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Threats, Parasites and Others: The Visual Framing of Roma Migrants in the British Press

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in the British Online Press

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the visual framing of Roma migrants in the British online press in the two months prior to January 1st 2014, when Romanian and Bulgarian citizens gaining the same immigration rights to the UK as other EU citizens. By identifying recurring visual content in photojournalistic representations and analysing their connotative meanings using semiotic analysis, the frames of meaning in which Roma migrants were place were identified. It was found that migrants were framed ultimately as threats, parasites and Others, as has been similarly observed in previous literature on migrant representation. Visual frames were created on a very subtle level, built upon the inclusion of semiotic signs that had specific meanings and implications in relation to British cultural codes. It was also found that the sample images visually reinforced prevailing negative political and media discourses towards EU immigration.

INTRODUCTION

In January 2014 Romanian and Bulgarian citizens gained the same rights to live and work in the United Kingdom as other European Union member states. This allowed them access to the provisions of the British welfare state, including healthcare and social security (Euromove).

In the months leading up to this change, immigration became a key subject for debate in the political arena and received much attention in the media. Discourse surrounding the January change, and the topic of immigration as a whole, was thoroughly negative. In October 2013, *The Daily Express* newspaper launched a campaign to oppose the latest surge of European immigration (Little & Brown, 2013). This was fuelled by expectations of a huge

influx of migrants, and fears that the UK would not be able to cope with the added pressure this would place on the economy and public services, and potential cultural tensions.

In November 2013, former home secretary Jack Straw claimed that the Labour Party had made a 'spectacular mistake' in lifting immigration restrictions on Eastern European migrants in 2004 (*Press Association*, 2013). These actions led to a significantly larger than predicted income of migrants from Poland and Hungary. Prime Minister David Cameron similarly labeled Labour's decision a 'monumental mistake', and announced plans to ban migrants from claiming benefits for three months after they arrive (Adams, 2013). This measure was taken in light of concerns that migrants may come to the UK to exploit British public services and claim benefits, and hopes that such measures would 'make the UK a less attractive place for EU migrants who want to come here and try to live off the state' (David Cameron, quoted in Beattie, 2013). The Home Office also proposed, without success, plans to cap EU immigration to 75,000 people per year (*BBC News*, 2013b).

Implications from the incumbent party that migrants would be coming to the UK solely to take advantage of the benefits system, and open moves to oppose their arrival in the new year, problematized the 2014 changes and created a tense and hostile atmosphere surrounding immigration. Business secretary Vince Cable and Archbishop Desmond Tutu both claimed that Conservative fear-mongering rhetoric on immigration was reminiscent of Enoch Powell's infamous – and widely regarded as racist – 'Rivers of Blood' speech (Chorley, 2013; Wintour, 2013b).

Interestingly, a significant amount of press coverage surrounding the topic of immigration towards the end of 2013 focused specifically on Roma migrants from Eastern Europe that were already in the UK. Reporting cast the Roma in a deeply negative light, emphasising their perceived problematic behaviour, and conflict with local British populations. The focus on the Roma at this time is interesting given a symbolic link that can be seen to exist between the often conflated Roma and Romanians (and, to a lesser extent, Bulgarians). The demonization of Roma migrants shortly before the predicted arrival of many Romanians and Bulgarians can thus be seen to have interesting implications for attitudes created about the new EU migrants expected in 2014. Indeed, as will be discussed, there is much literature suggesting that the representation of migrants in the media will affect how they are perceived and received in society.

Existing literature on the representation of migrants focuses largely on representation through written or spoken language, in news articles and political rhetoric, but other

literature stresses the primacy of the image in the modern world in shaping people's perceptions. As such, this research seeks to examine how migrants are visually constructed in the press, as visual representation may more strongly influence understanding than representation through text. Similarly, it will consider how, if at all, visual images of migrants informed the negative discursive representation of immigrants at the end of 2013, and trends noted in other literature surrounding migrant representation.

Framing is a largely unexplored method for the analysis of the representation of social groups; visual framing in particular is relatively unexplored area of communications studies. Nonetheless, framing, in its apprehension of how certain, simplified meanings are ascribed to the subject of a communication by drawing attention to some aspects of it over others, provides an excellent way to study the representation of social groups in the media. With this in mind, this essay will look at how Roma migrants are visually framed and consider how frames of meaning can be discerned from the content of the images.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Role of Representation

Representations of the world are intimately involved in the formation of our understanding about the world and how we interact within it. Lippmann (1922/1998) notes that we cannot have first-hand experience with all manner of people or all global events, thus we rely on what is reported to us by others. He argues: 'we are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception' (90).

In today's world, media discourses are the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies (van Dijk, 2000: 36). The media provide us with a vicarious experience of phenomena we cannot directly experience, and are thus crucial in shaping our perceptions of the world (Barry, 2005: 46–7; Lester & Ross, 2003: 3; Smith & Price, 2005: 127). Paradoxically, the only real contact we have with others is often symbolic, experienced through stories in media (Hartley, 1992: 207).

In essence, to represent is to describe, depict or stand symbolically for something; it is a process by which members of a culture use language – visual or linguistic – to produce meaning (Hall, 1997: 16–17). Crucially, as Cottle (2000: 10) explains, 'representations do not so much "distort" reality as productively provide the means by which "reality" is actively

constructed and/or known'. Through representation, groups of people can be constructed in particular ways, for particular reasons and with particular effects. One way in which this is done is through stereotyping, which reduces people of a certain group to a few essential characteristics that are construed as fixed and natural (Hall, 1997: 257). Stereotyping serves the function of dividing society into the normal and the abnormal, what "belongs" and does not belong, and is thus part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order (Hall, 1997: 258). Said's (1978) work on Orientalism, for example, highlights the ideological function of representation and stereotyping, describing the discursive process by which the West established and maintained its hegemonic position over the Orient by representing it as inferior, backward and other. The constructed stereotype of the Orient, far from an accurate representation, construed difference as inferiority, and strongly affected power relations in the real world.

In a similar vein, representations of migration and migrants can have real world effects on migrants. Indeed, Dyer (2002: 1) contends that 'how social groups are treated in cultural representations is part and parcel of how they are treated in life', with 'poverty, harassment, self-hate and discrimination... shored up and instituted in representation'. Wood and King (2001: 2) suggest that a host-country's media constructions of migrants will affect the way they are received, and their eventual experience of inclusion or exclusion. Similarly, Hargreaves (2001: 23) argues that the extent to which the media portray immigrants as a part of the national community can significantly affect attitudes towards them among majority populations.

The Role of Framing

One way in which to examine the representation of social groups is through the concept of framing. In communications studies, framing is based on the assumption that how an issue or object is characterised in the media can exert influence on how it is understood by audiences (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007: 11).

Lakoff (2004: xv) describes frames as 'mental structures that shape the way we see the world'. They prescribe simple ways to interpret complex phenomena by highlighting certain characteristics or bits of information about the subject of communication whilst obscuring others, making them more noticeable, meaningful, and memorable to an audience (Entman, 1993: 53–4; Kuypers, 2006: 7–8). Indeed, Entman (1993: 52) explains:

> To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.*

Lakoff (2004: 3–4) identifies one example of the framing of a political issue through language in the phrase 'tax relief'. When the word 'relief' is added to 'tax', taxation metaphorically becomes an affliction, creating a frame in which those who take tax away are heroes, and those that stand in their way are villains. Salience is ascribed to the negative and problematic nature of taxation, and this creates a frame in which tax is something that needs to be reduced. Gamson (1989: 157) explains that phenomena in the world 'take on their meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence', with certain facets of their nature emphasized and others obscured. Members of certain social groups can thus be placed within specific frames of meaning that guide an audience's interpretation and understanding of them through media representations that attach salience to certain characteristics of theirs over others.

Framing can occur in a multitude of ways, including, but not limited to: what stories about a subject are given attention, linguistic choices, the use of metaphors, the choice of exemplars, the evocation of stereotypes, and the use of symbols and visual images (Entman, 1993: 52; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Kuypers, 2006: 11; Shah et al., 2002: 367). According to Ross (2003: 31–2), frames work through audience recognition of the cultural meanings of certain words, images, narratives and juxtapositions, connecting a text to personal and social histories, and to pre-existing stereotypes and understandings of the world. She adds that framing is especially powerful in relation to people, places, or issues about which an audience has little or no information, shaping entirely our interpretation of the foreign and the other. This makes framing a particularly effective tool in shaping people's perception of unfamiliar migrants.

Existing Literature on the Representation of Migrants

Previous studies on the representation of migrants and ethnic minorities in the media almost universally document trends of negative representation, and the same tropes are identified time and time again. Most representations construe immigrants as in some way problematic and threatening to the national community; Wood and King (2001), for example, argue that media discourses have been influential in constructing migrants as others, criminals and undesirables.

Looking at the coverage of ethnic affairs in the British and Dutch press, van Dijk (1991: 21) similarly observes: 'minorities or immigrants are seen as a problem or a threat, and are portrayed preferably in association with crime, violence, conflict, unacceptable cultural differences, or other forms of deviance'. He argues that a focus on these racialized and ethicized problems fails to recognise the underlying social, political and economic causes of these problems. Van Dijk (2000: 38) also observes that immigration is commonly tropicalized as a threat and ethnic relations represented as a problem, again typically though stories that associate immigrants with crime, drugs and violence. Other topics occur much less frequently, such as the every day experiences of migrants, migrants leaving the country, migrant workers making positive contributions to the economy, or migrants suffering from discrimination and racism. This is important to note, as Linn (2003: 24) argues that stereotypes are perpetuated through the selection of what examples or cases are used to illustrate stories or represent certain groups.

Research on the representation of Eastern European migrants in the UK and Western Europe specifically finds parallels with the aforementioned trends. Several scholars discuss the media frenzy surrounding the arrival of Czech and Slovak Roma asylum-seekers in the UK in the late 1990s, all noting that coverage was almost universally xenophobic and intimidating. Tabloid papers engaged in sensationalist, inflammatory and fear-mongering reporting that demonized these Roma as criminals, beggars and parasites of the benefits system (Winstanley-Torode, 1998; Wood & King, 2001: 8). Guy (2003) notes how politicians and the press dubbed these Roma 'bogus asylum-seekers', claiming migration was motivated by the generous UK benefits system. Connecting to this, featuring prominently was the iconic and essential sing image of the gypsy beggar. The fact that many Roma were subject to racist attacks, social exclusion, lack of legal protection, and mass unemployment in their home countries was ignored, and no attempt was made to present refugee's own accounts. Erjavec (2001) similarly describes a history of prejudicial coverage of the Roma in Eastern Europe by non-Romani media. Here media coverage tends to reinforce existing negative stereotypes of the Roma, painting them as criminals or as otherwise threatening to national majorities.

Light and Young (2009) note that even before Romania and Bulgaria officially acceded to the EU in 2007, the tabloid press predicted a huge wave of migrants from these countries to the UK, constructing this as a threat and an invasion. Romanians in particular received negative representation as media discourses essentialized their perceived negative characteristics, portraying them as 'criminal, deviant, "not the same as 'us'", and as a potential source of moral and medical contamination' (292). Other coverage focused on Romania's significant

Roma population, notorious for crime and begging. It was implied that this population, despised within Romania, would turn en masse to the UK, and become the UK's problem instead of Romania's.

Other studies have considered a process of racialization in media representation of migrants. Fox et al. (2012) argue that Hungarian and Romanian migration to the UK after these countries gained accession to the EU in 2004 and 2007 respectively has been racialized in the tabloid press. Racialization entails the use of 'race' to interpret, order, and structure social relations. Racism here isn't based upon somatic biological difference, but rather different cultural traits that act as a basis for exclusion (681). Fox et al. argue that criminal behaviour was constructed as something innate to the character of migrants, and thus a racialized trait. It is also argued that migrants were placed within a Roma frame, linking them to a stereotypical construction of the Roma as criminals, beggars, diseased, culturally backward and morally deficient. Unfamiliar Eastern European migrants were thus connected to extant prejudices against the Roma people. It is often the case that Romanians in particular are falsely conflated with the Roma in tabloids (Cahn, 2004: 483, 490; Fox et al., 2012: 688; Woodcock, 2007: 497–8), perhaps because of the similar-sounding nomenclature, or because of Romania's significant Roma minority (Woodcock, 2007: 505–6).

Rzepnikowska (2013) also observed racialization in the representation of Polish migrants in the British press following the 2008 economic crisis, where they were depicted as criminal, barbaric, and culturally backward. Media coverage also spread panic about the growing number of Polish migrants in the UK and possible negative impact on the welfare and education systems, framing Polish migration as a flood. Here, as with discussions of the Roma asylum seekers in the UK in the 1990s, and with media and press discourses building up to January 2014, migrants are represented as a financial threat to the UK and its social services.

Other studies have focused specifically on how migrants are framed by the media, or what metaphors are used to represent them. Batziou (2011), focusing on photojournalistic representations of migrants in Greece and Spain, notes that migrants were typically framed as a threat and/or other. Cisneros (2008) similarly observes that metaphors of immigrants often portray them as threats to society (biologically, physically or socially), whilst metaphors of immigration problematize immigration through comparisons to other physical or social ills, such as pollution. Concerned with how visual images construct metaphoric representation of immigrants, Cisneros identifies a specific dominant metaphor of 'immigrant as pollutant' in US news media discourse. This metaphor was created by the use

of imagery of immigrants that strongly resembled imagery from media coverage of a prominent pollution crisis. Other recurrent metaphors have been identified in the US press, including immigrants as invaders (Chavez, 2001), and as animals (Santa Ana, 1999). Santa Ana (2002) notes that when the nation is conceptualised as a physical body, immigrants are construed metaphorically as infectious diseases or physical burdens. When the nation is seen metaphorically as a house, immigrants are criminals, invaders or floodwater.

It is through metaphors and frames that racism, xenophobia, prejudice and marginalization operate in a subtle and covert – yet powerful – form. Indeed, audiences are mostly unaware of the presence of frames, failing to realise that they are exposed to a *filtered* reality through the media (Kuypers, 2006: 8).

The Importance of Images

Most of the aforementioned research has focused on how migrants have been represented through text. However, the visual representation of migrants makes for an interesting and important area of study, due firstly to the way in which the brain processes images. Barry (2005: 47) argues that the slow process of evolution combined with the fast growth of technology has meant that our brains have not evolved to process visual experience gained by the media in a special way. Instead, visual media is read by the brain in the same way as first-hand visual experiences (Williams, 2005: 195). It is also the case that images are processed in a different way to words because they appeal to the emotional and impressionable right hemisphere of the brain, rather than the critical left hemisphere, and can thus bypass logical reasoning (Barry, 2005: 45; Williams, 2005: 195). Given that 'visual experience is by far the most dominant learning mode' (Barry, 2005: 46), this information has massive implications about the power of media images to shape people's perceptions about the communicated subjects and wider world. What's more, other research reveals that pictures have long-lasting staying power within the deepest regions of our brain; they remain in the memory longer than words, and are recalled more quickly and easily (Lester & Ross, 2003: 3; Wardle, 2007: 280).

Many scholars have also argued that there is a cardinal connection between visual images and knowledge about the world, thus the visual representation of migrants can be seen as critical to how they are understood, and by extension, treated. Fyfe and Law (1988: 2) argue that 'depiction, picturing and seeing are ubiquitous features of the process by which most human beings come to know the world as it really *is* for them'. Rose (2012: 4) similarly notes that images have come to saturate Western societies and cultures to such an extent that

Westerners now interact with the world predominantly through how they *see* it. Indeed, Jenks (1995: 1–3) argues that the modern world is a seen phenomenon, with vision and knowledge inextricably linked so that what is seen is conflated with what is known.

Scholars such as Cavell (1971) and Walton (1984) claim that the photographic process allows the production of images to be free from human subjectivity, and in this way ensures objectivity. Unlike a written text, then, which can be acknowledged as the mental creation of a human agent, subject to its creator's biases and perspectives, photographic images give the illusion of conveying reality (Batziou, 2011: 17). Indeed, Lippmann (1922/1998: 92) notes: '[Photographs] seem utterly real. They come, we imagine directly to us, without human meddling, and they are the most effortless food for the mind conceivable'.

However, the objectivity of the photograph is not as it seems. Scholars such as Mirzoeff (1998) have observed a disjuncture between seeing and knowing in postmodernity as people increasingly interact with visual experiences that are constructed and manipulated. Indeed, Lester (1988) describes how photojournalistic images can be misleading either through stage direction by the photographer, or through darkroom manipulation. He notes also that computer technology can be used to manipulate photographs in ways beyond detection. Barthes (1977: 19) similarly argues that, despite its appearance of a neutral reflection of reality, 'the press photograph is an object that has been worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms which are so many factors of connotation'. He observes that compositional factors such as lighting, pose, and props, as well as how images may form part of a sequence, may add an extra dimension of meaning to an image. Batziou (2011: 20) similarly observes that 'the process of selecting and filtering photographs contributes to the creation of ideologically charged products'. In the era of digital photography, it is easier to covertly manipulate photographic images that ever before.

It is, however, precisely the perception of photographs as an honest depiction of reality that gives them the power to shape people's perceptions, and to be effective in communicating ideological messages undetected (Messaris & Abraham, 2001). Hall (1973: 241) notes: 'news photographs have a specific way of passing themselves off as aspects of 'nature'. They repress their ideological dimensions by offering themselves as literally visual-transcriptions of the "real world"'. Indeed, Wardle (2007: 265) argues: 'photographs both capture and create reality and it is the role news images play in reinforcing the myth of objectivity that underscores the importance of examining visuals in journalism'. It may be accepted that

photographs can distort, but there is always an underlying assumption that something exists that is like what is pictured (Sontag, 1977: 5).

Testament to the importance of visual images, much work has been done on the visual representations of gender (Bordo, 1993; Mulvey, 2009), race (Hall, 1997; Pieterse, 1992), and people of the developing world (Cohen, 2001; Dogra, 2012; Wilson, 2011), to name but a few examples. Such literature discusses the ideological functions of images, and how they construct and maintain identity, social relationships and hierarchies. Less work has been done on the visual representation of migrants and migration, but this is, however, a growing field. Gilligan and Marley (2010), for example, consider visual representation of migrants in Europe. They note similar representational trends with aforementioned textual representations, with migrants construed as threats, victims or within a metaphor of flooding. Kochan (2009), on the other hand, has discussed how visual representations of internal migration in China that are more sympathetic towards migrants have played a part in reshaping perceptions of migration and the experiences of migrants.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Existing research on the representation of migrants on the whole focuses on representation through text. The aforementioned literature on the way the brain processes images and the cardinal role of media images in providing knowledge in today's world, I argue, determine visual representation a more deserving area of study. Hence I wish to investigate the visual representation of migrants, looking specifically at photojournalism in light of the perceived objectivity photographs provide.

The existing literature on media framing also focuses predominantly on linguistic framing, but the framing process of drawing attention to certain characteristics of a subject over others is very much something that can occur on a visual level. Indeed, any study that considers how migrants or other minorities are metaphorically constructed or associated with certain traits or issues through images are effectively concerned with visual framing. Frames, I argue, are an essential medium of representation as they provide simple ways to interpret complex and unknown phenomena, such as migrants.

I have chosen to look at how migrants were framed in the British press in the two months leading up to January 2014, when Romanians and Bulgarians gained full EU immigration rights to the UK. It is interesting to look at media representation of migrants at this time as

we can infer from existing literature that these representations may affect how those arriving in January are perceived and treated by the British public. Previous research on the representation of migrants, and specifically Eastern European migrants in the UK press, has revealed trends of negative frames, and it will be interesting to consider whether or not these trends are repeated vis-à-vis the next group of migrants expected in the UK. It will also be interesting to consider how, if at all, these trends are reproduced visually. Similarly, how, if at all, the negative attitudes towards the January 2014 changes expressed by politicians and the press can be observed in visual representations of migrants will be worth considering.

My own preliminary research into this study revealed that press coverage surrounding the topics of migrants and migration during this time included a focus on Eastern European Roma migrants that were already in the UK. Coverage centred on their perceived problematic behaviour, and supposed rising tensions between the Roma and local British populations. Indeed, Politician David Blunkett was accused of inciting Romaphobia (Bowers, 2013) in his public prediction that the anti-social behaviour of the Slovak Roma in Sheffield would lead to race riots if efforts weren't made to aid integration, calling for the Roma to change their 'culture' of loitering, dumping rubbish, and not educating their children (*BBC News,* 2013a; Holehouse, 2013). Overall, media coverage of the Roma during November and December 2013 talked about them in reference to begging, criminal activity, taking advantage of the benefits system, and failure to integrate and adhere to British cultural norms (Gye, 2013; P. Harris, 2013; Jeeves, 2013a, 2013b; Pidd, 2013; Shute, 2013; Wintour, 2013a). When *The Daily Express* began a crusade against Romanian and Bulgarian immigration, they frequently used images of Romanian Roma encamped and begging at London's Marble Arch to support their anti-immigrant rhetoric (Brown & Little, 2013; Evans, 2013). Anti-Roma feeling during this period may also have been primed by fears about child trafficking and child neglect amongst the Roma. These fears were piqued by global news coverage of the discovery of a blonde child in a Roma settlement in Greece who was suspected of having been bought or abducted (Fagge et al., 2013; Kirby, 2013). Whilst this was found not to be the case, the story revealed to the world the state of poverty many Roma children are subject to, and the not uncommon occurrence of selling children among the Roma.

Aforementioned literature has revealed that Eastern European migrants have been represented through a Roma frame, and Romanians in particular are often conflated with Roma. As such, we can infer that the Roma migrants discussed extensively in the press in the two months prior to January 2014 can be seen to stand symbolically for incoming Romanian and, to a lesser extent Bulgarian, migrants. In addition to the similar sounding nomenclature, this association may arise from the fact that Romania and Bulgaria have the largest Roma

populations in the world (The World Bank) (though this is not grounds to say that any or all migrants from these countries will be Roma). Similarly, a link may exist because of a perceived similarity in the darker skin tones of the Roma, Romanians and Bulgarians compared to Western Europeans.

Indeed, the focus on the Roma in the build up to January 2014, and the symbolic association with potential Romanian and Bulgarian migrants, is significant because of the stigma attached to the Roma people. As McGarry (2008; 2010) explains, the Roma have a long history of being subject to discrimination and persecution, and are often considered the most disadvantaged and contemned group in Eastern Europe. Marginalization and oppression is largely based on stereotypes, which construct the Roma as beggars and thieves who are not to be trusted (McGarry, 2010: 1). The focus on Roma migrants in the months preceding Romanians and Bulgarians acquiring full immigration rights may therefore attach a sort of discrimination by association to the latter parties in light of their symbolic connection to the Roma. What's more, the focus on the Roma is also significant in a UK context because of the media frenzy and moral panic surrounding Czech and Slovak Roma in the country in the late 1990s. Focus on the Roma in 2013 may prime people's associations with the problematized Roma of the 1990s, which may then be transferred onto incoming Romanian and Bulgarian migrants because of the symbolic link between them and the Roma. It is because of this that I will be focusing on press representations of Roma migrants specifically in the build up to January 2014.

The idea of symbolic association in representation makes for an interesting new avenue of research. Balaji's (2011) discussion of the media coverage of the Haiti Earthquake reveals a somewhat similar idea at work. Balaji notes that the Haitian people were linked symbolically to the dysfunctionality of Africa by the dark skin tone they share with people on the African continent (54). In this instance race acts as a symbolic link through which to attach similar meanings to very different groups of people from different parts of the world, but such a symbolic link may be created through other perceived associations or shared traits.

Research Question

This paper seeks to answer this question:

How were Roma migrants visually framed in photographs in the online British press during the two months prior to January 2014?

I will consider what frames are employed, and how they are created. I will also consider how, if at all, these visual frames relate to previous literature on migrant representation, and how they connect to the negative attitudes surrounding EU immigration exhibited by the press and UK politicians at the time.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research, framing will be understood in the following way: 'through framing, the central organizing principle of continued news coverage, the news media are able to tell us *how to think about* a particular issue or event' (Kuypers, 2006: 11). Frames will thus be understood as interpretive schemata, imposing on the subject of a communication a specific interpretation (Kuypers, 2006: 11). Frames narrow down multiple interpretations of complex phenomena, and guide an observer to understand the phenomena in a particular way, with certain characteristics or in relation to certain issues. In regards to Roma migrants, then, framing will most probably involve placing them into simple categories, or associating them with specific issues and traits.

There is no prescribed methodology for the analysis of frames, verbal or visual. Visual framing in particular is a relatively undeveloped field. At its core, framing is crucially concerned with the transfer of salience to certain aspects or attributes of the subject of a communication, which then guide how the subject is interpreted and understood by others (Entman, 1993). Frames highlight some aspects of a phenomenon while obscuring others; they act to construct a point of view that encourages a situation, issue or object to be interpreted in a specific manner (Kuypers, 2006: 8). Framing elements reside within media narratives. In text this may take the form of things such as key words, lexical choices, metaphors, concepts and symbols (Kuypers, 2006: 11–4). When looking at visual framing in media images, it stands to reason that the components of visual language – what makes up the image – comprise framing elements. These may take the form of objects, colours, settings, camera angles, and so on.

Essentially, frame analysis should involve looking at the components of a media text and considering what associations these components will evoke in an audience. It should ask: from the presence of these components, and their associated meanings, what facets of the subject are made salient? As such, my frame analysis ultimately considers what components are commonly found in images of Roma migrants, and what their presence in the image may imply about the Roma. I consider what aspects of Roma migrants are made salient through

the presence of these components, and what issues or characteristics they attached to the Roma.

My frame analysis involved two main steps. Firstly, I looked in my sample of images for recurring visual trends, asking what visual components could be found frequently. I then used semiotic analysis to reveal the connotative meanings of these components, or semiotic signs, thus establishing what their presence might suggest about the Roma, or what aspect of the Roma is made salient by their presence. By looking at what visual signs are commonly present in photojournalistic representations, and determining their connotative meanings, I could then identify frames of meaning.

Sampling Procedure

I sourced my sample of images from British online news outlets rather than from physical newspapers. This was for several reasons. Firstly, online news articles and accompanying photographs remain in the public domain much longer than physical newspapers, which are typically thrown away after they have been read. Online articles can remain on a news outlet's homepage for several days or weeks, depending on popularity, and then remain, often indefinitely, in searchable archives. As such, it can be inferred that online material has the potential to be seen and re-seen by more people. Research also shows that more people worldwide read newspapers in digital form, or get their news online, than read physical newspapers (Chisholm et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2014).

To gather my sample, I sourced images from six different online news websites that are variously positioned on the political spectrum, informed by their known or tacit leanings. This was done in an attempt to avoid a potentially biased sample that might occur if images were taken from a politically homogenous group of sources. Using data from the National Readership Survey (2014), I sourced images from the six most-widely read websites of UK national newspapers. These were (in descending order of readership): *The Daily Mail/Mail Online* (dailymail.co.uk), *The Guardian* (theguardian.com), *The Telegraph* (telegraph.co.uk), *The Mirror* (mirror.co.uk), *The Independent* (independent.co.uk), and *The Express* (express.co.uk). Three of my sources were broadsheet papers: *The Guardian*, noted for liberal views; *The Independent*, claiming to be free from political affiliation; and *The Telegraph*, noted for consistent right-wing views and generally negative attitude towards immigration. Three were tabloids: the middle-market right-wing conservative *Daily Mail*; the traditionally Labour-supporting *Mirror*; and the middle-market conservative *Express* (Kaye, 2001: 56–7).

From these sources, I sought out articles addressing Roma migrants in the UK that had been posted during the time period 1st November to 31st December 2013 (the two months preceding the January 2014 immigration changes). This was done slightly differently depending on how the news website organized their articles and how their search function worked. Where appropriate, I either entered the keyword 'Roma' into the site's search bar, or sorted through their separate immigration news portal for relevant articles. Articles from which images could be taken needed to meet the criteria of referring specifically to Roma migrants in the UK, or the wider subject of Roma migration to the UK. In order to be part of my image sample, images from these articles had to picture one or more Roma migrant, or Roma person who it was implied was a potential migrant (should they be depicted in their home country). Whether or not images featured such a person, was determined by the caption accompanying the image or if it could be strongly inferred from the context of the article that this was the case.

I was left with a sample of 42 images (4 of which were duplicated images that had occurred twice, in separate articles). I believed it was important to have a fairly large selection of images, from differently politically-aligned sources. This would allow me, to a certain extent, to have images that were representative of images of their nature as a whole during my specified time period. It also meant that any observations I made about frames would be backed up by a larger pool of data, and I would have more opportunity to identify recurring frames. What's more, the same frame might manifest differently in different images through the presence of different semiotic signs with similar connotative meanings. Having a larger sample of images thus provides more opportunity to see *how* particular frames are created in different images.

Identification of Recurring Visual Content

Once I had collected my sample of images, the first step of my frame analysis was to identify recurring visual content or trends. In doing so, I was considering the frequency of semiotic signs, a sign being a basic unit of language, visual or verbal (Rose, 2012: 113). In visual semiotics, signs may be any of the individual elements that comprise an image, including people, objects, colours and setting.

Dyer (1982: 96–104) provides a list of signs and conveyors of meaning to pay attention to when looking at human subjects in images. These include aspects of appearance, such as age, gender, nationality or race, hair, body (size of, which parts are shown and

clothed/unclothed), and looks (conventionally attractive or unattractive). Indicators of manner are also worth considering, such as facial expression, eye contact (who is looking at who or what), pose, and clothing. Activity signifiers can also be noted, such as touch (who or what is being touched, and in what way), movement, and positional communication (how are subjects positioned within a picture). In addition, Dyer (1982: 104) also talks about the importance of props and settings in conveying meaning in an image: 'physical objects can convey meaning to us in both literal or objective ways and also more subtly by suggestion and association'. Consideration of inanimate signs in the images, such as settings, colour and objects, can be key to discerning frames of meaning. This idea is explored in Williamson's (1978/2010) work on decoding advertising images, which reveals how different signs in an image can be given the same meaning through their juxtaposition and/or perceived visual similarity, with the signifieds of certain signifiers transferring onto other signifiers. The associated meanings of inanimate signs in images of migrants can thus be attached to the migrants themselves.

Photographic conventions, such as the angle of the camera, subsequent position of the viewer in relation to the subject of the image, and the distance between the subject and spectator can also contribute to frames. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 119–58) suggest that the spatial organization of images can affect the position of the viewer. If the camera angle positions the spectator to look down on the subject of an image, the spectator is given some sort of power over the image, and vice versa, whereas if they look at it on the same level a relationship of equality is implied. Distance between the subject of an image and spectator can affect feelings of intimacy between the two, with close-ups offering more intimacy than images where the subject is far away.

I looked out for recurring visual content as I felt there would be little point in applying in-depth frame analysis to an image, or semiotic analysis to a visual component, unless they occurred frequently in my sample. Basing observations about frames on recurring visual content ensured that a particular visual framing was not an isolated incidence. Indeed, the inclusion of a larger sample size and quantitative element circumvents the criticisms posed to mainstream semioticians who conduct detailed readings of a small number of images and cannot account for their representativeness (Rose, 2012: 144). One simply cannot make claims about how the media frame an issue or social group without reference to *recurring* content. Otherwise, the data used to make conclusions may be unrepresentative and the conclusions about the media framing of the issue or group largely unfounded.

Semiotic Analysis and Identification of Frames

Once I had established which visual signs occurred frequently, I used semiotic analysis to discern their connotative meanings. According to semiotic theory, a sign can be broken down into two parts: the *signifier*, the form the sign takes (what is literally pictured); and the signified, the concept or idea with which the signifier is associated (Hall, 1997: 31). Similarly, signs have denotative and connotative meanings. *Denotation* addresses the simple, objective descriptive level of a sign, whilst *connotation* involves the interpretation of a sign in relation to wider social and cultural codes and ideologies (Bignell, 2002: 16; Hall, 1997: 38). Indeed, central to semiotics is the belief that the relationship between signifiers and signifiers is not inherent but conventional, fixed by social and cultural codes (Chandler, 2007: 28). The meaning of a given sign can thus vary between cultures, time periods or the context of its usage (Bignell, 2002; Hall, 1997: 32). For example, the colour red has no inherent meaning, but it can have various connotations depending on context, such as passion and sexuality, anger, or Communism. When identifying the connotative meanings of the signs in my sample images, I will do this in reference to various cultural and social codes. In particular, it is anticipated that reference to British cultural codes may be necessary, given that this study is concerned with British news sources and immigration into Britain.

I believe the appeal of semiotics to the more subtle, connotative meanings of the signs that make up an image is crucial to the identification of frames. The meaning of the presence of certain signs in images of migrants, and the frame they create, may not be apparent until their connotative meaning and thematic associations are identified. It may be the case that a seemingly straightforward sign, such as an item of clothing, has specific connotative meanings in a British context, for example, and thus subtly creates a very specific frame of meaning. Indeed, visual semiotics also allows one to examine the *hidden* meanings of images, 'what ideas and values the people, places and things represented stand for' (van Leeuwen in van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 92). Once we know what signs are commonplace in images, and their connotative meanings and associations, we can see what aspects of Roma migrants are given salience, and what frames are being created.

I ultimately chose to include a semiotic dimension to my frame analysis because semiotics directly addresses the question of how images make meaning, unlike simply descriptive compositional analysis, or solely quantitative content analysis (Rose, 2012: 105). This is useful as my research is concerned with how photojournalistic representations of Roma migrants place them within frames of meaning.

ANALYSIS

Sample

I found a total of 57 articles published between November 1st and December 31st 2013 that discussed Roma migration to the UK. Of these, 26 articles had images that met the sample criteria. Other articles either contained no images, images of politicians or British locals, or images devoid of people. I was left with a total sample of 42 images, 4 of which were duplicates that were found in two separate articles.

Of this sample, 19 images came from the *Mail Online*, 4 images came from *The Guardian*, 2 came from *The Telegraph*, and 17 came from *The Express*. No images from articles from *The Mirror* or *Independent* met the criteria to be included in the study. A large majority of images thus came from *The Express* or *Mail Online*, two sources that have similar ideological standpoints. Both of these are middle-market tabloids, and traditionally take a conservative stance, and support the Conservative Party. *The Telegraph* is similarly conservative, whilst *The Guardian* is typically more liberal.

Concerns might be raised over the fact that the majority of images come from papers with a conservative stance, and that traditionally support the Conservative Party, who at the time held the majority of seats in the incumbent coalition government. One could sensibly assume that the stance and allegiances of these papers might affect the choice of images they put forward on a conscious or subconscious editorial level. Similarly, concerns might be raised over the issue of the majority of images coming from only two sources that are largely ideologically and stylistically homogenous (the *Mail Online* and *Express*).

However, even if these images are subject to the biases of their respective papers, they are for a very large part the *only* images that existed of Roma migrants during the chosen timeframe. As such, they form the only visual representations of this social group available to the British public at the time, aside from any images in the print version of the newspapers (which one might infer would be similar to their online counterparts), and potential footage on television news. In procuring a sample, news outlets across the political spectrum were included as potential sources of images, but either no or very few suitable images were present in sources besides the *Mail Online* and *Express*, or in more liberally-minded or politically-independent news outlets. Ultimately, the images in this sample represent for a large part the only visual representations of Roma migrants available to the British public at the time from mainstream British media, and by extension the only exposure to such migrants available to the British

public short of firsthand interactions. As such, these specific images can be seen to have played a crucial role in the formation of people's understanding of this social group as based upon visual stimuli.

At the same time, given the narrow pool of sources from which the sample images were taken, it can be acknowledged that the political leanings of the sources might affect what images they select to publish frames are employed. Indeed, the fact that the *MailOnline*, *Express* and *Telegraph* are typically Conservative-supporting might help explain why images from these sources reinforce the negative rhetoric towards immigration shared by the Party at a time when they were proposing immigration restrictions. Interestingly, however, images from the more liberal *Guardian* were thematically very similar to those in the sample from other sources, suggesting that the political leanings of the paper might play less of a role in the types of image they put forward that might be expected.

Either way, by looking for recurring visual content in my sample images, several frames of meaning for the Roma could be observed. To a large extent, these visual representations echoed previous studies done on migrant representation, and reiterated the fear-mongering and unwelcoming attitudes put forward by politicians and some media outlets at the time.

Migrants Framed as Threats

One key frame in which migrants were placed was that of a threat, construing them as in some way threatening. This finding very much echoed previous studies on migrant representation. The threatening frame was created in several ways, including placing migrants within sub-frames of criminality or anti-social behaviour, or through visually reinforcing and validating fearful narratives about a predicted large-scale immigrant invasion.

One way in which the frame of criminality and anti-social behaviour was established was through the presence of policemen in pictures of Roma migrants, which occurred in seven of the sample images (Figures 1, 3, 8, 9, 20, 26 and 35). Policeman are instantly recognizable by the clothing they wear (such as high-visibility jackets, and black peaked caps or helmets), which as semiotic signs signify police uniforms. This uniform, and the figure of a policeman, have connotations of relieving crime and protecting the public. They are figures one expects to see at the scene of a crime or emergency. Their juxtaposition with the Roma – seen either patrolling in their vicinity, or directly advancing on them or addressing them – implies that the Roma may in some way be acting against the law, explaining the police presence. One

cannot ascertain from the images alone why the police are present in the situations pictured, which may of course have nothing to do with the Roma, or the Roma themselves may have been victims of a crime. However, the figures of policemen and women have a very basic association with the theme of crime, and through their presence in the image this theme gets transferred over to the Roma. Indeed, Williamson (1978/2010) discusses how the signified meaning of a sign can get transferred onto a different sign through the juxtaposition of signs in the same image. Indeed, the presence of policemen, and their associations with crime, attaches salience to the idea of crime in representations of Roma migrants, thus framing them as criminal or associated in some way with crime.

What's more, as has been discussed, extant and long-standing stereotypical conceptions of the Roma associate them with criminal activity (among other negative characteristics). This cultural code of understanding that may exist among British spectators thus facilitates an interpretation of the presence of the policeman sign in the images of Roma migrants that would contribute to the framing of Roma as criminals.

Policemen can also be seen to act as a symbol of Britain in these images, as members of a recognizable British institution. This is in contrast to the unfamiliar Roma migrants, who, as discussed, can act as a symbol for Romanian and Bulgarian migrants, and EU migrants as a whole. These symbols imply that the relationship between the UK and migrants is like that between the police force and the difficult criminal situations they exist to deal with. Migrants are thus cast as problematic, needing to be contained, controlled and dealt with.

The frame of criminality and anti-social behaviour is also created by the semiotic signs of tracksuits and hoodies. In 15 of the sample images (figures 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 26, 30, 31, 32, 36) these items of clothing can be seen to some extent, always on men or boys. Within British cultural codes, the clothing items of tracksuits and hoodies – hooded sweatshirts – have connotations of anti-social and delinquent behaviour (McLean, 2005). Indeed, in the early 2000s, several key politicians supported moves to ban hoodies from certain public places, citing them as intimidating, as part of a wider cracking down on anti-social behaviour among youths (Lett et al., 2011). McRobbie (quoted in McLean, 2005) suggests that the hoodie is 'one in a long line of garments chosen by young people, usually boys, and inscribed with meanings suggesting that they are "up to no good"'. She notes also that it is the promise of anonymity and mystery that can explain the garment's appeal and ability to cause anxiety. Indeed, the hoodie, when pulled up over one's head, obscures one's face and identity, and this can be regarded as threatening and intimidating, and may imply someone has something to hide. The hoodie, as a loaded sign in the UK, therefore functions

to further alienate the Roma subject wearing it by drawing connections to anti-social behaviour and further obscuring their already unknown identity. The hoodie's connotative meaning of anti-social behaviour also disambiguates the police presence that can be seen in some of the images, implying that the criminal or anti-social behaviour of the Roma pictured is what has necessitated their presence. This shows how it is the combination of signs and their associated meanings that create frames of meaning.

Another visual trend that contributes to a threatening frame is the representation of the Roma in large groups, often only of men, in public places. The gathering of a group of men on the street in particular might evoke the idea of a gang or gang behaviour. Batziou's (2011: 73-4) analysis of the visual representation of migrants similarly identified a trend of depictions of migrants in groups. She notes that this is a key technique in the framing of migrants as a threat: 'a mass, a mob, a crowd has power… A group, or even worse, a mass of people who do not belong to "us" causes anxiety and uneasiness, activating the instinct for defense' (73). The depiction of Roma migrants in large groups may also be seen as threatening in the sense that it visually reinforces fearful narratives that predict huge waves of migrants coming to the UK. The depiction of migrants in groups, instead of individuals, provides a means for people to visualize large-scale migration, validating the fears put forward by politicians and the media. What's more, that migrants are often shown in large groups in British public places visually conveys the idea of an invasion or occupation, a frame identified in other related literature. Similarly, that they are shown in this way visually reinforces fears that the country is full and cannot cope with more migrants, as these depictions show them spilling onto public places as if they have nowhere else to go.

The aforementioned clothing signs, and depictions of men loitering in groups, are also associated with the British pejorative 'chav' stereotype. This typically refers to a young, working-class person who engages in loutish behaviour, and wears (often counterfeit) designer clothes and sportswear (Manson & Wigley, 2013: 173; *Oxford Dictionaries*). The chav stereotype can often refer to someone who lives in council housing, and receives many state benefits (J. Harris, 2013; Manson & Wigley, 2013: 173). Indeed, the etymology of the word chav is sometimes, mostly jokingly, said to be an acronym for 'council housed and violent' (Kneen, 2007). The evocation of the chav stereotype is interesting considering concerns put forward by politicians and much of the media about 'benefits tourism', the idea that migrants would come to the UK to exploit the generous benefits system. Living off benefits is an essentialized trait of the well-known and reviled British chav stereotype, and the drawing of similarities between this group and migrants – through clothing signifiers – visually reinforces the idea that migrants – Roma, and by extension Bulgarians and

Romanians – will come to the UK for this purpose. This creates a threatening frame in the sense that Roma migrants are cast a financial threat, or a threat to public resources.

The anti-social criminal hoodie and chav stereotypes are evoked through certain signifiers that have specific meanings in a British context, allowing for the creation of the frame of a threat. These signifiers give a culturally-specific meaning to unfamiliar people – Roma migrants – by associating them with familiar stereotypes and understandings of certain objects. Indeed, Ross (2003: 31) explains that frames are dependent upon the spectator's recognition of cultural meanings of the components of a media text, connecting them to pre-existing stereotypes and prior understandings of the world.

Migrants Framed as Parasites

As discussed, political and media discourses surrounding January 2014 centered largely on fears that migrants would be coming to the UK to exploit the generous benefits system. Any suggestion that Bulgarian and Romanian migrants would come to the UK to work and contribute to society was absent from discussion. From an examination of my sample, these ideas were very much reinforced through visual images that placed Roma migrants within a frame of parasitism, construing them as homeless, living on the streets, and as beggars.

Only one image (figure 40) directly depicted a Roma woman begging, as can be inferred from the posture of the woman and her outstretched hand. However, other visual signifiers evoked a beggar woman stereotype. Many images in the sample (figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 27, 39, 40, 41) depicted older women, almost always wearing headscarves, a clothing signifier that is often associated with begging women. Similarly, the depiction of these women in a public setting further signifies that they may be beggars. Images from the sample revealed that Roma men and women were depicted through a very narrow lens. The Roma male is depicted in ways associated with thuggishness – as discussed, through depiction in groups and in tracksuits and hoodies – whereas the Roma female almost always takes the form of a much older woman in a headscarf, inviting associations to begging.

In addition to the one image (figure 38) that directly depicts Roma migrants sleeping on the street, many of the sample images contained signifiers of homelessness. Such signifiers also imply begging, as an associated behaviour of the homeless. Object signifiers such as large plastic bags, bedding in the outdoors, shopping trollies, and suitcases on the street, point to the pictured migrants being homeless. Similarly clothing signifiers, such as mix-matched, layered warm clothing point to homelessness. Significantly, not one image in the sample

depicted Roma migrants indoors; they are always photographed in an outdoors setting. This is important to note, as 'settings are carriers of meaning and are rarely value-free' (Dyer, 1982: 105). As well as implying a homeless status, that the migrants may be living on the streets, this outdoors visual signifier – and lack of signifiers to the contrary – also serves to dehumanize the Roma, likening them somewhat to animals. They are never shown in a domestic setting, or even an indoors setting, which may suggest connotatively that they are less civilized or un-modernized. Images that implied the Roma were living somewhere other than the street still showed fairly squalid conditions, depicting dilapidated houses (figures 16 and 22) and outdoors campsites with makeshift tents (figure 23).

Being shown in public places the vast majority of the time, the Roma are presented as a problem that is always in public sight, without a personal private sphere to return to. Their perceived omnipresence in public places, in large groups, makes them a very visual problem that it is hard to ignore. Depicting the Roma in this way strongly visually reinforces the idea that migrants ultimately will act as burdens on the state, shown living off the streets like it is feared they will live off the state. That the Roma are always shown in outdoors settings also reinforces the idea that there is no space or place from them in Britain; the country cannot cope with more migrants hence they spill into public outdoor spaces en masse.

The political and media discourses that predict a parasitic wave of migrants enticed by easy benefits money rather than a desire to contribute was also visually reinforced in the sample by a large number of images that depicted migrants not engaged in any discernable activity. Indeed, a large majority of images showed migrants loitering in public places, like streets and parks.

Examining the frames of parasitism, it is worth reiterating that frames are derived as much from what is absent in a media text as from what is shown (Entman, 1993: 54). In other words, in discerning what frames Roma migrants are placed within, it is necessary to consider what visual components are absent from images of them; one has to ask how Roma migrants are *not* depicted, as well as how they are. Roma migrants are not shown working jobs or setting up their own homes, once again subtly supporting a growing assumption that the Roma and other migrants will come to the UK to live off the state. What's more, the Roma are not shown in situations that are relatable to the average British spectator: they are shown living on the street in what seems a perpetual state of inactivity. The framing of the Roma works not only by drawing salience to certain aspects of their nature through the inclusions of particular signifiers, but also through obscuring other potential aspects of their nature through the lack of oppositional signifiers. Lester and Ross (2003: 3) argue: 'when certain

individuals appear only as criminals, entertainers, and sports heroes, we forget that the vast majority of people – regardless of their particular cultural heritage – have the same hopes and fears as the rest of us'. Because the media, in our image sample, put forward a narrow collection of images that paint the Roma as criminals or parasites, we are not invited to think about them in any other way.

Given that most British spectators are unfamiliar with the Roma people, and with the Romanian and Bulgarian migrants expected in 2014, their expectations of them will be based largely upon the information that is available through the media. Media images do not seem to depict the Roma as workers or as homemakers, and as such spectators are not encouraged to think about them that way. Instead, the spectator draws inferences from what they *can* see, informed by the connotative meanings of familiar signs and indicators of stereotypes. Rarely do audiences seek additional information that may challenge media accounts (Kuypers, 2006: 8), thus the media exert incredible influence over the formation of people's understandings about the world and social groups.

Migrants Framed as Separate and Other

As Pickering (2001: 47–8) explains, to designate someone or some group as Other involves defining them in reductive terms, and highlighting their perceived difference which is defined in contrast to what is taken as safe, normal and conventional. Through an emphasis on difference, the evocation of the Other stereotype creates a sharp distinction between the Other, 'them', and the idea of the collective, dominant 'us'. Pickering (2001: 48–9) also explains that presenting people as Other functions as a strategy of exclusion, used to control ambivalence and create boundaries, containing the Other in its pace at the periphery. What's more, the Other is a denial of history, an obstacle to change and transformation. The traits and conditions of the Other are presented as essential, natural and invariable, obscuring the history and politics behind their social existence, thus rationalizing bigotry, hostility and aggression.

In the sample images, Roma migrants were certainly placed within a frame of the Other. The Roma migrants pictured are not, for the most part, presented in a way that is relatable to a British audience. They appear often to be homeless, or living in very basic dwellings. They are also not relatable by appearance much of the time, often appearing in old, mixed-matched clothing that indicates poverty, homelessness and difference. More often than not Roma women are shown wearing headscarves, an item of clothing that, besides anything else, can symbolize foreignness and otherness (in relation to typical UK fashion).

The sample images also create the idea that the Roma are not integrated into British society. In the majority of the images the Roma are pictured by themselves. When members of the British public are featured, it is often in a way that is problematic. One instance of this is the aforementioned juxtaposing of Roma migrants with members of the British police force, implying a criminal aspect to the Roma. What's more, interaction with the police, official representatives of the state, is something that rarely occurs for the average person outside of emergency situations. Showing the Roma with the police therefore presents them in situations outside of the normal everyday experiences that an audience is used to, further defining the Roma as different or Other to the average British spectator. Other images (figures 13, 15 and 18) seem to depict conflict with members of the British public, judging by the argumentative stances of the figures in the images. Figure 34, one of the few images that shows a Roma migrant engaging with the photographer (and by extension spectator), is of a man swearing, as indicated by his hand gesture. These types of images symbolize an antagonistic relationship between the Roma and Britain.

The dominant depiction of Roma in groups creates a much more impersonal relationship between the photographed subjects and the viewer than might a shot of an individual. This denies a level of symbolic intimacy. Frequent depiction in groups may also serve to homogenise and diminish the individuality of subjects. Intimacy is also prevented by a preference for long-shots over close-ups, with close-up shots typically inviting more intimacy and identification than long-shots (Dyer, 1982: 101). The long-shot also denies symbolic communication between the subject and spectator, and as such the images do not invite one to know or understand the migrants through connection, merely to observe them. Indeed, Batziou (2011: 66) observes:

> Preference for medium and long distance highlights the otherness of the depicted persons and makes them look more distant and alien. The distinction between "us" and "them" is cultivated in a way that makes it difficult for viewers to be aware of it, since it is achieved through a visual element that easily goes unnoticed when browsing through a newspaper.

What's more, in the majority of the images in the sample the Roma do not return the spectator's gaze. This lack of reciprocal gaze also denies a level of symbolic communication, instead creating a sense that the Roma are being watched without knowing or without being able to watch back. Not only does the lack of symbolic eye contact prevent a level of intimacy, the asymmetry of gaze also creates a situation where the spectator has a level of power over the Roma subject, again presenting them as different and Other, and also inferior. This idea

has parallels to Foucault's (1978/1995: 200) discussion on surveillance and power, with the idea that when one 'is seen, but he does not see [...,] he is the object of information, never a subject of communication'. In this sense, the Roma are placed in a subordinate position.

The majority of the sample depicts Roma migrants without context; we do not know why they have come to the UK, or why they are living on the streets or are in the situation they are in. Because of the preference for long-shots and lack of reciprocal gaze, there is no opportunity to connect with them on a symbolic visual level. We are not invited to know them as individuals or to hear their stories, but rather to watch them from afar. Without proper understanding of this social group and the factors that have led them to their current situations, behaviours such as begging and homelessness are essentialized to the Roma. This is supported by corroborating stereotypical conceptions of the Roma.

Concurrent Discourses and the Roma as a Symbol

As discussed, the attitudes towards Romanian and Bulgarian immigration to the UK and EU immigration as a whole put forward by many politicians and media outlets were deeply negative. These discourses argued that the UK could not cope with any more migrants, fearing large-scale immigration would lead to cultural tensions, and that migrants would arrive purely to exploit the benefits system. An analysis of my sample has revealed how images of Roma migrants visually reinforced these narratives.

Given the presence of these attitudes towards further EU immigration to the UK, the focus on Roma migrants in the press is fascinating for several reasons. The Roma have a long-standing history of persecution and discrimination, and a number of negative traits are associated with them because of extant stereotypes, such as criminality and begging. As such they embody very well the type of migrant that UK politicians and media outlets were seeking to prevent coming to the UK. Because of the deeply ingrained prejudices against the Roma, they are an easy group to demonize in the media, and present in certain ways and in certain situations that validate the fears put forward about the anticipated detrimental impact of further EU migration. One cannot conclude that this is *why* the Roma were the focus of media coverage, but their function as a symbol of incoming EU migrants, due to the common conflation between Roma, and Romanians and Bulgarians, has interesting implications for the perception these new EU migrants. It is, however, interesting that the vast majority of images from the sample came from Conservative-supporting papers, and the Conservative Party at the time were actively trying to oppose the January 2014 immigration changes, which may explain their consonant images.

Either way, because of the connection between these different groups, and because the Roma received much media attention in the build up to January 2014, the negative feelings towards the Roma can be easily transferred onto Romanian and Bulgarian migrants. Negative feelings towards Roma migrants from Eastern Europe are already in the British consciousness because of the media frenzy surrounding the problematic behaviour of Czech and Slovak Roma in the 1990s, another reason why the focus on the Roma building up to January 2014 can trigger in British audiences negative feelings towards further EU immigration.

CONCLUSION

Informed by research on the importance of visual images in shaping one's understanding of the world, this paper has explored the visual framing of migrants. The visual focus marks something of a departure from previous work done on migrant representation in the media, and on media framing, which have overwhelmingly focused on written and spoken language.

Academic literature suggests that how a social group is framed in the media can affect how they are viewed and treated in society. It can therefore be inferred that the representation of migrants in the two-months prior to January 2014, when the arrival of a large number of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants was predicted, may strongly affect the reception accorded to these migrants.

Interestingly, much media coverage of migrants in the UK focused on migrants who were identified as a Roma, a group historically and contemporarily subject to discrimination and persecution across Europe. Some scholars have discussed how the Roma and Romanians (and to a lesser extent Bulgarians) are commonly conflated with each other, due to such things as similar nomenclature and the large number of Roma in Romania and Bulgaria. As such, a symbolic link can be seen to exist between the two groups, with the Roma depicted in the British press at the end of 2013 as standing symbolically for the Romanian and Bulgarian migrants expected in 2014. Because of this, the negative media framing of Roma migrants at this time has wide reaching implications for potential Romanian and Bulgarian migrants, the negative meanings and associations attached to the former being transferred onto the latter.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, I found that the visual frames within which Roma migrants were placed echoed representational trends identified in existing literature on migrant representation. Indeed, migrants were ultimately framed as threats, parasites and Others. However, it was interesting to see how these frames were created on a visual level. The

creation of these frames was very subtle, and appealed to specifically British stereotypes and concurrent fears about migration. What's more, I found that the visual representation of migrants was consonant with the discourses put forward by many politicians and some media outlets at the time. These narratives were deeply negative about the January 2014 lifting of restrictions, and EU immigration as a whole. They were built upon fears that Britain could not cope with another influx of migrants, and posed migrants as a threat to public services, arriving to exploit the benefits system. Again, the reflection of these ideas occurred on a very subtle level in the images, based upon an understanding of the semiotic signs that made up the images having specific connotations in a British context. The focus on Roma migrants in itself validated fearful narratives about future EU immigration given the Roma's stereotypical negative associations, and the media frenzy surrounding the problematic behaviour of Roma migrants in the UK in the late 1990s.

Moving forward, it may be interesting to compare the visual framing of Roma migrants in the UK before and after the immigration changes to see if there are any differences, perhaps once the anticipated migrants actually arrive and more is known about them. What's more, it would be interesting to note whether there is still a focus on specifically Roma migrants once Romanian and Bulgarian citizens arrive. Future investigation into media framing, of migrants and other phenomena, might want to consider both text and visual framing, as it may be interesting to see how the two relate to each other. It would be interesting to consider if frames in text and in images about specific phenomena at a specific time are consonant, and *how* this is achieved. Similarly, as touched upon in this research, further investigation could be conducted into the relationship between visual images and frames and dominant political, cultural and media discourses.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1   Figure 2

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(NB: man on the left identified as Roma)

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Figure Sources

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