

**Are We Still at War with the Other: Media Language Now and Then
on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers**

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Abstract

The focus of the paper is upon a comparison of the language media in Bulgaria and the UK when talking about ethnic minorities, and more specifically on Roma in Bulgaria and Gypsies and Travellers in the UK. Applying the sociocognitivist approach within the Critical discourse studies (van Dijk 2016), I revisit one of the most frequent metaphors, i.e. the one related to WAR, used by the media at the beginning of the century (2001-2005) and in 2020-2022. The reason to select that particular device is the fact that metaphors reflect thinking patterns and emotions that people share and are conducive to the establishment of a generalized image of various phenomena, and, in this particular case, of an ethnic group. At the same time, I hypothesize that the pandemic would probably take media attention away from ethnic minorities and thus coverage of the groups would be scantier and the language, in case there are articles on Roma and Gypsies and Travellers, more neutral and void of metaphors. The corpus for the analysis at hand comprises some of the most popular dailies circulated online in Bulgaria and the UK. The analysis has shown that despite the time difference and the pandemic, the attitude and the language the Bulgarian and the British media use in their presentations of this ethnic group in particular has not changed significantly and has not been affected significantly by Covid-19.

Keywords: *media discourse, CDS, ethnic Other, Roma, Gypsies & Travellers, metaphors.*

1. Introduction

One might think that, at times, when globalization is a fact, when people travel freely from place to place, and there are supranational structures such as the EU, UN among others, differences in place of birth, origin or culture, in the most generic sense, would start fading away and there will be more understanding between humans and a union towards a common goal.

The latest COVID-19 pandemic showed all of us that disease does not discriminate between people and affects us equally. Still, reality shows us a different picture. Right after the pandemic we saw a rise in ethnic awareness and even small differences were brought up to account for differences in culture, language, understanding, and general perception of the world. Politics have their fair share in the whole situation of course, so the wars in Ukraine and currently in Gaza are as much a matter of differences in ethnic identity as political moves. It can be argued though, not going further into this unfathomable topic, that the latter were prompted as much by the desire for dominance as by the ethnic aspect of it all. We see an upsurge in identity politics (Duignan 2023) expressed through movements, such as MeToo, BlackLivesMatter, and initiatives as the Decade of Roma inclusion, etc., all of which focus on establishing one's uniqueness based on specific characteristics.

In addition, there is also a host of research that has focused on particular underprivileged ethnic groups, such as Roma in Europe (see Breazu and Machin 2019, 2021; Canut 2019), religious groups - Muslims (see Abbas 2011; Alsultani 2012; Bazian 2017; Modood 2009, 2021; Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva 2017b, 2017c) and the way these have been presented in the media. In most of the publications on the topic it has been shown that the latter play a considerable role in maintaining the perceived differences between Us and Them as the media disseminate images created by the symbolic elites (van Dijk 1993) that determine the stance taken and thus spread anti-racist discourses in their widest meaning (van Dijk 2023).

Images closely related to the idea of the ethnic Other have been reproduced time and again. Thus in a study on the representation of refugees Charlotte Taylor (2021) applying historical discourse analysis traces out the metaphors used to address the phenomenon in the *Times* newspaper over a span of 200 years (1800-2018). Her analysis shows that some metaphors kept appearing throughout the whole period, i.e. LIQUID, OBJECT, others proved to be more recent, i.e. ANIMALS, INVADER, WEIGHT, while still others have disappeared and then have been revived again, i.e. COMMODITY, GUEST (Taylor 2021). Similar presentations of the migrating ethnic Other from the south-eastern part of Europe have been observed by Mihaela Culea (2016) as well and traced out in a research of my own on refugees (Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva 2017b), Roma (Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva 2012), Bulgarians (Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva 2017a), and Muslims (Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva 2017c, 2018).

Driven by these findings, as well as by personal observations, the study at hand applies the sociocognitivist approach within the Critical discourse studies (van Dijk 2016, 2018) and revisits one of the most frequent metaphors, i.e. the one related to the field of war, used by the media at the beginning of the century (2001-2005) and compares the findings to the situation observed in 2020-2022 in the depiction of Roma in Bulgaria and Gypsies and Travellers in the UK.

The reason to choose that particular device is the fact that metaphors reflect the thinking patterns and emotions people share and are conducive to the establishment of a generalized image of various phenomena, in this particular case of an ethnic group.

Some of the hypotheses I start with are that given the different characteristics of the two time frames, i.e. pre-EU-accession period on the one hand, and the pandemic on the other, the media attention to said ethnic groups would be bigger in the first period due to some requirements by the EU, and smaller in the post-pandemic period. Additionally, I assume that the coverage of the groups in the second

period would be scantier and the language, in case there are articles on Roma and Gypsies and Travellers, more neutral and void of metaphors.

1.1. Why Roma, Gypsies and Travellers?

Although the members of this particular group¹ have coexisted with mainstream society for centuries, they still continue to be perceived as Other and are usually associated with the negative images generally applied to those associated with everything un-social there can be. In this respect Frazer has stated “that for the last century and longer, all Travellers, whatever their ethnic status, have been labeled as ‘criminals’, ‘deviants’, ‘vagabonds’ and ‘asocial’” (qtd. in Clark and Dearling 1999). The same opinion has been voiced in 2015 by Zheljko Jovanovic in his analysis on the Decade of Roma inclusion (Jovanovic 2015; see also Rorke and Matache 2015). Additionally, Cohen (2002) defines Gypsies as the “folk devils” society stands against. Still further, Ian Hancock defines them as “pariahs” in his book *The Pariah Syndrome* (1988).

The fact that Roma in Bulgaria are viewed as different has been further highlighted by the Decade of Roma inclusion initiated in Europe in the period 2005-2015 (see Friedman 2013) and revived in 2015 (see

¹ Here I use “this group” as a synonym of people perceived as “the ethnic Other” and not as a unifying notion suggesting that all Roma, Gypsies and Travellers belong to the same ethnic group. There are scholars who support the opinion that Roma, Gypsies and Travellers have originated from Punjab and who travelled as mercenaries hired by various rulers to lead their battles and who have thus spread and settled on the Balkans and throughout Europe, reaching the UK via Egypt (see Hancock 1988). There are still others who state that Gypsies and Travellers in the UK are a completely different group composed on the basis of lifestyle as there are also barge people, Irish travellers, etc., who have not migrated along with Gypsies but have become part of the group as a result of their itinerant lifestyle. However, here the claim is not that they are ethnologically the same, but rather that the treatment they “enjoy” is the same.

Lecerf 2017) to encompass another ten-years' period. This initiative inadvertently shows the strive to improve the situation of its targets and at the same time sets those targets apart as culturally different. There are no initiatives of including Turks or Armenians and Jews in Bulgaria, or Pakistani and Indians in the UK.

2. Corpus and methods of analysis

The corpora for the analysis at hand are collected during two main time frames, i.e. 2001-2005 and 2020-2022. Three Bulgarian (*Dnevnik*, *Standart*, and *Sega*) and three British newspapers (*The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Daily Telegraph*)² have been selected and the articles featuring any of the three ethnonyms have been collected manually. The total number of analyzed materials during the first (pre-EU-accession) period is 2085 articles (1380 Bulgarian and 705 British texts) and the (post)pandemic period of 2020-2022 returned 450 articles (200 Bulgarian and 250 British texts).

Even based on this raw statistical data one can easily see a drop in the interest to that particular group from 417 articles per year on average in the pre-accession period to 225 articles/ per year in the pandemic period. The observable drop in publications in 2020-2022 actually proves one of the hypotheses set at the beginning of the study, i.e. that the pandemic has somehow driven the attention of the media away from the ethnic Other.

As the study aims at unveiling some of the unjust practices in wording the information related to the group in the terminological apparatus of the war, the study is housed within the premises of Critical Discourse Studies (see Van Dijk 2016, 2018; Flowerdew and Richardson

² The newspapers that have been analyzed are abbreviated as follows: The Guardian (G/), The Daily Telegraph (DT/), and The Independent (I/); and the Bulgarian: Standart (St/), Dnevnik (Dn/), and Sega (S/). Throughout the paper the quoted materials will be marked by an abbreviation of the newspaper and the date the material has been issued. All translations of the original samples in Bulgarian into English are done by the author.

2018). In addition, as the main focus of analysis is the metaphor of War, which already positions the study within the premises of cognitive studies, I have found it most appropriate to use the triangular sociocognitive approach to CDS (i.e. discourse-cognition-society) as put forward by van Dijk (2016). As the latter himself explains: “Whereas all approaches in CDS study the relations between discourse and society, a sociocognitive approach claims that such relations are cognitively mediated. Discourse structures and social structures are of a different nature, and can only be related through the mental representations of language users as individuals and as social members” (van Dijk 2016: 64).

The steps undertaken in said approach as defined by van Dijk (ibid. 2016: 64) with minor changes, are as follows:

1. The discursive component which focuses on the many structures of racist text and talk, in this study the metaphor of War that establishes the ideological polarization between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’.
2. Said discourse structure is interpreted and explained in terms of underlying, socially shared ethnic prejudices and racist ideologies and the ways they influence the mental models of individual language users.
3. The discourses and their underlying cognitions are socially and politically functional in the (re)production of ethnic domination and inequality by white dominant groups against minority groups or immigrants.

3. Metaphors

Metaphors were chosen as the focus of analysis as one of the features that characterize media discourse in both Bulgaria and the UK is high frequency of metaphor usage (see Fowler 1991; Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva 2013). In addition, as Charteris-Black (2004: 28) states, the metaphor is “central to critical discourse analysis since it is concerned with forming a coherent view of reality” (qtd. Hart

2008: 91) and, as a figure of speech that connects two seemingly unrelated fields, is highly expressive and very provocative.

As part of discourse metaphors are also used in order to achieve certain strategies and the preference of one expression over another, i.e. a surface linguistic expression in the form of a word, phrase or sentence, of a conceptual structure (see also Hart 2008: 94; Lakoff 1993), is telling of the ideology behind such use as it is usually the so-called symbolic elites (van Dijk 1993) who dictate what gets published. Furthermore, based on their features metaphors “privilege one understanding of reality over others” as well as “have the effect of marginalizing or excluding alternative conceptualisations” (Chilton 1996: 154).

The reason for the high usage and productivity of metaphors is the fact that metaphors, as stated by Lakoff (1987), are born by and reflect people’s experience and as we are all human, our general experiences about things and processes in the world coincide and come to form the categories we use to judge anything happening around us (see Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 2005). This similarity in general experiences accounts for the existence of some universal metaphors that present similar cognitive patterns among different cultures, while if there are differences in metaphor representations, they are triggered by differences in personal experiences and emotions mainly because emotions are considered highly individual, private, and culture specific. Based on the above it could be stated that the metaphor is not only a solely conceptual or linguistic phenomenon, but also socio-cultural, neural, and bodily phenomenon which exists at all these levels at the same time.

Experience of war is similar in all cultures as fighting for territory is one of the primary expressions of possession and an attempt to protect what was considered one’s own. Therefore, the fact that this discourse would prove most prolific in terms of metaphors used to depict relationships between a minority and a majority is not something unexpected. They are part of our cognitive frames, or as explicated by Flusberg, Matlock and Thibodeau (2018: 1) “(a) they draw on basic and

widely shared schematic knowledge that efficiently structures our ability to reason and communicate about many different types of situations, and (b) they reliably express an urgent, negatively valenced emotional tone that captures attention and motivates action” and that is why they are preferred as a means of expression. Furthermore, defining the source domains of metaphors of emotions, Kövecses (2005) shows War as a source domain for the latter, along with Nutrient/Food and Game, clarifying that the common thing among them is “the desire to obtain an object (corresponding either to an emotion or the object of an emotion). Their application seems to be limited to love and lust.” (ibid.: 39). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have commented on the use of war as a source domain for metaphors related to arguments or leading to some kind of conflict which were once again based on bodily experiences. In relation to the topic at hand, relationships between groups in society in general are based on the dichotomy Us vs Them and closeness or distance between groups is defined based on this perception of who is similar to us, therefore, a part of Us/ our in-group and who is different, sometimes even scary and therefore defined as Them/ out-group. Relating all this to the statement by Frazer quoted above, it is not surprising that the relationships between ethnic Bulgarians and Roma in Bulgaria and ethnic British and Gypsies and Travellers in the UK will be housed in the negative hues of the metaphor of War.

4. Analysis

In their analysis on War metaphors in public discourse Flusberg, Matlock and Thibodeau (2018: 1) state that said metaphor is quite “ubiquitous in discussions of everything from political campaigns to battles with cancer to wars against crime, drugs, poverty, and even salad”. As they state further it is only based on context that the latter is qualified as either positive or negative in outcome (ibid.: 2)

When the linguistic ways employed by the media to realize the metaphor of War are analyzed, there are several lexemes from the general lexico-thematic field of war that come to the fore in the

Bulgarian media in the pre-accession period: бой ('fight'), опълчение ('volunteer force'), гранати ('granades'), битка ('battle'), бунт ('rebellion'), вендата ('vendetta'), размирици ('unrest'), барикади ('barricades'), протести ('protests'), погром ('pogrom'), патрули ('patrols'), война ('war'), derivatives of бия ('beat'): пребивам ('beat the life out of s.o.), убивам ('kill'), as well as verbs like вилнея ('rage'), линчувам ('lynch'), атакувам ('attack'), щурмувам ('storm'), окупирам ('occupy'), нахлувам ('invade'), воювам ('be at war'), бомбардирам ('bombard'), нападам ('assault'), атакувам ('attack'), троша ('break down'), паля ('set on fire'). So basically the realization of the metaphor relies heavily on the use of noun/ noun phrase or verb/ verb phrase as that is the main way concepts are triggered in people's minds. Some of the examples extracted from the corpus are:

- (1) Христо Змияра *поведе опълчение* срещу ромите /з/ ³
Българите се заключили в домовете си в нощта на *битката*
/пз/ (Hristo the Snake catcher *led a rebellion* against the Roma
/h/ The Bulgarians locked themselves up in their houses on the
night of the *battle* /sh/ - ST/ 08.06.05); (2) София *започна битка*
с ромските катунни /з/ (Sofia *undertook a battle* with the Roma
camps /h/ (St/ 02.09.05); (3) *Фадроми* срещу гетото /з/ (*Wheel
loaders* against the ghetto /h/ - ST/ 10.04.01); (4) *Ромски бунт*
във Варна, реституират Максуда /з/ (*Roma rebellion* in Varna,
Maksuda is about to be restituted /h/ - S/ 26.09.01); (5) *Ромска
вендата* потроши 8 къщи /з/ (*Roma vendetta* destroyed eight
houses /h/ - ST/ 04.04.02).

³ The abbreviations used in the analysis include the Bulgarian /з/ - headline (abbrev. /h/ in the English examples); /пз/ - subheadline (abbrev. /sh/). The translations of the Bulgarian examples into English are done by the author striving at conveying the original meaning through the employment of analogous lexemes and metaphoric expressions.

The selected extracts clearly show the belligerent nature of the relationship between majority and minority. Looking at the active agents one can easily see references both to the majority as well as to the minority. Thus, we see a member of the majority with the nickname the Snake catcher leading a rebellion that eventually turns into a battle against the Roma. We also see the explicit opposition between Us and Them exemplified through the explicit naming of the two groups, i.e. Bulgarians vs. Roma. In the next example there is a metonymy referring to the authorities in the capital of Bulgaria denoted by the toponym Sofia as opposed to the minority. The lexeme used to trigger the metaphor of war is *battle* again, however, this time the initiative is on the side of the minority. In the last two examples in this group one can also see the Roma as the active agents who in their own turn raise rebellions and wage vendettas against the majority, which actually creates the impression that the majority is in the position of the oppressed members of society and not the other way round – an approach frequently employed in nationalistic publications. In example (5) the choice of the journalists with the use of *vendetta* is an interesting one for it provokes associations with the Italian mafia as it is usually perceived as a kind of mafia revenge which usually ends in bloodshed in a particularly savage manner.

In addition to the articles directly focusing on the relationship between majority and minority members, there are also articles related to Bulgaria's accession to the EU and the possible outcomes. Thus, one of the effects that the process can have, as voiced by both Bulgarian and foreign analysts and politicians, is the possible migration of Bulgarian subjects to countries that are part of the union already. Even prior to the accession period various articles reported on the numbers of Roma traveling to work abroad:

(6) Русенските роми се стягат за *нашествие* към друга северноевропейска страна [...] ('The Roma from the town of

Ruse are getting ready *to invade* another Northern-European country [...] – S/ 26.07.01)

The idea of an invasion associated with the migrating Roma is not a new one and the belligerent language has frequently been employed by the Western media when reporting on newcomers especially from the East. Mihaela Culea (2016) analyses said metaphor in terms of the expected waves of Romanian immigrants to the UK. The idea of invasion is closely linked with the unwanted and forceful relocation of people to a territory that does not belong to them and thus creates negative connotations in the minds of the recipients. Using this negative idea, the Roma are presented as a threat as they are both unwanted and obviously inclined on settling or at least conquering the territory that they have chosen. In the first example the metaphor has been used to present the migration of Roma groups to countries in Western Europe in order to work, thereby assure better lifestyle for their families, but the metaphor has been also used in articles that talk about the way Roma go abroad and abuse the welfare system of the countries they visit in which case the War metaphor is usually used together with another popular metaphor, i.e. the PARASITE one (see Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva 2013, 2020; Culea 2016).

Discussing Bulgaria's accession, the aspect of imposters is once again presented through the employment of the WAR metaphor realized through the use of the noun phrase *a new army of people incapable of more complicated work*:

(7) С приемането ни в ЕС към тях ще се влее *нова армия* непригодни за по-сложен труд /пз/ [...] (With our accession to the EU their numbers will grow with the influx of *a new army* of people not capable for more complicated work /sh/ [...] - S/ 30.01.04)

The linguistic realization of the metaphor is interesting because we have a piling up of negative connotations. On the one hand, there is the military association carried and further developed by the idea of an invading army. On the other hand, the havoc that army is about to cause is further intensified by their incapability to work, thus in a way there is an overlap once again between the WAR metaphor and the PARASITE one.

The metaphor of WAR is employed also in the publications on the attempts made by the government in Bulgaria in integrating the Roma ethnic group.

(8) *Дълго ходом и бавно марш /з/ Правителството направи крачка напред, макар и твърде немощна, към ромската интеграция /пз/ (The long forward and the slow march /h/ The government made a step forward, although a very weak one, to the Roma integration /sh/ - S/ 03.11.03)*

In this particular example the aggression usually conveyed through the metaphor of War is toned down and almost missing as the suggestion is of a protracted action and a kind of reluctance. The altered command is usually issued prior to an attack to prepare the troops or armies for action. The modifiers in this case turn the phrase into something like an oxymoron as a military order requires immediate reaction while in this case it is used to describe a form of procrastination which shows the unwillingness of the officials to take action and at the same time hints on the fact that the necessity of a reaction on the issue of Roma integration is imposed from without which is actually the case.

Based on the examples from the pre-accession period in Bulgaria it can be concluded that the metaphor of War has been employed by the media when they describe interethnic relationships as well as the attitude of officials towards the Decade of Roma inclusion. The active perpetrators are both Bulgarians and Roma which once again confirms the Us vs. Them divide – the two warring camps.

Looking at the Bulgarian corpus from the period of the pandemic, one can see the resort to the same metaphor again. In this particular corpus the topic presented is related mostly to the pandemic and the preventive measures imposed on the whole population as well as the response to these measures. The articles cover aspects of the pandemic affecting or related to the Roma population both in Bulgaria and abroad:

(9) Институциите в България са загубили битката за вниманието и доверието на ромските общности във връзка с ваксинирането срещу COVID-19, се казва в доклада (Bulgarian Institutions *have lost the battle* for the attention and trust of the Roma communities in relation to vaccination against COVID-19, says the report – Dn/ 14.04.2022); (10) В Столипиново няма сватби, нито *пълчища* по улиците (There are no weddings or *hordes* in the streets in Stolipinovo – Dn/ 23.03.2020); (11) Градче до Неапол пък се оказа, че каквито и мерки да въведе срещу коронавируса, те са безсилни пред българските роми, *окопали се* в няколко изоставени блока. (A small town next to Naples proved that whatever measures it introduced against the Coronavirus, they were powerless against the Bulgarian Roma, *holed up* in several abandoned blocks of flats – St/ 22.06.2020); (12) *Напрежението* в италианския град Мондрагоне *ескалира*. Местните *нападнаха* български автомобили, наши сънародници ги *обстрелват* със столове през терасите. *Италия изпрати армията за въдворяване на ред.* (Tensions are *escalating* in the Italian town of Mondragone. Locals *attacked* Bulgarian cars, our fellow citizens *pelted them* with chairs from the terraces. *Italy sent the army to restore order* – St/ 26.06.2020)

The idea of a battle, therefore efforts beyond what is considered normal and acceptable in terms of being heard, or getting one's attention

as in example (9), is still there. However, the use of *hordes* to describe the groups of Roma in the streets of a Roma neighborhood in the capital, along with the idea of Roma pelting Italian soldiers with chairs flung from the terraces of the flats they inhabit speaks of Roma's backwardness and uncivilized manner. This animalization of the Other is not something new. Said (1979) has spoken of the strategy (though not using the same term) employed by the media in order to present the Other as someone to be feared and therefore avoided because of characteristics that show the Other as savage, backward, illiterate and generally uncivilized. This animalistic image would also justify any negative activities undertaken against that Other as they will be undertaken to preserve order and the mores felt acceptable by the civilized majority. One encounters the use of *battle*, *rebellion*, *entrenched* denoting the measures undertaken as guarding the Roma in the blocks of flats they inhabit unlawfully.

There is an article that stands in stark contrast to the rest of the corpus as it does not speak about interethnic relationships or the pandemic, however, still employs the same metaphor: (13) *Оковите на традициите: какво е да си ромска жена* (*The shackles of tradition: what it is like to be a Roma woman* – Dn/ 24.09.2020). The article aims at promoting cultural relativism and directing public attention towards the plight of a considerable part of the society, i.e. Roma women, who even though living in the 21st cen., are still generally treated as possessions, as objects and as chattels of their husbands, as children producing machines. And while the article brings awareness, the metaphor implicitly suggests that the situation would probably not change as for the shackles to fall down the whole worldview of a community has to change and when people are largely illiterate, poor and a tool for manipulating votes, no liberators readily come to mind.

When we analyze the British corpus from the beginning of the century we see the employment of the same metaphor of WAR predominantly realized through lexemes formed around the notion of an invasion or a battle: *invasion*, *siege*, *battlefield*, *lengthy eviction battle*,

long-running legal battle, series of court battles, a long battle, battlegrounds, battle lines, gipsy battle, eight-year legal battle, pitch battles, locked in battle, fight. As the examples show the articles focus mostly on one of the characteristics of the community of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK, i.e. their itinerant way of life:

(14) 'The potential is there for 2,000 people to move in, a village within a village. *An invasion?* Well, yes, how else would you describe it?' (DT/ 15.08.04); (15) 'But their community just grew and grew and others came in. They *took over* four housing estates' (DT/ 01.06.04); (16) [...] a naked attempt *to ram through* a change of planning use [...] (DT/ 26.10.04); (17) A group of villagers has raised £27,500 to buy a plot of land to prevent it *falling into the hands* of gypsies (DT/ 29.10.04); (18) The village residents' association said it was now advising locals to pay the tax but claimed *its campaign had ended in victory*, with bailiffs set to remove foundations for more caravans at the site (G/ 07.06.04); (19) *A four-hour standoff*, observed by 40 police officers and a number of firefighters, followed before the bailiffs were called off. The travellers' spokesman, John Lee, said: 'I think we can claim a *victory*' (G/ 13.01.04).

As can be seen the different stages of the military warfare from the invasion/ incursion, through the taking over, the battle that ensues, the siege, the stand-off and the ultimate victory have been employed to present the encounters between settled members of the majority and the Gypsies and Travellers. The metaphors speak of hostility and similar to those employed in the Bulgarian media discourse present the members of the minority in a negative light. They are the ones who break laws, trespass, and illegally camp on sites of natural beauty. They are also attributed a whiff of backwardness through the use of the phrase *ram through*, as the ram was used in medieval times as a means of forcefully opening castle gates and is therefore considered outdated in present day

reality. Today it signifies the forceful opening of a passage or making one's way through a situation or, in the case above, planning laws.

Contrary to the Bulgarian corpus from the pandemic period where one can see a shift in the topics discussed, in the British corpus even during the pandemic the publications continue to revolve around issues related to the Gypsies and Travellers' nomadic lifestyle:

(20) "*We fought long and hard to win this battle; some of the women are now old, while others have passed away. I am glad they will get to see the light of justice,*" she told the Guardian. (G/ 04.08.2021); (21) *The pitched battle* between police and activists was an experience that some former residents say they have yet to recover from (G/ 08.02.2022).

The lexemes used in these examples are generally similar to the ones employed before. Going further, one can see some expansions to the metaphor of WAR, mostly related to the experience of ethnic cleansing and annihilation during the First World War in the concentration camps. In the examples below the idea of extermination is mapped onto Gypsy life:

(22) '*My family fought a five-year legal battle to get planning permission for a small site, so we could maintain our way of life and have access to education and health care*' (Chloe Smith) [...] Throughout the ages, there have been attempts by the state to *extinguish* our nomadic way of life, which today is hanging on by a thread. The government's new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill is set to further erode our customs, and *subject us* to disproportionate policing.[...] We are being *legislatively cleansed* from Britain, and this bill must be scrapped before it further eradicates our traditions and destroys our already marginalised communities. (I/ 24.04.2021).

Gypsies and Travellers are also frequently being targeted by legislation and as a result they have to shield themselves in order to protect themselves or to prevent any possible harm:

(23) Several clauses *target* Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, by creating a new criminal offence of “residing on land without consent in a vehicle”, and broadening police powers to seize caravans and other property. (I/ 13.09.2021); (24) As a member of the Traveller community, I’ve been told my whole life to *shield who I am* from the outside world. (I/ 02.05.2022)

The examples so far talk about the predominantly negative attitude people experience, while the acts of kindness are very few. It is predominantly the members of the minority that are presented in the subjugated position of victims at the mercy of the powerful ones. A topic that has not been discussed by the Bulgarian media in relation to Roma but is covered by the British ones and employs the same metaphor of war is related to the refugees from war-torn Ukraine:

(25) ‘Meet us before you reject us’: Ukraine’s Roma refugees face closed doors in Poland /h/ [...] A warm welcome has been given to most people fleeing Putin’s war but Roma women and children *are struggling* to find homes (G/ 10.05.2022); (26) Vít Rakušan, the Czech interior minister, has claimed that the Roma *influx* is tied to organised crime and spoken of *the need to combat “social tourism”*. (G/ 25.05.2022).

In these examples the WAR metaphor has been employed once again to show both the difficulties refugees have to cope with arriving in their new destinations as well as the attitude officials have towards them. Actually, in the last example there is an overlap of two metaphors characteristic in the presentation of refugees, i.e. the one of war and

Migration is Tourism/ Way (discussed also by Culea 2016), in this case focusing on the fact that refugees from Ukraine avail themselves from the welfare systems of the countries they reach, and the one of DISASTERS/ NATURAL forces exemplified through a tidal wave or an influx of migrants. In this line of thought, especially bearing in mind that the idea of tourism is mostly related with pleasure and pastime activities, one can even see the metaphor of PARASITE lurking once again in the references used to describe Ukrainian Roma in this case.

Conclusions

Based on the analyzed examples above, it can be concluded that the negative language in the portrayal of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers in both the Bulgarian and the British media discourse persists and the employment of the metaphor of War is still extensive. It is also interesting to observe that especially in the case of the British media discourse no change of topics has been observed when it comes to coverage on Gypsies and Travellers in the UK.

The differences observed in the corpora from the period of the pandemic are mostly related to the fact that in the Bulgarian media Covid-19 was the subject in a number of articles with focus on the measures imposed and the way the population in general and Roma in particular responded to them. There was coverage also on the behaviour of Bulgarian Roma abroad and the relationships with authorities there were also presented through the same lexemes used for the realization of the metaphor of War in non-Covid times.

A topic that was covered by the British media but not by the Bulgarian ones in terms of the coverage of Roma is related to the events in Ukraine and the numbers of refugees including Ukrainian Roma to other countries. As the analysis has shown, the attitude they experienced in the host communities were similar to those local Roma experience.

Another difference observed in the British corpus is the fact that even members of the Gypsies and Travellers community use the

belligerent language when they talk about their experience which speaks of the pervasiveness of this notion of battle fought between Us and Them.

The study also features some expansions of the WAR metaphor with references to the First World War and the gas chambers where many Jews but also Roma lost their lives. There are also several overlaps between the metaphor of WAR and another very prolific metaphor in terms of the presentation of the ethnic Other as the one to be feared and kept at bay, i.e. the metaphor of PARASITE associated mostly with the idea that Roma, Gypsies and Travellers avail themselves from the allowances made by the welfare system of the countries they inhabit. The other metaphor that was also employed as a device very frequently resorted to in the description of migrants in particular is the one of DISASTER or NATURAL FORCES with its connotations of force that has been unleashed and a disaster no one can do anything about.

Limited though the study at hand is, as it is part of a much bigger project, it nevertheless explicitly shows that the span of 10+ years has not altered the figurative expressions used to describe the relationships between majority in Bulgaria and the UK and the members of the Roma and Gypsies and Travellers' communities respectively. This inadvertently shows that the thinking patterns have not changed over that span - they have been expanded to encompass some new phenomena, however, the idea of the ethnic Other who is to be feared and fought against has still remained, so, yes, we are still at war with the Other.

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