

# MOVEMENT OF PRICES, UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND THE ROMA CONTENT IN THE DAILIES, AUGUST 2010 – FEBRUARY 2011

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## Abstract

*In this article, I have explored the effect of two macroeconomic processes on the volume of Roma content in six Bulgarian daily newspapers. Using Eurostat macroeconomic data and press monitoring results produced by an independent nonprofit, I test for the presence of a significant association between the volume of content of Roma related articles and the movement of prices – in particular, the food and non-alcoholic product prices, and the diesel and unleaded 95 fuel prices. Further, the association between the unemployment rate and the volume of content of Roma related articles is tested. Interesting results show that the overall movement of prices is not significantly correlated with the volume of Roma content in the dailies. On the other hand, the unemployment rate and the price of diesel and food products appear to be in a strong and significant association with the volume of Roma content. A similar type of association though cannot be proved when it comes to a nationalistic daily.*

**Key words:** inflation indicators, diesel price, petrol price, unemployment, Roma content, daily newspapers.

## INTRODUCTION

A great deal of changes and social processes, including such as stratification, socialisation, institutionalisation, mobility, digitalisation, depopulation, pauperisation, ethnicisation, etc., have been taking place in present-day Bulgarian society. Beside the *societal* in the above and the like processes, I render an account of an increasing number of other aspects: environmental, economic, geographic, media, technological, etc. Exactly the increased multifaceted and intertwining nature of the contemporary *societal* makes it difficult to research, understand and mostly to model and forecast. I would really like this very situation to become the **contextual reading environment** for everyone interested in this study (and in every other paper in the field of social science).

The interaction between technology and the *societal* has already demonstrated its potential to generate and develop unprecedented in world history phenomena. For less than a year, the world has witnessed how Twitter played a key role during the collapse of the political regime in Egypt (Bergstrom; 2011). Twitter can be referred to as an applied product of elements from the social network theory (sociology) and the network theory (informatics/computer science). The situation is not very different

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when social processes intertwine with climatic, environmental and other processes. It is not only that new terms appear (firstly, in professional jargons and then) in people's vocabulary but also unseen before phenomena.

The steadily complicating social structure and the development of new ways for communication further enrich the diversity and multiformity of social processes. If ways of communication are accepted as the means used by participants to share information (e.g. via face to face communication, through paper /an electronic device or over the Internet), I would like to explicitly specify one of the many essential aspects concerning the exchange of content: its **velocity**. And despite the great importance of the velocity (or the choice of communication velocity) issues, the focus of this study is different: **to what extent certain economic processes influence the content in the Bulgarian dailies as one of the primary sources of information in present-day society**. Setting aside (but always keeping in mind) most important questions concerning communication and media, e.g. velocity, accuracy, etc. of the exchange of content, I decided to put effort in studying the association between some macroeconomic processes and the Roma media content.

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

This paper is an attempt for analysis of associations between selected economic processes and the volume of Roma ethnic content in two types of media: newspapers published on daily basis (dailies) and electronic newspapers (info portals) which update the content they publish every day. For methodological reasons other types of media, such as weeklies and monthlies, blogs, etc., were not monitored. Without going into detail here, I argue that it is important all media included in comparative studies should be as identical as possible in terms of the velocity at which they update/exchange the content they publish.

For seven months (from August 2010 to February 2011), a team of young members from non-government organisations have monitored six national daily newspapers. The sources of information were monitored for various purposes, among which was an analysis of content of articles related to particular Roma persons or the Roma community. In this study, though, I used only recorded data presenting the monthly number of Roma related articles in the monitored media. Furthermore, the analysis required the use of indicators of inflation and employment; in this respect, I used inflation rates, employment rates and prices data from Eurostat and the European Energy Portal.

The collected data was processed and analysed through statistical methods: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (called Pearson's correlation for short) and Box-Pierce portmanteau test for autocorrelation. Calculations were made through the statistical package Stata, version 9.2.

## ECONOMIC PROCESSES AND THEMATIC CONTENT IN THE MEDIA

It is hard to imagine that the critically reading public has never asked itself how come that in so many specific situations media tend to pay attention