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## THE SEGA’S DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF BULGARIA’S IMAGE IN THE EU

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### ДИСКУРСНО КОНСТРУИРАНЕ НА ОБРАЗА НА БЪЛГАРИЯ В ЕС ВЪВ ВЕСТНИК „СЕГА“

**Abstract.** The study examines the discursive strategies (van Dijk, R. Wodak) and the STRICT FATHER metaphor (Lakoff 2002) that *The Sega* daily uses to construct Bulgaria’s image in the EU. The corpus encompasses 12 articles published in the period 2007–2009, which covers the years marking Bulgaria’s admission to the EU and the imposition of the monitoring mechanism in the area of home affairs and justice. The articles from *The Sega* daily have been selected on the basis of macro-topics such as the timing of the 2007 enlargement, problems that Bulgaria (and Romania) faced in joining the club, the political and economic implications of their accession, including the EU-imposed sanctions on Bulgaria for its failure to fight corruption and organized crime and conduct reforms in the judiciary.

**Keywords:** press, discourse strategies, metaphor, national identity, inferences, lexicon

**Резюме.** Настоящото изследване изучава дискурсивните стратегии (ван Дийк, Р. Водак) и метафората за СТРОГИЯ БАЩА (Лейкоф 2002), които вестник *Сега* използва за конструиране на образа на България в ЕС. Корпусът обхваща 12 статии, публикувани в периода 2007–2009 г., годините веднага след приемането на България в ЕС и налагането от страна на Европейската Комисия на мониторингов механизъм в областта на въ-

трешната политика и правосъдието. Статиите от *Сега* са избрани на базата на макро-теми (macro-topics) като: навременно ли е било разширяването на ЕС през 2007 г., проблемите, пред които са били изправени България (и Румъния), и политическите и икономическите импликации на присъединяването към ЕС, включително санкциите, наложени от ЕС на България поради провала ѝ в борбата с корупцията и организираната престъпност, и в провеждането на реформи в съдебната система

**Ключови думи:** преса, дискурсни стратегии, метафора, национална идентичност, прагматични и семантични заключения, лексикален състав

## I. Introduction

This study examines how *the Sega* daily, a leading periodical on the Bulgarian print media market, tends to construct Bulgaria's image in the EU. The corpus encompasses 12 articles published in the period 2007-2009. The choice of the articles is not random, nor is the period of their publication. The period covers the years which mark Bulgaria's admission to the EU and the imposition of the monitoring mechanism in the area of home affairs and justice, when the country was subject to criticism over its failure to fight organized crime and corruption and conduct reforms in the judiciary. The articles from *The Sega* daily have been selected on the basis of macro-topics such as the timing of the 2007 enlargement, problems that Bulgaria and Romania faced in joining the club, the political, economic and immigration-related implications of their accession, including the EU-imposed sanctions on Bulgaria for its failure to fight corruption and organized crime, among others.

The **subject** of research is the discourse strategies and conceptual metaphors (more specifically G. Lakoff's (2002) STRICT FATHER metaphor) applied in newspaper's commentaries, through which Bulgaria's image and role in the EU is constructed. It sheds light on notions such as bias, manipulation and persuasion in print media discourse, which in turn is indicative of political discourse and widespread public attitudes in general.

This research holds the **view** that *The Sega* has consciously sought for and purposefully selected certain strategies to construct Bulgaria's image of a country of mismanagement, mistrust and missed opportunities (as earlier studies of Bulgaria's image in *the Economist* confirm, K. Bratanova, 2012). The analysis employs the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in an attempt to reveal the hidden mechanisms of manipulation or persuasion through which the newspaper constructs the country's image, role and identity.

The **research questions** pertain to

- How does *The Sega* construct Bulgaria's image and role in the EU and what discursive strategies does it employ?
- What is Bulgaria's identity that is constructed in this way?
- Is the conceptualization of Bulgaria as the naughty newbie and that of the EC as the strict father (Ishpekova 2012) confirmed?

## **Scope of the research:**

1. The study focuses on discursive strategies as used by Van Dijk and Ruth Wodak such as headlines, subheadings and macro-topics (topic selection), argumentation structure (topoi, see Wodak 2001), semantic and pragmatic inferences (entailments, presuppositions, conversational and conventional implicatures, speech acts), lexicon (vocabulary), local syntax (transitivity patterns and nominalizations), style and rhetoric.
2. The selection of the newspaper items is limited to opinion discourse, or the editorial or commentary in particular, because this specific genre presumably best exposes ideological bias.

## **II. Theoretical framework and methodology**

This research adopts the approach of CDA, which is based on interpretative epistemology, to the study of mass media discourse. The interpretative quality analysis assumes that discourse production and interpretation is a function of socially shared attitudes and ideologies, norms and values, and possibly other forms of social cognition, which has serious implications with regard to power relations and social inequality.<sup>1</sup> By adopting various methods of linguistic research from the fields of semantics, pragmatics, stylistics and rhetoric, CDA attempts to show how Bulgaria's image and role in foreign policy is constructed by *The Sega* daily and explain the discursive strategies employed. Furthermore, political discourse analysis involves examining the context of the discourse structures, the participants' mental models of communicative events, which are "subjective and evaluative representations of self and other participants and of the other discourse-relevant categories of communicative situations" (Kuhn 2007: 225). Therefore, this research aims to study the overall domain (Bulgaria's place in the EU) and societal action (print media), current setting, circumstances (Bulgaria's role as a newly acceded EU member and as a factor in regional politics) and interaction (political debate), discourse genre (editorial, commentary) and roles of its participants (editorial board and assumed readership) (van Dijk 2008).

### **Discourse structures**

#### **1. Topics: semantic macrostructures**

For discursive, cognitive and social reasons, the topics of discourse play a fundamental role in communication and interaction. As van Dijk (2001b) justifiably argues, "defined as 'semantic macrostructures' derived from the local (micro) structures of meaning, topics represent what a discourse is 'about' globally speaking,

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<sup>1</sup> Van Dijk, 2001. *Specialized Discourse and Knowledge*, found at <http://www.discourse-in-society.org/teun.html>.

embody most important information of a discourse, and explain overall coherence of text and talk” (van Dijk 2001b: 102). The author goes on to say that they are often expressed in titles, headlines, summaries, abstracts, thematic sentences or conclusions (ibid.: 102).

## **2. Local meanings**

Local meanings are expressed in actual sentences of text and talk. As van Dijk argues, local meanings include the study of the meaning of words, the structures of propositions, and coherence and other relations between propositions (ibid.: 103). They are “the result of the selection made by speakers or writers in their mental models of events or their more general, socially shared beliefs” (ibid.: 103). Especially interesting for CDA research is the study of the many forms of implicit or indirect meanings, such as implications, presuppositions etc. As van Dijk further argues “implicit meanings are related to underlying beliefs, but are not openly, directly, completely or precisely asserted, for various contextual reasons, including the well-known ideological objective to de-emphasize our bad things and their good things” (ibid.: 104). Therefore, the Us vs Them representation is important in these studies, which pertains to the positive self-representation and negative other representation. However, in the analyzed articles Bulgarians (Us) are represented in a negative light since the country has to deal with a lot of problems in the wake of its EU accession.

## **3. Argumentation**

In the current analysis, R. Wodak’s (2001) “topoi” or “loci” is applied. As the author argues, the latter “can be described as parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises” (Wodak 2001: 74). “They are the content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion” (ibid.: 74). She identifies a number of topoi, all of which are isolated in the analyzed corpus: the topoi of definition, of danger or threat, of humanitarianism, of justice, of responsibility, of burdening or weighing down, of finances, of reality, of numbers, of law or right, of history, of culture and of abuse (see Wodak 2001).

A cognitive-pragmatic approach to implication (what is left unsaid) and the major **types of inferences** (entailments, presuppositions and implicatures) is applied, whereby theoretical concepts are adapted to cater for the semiotic complexity of editorial construction to reveal the hidden mechanisms of manipulation of the target readership (with regard to shared or culture-specific public attitudes to the analyzed issues). Some types of inferences integrate Grice’s conventional and non-conventional implicatures. Entailment is a relation between sentences (or propositions) given by linguistic structure (or logical form): there is no need to check any fact in the world to deduce the entailed sentence from the entailing one.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dictionary of Philosophical terms and Names ([www.swif.uniba.it](http://www.swif.uniba.it)) states that “entailment is

As they are given special attention in this research, they will be elaborated upon in a separate section so that the terminology is fully clarified.

#### 4. Style and rhetoric:

Semantic representations are expressed in variable surface structures through lexicalization, syntactic structures and specific features of sound, printing or images or by rhetorical devices that are geared towards the emphasis or de-emphasis of underlying meanings. Negative lexicalizations, for instance, may have the rhetorical function of hyperboles, an effect on public opinion and hence on the construction of event models. Speech acts and rhetorical questions may be employed to express or confirm political identity and relationships.

It is through these discursive structures and strategies that Bulgaria's image and role in the EU is constructed by the leading Bulgarian daily, which is a highly topical issue for the public at large and for professionals in many fields.

### III. Definitions of discourse

Discourse analysts are primarily interested in **meaning**, what a specific text or talk is about and what implications it has for language users. In other words, they study the **semantics, pragmatics and stylistics** of a piece of discourse. Most researchers have made a distinction between two meanings of the 'discourse': instances of language use (modes of semiosis), and different kinds of language, conventions or perspectives related to certain spheres of life or human experience that influence and shape the use of language. This distinction surfaces in the singular and plural form of this noun.

Gee (2005) assumes a broad view of discourse, defining it as identity, which involves not only ways of speaking, but also behavior, appearance, values. In his view the term encompasses "ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a sort of socially recognizable identity" (Gee 2005: 21). Fairclough (2003) also makes this distinction between discourse as an abstract noun ("language and other types of semiosis of social life") and discourses as the "particular way of representing part of the world" (ibid.: 26). Fairclough also presents the different types of discourse as representing the different types of language used in different social situations – newspaper, advertising, classroom discourses, conceding that the countable noun stands for "different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice" (Fairclough 1992: 3). In a similar vein G. Kress (1985) defines the term as the "systematically organized sets of statements and traditions which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution" (Kress

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a logical relation between propositions such that one of them is strictly implied by the other: that is falsity is logically impossible, given the truth of what entails it. Thus the premises of a valid deductive argument entail its conclusion." There are both lexical and syntactic sources of entailment.

1985: 6). Getzov links discourse to a specific manner of talk typical of a certain socio-cultural sphere with some institutions and social practices, defining it as the limited and dependent on extra-linguistic factors use [of the language] system (Getzov 2009: 117).

Many researchers define ‘discourse’ within the specialized study of media discourse (Richardson, 2007; Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2001a). Richardson determines the two major approaches to the definition of discourse: the formalist or structuralist one, which treats discourse as a unit of language ‘above’ the sentence and focuses on how this unit becomes unified and meaningful and the functionalist approach which takes into account the social ideas that largely determine the way we use and interpret language (Richardson 2007: 22). As Richardson further argues, “to properly interpret, for example, a press release, or a newspaper report or an advert, we need to work out what the speaker or writer is doing through discourse and how this ‘doing’ is linked to wider inter-personal, institutional, socio-cultural and material contexts” (ibid.: 24). The second approach implies a dialectical relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them (ibid.: 28). Many of the aforementioned researchers have adopted the functionalist approach to the study of media discourse by relating linguistic structure to contextual factors (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2001a). Such an approach reveals “the patterns of belief and value which are encoded in the language – and which are beyond the threshold of notice for anyone who accepts the discourse as ‘natural’” (Fowler 1991: 14). Fairclough says discourse analysis should encompass two types of discourse practices: text production by media institutions and their reception by audiences, on the one hand, and sociocultural practices, as the latter comprise three levels: situational (the specific social goings-on the discourse is part of); institutional (the institutional frameworks within which the discourse occurs) and societal (the wider societal matrix of discourse) (Fairclough 1995: 12). As mentioned earlier, van Dijk also stresses that discourse production and interpretation is a function of socially shared attitudes and ideologies, norms and values, and possibly other forms of social cognition, which has serious implications with regard to power relations and social inequality. He points out that in order to see how underlying meanings are related to a text, an analysis of the cognitive, social, political, and cultural context should be made (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983). Hence, he examines the discourse, cognition and society triangle, which is intended to bridge the gap between the two orders in the macro/micro dichotomy, that is “language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication belong to the micro-level of the social order”, and “power, dominance and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro-level of analysis” (ibid.: 57). The major conceptual categories belonging to the two orders are power as control, access and discourse control, context control, the control of text and talk, mind control and the discourse strategies of mind control. It is through them that the researcher arrives at the specific discourse structures, which

are “deployed in the reproduction of social dominance, whether they are part of a conversation or a news report or other genres and contexts” (van Dijk 2001a: 34).

#### **IV. Discourse models. Discourse model for the media**

As discussed earlier, Fairclough and van Dijk offer three-dimensional approaches to the study of media discourse. The former claims that the three components are text (discourse or discourse structures), discourse practices (of text production and interpretation according to different orders of discourse: genres, discourses and styles) and social practices (or social structures). The latter holds that the link between social structures (institutions, power relations, ideologies) and discourse structures are mental models, which serve as a link between ideology and discourse. Media items are generally believed to focus on the important issues and events of the day. They are related mostly to politics and therefore activate, form or transform the readers’ discourse model for some social and political practice. In other words, they influence the audience’s perceptions and opinions.

##### **1. Persuasion, argumentation and manipulation**

Given the above statement, media text and talk is intended to be **persuasive**. Readers in general have discourse models about specific media genres, about the events and people that are represented, and context models in general. This idea is related to van Dijk’s notion of ‘ideological square’, as “an overall strategy in mapping models on text and talk” which consists in a positive self-presentation and a negative others-presentation via the selection and focus on the appropriate parts of the information in a model” (van Dijk 1998: 41). Since ancient times the concept of **argumentation** as a means of persuasion has been the subject of scientific inquiry. Many researchers have provided definition of ‘argument’. For the purposes of the present work this concept will be understood in the sense of advancing reasons and persuasion.

##### **2. Discursive strategies: macro-propositions in headlines**

Apart from the discursive structures and strategies outlined above, this research will pay special attention to the macro-propositions in headlines. Macro-propositions are mostly summarized in headlines and subheadings. Headlines are attention grabbers, as potential readers presumably browse them before they decide to read the item itself. Headlines, as van Dijk notes, express the top propositions of the semantic macrostructure or the set of topics to be addressed. They at once define and evaluate the situation. Certain entailments with ideological implications get additional emphasis by prominent position and size in the headlines (van Dijk 1994). Also they are an important element of the study of context models, given that the

readership expects some schema or superstructure in a particular journalistic genre. Moreover, as Brown and Yule (1983) claim “titles, chapter headings, sub-divisions and sub-headings all indicate to the reader how the author intends his argument to be chunked” (Brown and Yule 1983: 7).

Traditionally headlines have been characterized as short, telegram-like summaries of their news items, which may be true with respect to news headlines (van Dijk 1996). However, even the most prototypical headlines in quality newspapers do not always summarize their stories, but highlight a single detail extracted out of the story, or quote someone’s else’s view. Bell (1991) distinguishes between headlines which “abstract the main event of the story” and headlines which “focus on a secondary event or a detail” and goes on to claim that headlines are a “part of news rhetoric whose function is to attract the reader” (ibid.: 189). Furthermore, headlines may be reduced to a finite number of syntactic patterns of straightforward statements unlike those that usually appear in opinionated articles and editorials, which offer “a fairly complex riddle, which, first triggers frames and belief systems, and then gets resolved in the body of the text” (Dor 2003: 699). Furthermore, headlines and subheadings play the role of relevance optimizers (overt persuasion and covert manipulation) in the print media discourse.

The third section of this research will address some basic concepts in linguistics, more particularly in semantics and pragmatics, as it is on the basis of these theoretical concepts that the meaning of text and talk, or of a particular piece of discourse, can be analyzed.

### 3. Semantics, pragmatics and discourse

As the notion of **meaning** is central to the study of discourse, the concepts of semantics and pragmatics in linguistics should be given due consideration. According to Charles Kreidler (2002), semantics and pragmatics can both be viewed as different parts, or aspects, of the same general study as both are concerned with people’s ability to use language meaningfully. “While **semantics** is mainly concerned with a speaker’s competence to use the language system in producing meaningful utterances and processing (comprehending) utterances produced by others, the chief focus of **pragmatics** is a person’s ability to derive meanings from specific kinds of speech situations – to recognize what the speaker is referring to, to relate new information to what has gone before, to interpret what is said from background knowledge about the speaker and the topic of discourse, and to infer or ‘fill in’ information that the speaker takes for granted” (Kreidler 2002: 18-19).

Pragmatics is generally assumed to study language in use, therefore human **communication** is a highly relevant concept. As Kreidler notes, communication takes place against a large common background, which pertains to culture, defining the latter as including “eating with a fork, wearing neckties, knowing at least some of the same proverbs, using at least some of the same gestures for the same pur-



poses, celebrating the arrival of a new year, believing in law and democracy, and hundreds of other major and minor customs and beliefs” (ibid.: 20). Furthermore, he claims that the “identification of the elements in an utterance requires speaker and hearer to share what Clark (1996: 92-121) calls ‘common ground’, though there can be different degrees of commonality in the common ground. Successful communication involves the successful interpretation of a speaker’s message, that is when hearers “derive some information from what has been said previously (the discourse context) and from knowledge of the speaker and from a grasp of conditions and circumstances in the environment (the physical-social context)”. Listeners and readers use their implicit knowledge of the language to grasp the message they are dealing with (ibid.: 22-25).

In his book *Pragmatics*, Levinson (1983) claims that semantics is used in much narrower sense by linguists, than is usually thought. Given that semantics does not overlap with meaning, and what is left of the notion of meaning constitutes pragmatics. Still, the borderline between semantics and pragmatics is not fixed and the dependence between the two branches of linguistics is not so strong but rather partial.

Dwelling on the scope of pragmatics, Levinson makes an overview of the various attempts at defining the term, which can be seen as the study of language in use, or concerns the fact that it deals with the acceptability or unacceptability of an utterance. Furthermore, he says pragmatics is concerned with the presuppositions and the speech acts, and conventional implicatures. Meaning has different projections, which occasionally overlap under different contextual conditions. Hence the concept of meaning, more particularly the inexplicit connotations which each utterance contains, are difficult for classification, as it may include irony, metaphoric and implicit communicative content of an utterance. Levinson also stresses the importance of the distinction between sentence-meaning and utterance-meaning. He arrives at a definition of pragmatics, saying it is **the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding**. By language understanding is meant more the mechanical lexicology and grammar. The basic benefit of this definition is that there is one to one correspondence between each systematic set of constraints on the use of language and a set of inference-procedures that will be applied to language understanding (ibid.: 1-20).

Kreidler also pays special attention to conventional implicatures and their role in comprehension, defining them as “a bridge constructed by the hearer (or reader) to relate one utterance to some previous utterance, and often the hearer or reader makes this connection unconsciously” (Kreidler 2002: 28).

Summing up the major attempts at defining the field, Levinson says that pragmatics should not be restricted to “grammatically encoded aspects of context” nor “built on the concept of appropriateness”. The author regards as “most promising” the definitions that “equate pragmatics with ‘meaning minus semantics’ or with a theory of language understanding that takes context into account in order to complement the contribution that semantics makes to meaning” (Levinson 1983: 21-32).

### 3.1 Pragmatic inferences: implicatures, presuppositions, speech acts. P. Grice and speech act theory

In his William James Lectures, Paul Grice (1975) made an attempt to develop the inferential model of communication into an adequate explanatory account of communication. He suggested that communication is governed by a cooperative principle (CP) and maxims of conversation. Grice's fundamental idea is that the communicator is trying to meet certain standards. From knowledge of these standards, observation of the communicator's behavior, and the context, it is possible to infer the communicator's specific intention. This general principle, which according to Grice all speakers are expected to follow, was called the CP. Furthermore, the standards for conducting cooperative communication were claimed by Grice to be of several different types. Grice called them standard maxims and grouped them under the categories quantity, quality, relation, and manner.<sup>3</sup> Naturally, in real life conversational exchanges may occur in which the cooperative principle may not be in operation (speakers may lie, be sarcastic, try to be different or clever). However, this general description of the normal expectations we have in conversations helps to explain a number of regular features in the way people say things. Furthermore, these maxims make it possible to explain how the incomplete and ambiguous representation of a thought in the utterance can nevertheless express a complete and unambiguous one. From the variety of thoughts, the hearer can eliminate any that are incompatible with the assumption that the speaker is obeying the CP and maxims. Hence, the maxims and the inferences they give rise to make it possible to convey unambiguous thoughts by ambiguous sentences/utterances. Grice's approach to verbal communication makes it possible to explain how utterances can convey implicit thoughts. The terms 'implicature' was introduced by him to explain the speaker's and the hearer's cooperative use of inference. Grice argued that the predictability of inference formation could be explained by the CP and maxims.

In the linguistic literature there are different definitions of implicature. According to Gadzar (1979: 38), "implicature is a proposition that is implied by the utterance of a sentence in a context even though that proposition is not part of nor an entailment of what was actually said". This would appear to include presuppositions. Presuppositions seem to lie at the borderline of the division between semantics and pragmatics. On the one hand, presuppositions are based on conventional meaning, on the other – on common knowledge.

From the above detailed overview of the relation between linguistics (semantics and pragmatics) and discourse, the research moves on to the discussion of some

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<sup>3</sup> **QUANTITY:** Make your contribution **as informative as is required** but **not more**, or **less**, than is required.

**QUALITY:** Do **not** say that which you believe to be **false** or for which you lack evidence.

**RELATION:** Be relevant.

**MANNER:** Be clear, brief, and orderly.

central concepts relevant for the examination of discourse and in particular media discourse, which are related to culture and social psychology, namely values and norms, attitudes and ideologies, identity and interests. Prominence is given to the research on the Bulgarian national stereotypes as they largely explain the media construction of Bulgaria's image and role in foreign policy.

## **V. Media discourse and the power of the print media**

The role of the print media in contemporary society has been subject to much public and academic debate. Elaborating upon media power and its influence on the entire political system, Habermas says that "in intermedia agenda setting, an informal hierarchy accords the national quality press the role of opinion leader. There is a spillover of political news and commentaries from prestigious newspapers and political magazines with nationwide circulation into the other media" (Habermas 2006: 419). Furthermore, as the Latin saying goes, the written word stays.

Media are vital to the existence of a modern democracy, since they not only keep people informed about the events of the world, but also help them form their opinion about these events. More importantly, they protect people from abuses of power in their role of a public watchdog, keeping an eye on the political elite and exposing any breaches of law and irregularities (Kuhn 2007). The press in particular is one of the most frequently exploited means of diffusing ideology, as it generates a significant part of public discourse and sets the agenda in society (Zambova 2000). Fowler (1991) attributes its influence to the scale of production and to the economic and political aspects of the newspaper industry (advertising as a major point). Conboy elaborates on this second factor, saying that "[t]he news media, owned as they are members of political and economic elites, unsurprisingly reproduce the views of these dominant classes" (Conboy 2007: 24). What is more, newspapers are believed to play a hegemonic role in society. Richardson describes hegemony as "the process in which a ruling class persuades all other classes to accept its rule and subordination" (Richardson 2007: 35). Conboy in turn describes hegemony as a "jointly produced consensus", into which consumers (of newspapers) are drawn (Conboy 2007: 115). According to McNair, the media are political actors who not only transmit political messages to the public, but also transform the message by news-making and interpretation in the form of different commentaries, statements, editorials, and interview questions (McNair 2007). Stressing that "the media operate as a means for expression and reproduction of the dominant class and bloc", Fairclough claims that this power is hidden because "it is implicit in the practices of the media", and its effects "work through the particular ways of handling causality and agency, particular ways of positioning the reader" (Fairclough 1995: 3). He believes that the journalist (the reporter) is as a figure of authority, someone who knows, and someone who has the right to tell. Hence the authoritativeness of the language works together with the authoritativeness of the image

(ibid.: 4). The author also suggests that most journalists are unaware of the media's manipulative role, as they tend to believe that practices of production, generally viewed as preserving the established status quo and maintaining the power relations, are professional ones which ensure their success (Fairclough 1989: 51-54).

Mass media can perform their function of the Fourth Estate, to quote Edmund Burke, in modern democracies only if they take into account concepts such as objectivity, impartiality, newsworthiness, transparency and, at the other end of the spectrum, bias and discrimination. For this reason, media discourse researchers have given due attention to the aforementioned notions. What is more, most contemporary democracies have adopted ethical codes of the journalistic profession, which highlight the reliability of the information in terms of accuracy and sources, collection and presentation, taking into consideration the possible risks of harassment, privacy, children, discrimination, crime and brutality, decency, and editorial independence.

According to Richardson, objectivity requires reference to "people other than journalists" and should not be confused with neutrality, as value judgment is always present during the stages of news selection and newsgathering, organization of the story and its presentation (Richardson 2007: 86-89). Kuhn, for his part, calls into question the notion of unbiased news, maintaining that there is no reliable account of the real that is independent of interpretation. Therefore, he claims impartiality and objectivity are notions that help media professionals legitimize their work and validate the status of their product for audiences, but in effect disguise a particular or partial version of reality (Kuhn 2007: chapter 6). Kuhn further states that "[i]n reporting and commenting, the news media are sometimes said to act as a window on the political world. The metaphor, however, is flawed in that audiences are represented with a highly selected and filtered version of 'reality'" (ibid.: 23).

## **VI. National psychology and political identity**

### **1. Identity**

The notion of identity is given prominence in this research as it can account for the discourse strategies the media use to persuade and manipulate the target readership. Identity encompasses the notion of WE and THEY, US and THEM, OURS and THEIRS, so 'othering' has become part of the common terminology in sociology. In philosophy, the term has an ancient history which can be traced back to Plato, who used it to represent the relationship between an observer (the Self) and the observed (the Other). As Riggins (1997) notes, social sciences use the "external other" and the "social other" "in a more restricted sense...to refer to all people the Self perceives as mildly or radically different". The researcher also makes a distinction between the singular and plural forms of the word. The Other, the author suggests, is used by scholars "to represent the similar treatment members of such

categories are likely to receive from outsiders”, and “tends to reproduce the stereotypical homogenization of other cultures and peoples they seek to overthrow.” Others is used as it “conveys the notion that the Self in its discourses of identity is continually negotiating several identities simultaneously” (Riggins 1997: 3-4).

## 2. In Mistrust We Trust (Ivan Krastev)

The **Bulgarian cultural stereotype** is a central issue, as culture is an important factor in foreign policy and diplomacy. Commonly shared values, widespread public attitudes, preferences and expectations are instrumental in creating an image in foreign relations, ever more so given our belonging to the European family.

Many contemporary Bulgarian and foreign researchers have made attempts to examine the major components of the dominant stereotypes. However, the description offered by Aleko Konstantinov in *Bai Ganyo Goes Visiting* (translated by the academic team from Wisconsin University (Friedman 2010)), encompasses some of the typical features of our national psychology:

The only thing that could embarrass our young egoist would be someone’s outwitting him. While for other nations the word “sly” is a synonym for “crafty” and “perfidious,” and if applied to a person would lower him in the opinion of society, in our country we bestow the epithet “sly” as if it were the most honored declaration. “Wow! He turned out to be a sly fellow. What a chip off the old block. He put one over on all of us. We couldn’t fool him. Well done. Bravo!”<sup>4</sup>

Blagoy Kolev (2008) summarizes the sustainable cultural attitudes that underlie the Bulgarian psychological make-up. Egalitarianism (belief in equality throughout mankind) is one such feature, which, in his opinion, goes back to patriarchal community and reflects the lack of aristocracy, privileged classes and social strata, and explains negative public attitudes to the well-off and big business. Having assumed the status of a philosophical doctrine, egalitarianism is resistant to any type of individualism and tends to reject any individual form of success. Social hierarchies are rejected and people tend to level off the well-off and the worse-off, the highly intelligent with those deficient in IQ, the hard-working and the lazy. Another feature, paternalism has long been a drag on the development of free market and the search for innovations, as it eliminates risk-taking and cripples prompt decision making. It contributes to establishing a national temperament of idleness, sluggishness, and constantly postponing action. Furthermore, self-sufficiency as opposed to the monetarization and consumption in the highly industrialized countries is also seen as a typically Bulgarian feature. The communist regime is found to have determined

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<sup>4</sup> Едно би смутило нашия млад егоист — да го надхитрува някой. Когато в другите народи думата „хитър“ е синоним с **лукав, вероломен** и прикачена на някое лице, би го понижала в мнението на обществото, у нас с епитета **хитър** се кичат като с най-почтена декорация: „Брей! Хитро момче излезе, да е живо на баща си, всинца ни измами! Не можахме да го излъжем! Ашколсун. Bravo!“ (с. 47)

Bulgaria's specific individualism, low self-esteem, propensity to material wealth as a symbol of social status rather than consumption, as Marin Paunov (2011) argues in his analysis of the national specificity of organizational culture. Furthermore, socialist-type regimens of centralized authoritarian rule and market intervention are considered to be more prone to corruption than neo-liberalism, which is seen as related to lower corruption levels.

Paunov also draws on Ivan Hadzhiyski's work and Aleko Konstantinov's Bai Ganyo to substantiate the view that hard work or hospitality (described as "myths which have not been confirmed in real life") are not the distinctive features of our national culture. What the author sees as such characteristics are affinity to material well-being, narrow-mindedness and "cemented moral norms, rules and hierarchies which govern team work". They are attributed to historical factors such as the Ottoman rule, which has affected the Bulgarians' basic human need of safety, resulting in alienation to statehood, collective action and organization in general (ibid.: 184). Complacency and the Slavic type of mysticism and fatalism are some other aspects of national psychology (ibid.: 185-186).

Ivaylo Hristov (2011) studies the various aspects of the Bulgarian nihilism such as the subservience to foreign authorities (xenomania), the typically Bulgarian tolerance and short historical memory, and the crisis in education and language developments. He argues that Bulgarian patriotism has been destroyed as a result of the ill-interpreted ideas of democracy and globalism (ibid.: 9-16). The fact that Bulgarians have failed to find their identity in the European Union is a conclusion based on the findings of a wide range of contemporary researchers such as Mihail Mirchev, Marko Semov, Petko Todorov, as well as Nikolay Haitov. Hristov claims that the disrupted link between "mentality and ownership" is what has determined the Bulgarian nihilism, saying that its roots are to be found in the country's historical development and more specifically in the disrupted link between mentality and ownership during socialism, as well as the attitude to the ethnic Turks and the orthodox church (ibid.: 21-28). Hence, in the era of globalization the typically Bulgarian curiosity and love for knowledge has degraded into xenomania, the mania for and attachment to foreign customs, institutions, manners, fashions, more specifically to the American values. Another flaw with regard to national culture is what the author describes as "democratic totalitarianism", that is the misinterpreted transition to democracy that has ultimately resulted in the destruction of state and statehood, the impoverishment of the Bulgarian society and rampant corruption (ibid.: 96-110).

Hristov also questions the advantages of Bulgaria's EU accession, by citing Petko Todorov's *Samarut na Sancho* (ibid.: 119-123). His final chapter summarizes the aspects of nihilism, drawing on various analyses of the Bulgarian identity, which find that "the Balkan peoples are well aware of their "economic, social and cultural backwardness, which is a source of low self-esteem and compensatory aspirations to catch up with more developed nations, which in turn creates the mechanisms of

xenomania". Tolerance and historically fear-driven submission is another aspect of nihilism (a feature that Botev and Karavelov have highlighted). In this respect, Bulgarian journalism is seen to have continued the socialist tradition of contracting, and though "journalists formally tend not to persecute or suppress the freedom of thought and speech", "ideological control was promptly replaced by economic control" and the regulatory bodies (SEM, Council for Electronic Media) "tend to force the media to serve corporate interests rather than regulate" (ibid.: 186).

Tanya Chavdarova (2004) studies some dimensions of our business culture.<sup>5</sup> In the first place, Bulgarian business culture is found to be diffuse/female (as opposed to the specific/male business culture). In other words, human relationships are considered a core value in professional interaction, criticism is interpreted in a personal manner, while professional and individual competence is often confused. When sanctions are imposed, consent and fair treatment are accentuated, therefore inappropriate behavior is more often redeemed. Effectiveness is viewed in the context of personal 'friendly' relationships. Furthermore, matters of trust and confidence are considered a priority, and there is always the suspiciousness and touchiness related to expectations of unfair and even outright illegal practices. The very concept of 'trust' in Bulgaria differs in its interpretation and semantics from western business environment, where it is assessed against the background of predominantly instrumental relationships strictly regulated by sets of rules and norms of etiquette. In Bulgaria trust is replaced by confidence in the reliable performance of functions. There is a unique combination of the high value attached to personal relationships and the widespread 'mistrust' and suspiciousness in institutions and authorities. The affective and emotional aspect of the Bulgarian business culture, which is different from Western culture, is generally seen as once negative, as it affects time-efficiency and team work, and positive, as it stimulates commitment and enthusiasm to the company. Particularism is what determines the overall disrespect for law and order (or the propensity to violate it) and the overall respect for privileges and benefits provided to groups and individuals. Thus, Chavdarova argues, respecting law would easily translate into respecting the 'person in power'. The person embodying the impersonal legal norm is what matters most. Corruption is

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<sup>5</sup> The empirical study of the cultural encounter between Bulgarian and Western entrepreneurs and managers, who cooperate in the Bulgarian economic environment, is aimed at identifying the major types of cultural tensions and conflicts in the interaction between Eastern and Western partners so that the degree of variety within the European social model upon EU enlargement may be outlined. Such research may provide arguments against Western concerns over 'cultural pollution' and Eastern fears over a loss of cultural identity. The central hypothesis was that, rather than a western hegemony (or westernization), sustainable forms of mutual penetration of the Western and Eastern types (ideally typical), socio-cultural attitudes may be expected. The accessing countries will contribute to the "European identity" with both assets and deficiencies. The methodology is based on in-depth interviews focusing on socially shared beliefs, evaluative beliefs (opinions) that 'drive' economic activity, on the one hand, and their political and institutional basis, on the other.

a specific participatory action, since it is a violation of established rules and results in privileged positions.

A number of researchers have analyzed the findings of the 2008 European Values Survey, revealing essential aspects of the Bulgarian cultural stereotype and identity. Examining in a diachronic aspect the Bulgarian values after the onset of the transition to democracy, Georgi Fotev (2009) stresses the deficit of social values, such as solidarity, justice, trust in the institutions, the rule of law, cooperation in joint action, good manners, and other values, attributing this deficit to its false content of coercive justice administration during socialism. Furthermore, he argues, the Bulgarians are too slow to adapt to the European values, especially with regard to voluntary action and civil participation in the care for the elderly people, the disabled and the marginalized social groups. The family in turn has traditionally been seen as a value in Bulgarian society and its core qualities are hard work, sense of responsibility, good manners and tolerance. Still, Bulgarians tend to explain the huge number of poor and needy people with social injustice. A positive trend is the higher importance attached to personal freedom compared to egalitarianism.

This problem has been investigated in detail by Pepka Boyadzhieva (Fotev 2009), who argues that the fourth wave of the EVS shows that Bulgarians tend to mistrust each other and the Bulgarian state authorities and institutions, but vest their trust in the European ones. Trust and confidence is the “irreplaceable and invisible axis of society” and its deficit undermines social values at large (*ibid.*: 59-64). Kolyo Kolev draws important conclusions about the Bulgarian national stereotype with regard to risk avoidance and uncertainty, saying that “social ties in Bulgaria have been paralyzed” because people tend to avoid risk and seek certainty (*ibid.*: 83-84). These findings “outline the profile of a negatively politicized society, in which solidarity seeks its grounds in the shared prospect of inequality and lack of justice”.

Commenting on the 2008 European Values Survey, Petya Kabakchieva (Fotev 2009) offers a comprehensive analysis of the Bulgarian national (or ethnic) identity as opposed to the political identity as citizens of Bulgaria. She draws conclusions that are much in line with all the aforementioned aspects of the Bulgarian cultural stereotypes. In Bulgaria there is a clear-cut distinction between identity and citizenship, while the sense of political and civil identity is lacking. Bulgaria boasts a strong feeling of national identity which is basically ethnic and does not include a feeling of belonging to the political union of the national state. As the author says, our country has disintegrated into ethnic Bulgarians and a state that is not respected by its citizens. There are widespread aspirations to be part of the European citizenry as a feeling of belonging to the EU, yet there is no European identity and European civil self-consciousness.

What unites the diverse sources quoted thus far is the feature of our culture and identity which is invariably seen as a core one, namely mistrust and suspicion (in state, statehood, authorities), nihilism and xenomania. Hence, the Bulgarian nation-



al culture and identity clashes with the widely accepted views of the UK values of good governance, tolerance, commitment and might in foreign policy, and with the long cherished norms of the rule of law and human rights protection, which form the country's identity of a benevolent power, committed to its leadership on all key issues in regional and global politics.

## **VII. The Bulgarian print media market**

Many Bulgarian researchers have critically examined the emergence and development of the print media market (Znepolski, 1997; Tsankova, 2010; Filipov, 2002) with its key actors, readership and newspapers (demand and supply). The structural development and expansion over the years since 1990 of newspapers exposes the dominant position that Bulgarian print media have come to occupy in the transition to democracy. As Znepolski (1997) has noted, this happened within the broader social, political and economic landscape in Europe at the time: the fall of the Berlin Wall is a product of the media, which "took on a central role in a political strategy"; in the Soviet Union the "liberalization of the system started in the press"; in Eastern Europe the gentle revolutions were carried out as media revolutions, in which revolutionary action is replaced by revolutionary representation. "In the newly established situation of constitutionally regulated democracy, of political rivalry and free elections... the press, and mostly the big daily papers, should be credited for the establishment and maintenance of the new social and political publicity" (Znepolski 1997: 8-13, translation mine). Having emerged as an antipode of the "old, state-owned press controlled and manipulated by the party during the communist rule", the new press was characterized with "the lack of censorship, the pluralism of interests, more dependent on market realities than on ideological bias". Its dynamic development in the early 1990s was largely determined by the audience's hunger for obtaining information about the political, economic and institutional reforms. What is more, the quality and level of public information determined the nature of participation in social life, that is, the very quality of democracy (ibid.: 4-7). The new political eloquence and rhetoric was reasserted in the newspapers, rather than on the parliamentary rostrum. It was on the pages of the newspapers that the various political and social discourses took shape and the political commentary and analysis emerged. It was there that the real political debate was held. Furthermore, the press turned out to be an equal participant in the democratic process along with the political parties, the public administration, parliament and the other economic agents (ibid.: 14-20).

Tsankova (2010) reconfirms this view, saying that the newspapers "provided the newly formed political parties, organizations and movements the opportunity to express their views, acquire public identity and actively participate in the processes of social transformation" as "media pluralism became the condition for and guarantee of political pluralism". Thus, to meet growing public demand in the first three

years of the transition, the Bulgarian market offered its readers over 1,000 print media products. More importantly, their success depended on their competitiveness, their ability to attract readers and advertisers. (ibid.: 40). Apart from its economic function, the readership also serves as an indicator of the quality of newspapers and magazines. The demand for print media is determined by the consumers' political views, cultural attitudes and tastes. Today readers prefer that media meet their needs for both information and entertainment. However, in Bulgaria, unlike in the developed democracies, newspaper reading and subscription cannot serve as a basis for identifying the audience in social, psychological, and even political terms (ibid.: 29).

Znepolski (1997) argues that the press rested on the principles of mistrust, ill intentions and even hostility towards state institutions and government. It took on the archetype of mistrust and cunning neglect, somewhat naturally assuming that those in power act against public interests, and are "alienated, incompetent and corrupt" (ibid.: 60). More importantly, public mistrust and suspiciousness is directed at all those in power, corruption is wrapped up in the mythic aureole of something that cannot be broken up. The average Bulgarian perceives political reality as some secrecy and conspiracy. "They" are always doing something behind our backs under disguise. The press makes assumptions, but does not deal in investigation. It tends to fill in political space with rumors and insinuations. The author claims that the "anonymous voice of private existence is realized in a few strategic stereotype reactions", whose first aspect is described as "catastrophic conscience" or some kind of massive masochism (ibid.: 61-65). Furthermore, Znepolski says the press cultivates an atmosphere of intolerance, brutality and aggressiveness on part of the plebes publicity. By analyzing the news coverage of petty crime, the researcher elaborates upon what he calls aggression through and against language. The freedom of speech became an essential part of freedom in principle or of an internal feeling of freedom. It is a reaction against the coercive silence or fear of making public statements during the communist rule. Therefore, the talk of the new press is personal, biased, indecent and having a liberalizing effect. Znepolski quotes Valeri Naydenov's statement that newspaper language should be interpreted as the strategy of influencing through talk. Naydenov concedes that the aggression against the Bulgarian language literary norms largely exposes the rebellion in the streets, which is much like some anarchy and overthrowing of authority in general. The aggression against the language in effect reflected the revolt against public power and social conventions. Znepolski distinguishes between several levels of aggression against the language (language norms): **grammar rules** (elliptical sentences, which is naturally explained with the economy of space and time), **the violation of the good tone**, characterized rather by gloating, malice and glee, teeming with barbaric and cynical phrases and archaic forms. This is the language of the wealthy boor and the spiteful pauper, springing out of the energized bodies and those agonizing with misery, quoting Alexander Kyosseff. The linguistic brutality takes the

form of what Georgi Lozanov refers to as macho-type of rhetorical strategy. Its third aspect is the **preferred themes** and their interpretation (ibid.: 71-82).

Other researchers have explored journalese and linguistic developments. Zambova, for instance, has analyzed the wide use of verbs rather than nominal phrases (Zambova 2000: 101-102). Still others argue that Bulgarian journalese generally rejects the linguistic standard norm, drawing a parallel with the readers' rejection of the established political power (Znepolski 1997, Zambova 2000, Getzov 2009). Furthermore, the widely employed colloquial vocabulary and the preference of words of Turkish and English origin and slang could also be interpreted as an attempt to dismiss Bulgarian statehood (Nitsolova 1994, Nikolova 1995).

In her overview of the developments in Bulgaria's print media market in the period between 2005 and 2009, Tsankova (2010) points out some positive trends such as its relatively stable structure, where thematically varied and high quality newspapers and journals are offered alongside the Bulgarian versions of a number of leading foreign periodicals. Another positive development is the enhanced interest on the part of foreign publishers toward the print media market following the country's accession to the EU. Certain negative trends which are typical of all print media markets worldwide are declining circulation and readership, as well as an increasing concentration and monopolization. The developments on the Bulgarian print media market may be attributed to global factors, such as the economic crisis and the competition on the part of the electronic media, as well as the tendency towards commercialization and entertainment (as Fairclough also notes), and typically domestic factors such as the Bulgarians' decreasing purchasing power and the deteriorating literacy and media culture among the readership, as well as the lack of a single government policy in the field. The author goes on to elaborate on the negative implications of the concentration of media ownership with regard to media pluralism and the attitudes and values of the readership in general, as owners can influence the editorial content and independence. In his analysis of the factors for crisis in the media sphere, Petko Todorov (2012) attaches priority to politicians' attitude to the media as the government's voice in support of the status quo, the underdeveloped civil society and the inadequate mechanisms for public control, as well as the economic stagnation and slumping investments. The press not only has an essential economic function but it also continues to serve as a powerful tool in the formation of public opinion (Tsankova 2010: 8-9). As the author points out, the careful examination of the print media market requires that its two essential aspects **readership and newspapers (typology)** are studied.

The studies on the language of the Bulgarian press have analyzed only the discourse of the popular press (Zambova 2000, Getzov 2009) because quality press was believed to be practically non-existent. Znepolski attributes that to the lack of big elite societies to finance them (Znepolski 1997: 34), whereas Getzov and Zambova think this is due to the aforementioned functions that the press in Bulgaria was awarded at the time, namely to nurture a society that is indifferent, apathetic and

easy to manipulate. Hence, the saturation with texts dealing with entertaining and superficial issues and characterized by aggressive language and vulgar vocabulary. Whatever the factors, the elite press in Bulgaria was still at an embryonic stage, which is a major consideration in choosing *The Sega* daily. What is more, *The Sega* as a national daily paper, which though not of the highest circulation (ranking 8<sup>th</sup>, see Tsankova, table 7: 53) and readership (ibid., table 8: 60), is the edition with the most read columnists (ibid.: 65). This daily has been selected as an object of analysis because together with *The Kapital* weekly it is seen as a specialized quality paper that “follows the events and tries to find their place within a broader context” (Znepolski 1997: 33). What is more, this daily boasts active journalists in the sphere of international relations. While *The Sega* provides coverage of international events, they are reconfigured to accord with the taste and orientation of Bulgarian society.

### **VIII. Corpus of articles from The Sega daily**

As Bulgaria's place in the EU became increasingly important after its accession, so its construction and renegotiation by the media also gained significance. There is a pressing need to scrutinize the media's role in taking a positive or negative stand. Therefore, discriminatory and exclusive practices are investigated. Highlighting the source of the change in Bulgaria as criminal, the authorities not only increased doubts about the government's willingness to fight crime but also reinforced its image as a child. It confirms the findings made earlier (Ishpekova 2012) that Bulgaria is conceptualized as the naughty newbie in the EU, while the EC is conceptualized as the strict father. The commentaries' irony runs counter to the official discourse.

The Bulgarian *Sega* daily is examined as it holds an important place in a new market that was created after the transition to democracy and free market economy. All commentaries were written by a single author, Svetoslav Terziev, who is considered one of the leading publicists in contemporary media discourse.

The corpus encompasses 12 commentaries published by *The Sega* in the wake of Bulgaria's accession to the European Union in the period 2007-2009, mostly addressing the country's problems as the poorest EU member state which has failed to stamp out rampant corruption and has accordingly been subject to a monitoring mechanism in the field of justice and home affairs. The articles were prompted by a wide range of specific events ranging from the imprisonment of the reputed drug dealer Dimitar Zhelyazkov (in an attempt to placate Brussels and change the imposed view that Bulgaria had adopted no measures in the fight against organized crime) to the EU's decision to terminate the accreditation of the two executive agencies for the EU fund management at the Finance and Regional Development Ministries, requiring that Bulgaria promptly informed the Commission of irregularities and frauds (no matter whether they have been confirmed or just suspected).

The articles also cover the European Commission's monitoring reports which established the government's failure to produce any convictions in high level corruption cases, while regular graft is still punished with lenient sentences.

The corpus will be examined within Bulgaria's image and role in the EU enlargement debate. It comes as no surprise that the biggest number of articles in the Nablyudatel (Observer) section of *The Sega* daily is devoted to Bulgaria's place in the EU, more particularly to the suspended aid while socialist-led three-party coalition was in office and a number of events that stigmatized Bulgaria as the bad performer among the member states.

A quick overview of the headlines shows that a hidden mechanism of manipulation is the assumption of guilt, as the inferences suggest that Bulgaria needs to clean up its image, Bulgaria needs condescension, Bulgaria has been found guilty, more than once. For the links to the articles see table 1 in the appendix.

***S1, BULGARIA SENDS PITIFUL REPORT TO BRUSSELS, with only one sentence against Mityo "Eyes" in the anti-crime fight (БЪЛГАРИЯ ПРАТИ В БРЮКСЕЛ ЖАЛЪК ОТЧЕТ, Единственото конкретно име в битката срещу престъпността е присъдата срещу Митьо Очите)***

*S1* elaborates on the fact that the government sent to Brussels a poor, incomplete report on its achievements in fighting organized crime and corruption, listing a few among the dozen "significant results" and "success stories". The headline shows an interesting personification of report as a pitiful, miserable creature. Bulgaria is also personified, which is an instantiation of THE STATE AS A PERSON metaphor. The headline expresses not only the topic (Bulgaria's failure to send an exhaustive report to Brussels), but also the self-categorization of the text genre (commentary). On the local meaning level, the choice of the word "pitiful" is revealing of the author's attitude to the event.

The first part gives a detailed account of the few cases in which Bulgaria has managed to report on the fight against organized crime and corruption, concluding in the last two paragraphs that once again Bulgaria failed to report the expected by Brussels detention of the bosses of big crime rings or convictions passed and charges brought against former and current ministers. Therefore, the report is called "modest" and "inaccurate", which reinforce the adjective used in the headline "pitiful". In terms of argumentation, it justifies the negative attributions of the Bulgarian government. Here we can apply the topos of advantage or usefulness, which can be paraphrased by means of the following conditional: if an action under a specific relevant point of view will be useful, then one should perform it (Wodak 2001: 74). In this article, the government should do its best to more efficiently fight organized crime and corruption and reflect it in the reports submitted to Brussels. Instead, the government has laid the emphasis on administrative and legislative measures: the appointment of Meglena Plugchieva as deputy prime minister in charge of EU funds; moving AFCOS, which is OLAF's partnering Anti-Fraud Co-ordination

Structure, under the control of the Council of Ministers; tabling the draft bill on the conflict of interests; the closure of the duty-free shops and petrol stations; the draft amendments to the Penal Procedure Code and to the Special Surveillance Means Act. The structural changes in the Interior Ministry have been pointed out. However, the resignation of former Interior Minister Rumen Petkov is omitted as a positive fact. With regard to the reforms in the judiciary, this country boasts of the creation of the Inspectorate at the Supreme Judicial Council, and the contest held for the appointment of judges, prosecutors, and investigators. The author Terziev uses the ‘number’ game to accuse the government of inaction. Moreover, we can apply the topos of responsibility, according to which “because a state or a group of persons is responsible for the emergence of specific problems, it or they should act in order to find solutions to these problems” (Wodak 2001: 75).

***S2, BRUSSELS ALSO EXPOSES CABINET LIE ABOUT FROZEN MONEY, all payments to road infrastructure agency – under both EU pre-accession funds and operational programs – have been frozen, spokesperson of the regional policy commissioner confirms***

***(И БРЮКСЕЛ УЛИЧИ КАБИНЕТА В ЛЪЖА ЗА СПРЕНИТЕ ПАРИ, Всякакви плащания към пътния фонд – и по предприсъединителни, и по оперативни програми, са спрени, потвърди говорителката на комисаря по регионалната политика)***

**S2** directly accuses the government of stubbornly denying the suspension of EU funds under the Transport Operational Program. The article provides a wealth of official statements suggesting that sanctions have been imposed and are unlikely to be lifted “*before all suspicions for corruption in the travel fund are cleared*”. The use of the iterative ‘also’ in the headline, combined with ‘exposes cabinet lie’, trigger the presupposition that such accusations have been made more than once. The headline not only introduces the topic of the article, but also reveals the cabinet’s personification as a liar, which is a role condemned by society as a whole. We can apply here the topos of definition or topos of name interpretation, which states that “if an action, a thing or a person (group of persons) is named/designed as X, the action, thing or person (group of persons) carries or should carry the qualities/traits/attributed contained in the (literal) meaning of X” (Wodak 2001: 75). Brussels threatens to impose sanctions, which reminds us of the conceptualization of the EC as the strict father who resorts to sanctions, penalties which are painful (Ishpekova 2012: 82-85).

The article quotes the words of Eva Kaluzhiska, spokesperson of Regional Policy EU Commissioner Danuta Hubner, who says that “*All payments related to the Road Fund have been frozen*”. Moreover, “*the damage which the Road Fund inflicts by undermining the EC’s trust in Bulgaria, may amount to 1.3 billion euros*”. This is in line with the topos of danger or topos of threat, according to which “if a political action or decision bears specific dangerous or threatening consequences,

one should not perform it” (Wodak 2001: 75). Furthermore, the newspaper’s reliable government source said that “*the most important proof of honesty to Brussels is if it sees that misuse is uncovered and people are punished*”, which instantiates the topos of responsibility: “because a state or a group of persons is responsible for the emergence of specific problems, it or they should act in order to find solutions to these problems” (Wodak 2001: 75).

***S3 ONE MITYO IS NOT ENOUGH TO CLEAN UP OUR REPUTATION IN EU’S EYES, although Brussels repeats as a mantra criticism against Bulgaria, our native crime is tougher than Eurocracy***

***(ЕДИН МИТЪО НЕ СТИГА ДА НИ УМИЕ ОЧИТЕ В ЕС, Брюксел повтаря като мантра критики срещу България, но родната престъпност е по-жילהа от еврокрацията)***

S3 mocks the Bulgarian government’s pretense of fighting corruption and organized crime. The very headline suggests that Bulgaria’s reputation needs cleaning up, which is in line with earlier findings in *The Financial Times*’ coverage of corruption and crime-related events in Bulgaria (Ishpekova 2012) that the naughty child (Bulgaria) has made a mess and needs to clean it up (Ishpekova 2012: 107). Brussels is also personified as a person repeating over and over again its criticism against Bulgaria’s inactivity in fighting corruption, which reminds us of the conceptualization of the EC as the strict father, criticizing its child, using harsh words (Ishpekova 2012: 79-82). As the subheading suggests, the attribution of the quality of viability to Bulgaria’s native crime ironically suggests that it will continue to live or exist (topos of definition, Wodak 2001:75).

Again in line with the topos of definition (name-interpretation or locus a nominis interpretation), the criminal Mityo “Eyes” is ironically called a “valiant Bulgarian” in the first paragraph, who self-sacrificed himself for Bulgaria’s good name in the EU. However, the article goes on to say, again ironically, that the EC did not appreciate his self-sacrifice and wrote that Bulgaria is, as it has always been “*a bandit and corrupt state, lacking a judiciary*.” This statement not only reiterates Bulgaria’s stereotyped image in the EU, but also implies the topos of reality, according to which “because reality is as it is, a specific action/decision should be performed/made” (Wodak 2001: 76). That is, Bulgarian officials should take action to clean up Bulgaria’s image.

The derision is also evident in the paragraph which claims that the state was in effect punished ‘for daring at long last’ to expose to the world two corrupted mid-level officials, with which it wanted to change ‘the imposed view’ that Bulgaria had adopted no measures. The adverb ‘at long last’ triggers the presupposition that Bulgaria is slow in taking a stance of its own and that it is too timid in doing so.

“The state was punished for daring to expose to the world two corrupted mid-level officials, with which it wanted to change the imposed view that Bulgaria had adopted no measures. The European Commission immediately stopped the

EU funds, which was a mistake. If we consider the statements made in Bulgaria, this measure was interpreted as a sign that we must no longer mistakenly “throw such officials to the lions”. It will not be surprising if our government worked out a timetable for bribery. A major rule in this timetable will be that bribes must not be given or taken just before the European Commission comes up with its report. If criminals are to be exposed, these cases are to be well planned in advance, so that they may be noticed. It is not so difficult to introduce some order, since it is well known that the annual reports are submitted in June-July, and the interim -- in January-February. (This is irony, not a piece of advice, just in case some top official has misinterpreted the message)”<sup>6</sup>.

Furthermore, the author warns that teachers and healthcare officials may be used by the government for exposure of corruption and says that the closure of the duty-free shops and gas stations are yet another example of the non-existent state, which is always excusing itself with the court having tied its hands.

“This is not to say that it is not worth fighting the battle with small fish, but this battle can serve as indulgence for the state’s inaction with regard to the bigger fish”<sup>7</sup>.

The commentary abounds in statements pointing to the state’s inaction, idleness or non-existence, which is obvious in the subheading stating that domestic crime is more viable than the European bureaucracy. This is again in line with earlier findings (see Ishpekova 2012) where Bulgaria is conceptualized as the naughty child which is not taking any action to improve its image (Ishpekova 2012: 100).

***S4 EU STARTS SPEAKING BULGARIAN, BUT THERE IS NO ONE TO LISTEN, Brussels starts dialogue with the [Bulgarian] people, seeing that the authorities would not listen to reason***

***(ЕС ПРОГОВОРИ НА БЪЛГАРСКИ, НО КОЙ ДА СЛУША, Брюксел премина към диалог с народа, като видя, че властта не разбира от дума)***

In *S4* the derision of the Bulgarian government and its treatment as a child becomes evident in the first paragraph, which says that Brussels, personified as a per-

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<sup>6</sup> Държавата фактически бе наказана, след като най-сетне се осмели да покаже на света двама корумпирани чиновници на средно равнище и така да преобърне натрапилото се мнение, че бездейства по проблема. ЕК веднага спря европейските ѝ фондове, което бе грешка. Ако се съди по изказванията у нас, сигналът се възприема като знак, че повече не трябва да се лъжем да хвърляме разни чиновници на лъвовете. Нищо чудно, поучена от досегашното наблюдение на Брюксел, властта у нас да изработи график за подкупите. Неговото основно правило е подкупите да не се искат и дават точно преди огласяването на поредния доклад на ЕК. Ако ще се правят разкрития, те да са добре планирани, за да бъдат забелязани. Не е трудно да се въведе ред, защото се знае, че годишните доклади се представят през юни-юли, а междинните – през януари-февруари. (Това е ирония, а не съвет за действие, ако някой висш чиновник не е разбрал).

<sup>7</sup> Не че битката с дребните риби не си заслужава, но тя не може да е indulgenция за пълното бездействие на държавата по въпроса с едрите риби



son, started speaking Bulgarian only after it was reassured that the government did not understand any other language and that it did not understand Bulgarian either. It mocks at regional development and public works minister Gagauzov's statement with regard to the European Commission's decision to deprive of accreditation the executive agencies at two ministries. Although the EC said that *"only the text in Bulgarian is authentic"*, Gagauzov still claims that *"the most difficult thing would be to translate in Bulgarian what the exact requirements are"*. The author concludes the first paragraph with the words: *"Since a Bulgarian minister does not understand Bulgarian and needs translation, unambiguous gestures are likely to follow – for instance a hard European kick"*. The metaphor used here (*a hard European kick*) is a rough way of saying that Bulgaria will once again be punished by the strict father, who uses physical force to prompt the child to action (Ishpekova 2012: 76-78).

Gagauzov and Oresharski were sent a neat table containing the measures that are to be taken to restore the funding through the two guilty agencies. Apart from the recommendation that the entire EU fund management team should undergo special training to learn how to spot irregularities and perform their official duties to report the alleged cases of fraud, the European Commission also said that it would conduct independent audit at the two ministries' agencies. For a second time, the government is told to make a list of all physical and legal persons who were found guilty of being involved in EU fund embezzlement or investigated on similar grounds. Furthermore, Bulgaria is told to promptly inform the Commission of irregularities and frauds, no matter whether they have been confirmed or just suspected. Admittedly, the European Commission refuses to wait for the Bulgarian court to pronounce any judgment, since it has been reassured that the courts did not work. The Bulgarian authorities downplay the threat, but Brussels directly links the pre-accession funds with the structural and cohesion funds, being aware that whoever steals from the one fund will also steal from the others. Terziev further quotes that in its report the European Commission has required that the so far granted funds be taken back. Hence Terziev warns that Brussels will empty the pockets of the suffering Bulgarian taxpayers, while taking some change from the officials that are glutted with stolen money. He criticizes the Bulgarian authorities for pretending not to know what to do and asking Brussels for an opinion. Even though many countries sent experts to advise the Bulgarian leaders on how to enforce laws, as if the former were leaders of indigenous tribes, still they turned a deaf ear to all advice. Therefore, the Commission (conceptualized as the strict father) now directly calls on Bulgarian authorities (conceptualized as the naughty child) to turn words into action and make arrests, press charges and issue convictions, or else, punish examining magistrates, judges, or prosecutors. The concluding paragraph summarizes the overall message of the article:

"The most important conclusion from Brussels' tirade is that, when criticizing Bulgaria, the European Commission starts to distinguish between the government and the people. "The Bulgarian citizens deserve to have access to all benefits of the

EU membership”, this is what is written in the report on the monitoring mechanism for Justice and Home Affairs. Stating that the official statistics in Bulgaria is unreliable, for the first time Brussels invokes public opinion polls: Most Bulgarians do not recognize any advance since the accession to the EU”. Ignoring the government that make up success stories, the European Commission tells the people that it wants to contact them directly. The people’s voice can hardly be heard and Brussels feels sorry for the fact that “despite the actions to notify the community, neither complaints nor signals were submitted by informatory servants”. Brussels, however, is aware that the people are scared, explaining why: “There is no protection for the informatory servants and that is why it is no surprise that no cases were brought to court as a result of signals by informatory servants. Given the lack of protection, there is a grounded fear of repression”. Fear of whom? Of crime, covered up by government. Nevertheless, the signal has been given: “Bulgaria can rely on the European Commission’s full and active support”, this is what is written in the conclusion of the main report. Which Bulgaria? It seems that this time we are not speaking of the government”.<sup>8</sup>

The EC makes a “tirade”, criticizing the Bulgarian government. In other words, ignoring the government that make up success stories, the European Commission tells the people that it wants to contact them directly and offer its full support. This reminds us of the topos of culture, based on the following argumentation scheme: “because the culture of a specific group of people is as it is, specific problems arise in specific situations” (Wodak 2001: 76). In other words, the EC takes for granted that the culture of the Bulgarian government is characterized by turning a deaf ear to advice and not taking any measures to improve its governance style, therefore, problems arise and the EC would like to contact the Bulgarian people directly.

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<sup>8</sup> *Най-важният извод от брюкселската тирада е, че ЕК започва да прави разлика между власт и народ, когато критикува България. «Българските граждани заслужават да имат достъп до всички преимущества на членството в ЕС», пише в доклада по механизма за проверка на правосъдието и вътрешния ред. Като заявява, че официалната статистика е ненадеждна, Брюксел за първи път се позовава на изследвания на общественото мнение в България: «повечето българи не усеят каквото и да е подобрение от началото на членството в ЕС». През главата на властите, които си измислят успехи, ЕК дава сигнал на народа, че иска да общува пряко с него. Народният глас обаче е слабо доловим и Брюксел съжлява, че «въпреки дейностите за информиране на обществеността не бяха подадени жалби, нито сигнали от информатори». Той обаче си дава сметка, че народът се страхува, и дори обяснява защо: «Няма защита на информаторите и затова не е изненада, че няма и дела по сигнали на информатори. При липса на защита има основателен страх от репресии». Страх от кого? От престъпността, закриляна от властите. Въпреки това сигналят е даден. «България може да разчита на пълната и активна подкрепа на Европейската комисия», пише в заключението на основния доклад. Коя България? Този път май не става дума за правителството.*

***S5 WHY DID WE FAIL TO FRIGHTEN MICHAEL LEIGH? Finding no arguments against the criticism, Bulgaria launches desperate attacks against EC***  
***(ЗАЩО НЕ УПЛАШИХМЕ МАЙКЪЛ ЛИЙ? Като не намира аргументи срещу критиките, България се впуска в отчаяни нападки срещу ЕК)***

Written on 10 December 2008 in the wake of EU Enlargement Commissioner Michael Leigh's visit to Bulgaria, *S5* gives a detailed account of his merit with regard to the country's EU membership, recalling that he had proposed the removal of the Schengen barriers for Bulgaria and that Bulgaria joined the EU by a political compromise. Having established irregularities in the EU fund management, the commissioner managed to persuade the EC and the EU member states that Bulgaria's accession must not be delayed. Furthermore, believing that the country would completely change in three years, he was one of the designers of the Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification, which in turn served as one of the guarantees against the objections raised by the skeptics that Bulgaria could possibly change in the near future and that it did not deserve to join the EU in 2007. By revoking the accreditation of the two Paying Agencies and suspending the payment of 220 million euros in aid, Michael Leigh punished Bulgaria and thus showed his concern that he must have made the wrong judgment. In line with Wodak's "topos of definition" (Wodak 2001: 75) Bulgaria is depicted as a country which "*has no functioning judiciary, capable of fighting organized crime, there is no rule of law and the country fails to meet even the most basic criteria for EU membership, known as the Copenhagen criteria*". Moreover, Brussels reproaches Bulgaria for having been strategically late in its EU integration, which reminds us of the conceptualization of the EC as the strict father, who criticizes the naughty child using harsh words and making an example of them (Ishpekova 2012: 79-82).

As the subheading suggests, the article exposes yet another negative side of the Bulgarian government: its action boils down to launching attacks against the European Commission when it fails to find suitable excuses, which is best summarized in:

"The country of organized crime and corruption, as each EC report describes it, has recently made a series of tactical mistakes, which only aggravate the situation. What is most scandalous is that Bulgaria has started to bite and scratch the EU officials, who strictly perform their duties in compliance with the EU rules and regulations, which have been worked out according to the will of the member states. The attacks against the EC Enlargement Director General Michael Leigh provoked indignation because they are showed not only of the country's lack of principles and bad manners, but also its flagrant ingratitude".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Държавата на организираната престъпност и корупцията, както я описва всеки евродоклад, прави напоследък и серия тактически грешки, които само влошават положението ѝ. Най-скандално е, че се хвърля да хате и драци еврочиновниците, които стриктно си вършат работата съгласно европейските нормативи, изработени по*

Terziev goes on to recall that prior to its EU accession Bulgaria did not have, and does not have yet, an ally close enough to be ready to risk its integrity. Washington was Bulgaria's most loyal advocate in the EU and Bulgaria's teaming up with Romania secured the support of France. Strangely, the author admits, Bulgaria has made efforts to disappoint France as well by Stanishev's establishment of the advisory board of EU experts, headed by former French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, one of those who the then President Nicolas Sarkozy hates most. Thus, Bulgaria lost the support of the French left wing, since it will be hard to explain how a left government gets advice by a conservative politician.

Instead of taking effective anti-crime measures, the government complained that the enlargement director general had missed to note its achievements in the past five months, though he had explained in simple words that he had expected that at least one person would be punished for power abuse. The ridiculous muscle flexing in Sofia apparently did not frighten Michael Leigh. He promised to send a new technical mission to Sofia in January to check the Paying Agency at the Finance Ministry, which had been so lavishly commended.

The article reveals a discursive strategy that seems to be effective in suggesting the suspicions and uncertainty surrounding Bulgaria's behavior, which is much like that of a little child: the use of a quasi question.

***S6 IRELAND PUTS SPOKE IN OUR WHEEL IN THE EU, rejection of Lisbon Treaty gets on EU nerves when Commission is drafting critical report against Bulgaria***

***(ИРЛАНДИЯ НИ ПОДЛЯ ВОДА Е ЕС, Отхвърлянето на Лисабонския договор изнервя Еврокомисията точно когато пише критичния доклад за България)***

Written in the context of Ireland's rejection of the Lisbon Treaty, **S6** yet again reveals Bulgaria's childish behavior, as explicitly stated in the very first paragraph. When the grown-ups in a big family are beset by worries, it is the children that suffer most. In such moments the children should not attract unnecessary attention. This is how the Bulgarian statesmen are behaving after the referendum in Ireland. While foreign politicians are voicing their concerns over the big European family's fate, the Bulgarian politicians are keeping a low profile as they were taught in an experienced school of politics. This is the proper behavior since they feel guilty and any word they utter may be used against them. Terziev goes on to reassert Bulgaria's immature conduct, saying that it could have attempted to gain the self-confidence of a big state by imposing a veto on the Lisbon Treaty for the spelling of

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*волята на държавите-членки. Нападките срещу главния директор на Главна дирекция „Разширяване“ Майкъл Лий са повече от възмутителни, защото са проява не само на безпринципност и лошо възпитание, но и на черна неблагодарност.*

euro. Mocking Bulgaria's half-hearted attempt to block the agreement before the Irish, the journalist says:

"However, the unification of Europe is a much bigger project than the specific national interests. For Bulgaria it is important that euro is pronounced as 'evro', not as 'euro', but it is much more important that the bandits are called 'bandits', not 'businessmen'. Bringing Bulgaria in line with the European project means that Bulgaria should start resembling the other normal states, whose example it chose to follow at the beginning of the transitional period. The current system of EU governance, which was established by normal states to meet their own needs, proved to be inefficient toward states which were accepted by compromise, such as Bulgaria".<sup>10</sup>

The author details the implications of Ireland's rejection of the Treaty for Bulgaria, which is directly suggested by the subtitle: *rejection of Lisbon Treaty gets on EU nerves when Commission is drafting critical report against Bulgaria*. He warns that this referendum creates the nightmare of the possible appearance of a two-track accession as the states willing to become closer based on their common standards are ever more tempted to form a core and are reluctant to wait for the laggards to catch up. This fact confirms the conceptualization of the older EU states as the "better performers" for whom the EC is the nurturing parent (Ishpekova 2012: 113-120). The forming of a fast-track core has no prospects, as it failed after the French and the Dutch rejected the European constitution, the author claims. However, he continues, it was then regarded improper to speak of dividing Europe into two categories, while isolating France, which is the founder of the EU and one of its major engines, was considered impossible. Terziev explains the risks that Bulgaria is exposed to amid the crisis surrounding the reform treaty: having arrived at an uneasy compromise to revive the reform treaty, the big states are unlikely to abandon this idea but may increase the pressure on Ireland, instead of going back to their initial position, having to admit they wasted the last six years in futile attempts to reform the EU. The report on Bulgaria, which is to be published on 16 July, will be written under such circumstances of low tolerance. It is illogical to expect that, at the summit on 19 June, the EU leaders will show a firm position toward Ireland, and, just a month later, the European Commission will demonstrate a condescending attitude to Bulgaria. Here, the EC is again conceptualized as the strict father, who resorts to punishment to check the naughty child's self-discipline and self-reliance (Ishpekova 2012: 85). Moreover, the increasing criticism would be quite unpleasant for the government of Sergey Stanishev, who fears that Brussels may overthrow him.

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<sup>10</sup> Обединяването на Европа обаче е много по-голям проект от специфичните национални интереси. За България е важно да не казва „euro“ вместо „евро“, но още по-важно е да не казва „бизнесмени“ вместо „бандити“. Вписването ѝ в европейския проект означава да заприлича на другите „нормални държави“, които си избра за образец още от началото на прехода. Сегащата система на управление на ЕС, която е изработена от нормални държави за собствените им нужди, се оказва неефикасна към държави, приети с компромис, като България.

Bulgaria may be pushed out to the periphery or sent back to where it was before it joined the EU, Terziev warns. The latter is in line with Wodak's topos of danger or threat (Wodak 2001: 75).

***S7 THE COURT – OUR SACRED COW – PROVED TO BE BARREN IN EU, the cabinet falls hostage to corrupt magistrates, and so does Brussels***

***(СЪДЪТ, НАШАТА СВЕЩЕНА КРАВА, ИЗЛЕЗЕ ЯЛОВА В ЕС, Кабинетът е заложник на корумпирани магистрати, Брюксел – също)***

As the headline of *S7* suggests, the Bulgarian court is compared to a sacred cow, an idiom which means an idea, custom or institution that is unreasonably immune from criticism or opposition. The fact that the court is depicted as infertile shows that it is incapable of producing results in fighting corruption and organized crime. Again we can analyze the headline in terms of the topos of definition, where the quality "barren" is attributed to the court, metaphorically compared to a sacred cow.

The article addresses the same issue as *S4*, saying that Brussels seems to have realized its major weakness in the criticism against Bulgaria as it twisted the arms of the legislative and executive power, demanding that they bring the laws in line with the EU rules, but at the same time tolerated the judiciary. The EU seems to have belatedly grasped that this country comprises three powers, criticizing Bulgaria six times on seven pages over the court's failure to take action to change the current state of affairs. The previous reports laid the emphasis on guaranteeing the judiciary's independence, for which the constitution was amended four times. Quoting the report, which yet again calls on Bulgaria to show results in the fight against organized crime and corruption, to prevent conflicts of interests and break up the alleged ties between the political class, business and organized crime, Terziev claims that thus Brussels seems to goad the lolling judiciary, and even singles out whom to goad, placing politicians, businessmen and bandits in the same melting pot. The second part of the commentary gives arguments to suggest that the European Commission is to blame for the impotence of the Bulgarian courts, which have been loafing about as a sacred cow, and institution that is unreasonably immune from criticism, which has been protracting cases piling for years on end. Terziev says that Brussels found itself in the comic situation of having to repeat that the Bulgarian sacred cow was barren, even though Brussels contributed to its feeling of being untouchable. What is more, the EC conclusion that, despite the "widespread publicity given to the war on corruption", just one high-level official has been convicted in the first five months of 2008, rather sounds as if it is mocking itself and its terrifying monitoring mechanism. The author levels criticism at the European Commission's contradictory instructions to the courts in Bulgaria, concluding that Brussels cannot possibly manage the Bulgarian sacred cow, since it has no idea of how to get it into the right path, which will lead to arrests, convictions with dissuasive effect, and seizure of assets. Terziev further exposes the European Commission's confusion in its admission that all measures required political will

and determination, something that was missing in its previous reports. This commentary seems to provide a different conceptualization of the EC: although it is the strict father, this time he is confused and not very consistent in its re/actions against the naughty child.

***S8 VOTE BUYING TURNS OUT TO BE BRUSSELS PHENOMENON, after unfreezing ISPA, European Commissioner Danuta Hubner may invite the defendant Veselin Georgiev in her team***

***(КУПУВАНЕТО НА ГЛАСОВЕ СЕ ОКАЗА БРЮКСЕЛСКО ЯВЛЕНИЕ, След като размрази ИСПА, комисарката Данута Хюбнер може да покани в екипа си подсъдимия Веселин Георгиев)***

In *S8*, drawing on Dogan's statement that vote buying is a European phenomenon, Terziev conveys the message that this phenomenon is typical of Brussels, considering that by resuming the payment of 115 million euros in aid, which is a windfall amid the financial crisis, Barroso's team is expecting support in the elections. Moreover, the EC "*winked at*" the Bulgarian government that it expects "*a reciprocal gesture in return*". The use of the phrasal verb "to wink at", meaning to pretend not to notice something bad or illegal, in a way that suggests you approve of it, is indicative of Terziev's irony to Brussels' attitude to the Bulgarian authorities. The author criticizes Barroso and Huebner for trying to excuse the government before both the Bulgarian and European voters by claiming that the government is no longer so fond of stealing and that the EU's pressure has yielded results. Otherwise, Terziev argues, they would have to admit that they have been defeated by the poorest and most corrupt EU member state (judging by the official assessments). Meanwhile, the National Audit Office admitted that the NRIA has made no progress. None of the 13 recommendations to strengthen the control by the national auditors has been implemented. However, Terziev concludes, if there is anything that Bulgaria could gain from its EU membership, this is not the money flowing into the country, but the common rules to be observed. No matter how much money flows into the country, it will not clean up Bulgaria's tarnished image of a mafia country, since the money will ultimately fall into the same thievish hands. Brussels failed to tie these hands and it must admit its failure, instead of mocking at the sense of justice of the citizens, who believe in the supremacy of law. This reminds of Bulgaria's conceptualization as a person involved in illegal activities (Ishpekova 2012: 91-95). Moreover, it is in line with Wodak's "topos of abuse", which can be paraphrased as the following conclusion rule: "if a right or an offer for help is abused, the right should be changed, or the help should be withdrawn, or measures against the abuse should be taken" (Wodak 2001:77).

***S9 BRUSSELS WRITES REPORT WITH SCISSORS, EC turns criticism into wishes for the summer, as categorical assessment of [Bulgarian] authorities' performance is due then.***

***(БРЮКСЕЛ НАПИСА ДОКЛАДА СИ С НОЖИЦА, ЕК превърна критиките в пожелания за лятото, когато ще бъде дадена категорична оценка за работата на управляващите у нас)***

*S9* notes the Bulgarian government's contentment with the fact that Brussels has trimmed its report, cutting 10 pages of criticism, leaving only the praises. The very first paragraph calls into question the government's possible correcting itself overnight, ironically stating that Eurocrats must have got sunstroke in winter. Even though Bulgaria's achievements are legal amendments and structural changes in government and the judiciary, conclusions are drawn about the lack of any specific results in passing convictions against corrupt highly placed officials and organized crime bosses. Further down, the author concedes that the government has been armed with a pair of editorial scissors in the struggle to show its good performance to Europe and to the voters in the upcoming election. Obviously, the author suggests, the EC does not want to discourage the power holders from putting effort into achieving good results and has therefore put a carrot on the stick with which it has beaten the government for a year now. This again is in line with the conceptualization of the EC as the strict father, who uses physical force and moral pressure to prompt the naughty child (Bulgaria) to action, yet he is concerned about the latter's performance (Ishpekova 2012: 67-85). This is Brussels' sign of goodwill to restore the communication, which recently reached the point where both sides were cross with each other. A clear distinction is made between US and THEM, warning Brussels that where money is involved, compromises cannot be made, because the government is directly responsible for spending it. If the Eurocrats fail to detect violations, there is a danger that the people's pockets may suffer.

***S10 THIEVISH OR INCOMPETENT – IT DOESN'T MATTER, as always, EU funds remain inaccessible for Bulgaria because Brussels does not believe government can manage them***

***(КРАДЛИВИ ИЛИ НЕКАДЪРНИ – ВСЕ ТАЯ, Еврофондовете остават все така недостъпни за България, защото Брюксел не вярва, че тя може да ги управлява)***

Written in August 2009, *S10* focuses on the European Commission's latest report on home affairs and judiciary, which was unusually soft in tone and thus raised hopes that Bulgaria had cleaned up its tarnished image of a country with thievish administration. As the headline suggests, in line with the "topos of definition" (Wodak 2001: 75), the Bulgarian government is called "thievish" and "incompetent". Once again we are reminded of the conceptualization of the EC as the strict father, the authority influencing and instructing the naughty child (Bulgaria) in the EU family, the latter not to be trusted any longer (Ishpekova 2012). A month later the



funds were again frozen. Terziev criticizes Brussels' inconsistent behavior, ending the commentary by saying that Brussels used the term "systematic problem" to claim that the people employed in public administration are incompetent. But who understands the language spoken in Brussels?

***SII EC ON BULGARIA: WE KEEP TEACHING BULGARIA, BUT IT WOULD NOT LISTEN TO REASON (IT WOULD NOT GRASP ANYTHING), Brussels forced to take steering wheel of EU fund utilization in Bulgaria. Against this backdrop, Romania is an excellent performer in fund absorption***

***(ЕК ЗА БЪЛГАРИЯ: УЧИМ Я, НО ТРУДНО УВИРА, Брюксел е принуден да вземе на ръчно управление харченето на европейски средства у нас. На нашия фон Румъния направо е отличник по усвояване)***

Written in October 2009, *SII* addresses the EU latest heartrending report, though it skips the numbers and translates the information into comprehensible language. The report, which covers two big periods of Romania's and Bulgaria's growth in the EU – the preparatory stage when pre-accession funds were absorbed and the current one at which the two countries are supposed to have utilized the funds granted to them as full-fledged members, is said to describe Bulgaria as the bad student who is painstakingly trying to correct its behavior, while Romania as the diligent student absorbing all funds in EU aid. This reminds us of the conceptualization of Bulgaria as the naughty child, which fails to fulfil the tasks it is supposedly assigned (Ishpekova 2012: 90-91). Terziev quotes the EU as saying that it had established a close cooperation with the authorities in the two countries, so as to guarantee that the lessons from the transition from the pre-accession to the structural funds have been learned. He continues to compare the two countries to students in the preparatory class who are being assessed in their progress with the PHARE, SAPARD and ISPA subjects, offering detailed statistics about the absorption of funds under the three programs, which is believed to show that Romania is performing better. Romania was given a positive assessment for compliance under all operational programs, while Bulgaria had to pass a make-up exam twice for its poor performance. This is accounted for by the fact that Bulgaria lacks any legal body tasked with managing the structural funds because it failed to provide evidence that it has established such a control system to prevent embezzlement and resolve offenses. The major problem lies in the notorious Single Information System for Management, which would serve as a camera to monitor from a distance how the aid granted by Brussels is managed. This system should be established by the even more notorious State Agency for Information Services, which became known for the big salaries and bonuses given to its employees and close party parasites. Terziev points out that the Eurocrats in Brussels could not excuse themselves to European Parliament for failing to force Bulgaria to perform such a simple technical task, promising that before it makes the first interim payments, it will conduct on-site checks. Instead of managing EU funds from a distance, the commission will

resort to the classical direct control and will thus treat Bulgaria as a country that has not reached the information era yet. What is more, Brussels ignored the attempts to restore its trust: the central coordination of the EU fund management, the passing of the Conflict of Interests Bill, the introduction of corrective measures for the risky projects, and the promise to submit by the end of 2009 a revised assessment of the compliance with the operational programs. Terziev ends his commentary by saying that the Bulgaria-Romania tandem is not advancing at the same speed, although it is jointly monitored since it has had insufficient capacity to meet EU standards. Romania shows enough common sense and diligence and may emerge as an excellent student compared to Bulgaria. This is in line with the “topos of justice” based on the principle of ‘equal rights for all’ meaning that “if persons/actions/situations are equal in specific respects, they should be treated/dealt with in the same way” (Wodak 2001: 75). Apparently, this is not the case with Bulgaria and Romania.

***S12 WHO WAS THE ROMPUY THAT TOOK OVER EU COUNCIL? Federalism in Europe advances in Leninist style: one step ahead, two back***

***(КОЙ РОМПОЙ НИ СТАНА НАЧАЛНИК? Федерализмът в Европа напредва по ленински: крачка напред – две назад)***

The device of using a quasi-question is employed in *S12*. Comparing the advance of European federalism to Lenin’s style of making a step forward, then taking two steps back, the article questions the election of Belgium’s prime minister as the pan European leader. The first paragraph lists his assets, namely his success in bringing stability to his country, which faced the risk of being split apart, carrying out the constitutional reform in a way not to irritate the Flemish (the Dutch-speaking community) or the Walloons (the French-speaking community), and is described as a Flemish guy with a human face. Terziev goes on to explain why this election is of particular importance to Bulgaria: the Dutch are most skeptical about Bulgaria’s EU membership and have been insistent on imposing sanctions on Bulgaria, on triggering the safeguard clause, and making its accession to the Schengen zone contingent on the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism on justice and home affairs. Still, we have no reason to dislike Rompuy, who is a federalist, a staunch proponent of the European integration, and Bulgaria has an interest in strengthening the federalism in Europe as a way to get out of its own quagmire in which it has sunk in the last 20 years. The federalists have been weakened in the last decade, which saw the EU’s biggest enlargement. The fight over the Nice Treaty at the beginning of the century, the ambitious idea of creating a European Constitution which collapsed, and the painful process of foisting a similar treaty, called the Lisbon Treaty, as a compromise, was the utmost limit the aspirations at supranational European integration could reach at this stage. The growing Euro skepticism after the not so successful EU enlargement, to which Bulgaria and Romania largely contributed, has forced federalists to keep a low profile. Even the heads of state of the countries that played the major role in integrating Europe readily ceded part of their powers

to someone so that he could represent the entire EU. Terziev comments on the ceremonial functions of the newly elected European Council president, explaining why this appointment is far from the idea of pan European democracy and European federation: Van Rompuy cannot answer the phone on behalf of the EU when the presidents of the United States, Russia, or China call him, but will rather serve as an answering machine because he would not be able to respond to any enquiry whatsoever. What is more, the coordination procedures will remain sluggish and lengthy as they are now. His election in the dark without even applying for the post shows how big his powers will be. The article ends in the pessimistic conclusion:

“The disillusioned would say that the mountain labored and brought forth a mouse. Ever since the EU is being established, this process is wobbly and compromisingly and the big success is achieved by making minor achievements. What is the use of giving full throttle, if there is a high risk that the engine will overheat and come to a halt? The very idea that some Mr Europe could emerge is revolutionary enough and needs time to ripen before it evolves into an idea of a pan European leader. Also, we must wait for the birth of such a leader, since, at first glance, it seems as if he has not been born yet”.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the conclusion reinforces the overall skepticism, once again questioning the EU's efforts to finding a pan European leader, brought across by the metaphor of the laboring mountain which gives birth to a mouse. The conceptual metaphor of motion as opposed to coming to a halt is used to suggest the futility of such attempts.

## IX. Conclusions

1. In terms of the overall conceptualization, the study confirms Bulgaria's conceptualization as the naughty child in the European family. Most metaphorical entailments (Ishpekova, 2012) are also detected in the analysis of the corpus of *the Sega* daily. The EC once again assumes the role of the strict father, constantly criticizing and punishing the naughty child for its behavior.

2. In terms of discourse structures and strategies:

All the **topics** are related to Bulgaria's place in the EU and its failure to fight organized crime and corruption and meet basic EU membership criteria.

The analysis shows that the Bulgarian daily displays a preference for the use of **presupposition triggers**, mainly in the form of definite noun phrases, iterative,

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<sup>11</sup> *Напънала се планината и родила мишка, биха казали по-разочарованите. Но не бива да се съжбява за скромния резултат. Откакто се изгражда ЕС, процесът протича все така колебливо и компромисно, като големите успехи се получават от натрупване на малки. Каква е ползата да се форсира европейският мотор, ако се увеличава рискът да спре от прегряване? Самата идея да се появи някой г-н Европа е достатъчно революционна и трябва да зрее дълго, преди да се трансформира в идея за г-н Европейски лидер. Заедно с това трябва да се изчака да се роди такъв лидер, защото при първото оглеждане май се окаже, че още го няма.*

factive verbs and adverbials. Even though they are used in a variety of situations and for different purposes, they are employed mostly to make indirect accusations, that is to attribute responsibility and blame.

Contrary to expectations and previous studies, *The Sega* was found to employ recurrently **nominalizations**, mostly for two purposes: to make implicit accusations and emphasize on negative facts (as is the case with presuppositions) and to give credit to a definite actor, making his/her actions appear as facts from reality by obscuring the details related to time, agents, and other aspects of the specific event. It is not surprising that the newspaper uses nominalizations, as it cannot afford to make statements it cannot possibly prove, especially direct accusations that expose them to the danger of being sued for libel. Furthermore, nominals take away much of the informativeness of the text, which is often a prerequisite for manipulation. It also creates the illusion of objectivity and gives statements greater validity. *The Sega* uses the nominalizing transformation primarily to ascribe blame (and rarely merit).

**Agentless passives** were also employed for the same purposes.

All these discursive strategies were combined with **loaded vocabulary**, which confirms the findings of most of the Bulgarian researchers of the press. The Bulgaria articles exploit primarily negative vocabulary and colloquialisms.

In terms of **argumentation** most of the “topoi” proposed by R. Wodak (2001) are found in the analyzed corpus:

- The topos of definition predominates: Bulgaria is defined as a country where corruption and organized crime are rife and as a country incapable of dealing with these problems.

- The topos of danger is also present since a lot of political actions or decisions the Bulgarian government takes bear threatening consequences.

- The same applies to the topos of humanitarianism: a lot of political actions and decisions Bulgaria takes do not conform with human rights or humanitarian convictions and values, therefore they should not be performed.

- The topos of responsibility can also be found in some of the articles: Bulgaria and its political leaders are responsible for the emergence of specific problems related to Bulgaria’s EU membership and they should act to find solutions to these problems.

- The latter topos is related to the topos of burdening: since Bulgaria is burdened by specific problems, it should act in order to diminish these burdens.

- In accordance with the topos of finances, since Bulgaria’s mistakes cost too much money (especially freezing EU funding), the government should act to diminish the costs.

- The topos of reality is also detected in the articles: because reality is as it is (Bulgaria is a country of rampant corruption and organized crime), actions should be taken to fight these two phenomena.

- The topos of numbers: the numbers prove the topos of finances; therefore actions should be taken to remedy it.

- The topos of culture can also be detected: the culture of the Bulgarian government is characterized by inactivity, therefore specific problems arise related to Bulgaria's EU membership.

- In one article (S5) the topos of abuse was found: since an offer for help was abused, measures against the abuse should be taken.

3. In terms of national identity construction:

What emerges from the analysis is that Bulgaria is depicted as a country in which the following characteristics predominate:

- low self-esteem and nihilism
- subservience to foreign authorities (xenomania)
- "democratic totalitarianism", that is the misinterpreted transition to democracy that has ultimately resulted in the destruction of state and statehood, the impoverishment of the Bulgarian society and rampant corruption

- Particularism, i.e. determining the overall disrespect for law and order (or the propensity to violate it) and the overall respect for privileges and benefits provided to groups and individuals

- the deficit of social values, such as solidarity, justice, trust in the institutions, the rule of law, cooperation in joint action, good manners, and other values.

## Appendix

Table headlines/links

art	date	Headline & subheading	links
S1	12 June 2008	<b>BULGARIA SENDS PITIFUL REPORT TO BRUSSELS, with only one sentence against Mityo “Eyes” in the anti-crime fight</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?issueid=2998&amp;sectionid=16&amp;id=0000101">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?issueid=2998&amp;sectionid=16&amp;id=0000101</a>
S2	29 Jul 2008	<b>BRUSSELS ALSO EXPOSES CABINET LIE ABOUT FROZEN MONEY; all payments to road infrastructure agency – under both EU pre-accession funds and operational programs - have been frozen, spokesperson of the regional policy commissioner confirms</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=376410">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=376410</a>
S3	5 Feb 2008	<b>ONE MITYO IS NOT ENOUGH TO CLEAN UP OUR REPUTATION IN EU’S EYES, although Brussels repeats as a mantra criticism against Bulgaria, our native crime is tougher than Eurocracy</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=355973">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=355973</a>
S4	25 Jul 2008	<b>EU STARTS SPEAKING BULGARIAN, BUT THERE IS NO ONE TO LISTEN, Brussels starts dialogue with the [Bulgarian] people, seeing that the authorities would not listen to reason</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=375894">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=375894</a>
S5	10 Dec 2008	<b>WHY DID WE FAIL TO FRIGHTEN MICHAEL LEE? Finding no arguments against the criticism, Bulgaria launches desperate attacks against EC</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=394903">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=394903</a>
S6	17 Jun 2008	<b>IRELAND PUTS SPOKE IN OUR WHEEL IN THE EU, rejection of Lisbon Treaty gets on EU nerves when Commission is drafting critical report against Bulgaria</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=371295">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=371295</a>
S7	12 Aug 2008	<b>THE COURT – OUR SACRED COW - PROVED TO BE BARREN IN EU, the cabinet falls hostage to corrupt magistrates, and so does Brussels</b>	<a href="http://old.segabg.com/article.php?id=378062">http://old.segabg.com/article.php?id=378062</a>
S8	14 May 2009	<b>VOTE BUYING TURNS OUT TO BE BRUSSELS PHENOMENON, after unfreezing ISPA, European Commissioner Danuta Hubner may invite the defendant Veselin Georgiev in her team</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=414358">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=414358</a>
S9	13 Feb 2009	<b>BRUSSELS WRITES REPORT WITH SCISSORS, EC turns criticism into daydreaming amidst summer, as categorical assessment of [Bulgarian] authorities’ performance is due.</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=402877">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=402877</a>
S10	25 Aug 2009	<b>THIEVISH OR INCOMPETENT – IT DOESN’T MATTER, as always, EU funds remain inaccessible for Bulgaria because Brussels does not believe government can manage them</b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=429520">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=429520</a>

S11	21 Oct 2009	<b><i>EC ON BULGARIA: WE KEEP TEACHING BULGARIA, BUT IT WOULD NOT LISTEN TO REASON (IT WOULD NOT GRASP ANYTHING), Brussels forced to take steering wheel of EU fund utilization in Bulgaria. Against this backdrop, Romania is an excellent performer in fund absorption</i></b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=437502">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=437502</a>
S12	21 Nov 2009	<b><i>WHO WAS THE ROMPUY THAT TOOK OVER EU COUNCIL? Federalism in Europe advances in Leninist style: one step ahead, two back</i></b>	<a href="http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=442204">http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=442204</a>

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