feb. 20, 2002, 10) and by evoking emotional reactions by means of comparison:

The citizens of Stolipinovo react exactly like the Argentinians – break into food stores. When the gauchos got fed up with the combination of a monetary fund and inefficient politicians, they smashed into pieces the shop windows of the expensive stores in Buenos Aires. The Roma in Stolipinovo rage because the electric company has switched off their circuit-breaker (ibid.).

The press itself makes direct reference to the resemblance between the pogroms and the pictures broadcast by the world televisions from other geographical regions (Monitor, Feb. 20, 2002: 4). Direct link between terrorists and Gypsies in Bulgaria was established yet in the immediate aftermath of September 11 in the Bulgarian press (Standart, Sept. 25, 2001).

Sometimes it is not quite clear who wants to break a war. Kapital (#08, Feb., 2002) narrates of the rumours in Stolipinovo that tanks have headed for Plovdiv from Sofia, while the “Big General” had ordered to cut off the electricity. As a response, an anonymous Rom makes an ardent speech:

We’re hungry, and they want to start a war. It’s like Kabul neighbourhood here. If this is the case, we’re ready to draw the swords and axes to fight. Instead of dying every day, we’d better die once and there will be a reason why. Levski14 said this. We’re not afraid. We have real Turkish hearts of warriors... Write! This is a coup d’etat! This is the policy of the people against starvation. There is no other policy. They have lied to us, lied to us, we voted for the king,15 but he also won’t make things better. Tell Ahmed Dogan16... write! Tell him not to come to Stolipinovo, or he will die. He never support-
пишувај! Какви му да не доаѓа во Столипиново, затоа што ќе умре! Тој никогаш не нè поддржувал; тој никогаш не покажал било каков интерес за нас, туку само за оние во Карцали и Разград. 17 Политичарите знаат за нашите проблеми и кога ќе дојдат овде; „гласајте за нас и ние ќе ве ослободиме од долговите за вашите сметки за струја, ние ќе ви дозволиме да продавате сончогледови семки на улиците, ќе имате многу пиво и ќебапи“... Тоа заврши! Ни сакаме работа и струја, во спротивно ние ќе мора да умреме (ibid.).

Другиот пример е од 24 Часа (фев. 20, 2002: 1-3):

Дали овие љубо сакаат да водат војна?! […] Ние сме презаситени од оваа влада, овој крал, за кој 90% од људето од Столипиново гласаа (ibid.).

Разочараноста од владината политика и злоупотребата на моќта од страна на политичарите беше прикажана во претходните медиумски дискурси. Како и да е, нов елемент беше мобилизирачкото, реторично позајмување од ќазикот, чувствата и сликите од периодот на Националната преродба во борбата против Отоманското угнетување во средината на 19-от век. Преродбените дискурси во форма на партиотски песни и символика беше повторно оживеано во протестите за соборување на комунистичката влада во 1997 год, водена од студентите и популяризирана од страна на младинската сатирична програма која започна под името Ку-Ку, а подоцна се промени во Каналето и Хашове. 18 Истиот вид на символизам и реторика беше широко применувана од страна на Ромите кои протестираа во вешниците, често играјки си со зборовите од популарните револуционерни слогани: „Хелојска смрт или слобода од компанијата за струја“ пееја бунтовниците во 24 Часа (фев. 21, 2002: 4). 19 Истиот револуционерен дух е изразен во решеноста да се „стане како Левски и да се ослободат [самите]
ed us; he never showed any interest in us but only in those in Kardzhali and Razgrad.” The politicians know about our problems and when they come here; “vote for us and we’ll remit your electricity bills, we’ll let you sell sunflower seeds in the streets, you’ll have plenty of beer and kebabs”... That was the end of it! We want jobs and electricity, or otherwise we have to die (ibid.).

Another example is from 24 Chasa (Feb. 20, 2002: 1-3):

Do these people want to wage a war?! [...] We are fed up with this government, this king, for whom 90% of the people in Stolipinovo voted (ibid.).

Disillusionment with governmental policies and the abuse of power by politicians have been present in previous media discourses. A new element, however, has been the mobilising rhetoric borrowing from the language, emotions and images of the period of the National Revival in the struggle against the Ottoman oppression in the mid-19th century. Revival discourses in the form of patriotic songs and symbolism have been revitalised in the protests attempting to overthrow the communist government in 1997 led by students and popularised by a youth satirical programme that started under the name of Ku-Ku, which was later changed to Kanaleto and Hashove. 18 The same type of symbolism and rhetoric has extensively been applied by the protesting Roma in newspaper discourse, often making puns of popular revolutionary slogans. “Heroic death or freedom from the electric company!” sing the rebels in 24 Chasa (Feb. 21, 2002: 4). 19 The same revolutionary spirit is expressed in the determination to “become like Levski and set [themselves] free from the electric company!” (ibid.). Levski seems to be a symbol to an equal extent for Roma, eth-
Ромите се прикажани како готови да започнат војна, снабдени со муниција и правејки планови и имајќи средства и људе да ги исполнат. Според 24 Chasa (Feb. 21, 2002), Romani Turks and Bulgarians, as an emblem of self-denial and justice (Kapital, # 08, Feb 20, 2002). The layout of the front page of 24 Chasa (Feb 20, 2002) makes a direct allusion to the image of Levski in an attempt to impose symbolic order. It represents the images of Levski and General Boiko Borisov respectively in the left and right top corners, symbolically creating the idea of order and state power. The visual link is made more explicit in the headline: “Borisov Most Liked Standing in Front of Levski’s Monument.” The meaning implied is that Borisov is a modern-type of hero, almost of the stature of Levski. Underneath, a huge bold headline reads: “Riots” and enumerates in a bullet form the order of events in Stolipinovo. This is against the background of a whole page picture of the grocery stores plundered by the Roma rioters. The bottom right corner presents an advertisement of Voice Mail, which reads: “The stolen moments of peace are so precious for you. Use Voice Mail! Life is happiness!” It completes the impression of the irreversibility and violence of the events and the threat that the riots may spread nationwide. It is further implied that, this is a time requiring adequate decisions, the strong hand of the state and new national heroes. Nevertheless, even the illusion created by the “Big General” as almost a replica of Levski, is soon dispelled by the subheading, implying discontent even at the summits of state and political power, as it states that “A Public War Broke Out between the General and the Minister of the Interior” (ibid.). The same war lexis is applied to amplify the impression of violence, disorder and political discordance.
Часа (фев. 21, 2002: 4), бунтовниците имале намера да кренат во воздух бензинска пума на патот за Софија, железничката станица, канцеларијата на Градоначалникот и неколку други ромски населби. „Имаме три кила тротил, што е довољно. Исто така имаме луѓе кои служеа како бомбардери во војска и кои знаат да креват во воздух,“ се закануваа Ромите, собирајки се да започнат војна во раните утрински часови, според 24 Часа (ibid.).

Засиленото чувство на надвисната опасност за Бугарите и државата е демонстрирано подеднакво од печатот во целина. Вниманието често е насочувано кон симулираната природа на сиромаштијата на Ромите (Труд, фев. 21, 2002: 14; Дневник, фев. 20, 2002: 7), постоечката неофицијална економија која беше вистинскиот должник на компанијата за електрична енергија, паразитската егзистенција на Ромите и нивното постојано привилегирање. Старите митови за богатството на Ромите се материјализираат во дискурсите за ромските „барони“ или кога се реферира на двосмисленоста и некомпатибилноста на сиромаштијата и последувањето насателитскичини, со здрава класна криза. Свртувано е внимание кон имушноста на ромските „барони“ и политичари, кои создале богатства со присвојување на пари од специјалните фондови за Роми (24 Часа, фев. 22, 2002: 6; Труд, фев. 21, 2002: 14). Покрај фактот дека дискриминацијата, невработеноста и сиромаштијата се споменати неколку пати како можни причини за незадоволство, тие обично се прикажувани како аргументи на анонимни Роми и веднаш им се противставува доминантното мислење на авторот (Монитор, фев. 20, 2002: 4; Труд, фев. 20, 2002: 2-3; Капитал, бр. 8, фев. 2002). Исклучително емоционална реторика е применета во прикажувањето на Ромите со цел да се нагласи нивното насилство и ирационалност. Директните цитирања често упатуваа на

A heightened sense of an impending threat to Bulgarians and the state is demonstrated equally by the press as a whole. Often attention is directed to the simulative nature of Roma poverty (Trud, Feb. 21, 2002: 14; Dnevnik, Feb. 20, 2002: 7), the existing unofficial economy that was the real debtor of the electric company, the parasitic existence of the Roma and their constant privileging. Pre-existing myths of the affluence of the Roma are reified in discourses about Roma “barons” or when referring to the ambiguity and incompatibility between poverty and the possession of satellite dishes,22 creating a categorical crisis. Attention is often called to the wealth of Roma “barons” and politicians, who made fortunes by appropriating money from special Roma funds (24 Chasa, Feb. 22, 2002: 6; Trud, Feb. 21, 2002: 14). Despite the fact that discrimination, unemployment and poverty are mentioned several times as the possible reason for the discontent, they are usually presented as arguments by anonymous Roma and immediately contradicted by the dominant opinion of the author (Monitor, Feb. 20, 2002: 4; Trud, Feb. 20, 2002: 2-3; Kapital, #08, Feb. 2002). Extremely emotional rhetoric is employed in the representation of the Roma, aiming to emphasise their violence and irrationality. Direct quotes often point to their linguistic incompetence of Bulgarian language, illiteracy, or naïveté, thus reinforcing denigrating negative images (Kapital, #08, Feb. 2002; Trud, Feb. 25, 26, 2002).
The discourse representing state authorities and the police aims to infuse a sense of control, restraint, determination and resolve to obtain a full grasp of the situation. The police are not only the victim of the violent mob. They declare their readiness not to let further discontents occur (*Trud*, Feb. 20, 2002: 3). General Borisov declares in *Dnevnik* that “the necessary measures have been taken and the police can easily tackle any riot of a similar nature” (Feb. 20, 2002). The Mayor Chomakov, as well as the NEC officials confirm their firm decision “not to yield” (*24 Chasa*, Feb. 20, 2002: 3). The same war rhetoric is applied by the Manager of the Board of Directors of NEC, Valentin Kirchev, and quoted several times in the press, who states that “If [NEC] lose the battle, [they] lose the war. This is the last redoubt” (*24 Chasa* Feb. 20, 2002: 3). Nevertheless, according to mutual consent, the local authorities and the police, instructions had been given not to use force to disperse the crowds. One strategy to deal with the problem in public discourse, according to local authorities, was to arrest the perpetrators of the crimes and the instigators of the riots. Soon, some of the assumed offenders were already under arrest, but the blame was shifted to the inefficiency of the social services (*Trud*, Feb. 20, 2002: 2-3), turning a blind eye to the illegal business and wealth of the Gypsies, who otherwise claimed unemployment benefits. The payment of the electricity bills was further defined as “a battle for statehood and [the need for] abidance by the law by everyone”(*Monitor*, Feb. 20, 2002: 4). The Mayor Chomakov suspected intentional plotting, aiming to destabilise the peace in Plovdiv (*Standard*, Feb. 20, 2002, 6). The District Governor and the Manag-
er of NEC confirm the hypothesis that businessmen living in the ghetto might have certain interest in provoking conflict in order to avoid the payment of electricity bills (24 Chasa, Feb. 26, 2002, 8; Dnevnik, Feb. 20, 2002, 1-4; Kapital, #08, Feb. 2002). In some cases political scheming has been assumed (Trud, March 8, 2002, 1; Sega, Feb. 20, 2002; Sega, March 6, 2002; 24 Chasa, Feb. 22, 2002:6; Demokratsia, Feb. 20, 2002, 1-2) on the part of the Union for Democratic Freedoms (UDF), the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) or individual Romani leaders, as a plan to destabilise the state. Despite the attempts at negotiation between Romani leaders, the police and local authorities, an impression was created that the Roma have a strong political lobby to defend their interests and impose their will on the majority. This is implied by the headline in Sega (Feb. 22, 2002): “MPs from NDSV, the MRF and Gypsy leaders have reached a compromise, forced the NEC to switch on the current in the roma ghettos in Plovdiv. The Chief of the Local Police, Ilian Jordanov, Left the Negotiations Raging.” The headline does not make it clear that the measure was temporary, only for the duration of the religious feasts of Christian and Muslim Roma, Zadushnitsa (All Souls’ Day) and Kurban Bairam, aiming to forestall further disturbances.
The quality press is equally eloquent in presenting the riots. The job of the journalist entering the ghetto is depicted as particularly dangerous, being forced to report under pressure and threats to her life, despite the slightly ironic undertones, but compared as similar to the work of other journalists, like that of the American kidnapped in Pakistan (Kapital, #08, Feb. 2002). The story entitled, “The Gypsy Camp Goes to the Filibe,” is built around the contrast between Bulgarians and Roma in the ghetto. While the saleswoman of one the plundered shops, being a good Christian is ready to forgive and shows willingness to help the Roma, despite the numerous similar instances in the past, some eight or ten-year-old Romani children shove their “skinny” hands through the jagged pieces of the broken windows “like fakirs”, “skillfully” picking out coins in the dust, mumbling an oath at her “May you get cancer! May you get cancer!” (ibid.). The danger coming from the youth is also revealed by the fact that the kids were targeted as the instigators of the riots (ibid.). While for some of the Roma the riot is seen as a “kids’ play” (ibid.), for the majority sending the women and children to the “vanguard” is a premeditated and well-designed, typically Gypsy tactic (Monitor, Feb. 20, 2002: 4).
A very strong assertion is made explicit by pointing to the victimisation of the Bulgarians living in the ghetto and in general. The Roma blocked the streets and threw stones at the windows of some thirty Bulgarian families living in Stolipinovo, according to Republika (Feb. 20, 2002: 1-4). As a response, the frightened Bulgarians called the police pleading “We are defenseless, help us, please!” (Trud, Feb. 20, 2002: 1-3). “We live under siege by Gypsies, help us”, complained to the local office of Monitor another Bulgarian (Monitor, Feb. 20, 2002, 4) shortly before the launch of the Gypsy attacks. Another headline in Trud (Feb. 21, 2002: 14) quotes the crowd of Roma yelling: “Giaours,²⁶ we’ll switch on the current for you again! [...] We’ll make things right in the end for you and your people will give up soon.” (ibid.)

Roma are not seen as helpless or defenseless, as many of them attempted to switch on the electricity by breaking into the switch-stations, according to 24 Chasa (Feb. 27, 2002: 6). On the other hand, Bulgarians, either as individual citizens or authorities are represented in general as helpless victims, hostages of the Roma and electric dependence.

Electricity, it is implied, is an instrument for discrimination, turning millions of Bulgarian citizens, including the socially weak and the pensioners, into “white Negroses,” whose electricity is cut off if failing to pay even a single bill (Trud, Feb. 23, 2002: 16). Bulgarians as a whole are seen as being “racketeered” by the big industrial debtors, such as Kremikovtsi, Himko, Radomir Metali (ibid.) and EU pressure for closing down the nuclear power station
The last implication can be illustrated by the front page of *Trud* (ibid.), showing a picture of the rioting Roma and the big headline “Pogrom,” followed underneath by another big headline “Energy Imperialist,” referring to the EU, according to the Prime Minister of Finland. Next to it, in another special column dedicated to the Roma, the journalist asks “How Shall We Pay for the Bills of the Roma? (ibid.) The repetition and ordering of the sentences, used by the author, aims to emphasise the backward nature of the Roma and their undeserved claims of discrimination, by means of applying well-established stereotypes.

Although having a nomadic spirit, the Roma also got used to electricity. Although being carefree merry rascals, their nerves are not made of steel and when their electricity is being cut off, they are capable of turning into ruins a whole town. Although being among the most discriminated against, they also get social benefits, have the right to vote, work, wheel and deal.

Why do they behave then like the metallurgic mastodon Kremikovtsi and yell: “We are not going to pay! We are not going to pay!?”

The answer is clear for the author – the lack of a well-developed policy for integrating the minorities. Such criticism seems to be not accepted by the government, however, as hinted by the column next to it, declaring the Prime Minister’s conviction that “[his] cabinet is [his] own business.” (ibid.)

An attempt is made to contrast and to set off against one another not only Roma and Bulgarians but also the

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The victimisation of poor Bulgarian families is stated in an article entitled “Poorer Are Those Who Pay the Bills.” (Trud, Feb. 20, 2002: 3) The text aims at objectivity by presenting the plight of two hypothetical Bulgarian and Romani families, each having three children, in which both parents have been long-term unemployed. Precise calculation is made of the monthly budget of the families from different sources such as occasional benefits or jobs, which turn out to be equally low. Nevertheless, it is stated in the concluding part that the Roma are much better off as they don’t pay for electricity or water (ibid.).

The article is a typical example of a type of argumentation relying on a single case for drawing general conclusions.

All Bulgarians, Turks and Pomaks are seen as conscious and good citizens, observing their obligations and not abusing their rights, while at the same time benevolently footing the bills of the Roma (Trud, Feb. 20, 2002, 1). In contrast, the Roma could be turned into an easy tool for breaking ethnic peace (ibid.). Previously, the Turkish minority was considered as being such a threat. Nevertheless, the Turkish leaders have managed to build a positive image of the minority in the post-communist period, drawing a symbolic status of victim from their experience during the so-called “Rebirth process” and the “Great Trip” in the 80s, when they were forced to change their names or leave the country. They have demanded the state to acknowledge its fault and as Trud informs (March, 18, 2002: 3), the Vice President has asked pardon for the “Regeneration Process” at the Christian holiday Sirni Zagovezni (the first Sunday before lent), which is about forgiving past mistakes.
The press represents the Roma as seriously violating social peace, contrary to the image of the ethnic Turk and other ethnic minorities. An article on the urgent need to evacuate the Bulgarian families from Stolipinovo (Trud, Feb. 27, 2002: 6) is arranged next to a picture of the Foreign Minister, Solomon Pasi, invited to a celebration in a Jewish school as a means of contrast. The danger of violating ethnic peace by the Roma in the near future is further emphasised by publications about similar problems in other towns of the country, such as Lom, Sliven, and Sofia (Trud, March 14, 2002: 7; Feb. 20, 2002: 2; Standard, Feb. 21, 2002). The tensions between Bulgarians and Roma have exacerbated interethnic tensions in general, though not explicitly in newspaper discourse. This can be observed in the growth of anti-Semitic graffiti, a phenomenon previously almost unknown in Bulgaria, and the rise of extreme right and neo-Nazi attitudes, which are also abundant in the commentary sections of the Internet issues of Sega and Dnevnik, following not only information about Roma, but anything related to the failure of social policy in the country.

The representation of the Roma riots in the Bulgarian press relying on a number of rhetorical and ideological devices, the proliferation of old stereotypes and the emphasis on new negative traits of the minority, have created further panic of a pending threat by ethnic disturbances. The highest circulation newspapers of WAZ present the best illustration of tabloid strategies for creating the image of the Roma as an ethnic “Other,” as previously seen as dirty, lazy, illiterate, carefree, leading a parasitic existence. The ethnic riots, however, have highlighted the sense of danger created by cruel mutinous rebels, sponging on society, aiming to destabilise the state. Numerous comparisons with other places of ethnic discontent
draw a similar dismal picture of interethnic relations in Bulgaria. The rhetoric of revolutionary spirit of the 19th century National Revival is employed to emphasise the difference in religious faith, which at present is seen as threatening in the case of the Roma alone. The image of the ethnic Turks, contrary to previous strategies of representation has evolved and achieved positive connotations and a sense of penitence for the unjust policies of the communist state. The reasons for the riots are denied as absurd and lacking objective grounding. The overall impression created is of a dangerous ethnic “Other” and a helpless and discriminated against Bulgarian population.

"Sega" repeats the general outlines of representation of the disturbances of the WAZ newspapers. Special attention is paid to the “Gypsy tactics” for conducting “hostilities” and the sense of strong economic and political manipulation.

"Standart" intensifies the existing panic by relying on direct quotations from authorities and the rebels, war rhetoric and an assumed idea of plotting. It is also the only newspaper reporting the degree of discontent in the other Roma ghettos in the country.

"Demokratsia", "Republika" and "Monitor" repeat the same pattern of an imminent threat and the resolve on the part of the police and local authorities to tackle the problem. Heightened emotional colouring is achieved in "Monitor", by directly quoting victims and rioters and emphasising the hostility of the latter.
The quality press (Dnevnik and Kapital) has an ambiguous attitude towards the conflict. On the one hand, only Kapital provides for serious analysis of the reasons for the riot and allows for the expression of the alternative view. Nevertheless, to defy attempts at objectivity, a typically WAZ tabloid rhetoric and framing of the news can equally be found on the pages of Kapital and Dnevnik. The overall impression is of a society driven apart along ethnic lines, repeating similar scenarios of ethnic discordance in other parts of the world.

To sum up, it could be concluded that the type of argumentation, the rhetorical tools of the Bulgarian press in the representation of the Roma riots have achieved not only short-term media effects, such as framing and agenda setting, aiming to boost sails by means of sensationalism. The image of the Roma has been constructed by accumulating the ambivalent characteristics of the feigned poor and victim of discrimination and lack of social integration. The revival of mythological frameworks of the Ottoman past and a well-premeditated knowledge of the psychological mechanisms of ethnic discourses have mobilised collective response on the part of the majority and already attempt to define and direct the nature of interethnic relations.
construction of the negative and biased image of the “Other” has been interpreted as the result of the absence of sufficient criteria for journalistic ethics and responsibility, of prevailing preoccupation with consumption and the functioning of mechanisms of stereotyping, scapegoating and stigmatisation. In addition, it can be perceived as a strategy for overcoming existing anxieties provoked by the “Other,” which in order to be tamed, necessitate institutionalised and cognitive structures of distancing and exclusion. This is a partial, biased, distorted vision, which denies, in general, the particular view of the “Other” or even of present, channeling it through familiar racist discourses.

Notes:
1. McQuail defines framing as “the way in which news content is typically shaped and contextualised by journalists within some familiar frame of reference and according to some latent structures of meaning.” (2000, 495) It also includes the effect on audiences, who adopt the discourse constructed by journalists (ibid.).

2. The main political organs Demokratsia (the organ of the United Democratic Forces) and Duma (later Republika) (the organ of the Bulgarian Socialist Party) declared themselves as national, not political dailies. The decline of direct political ownership of the press has been considered as contributing to the construction of the free and independent press. Nevertheless, Curran and Seaton (1991, 1) reflecting on the nature of the British press, consider that this is another ideological invention aiming to conceal the
3. The notion of the “new” Bulgarian press has been first used in 1990 and popularised by a number of authors, among whom Ivailo Znepolski is one of its main theoreticians (Znepolsky, 1997, 5). According to him, it was created to make visible the clear boundary between the “old” state, centrally-controlled and ideologically manipulated press under communism and the aspirations towards creating a “new,” pluralistic, free of censorship and market-oriented press. Nevertheless, the term for Znepolsky (ibid.) does not signify a qualitative change, but rather a change in its social, economic and political status. In a sense, we could assume that the “new” Bulgarian press was an ideological invention, to justify the interests of those it serves. For Curran and Seaton, press market dependency is equally responsible for the assumed deviation from professional practices and the abuse of media power (1991, 4). The market has definitely played a central role in the choice and form and rhetoric of media framing. A successful formula has been the combination of the so-called “hybrid” press (Spassov in Lozanov et al. eds., 2000, 112), combining the features of the serious quality commentary with tabloid attention to the entertaining, curious, scandalous and disastrous. The prevailing emphasis on the personal and the sensational, often exposed on front-page articles or in the nature of construction of headlines, have provoked claims of the tabloidisation of the daily press. Such a form of presentation could be interpreted as a very strong tool for the legitimisation of the preferred discourse to a large audience, as according to Fiske (in Tompson, 1997, 47), while the tabloid journalism encourages skepticism and disbelief, quality press may be held accountable for creating a believing subject (ibid.).
The launching of the news met strong opposition, especially by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (VMRO).

The supreme Forum of the Bulgarian Journalists drafted a programme including the passing of a Press Law, at its IX Congress in February 1990. Nevertheless, in the same year, the first reactions against such a law occurred in the press (ibid.). In 1991 the question of drafting a Press Law was again put on the agenda (Pogled, #25, June 26, 1991, ibid.)

McQuail and Blumler (1972 in Watson and Hill, 1993:197) describe the construction of personal identity as one of the four basic needs satisfied in media consumption (the so-called “uses-and-gratification” theory): social relations and companionship, identity formation, value and reality exploration, provision of information, diversion and escapism.

The study covered the representation of the Roma in several daily newspapers (Trud, 24 Chasa, Sega), the weekly qualities Kultura and Kapital, the regional Starozagorski Novini as well as the regional supplements of Trud and 24 Chasa, in the period December 1997-February 2000.

It is an acknowledged fact that Jews have traditionally been treated with great respect in Bulgarian society, despite the existence of some medieval stereotypes that have subsequently been positively deconstructed (Mutafchieva, 1994: 51).

Stolipinovo has approximately 30,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, according to different sources (Dnevnik, Feb. 19, Feb 20, 2002; Trud, Feb 20, 2002: 3), who are mainly Roma but also ethnic Turks and Bulgarians.
10. “Nemiri” (24 Часа, фев. 20, 2002: 1); “Vojna vo Stolipinovo” (ibid., 2-3); “Истребување во Пловдив” (Труд, фев 20, 2002: 2, 2002: 1); “Ромска буна“ (ibid.: 2); “Нов бунт во Столипиново“ (Труд, март, 14, 2002: 7); “Масовен бунт на Ромите во Столипиново“ (Сега, фев. 20, 2002); “Ромски бес поради исклучената струја“ (Дневник, фев. 19, 2002); “Истребувањата продолжија во центарот на Пловдив“ (Дневник, фев. 20, 2002).

11. Na primer: “Romi od tri gradovi se upatuvaat kon gradot na ridovite,“ „провалија и ограбија продавници,“ „napadnaa тролејбус“ (24 Часа, фев. 20, 2002: 1); „2000 luѓе фрлаат со камења на полициски автомобили, ограбуваат пиљари, заканувајќи се дека ќе дигнат во воздух бензинска станица“ (ibid.); „запален отпад“; „ланови да се бложира и запали железничката пруга“ (Труд, фев. 20, 2002: 2); „Бложиран централниот булевар ‘Независност’ и автопатот“, „нападнати три [...] куќи“, „нападнат е грчки автобус со камења и повредени се децата внатре“ (Дневник, фев. 20, 2002); „искршен автомобил на НЕКК“ (ibid.).

12. Исто така: „бесни Роми“, (Труд, фев. 20, 2002: 2-3); „разбеснети Роми“. (Стандарт, фев. 20, 2002)

13. Други разбеснети анонимни гласови од толпата викаа: „Ако тие не ни ја пуштат струјата, Пловдив ќе биде претворен во Афганистан и во споредба со нас, Талибанците ќе бидат како ангели.“ (Стандарт, фев. 20, 2002: 6)

14. Васил Левски (1837-1873) е еден од најголемите национални херои на Бугарија, нарекуван „апостол на слободата.“ Той организирал револуционерна мрежа за ослободување од отоманското угнетување. Некои од неговите идеи, како онизи за „чиста и света република“ и за „почитта за правата и слободите на секој поединец“, беа исключително напредни во 19-от век во контекст на Оттоманската империја.
15. Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the present Prime Minister of Bulgaria.

16. The leader of the Turkish minority party “Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF).”

17. Some of the towns in Bulgaria with predominantly ethnic Turkish population.

18. The TV show was launched by students in the early 90s and gained extreme popularity. For a number of years its political satire was an influential corrective to political life, often creating serious scandals. Ku-Ku and later Kanaletto developed their own entertainment business, after which the staff split into two and produced two new programmes: Kanaletto and Hashove. “Hashove” (“Rebels”) is a word also belonging to the period of the National Revival, applied mainly to the Bulgarian revolutionaries living in exile. The TV show no longer exists. Its leading figure, Slavi Trifonov, has his own talks show on Murdoch’s BTV.

19. “Freedom or death!” was one of the slogans of the rebels of the National Revival and the April uprising of 1876, written on their flags. “Freedom or death heroic” was also used by one of the greatest Bulgarians revolutionaries and poets, Christo Botev (1848-1876) in his famous poem “On Parting” (1868).

20. One of the most popular political figures in Bulgaria, creating an image of an American-style “good cop” and testing to the efficiency of the police in imposing law and order.

21. February 19th is a day for commemorating the heroic death of Vassil Levski.

22. The numerous satellite dishes are a typical sight in Stolipinovo, which has a great number of population with a Turk-
Identities

elenie koj ima turska periferna svest. Tie se sredstvo za odhrjavanje na kontaktot so zemjata za koja se pretpostavuva deka od nea poteknuvata. Satelitskata chinija e vajen del od socravanetoto na identitetot, za-toa se smeta za osnovna potreba, duri i vo uslovii na kraja beda. Bidejki satelitskite chinii cebi priilichno skapi vo Bugarija, nivnoto poseduvaane chesto se smeta za zan za bogatstvo.


24. Унијата на демократски сили (УДС) беше главната опозиција на Социјалистичката партија на Бугарска во годините по 1989 год. и ја изгуби моќта веднаш по доаѓањето на партијата на Симеон II, Националното движење Симеон II (НДСВ), на политичката арена на изборите во 2001 год.

25. Направена е алузија на филмот „Табор уходит в небо“ („Циганскиот камп лета на небо“) (СССР/Молдавија, 1976, реж. Емил Лотиану). Филибе е еден од старите и популарните места во Пловдив по 14-от век, кога градот беше освоен од Османските Турци. Бил наречен Филиппополис по Филип II Македонски, таткото на Александар Велики во 432 год. пред нашата ера.

26. „Гаур“ (од турски јазик) значи „неверник“ на муслиманската религија. Ова беше еден од начините на кои османските Турци му се обраќале на покореното население во Османската Империја. Терминот има силна негативна конотација во бугарскиот јазик.

27. Варијантата од истиот натпис на интернет е малку поинаква. Во неа се имплицира дека ромското семејство можело да заработи многу повече пари, ако главата на семејството не одбивала да работи на проект за пошукување.

ish or Turkish preferred peripheral consciousness. They are a means of maintaining contact with the assumed country of origin. The satellite dish is an important element in the construction of identity and therefore is considered a basic necessity, even in conditions of utmost penury. As satellite dishes are quite expensive in Bulgaria, their possession is often seen by the majority as a sign of affluence.

23. This is evident from the use of headlines, directly quoting police authorities: “We Will not Allow Disturbances” (Trud, Feb. 20, 2002: 3) or “The Police in Plovdiv Ready to Quell the Riots” (Trud, Feb. 26, 2002).

24. The UDF have been the main opposition to the Bulgarian socialist party in the years after 1989 and lost power only after the advent of Simeon II’s party, the National Movement Simeon II (NDSV), on the political arena at the elections in 2001.

25. An allusion is made to the film “Tabor Ukhodit v Nebo” (“The Gypsy Camp Flies in the Skies”) (USSR/Moldova, 1976, dir. Emil Lotianu). Filibe is one of the old and popular designations of the town of Plovdiv after the 14th century, when the town was conquered by the Ottoman Turks. Named Philipopolis after Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great, in 432 B.C.

26. “Giaour” (from Turkish) means an “infidel” of the Muslim religion. This was one of the ways the Ottoman Turks addressed the dependent population in the Ottoman Empire. The term has achieved strongly negative connotations in Bulgarian language.

27. The Internet variant of the same article is slightly different. It is implied that the Roma family could have earned much more money, had it not been for the refusal of the head of the family to work in a project on afforestation.
28. The communist party conducted an assimilationist policy of the ethnic Turkish population in Bulgaria by changing their Turkic – Arabic names with Bulgarian in 1984-1985. This led to a wave of protests of the Turkish minority and to the subsequent mass exodus in 1988 to Turkey. The two processes were called respectively the “Rebirth Process” and the “Great Trip”.

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