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The Media Image of Ukraine: An European View

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Abstract---A positive image of the country on the international arena enables the state to pursue an active foreign policy, attract investment and tourist flows, and increase its prestige in the world. A positive political, economic, social, and cultural reputation in the world is very important for Ukraine, which is in a state of political crisis, military conflict in the East of the country, and at the same time has declared to uphold the European values and is aimed at joining the EU and the NATO. Ukraine is an attractive source of news in shaping the agenda of influential European media. In 2019, the catalyst of interest was the events of the presidential election campaign. This is one of the fateful periods of the country's struggle for independence and democracy. The political course of the country in the international arena depends on the results of the will expression, which may indirectly affect the geopolitical landscape of Europe. Based on the content analysis of The Telegraph, The Guardian (UK); Die Zeit, Die Tageszeitung (Germany); Le Figaro, Le Monde (France) defined the semantic structure and emotional and evaluative tone of the media image of Ukraine.

Keywords---content, information, journalist, newspaper, thematic constants.

Introduction

Ukraine is a Central European country with a long history and is famous for its ancient cultural and ethnic traditions. Due to its geographical position, Ukraine is constantly in the epicenter of the strategic interests of influential states of Europe. Throughout its existence, the state has been facing an acute problem of integrity, independence, and democracy. The natural aspiration of Ukraine to become a self-sufficient European state not only geographically became possible in 1991 when Ukraine gained independence and a great desire to take a worthy place in the world arena. The fall of the Soviet Union is an event that shook Europe, as well as the whole world. New countries were formed either by integration or by separation. For each newly created state, its image that is the way it is perceived by the world is a very important thing. The formation and promotion of a positive image of Ukraine, according to scientists, is the “information resource that determines its political and economic perspective and the importance as a factor in the security of national interests in the geopolitical confrontation of states” (Gurkovskyi, 2012). The geopolitical interest of Russian Federation, which proclaimed itself the successor to the Soviet Union, was determined by the Eurasian course. Ukraine, however, has chosen the opposite direction of state development, marked by European values. The multi-vector geopolitical orientations of the neighboring countries have become the driving force of Russian Federation military-political aggression. Authors can state that the Ukraine-Russian Federation conflict has split the world into halves on the issue of European security. The annexation of the Crimea, the war in the East of Ukraine, Russian Federation information attack – all these factors characterize today's Ukraine and associate it with danger, threat, instability, at the same time are important for the formation of the positive image of the state (Tkachenko et al., 2020).

Over the decades, a state image is an issue that has attracted the attention of many scholars from different fields. The state image is the whole set of indicators, key features that provide the concept of the country and identifies it. Everything concerning the state, its past, present, and future can have a significant impact on its image. As a scientific category, this problem is interdisciplinary – social-communicational-humanistic. Political scientists, diplomats, sociologists, philosophers, journalists, psychologists – everybody concerned about the problems of man and world, personality and state, power, politics, etc., study the image. In research, rely on the theory of image proposed by Kunczik (1990). For the scholarly notion, the image of the state is identical to the image of the nation and involves a combination of “three components: the cognitive (what we know about the nation), the affective (what we feel about it) and the activity (how we behave towards it)”. The image of the country is not only a key to understanding between states, peoples, and nations, an important factor in humanitarian contacts, the formation of a worldview, a public opinion, but also a tool for manipulating it. The stereotypes of the former Soviet empire are sometimes associated with Ukraine. In this perspective, the study of Vodotyka & Magda (2016), is worth paying attention to.

Many researchers offer various mechanisms for promoting the positive image of Ukraine, in particular, recommendations on improving the practice of using

trans-border media for the formation of a national brand of Ukraine (Tereshchuk, & Tereshchuk, 2015), ways of optimization of the image of Ukraine under the conditions of Russian Federation military information aggression (Piskorska & Yakovenko, 2015). The image of Ukraine is also of interest to researchers from other countries, in particular, Saunders (2008). At the same time, scientists are very concerned about the fact that Ukraine has no “balanced state information policy capable of protecting society, the state and citizens from the informational and psychological expansion of the entities of geopolitical competition and other threats”, therefore, Gurkovskyi (2012), notes that the image progress of the country requires constant support for foreign policy decisions and the search for a corresponding new paradigm of public administration in the information sphere of society.

The year 2003 is marked by the official launch of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1609 “On approval of the State program to ensure a positive international image of Ukraine for 2003-2006” (2003), according to which the image formation is an integral part of the state's information and advocacy activity and is part of a nationwide idea. The first tasks of the Program are “the formation of the positive image of Ukraine abroad based on the use of indisputable positive phenomena and processes taking place in the Ukrainian society”. The seriousness of the intentions of the authorities confirms the fact that the program was amended and supplemented in 2004 and 2005. However, this Program was not fulfilled. In 2007, Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 379-r “On approval of the Concept of the State program formation of a positive international image of Ukraine for 2007-2010” (2007) approved. “The insufficient representation of Ukraine in the information space of other states, as well as the spread of false and prejudicial notions about it by foreign citizens of various kinds is a consequence of several factors, in particular, the low level of integration into the world information space...”. In the context of globalization and geopolitical competition, the world media perform an important political and ideological function necessary for Ukraine's affirmation on the international arena and contribute to its positive image.

Ukraine on the European media agenda

The formation of Ukraine's media image is to a great extent motivated by the general geopolitical situation in the world, in particular, the confrontation between the United States, the leading European countries and the Russian Federation, which is observed in an information confrontation with the involvement of the mass media. For Ukraine, aimed at the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a positive political, economic, social, and cultural reputation is important at the international level. In order to understand what kind of media image of Ukraine is being formed in the European information space, authors have carried out a content analysis of the materials of the Internet versions of the British newspapers – The Telegraph, The Guardian; Germany – Die Zeit, Die Tageszeitung; France – Le Figaro, Le Monde from January 1 to June 30, 2019.

Great Britain, Germany, France are leading in the development of information technology and identifying important strategic information dissemination routes.

These countries are also political leaders in Europe: currently, the French-German axis of leadership in the EU is obvious; Britain, despite Brexit, does not lose the status of a powerful political and economic player in Europe. Therefore, it seems logical that the media content of reputable countries in the international arena influences public consciousness, the perception, and behavior of citizens both inside and outside European countries, and determines the vectors for evaluating important social and political phenomena and events. The media space of these countries is interesting, first, as they can now influence the settlement of the situation in the Crimea and the East of Ukraine. Representatives of France and Germany – members of the Normandy Four are aimed at contributing to the resolution of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Britain expressing its strong attitude regarding Russian Federation aggression is the most active European advocate for strengthening sanctions against Russian Federation. Besides, the choice of the empirical base of the study was due to certain typological characteristics of the mass media: daily, multi-media. They represent different political views: The Telegraph is right centrist, conservative; The Guardian is left-liberal, Die Zeit is liberal; Die Tageszeitung represents the views of the new left; Le Monde is left-liberal; Le Figaro presents the official viewpoint of the French Government and moderately right-wing parties. The papers have foreign language versions of different countries, their readership is not limited to the country's edition, and therefore, the media image of the social and political situation in Ukraine and its assessment is broadcasted into the mass consciousness of citizens of different countries, which emphasizes the relevance and importance of research (Schindel & Given, 2013; Xavier, 2015).

In terms of the arrangement of the study, considered the fact that the image of the country in the media consists of two components – quantitative and qualitative. The first is related to the frequency of mentioning the country, its place in the flow of messages. The second is characterized by the content of the information flow, the subject of messages, their tone, and the frequency of submission of information. To determine the position of Ukrainian content on the agenda of the European media, authors have identified the number of references to Ukraine as the hyperlinks (key words, the names of the countries concerned), estimated the relative share of the materials where Ukraine is mentioned regarding materials about other countries. To create an objective notion about the position of Ukraine in the information space, authors have processed the archive materials of each edition (Clement & Foster, 2008; Auslander & Gold, 1999).

The main criteria for selecting the indicator-countries were the following: 1) ethnic, social and historical: Ukraine, Russian Federation, Belarus – East-Slavic countries that formed the Russian Empire for four centuries; 2) cultural and historical: Ukraine and Poland have long historical ties, both countries view each other as strategic partners, though, Poland, thanks to a progressive model of economic development, quickly entered the EU, Ukraine is still on its way of reform; 3) geopolitical: the conflict between Russian Federation and Ukraine went beyond the two countries and largely affects the geopolitical situation in Europe and the world; 4) geographical: the territorial proximity of countries; 5) strategic: the USA, China and Russian Federation are the powers that influence the economic situation in the world and Europe, in particular. The diagram on Figure 1 indicates that the international interest of the analyzed publications is

concentrated around geopolitical and economic world titans – the United States and China, and less Russian Federation, which is at the center of the geopolitical conflict. Far less attention of the media is paid in the countries of the EU. Although Ukraine is not the main topic of the European media agenda, it is within the scope of news visibility.

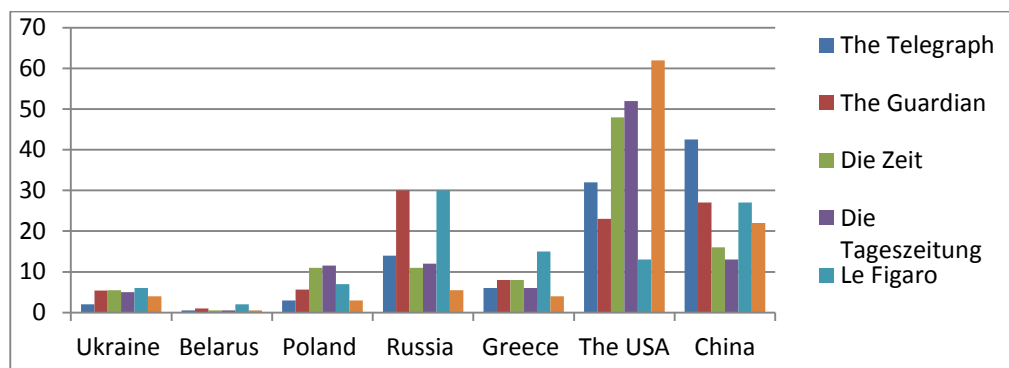


Figure 1. The relative share of Ukrainian content in the European media in comparison with the content of other countries

Thematic constants of Ukraine's media image in the European media

The direction vectors of discourse analysis motivate the time limits for the study of the qualitative component of Ukraine's media image in the European media: from the event to the media discourse and vice versa from the discourse to the reality, which it denotes. The first approach is productive, because the catalyst for Ukraine's interest is the events that are important for the world community. In 2019, the events of the period of the presidential election campaign, as well as the election to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, were of particular interest. The results of the election campaign affect the further development of the country, in particular, its political course in the international arena, which may indirectly affect the geopolitical landscape of Europe. December 31, 2018, an election campaign of the scheduled elections of the President of Ukraine was launched in Ukraine, and on May 24, 2019, the pre-term elections to the Verkhovna Rada, scheduled for July 21 started. Considering above-mentioned, the materials published in the period from January 1 to June 30, 2019 were selected for the analysis. In this period, 510 materials were analyzed, in which Ukraine was not just mentioned, but was the subject of discussion: The Telegraph – 30; The Guardian – 73; Die Zeit – 87; Die Tageszeitung – 115; Le Figaro – 159, Le Monde – 46.

The following emphases were defined while elaborating the qualitative component of the media image of Ukraine: 1) the subject of communications; 2) their regularity; 3) the tone of the Ukrainian context (neutral, positive or negative); 4) volatility (the dynamics of the media image in connection with the receipt of new information about the changeable events, information that is significantly more important in shaping the public opinion); 5) interrelations with images of other states (territories); 6) lexical markers of the Ukrainian content. The review of publications on the thematic criterion (the second direction vector of the

discourse analysis) allowed determining the main components of the media image, which are formed by the European media, in particular, establishing how Ukraine is characterized as a state: its culture, ethnos, history, religion, geography, economy, political ideology, etc.; and Ukraine on the international arena: relations with other countries, participation in international events and organizations, foreign policy, etc.

The peculiarity of the thematic constants (Table 1) and their quantitative representation makes it possible to conclude that Ukraine is an attractive source of news for the European media in shaping the agenda. Depending on the contents of the news content, image-forming components have different themes. For example, the component “Foreign Policy” is implemented in the following topics: “Official events at the highest level”; “Ukraine-Russian Federation-Europe”; “Ukraine-Russian Federation”; “Ukraine-Europe-World”; “Ukraine-PACE”; “Conflict in the East of Ukraine”; “The Crimea”; “Relations with other countries”. Although in the current international situation, the military conflict in the East of Ukraine is gradually shifting to the “second place” Russian-Ukrainian relations remain in the focus of the international media. The component “Domestic Policy” is “Presidential Elections”; “Parliamentary Elections”; “Legislation/Law and Order”; “Freedom of Speech”; “Power”.

Table 1
Thematic constants of Ukraine's media image in the European media

Image component/ publication theme	Number of publications						Quantity/ share of the material
	The Telegraph	The Guardian	Die Zeit	Die Tageszeitung	Le Figaro	Le Monde	
Foreign policy	12	29	41	39	57	13	191/38%
Official events at the highest level	4	1		2	3	2	12
Relations with other countries		2	1	3	4	2	11
Ukraine-Russian Federation-Europe	3		11	4	18	2	48
Ukraine-Russian Federation	1	2			3		6
Ukraine-Europe-World		4	1	6	9	1	21
Ukraine-PACE	2	2	5	4	0	6	13
Conflict in the East of Ukraine	2	14	18	18	17	5	64
The Crimea		4	5	2	3	1	15
Domestic Policy	10	29	36	39	66	26	200/39%
Presidential Elections	8	24	27	20	31	14	124
Parliamentary Elections	1	2	2	1	7	1	14
Legislation/Law and Order	1	1	4	9	21	3	39
Freedom of Speech				7	1		8

Authorities		2	3	2	6	2	15
Culture/history/ religion	5	5	9	28	10	6	63/13%
Economic cooperation	1	5		8	11	1	26/5%
Tourism	2	5	1	1			9/2%
Sport					15		15/3%
Total	30	73	87	115	159	46	510

Most publications (Figure 2) were about policy – foreign (formal occasions at the highest level, Ukraine-Russian Federation-Europe relations, Ukraine's protest against Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) decision on Russian Federation's participation) and domestic (presidential and parliamentary elections, legislation), and culture as well.

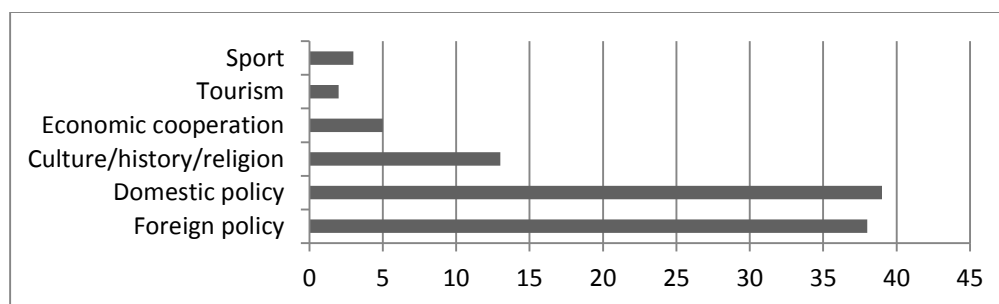


Figure 2. Structural dynamics of Ukraine's media image in the European media

A thematic constant “Domestic Policy” represents the internal image of Ukraine. The external image, which is 61% of the total content, is represented by “Foreign policy”; “Culture/History/Religion”; “Economic Cooperation”; “Tourism”, “Sport”. It is worth emphasizing that such image components as culture, history, religion, international economic cooperation, tourism, and sports are the most attractive in shaping the external image of the country, though they are least represented in the information content of the Internet versions of the newspapers of Great Britain, France, and Germany. However, it is worth noting that the sites of the British Internet newspapers The Telegraph and The Guardian are to some extent contributing to the formation of a positive image of Ukraine in the field of culture and tourism (Shaw & White, 2004; Hawes, 2015). If enter Ukraine into the search engine, a visitor is offered a kind of travel guide (advertisement), which in a positive way informs visitors about the tourist trips to Ukraine, the most attractive cities and routes, historical places and architectural monuments, opportunities for cultural recreation and entertainment. It is worth emphasizing that despite a large number of high-quality informative photos of prominent Ukrainian places the theme of the page “Ukraine trip planner” is a collage of Russian Federation nesting doll (newspapers give links to Inspirock site). This suggests that, by now, the Europeans have not got rid of their stereotypical perception of Ukraine as a part of Russian Federation, if not Russian Federation, the Soviet Union, which Russian Federation embodies. Besides, the remnants of ethnocultural and social and political stereotypes in the minds of the British can be determined by comments on the publications, such as “... bribes, small arms,

henchmen – no shortage of any of these items in wild Ukraine” (Southworth & Mendick, 2019).

The top topics of the Ukrainian context in the information content of the analyzed mass media, as Table 1 shows, are “Elections of the President of Ukraine”; “Conflict in the East of Ukraine”; “Ukraine-Russian Federation-Europe relations”. Consequently, Ukraine's media image is predominantly shaped by the political image of the state, where the political leader takes the main place. The leading role of the president in shaping the external image of Ukraine is determined by the powers prescribed by the Constitution of Ukraine (1996) he is the head of state and acts on its behalf; ensures state independence, national security and succession of the state; is a guarantor of state sovereignty, territorial integrity of Ukraine; is the guarantor of fulfillment of the strategic course of the state on gaining full membership of Ukraine in the EU and in the NATO (Article 102); represents the state in international relations, manages the foreign policy activities of the state, negotiates and concludes international treaties of Ukraine; makes a decision on the recognition of foreign states (Article 106) (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996).

The point is confirmed statistically: 24.3% of all informational content about Ukraine is devoted to the elections of the President of Ukraine. The period from election campaigning, the results of the first and second rounds, the inauguration and the first official powers of the newly elected president became an equally interesting information matter for every publication. Perhaps such an active interest owes the fact that there is a new leader on the political stage, the one who is an “experienced showman and a beginner in politics” (Semo, 2019), the one who since the start of the presidential campaign had enormous support of the people and great chances to win. The Guardian called the 2019 elections “the most unorthodox presidential campaign in Ukraine” (Roth, 2019); The Telegraph – “a dirty campaign that culminated in a venomous debate” (Luhn, 2019); Die Zeit – “hot election campaign” (Komiker Wolodymyr Selenskyj, 2019); Die Tageszeitung – “the show” (Clasen, 2019); Le Figaro – “unpredictable and dizzying, as the plot lines of “Servants of the people” (Siohan, 2019); Le Monde – “one of the most expensive and dirty in Ukraine”, due to the presence of so-called “technical” candidates, whose sole purpose is to mislead voters, as well as the use of administrative resources to bribe voters, in particular, the camp of P. Poroshenko was accused of using social payouts for campaigning. Despite such ambiguous, even negative, assessments of this political action in terms of its organization and conduct, the European media have expressed the opinion that in this situation “neither Ukraine's democratic set-up nor its choice of drawing closer to Europe” (Nougayrède, 2019), is questioned.

The European media, reporting on the results of the presidential elections in Ukraine, tried to find an answer to the question: how could a person without a program and any political experience win? Gorchinskaya (2019) in her “Zelensky's victory in Ukraine was extraordinary”, says that V. Zelensky's victory broke all national political records: a forty-one-year-old candidate with zero political experience who could not name any of his policies received an unprecedented 73% of the vote and became the first president, supported by the majority of Ukrainians in all regions except one. Instead of holding an election campaign, he

toured with his comedy show. It does not belong to any existing political class and therefore was perceived as a new face that was immediately recognized in any home where there is a TV. The originality of V. Zelensky's idea was to create an unsurpassed show, almost a reality show, a hype, as well as to gain the support of young voters. In addition, The Guardian claims that one of the main benefits of V. Zelensky is that he was not engaged in politics for a long time enough to provoke anger to voters. At the same time, P. Poroshenko's defeat at the elections is explained by the fact that he promised citizens that they "will live a life", but the pace of change was too slow, and the war has been bleeding the nation for five years, as well as the ruling of the old political elites, which is the main cause of corruption. V. Zelensky's victory was positively assessed by Le Monde: "Mr. Zelensky is a new type of populist, neither the left nor the right, which promotes the liberal order of the day and insists on curbing corruption". Die Zeit expresses a similar opinion: "A populist of a new type – he did not advocate for a split, but for reconciliation" (Beck, 2019), although it refers to a doubtful argument: V. Zelensky spoke Russian, while the government legally defended the status of the Ukrainian language (a language issue that allegedly splits the country and appears to be the source of political speculation).

The former comedian won in the presidential election because millions of voters who are tired of war and economic hardship condemn the ruling elite so much that they are ready to take a risk and "jump into emptiness, not to associate with the political class, discredited over the years of survival". If one comedian in the capacity of the head of state surprises, then the other frightens, as, according to Die Zeit: "No one really knows what the new Ukrainian president is planning, perhaps even himself" (Bota, 2019). European media emphasize that presidential elections took place against the background of the conflict in the Donbas, the government's inability to deepen reforms (Le Monde); the war in the East and corruption in the political and economic spheres (Die Zeit); the unpopularity of the government of P. Poroshenko (The Telegraph); raising utility bills, impunity for corrupt officials (The Guardian); the oligarchy who makes money off the war and poverty (Die Tageszeitung). "Now the poorest country in Europe, Ukraine and its 42 million people stand in the forefront of tensions between Russian Federation and the West, fighting a low-level conflict with Moscow-backed separatists, which continues to claim lives", – this is the way Luhn (2019), (The Telegraph) sees modern Ukraine.

However, the European media positively assess the will of the Ukrainians. The Guardian emphasizes that these were "a free and fair, genuinely pluralistic election, and the prospect of a democratic transfer of power; Ukraine's current democratic process is going rather smoothly" (Nougayrède, 2019). According to Die Zeit, electing V. Zelensky a president is "more than just a television story that has become a reality, this is an important step towards democratization of Ukraine", and Die Tageszeitung states that "an explicit rejection of the corrupt oligarchic system in Ukraine". Over the past five years, the Ukrainian opinion has changed greatly and Le Monde calls that the progress on the path to Europeanization of Ukraine is that "for the first time in the history of Ukraine, presidential elections did not become the scene of opposition between pro-Europeans and pro-Russians". "Today, the people of Ukraine are more united than ever in their support for their country's European orientation. Ukraine still

has many demanding tasks and reforms to implement, but impressive progress has been made despite the ongoing Russian Federation aggression. Today's Ukraine is fundamentally different from Ukraine before 2014 and has never been so close to Europe and European values" (The west must not abandon..., 2019), such a rendering of the political situation by The Guardian reflects the general tendency of the European world to break the old stereotypes in perceiving Ukraine. Today, the European press supports the understanding that Ukraine is a European state. It is far from being flawless but is consistently evolving towards constitutional democracy. "Look at us, anything is possible" – this message of the newly elected president of Ukraine was intended for all post-Soviet states as a concrete call to change and an example of such changes (Montes-García et al., 2013; Zheng et al., 2018).

The contextual tone of media messages

The formation of a new image of Ukraine is to a certain extent promoted by the rhetoric of media messages, which is shown through the contextual tone – neutral, positive, negative. The tone of media messages is determined by the author's judgments as evaluation of certain facts. Since the structure of the image, in addition to the cognitive, contains emotional (affective) and evaluative components, then the country's media image is considered as the result of forming a certain stable emotional attitude towards this country based on the perception and processing of the information about it. In this regard the leading role in shaping the media image of Ukraine is played by texts with a strongly pronounced appraisal tone (Diorditsa et al., 2021; Rinartha et al., 2018). Given that the emotional tone of a media text is directed (targeting), the journalist uses it not for expressing his position though for social influence on the reader. It is through the subjectification of the media message that one can influence the perception, understanding, and evaluation of the information, stimulate the reader's emotional reaction promoted by the journalist, and thereby form a stable idea of the object in the mind of the recipient; in this case, it is the image of Ukraine.

A significant number of publications (43.5%) about Ukraine has a neutral context (Figure 3) – the vast majority of them are presented in a news format without the author's assessment.

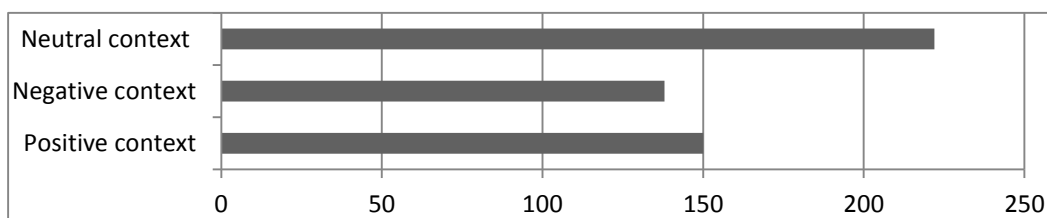


Figure 3. The general tone of the Ukrainian context in the European media

Total positive (29.5%) and negative (27%) evaluating the content of the analyzed messages are only slightly larger than the neutral one (Figure 3). Thus, the topic of Ukraine in the analyzed editions is represented in a balanced manner with the messages of neutral and increased evaluating tones. Given this fact and the fact

that Ukrainian content in the European information space is presented sporadically, authors cannot state the purposeful and systematic formation of the media image of Ukraine by the European media. The results of observations (Figure 4) indicate that all of the analyzed editions provide the majority of information about Ukraine in a news format and, in under journalistic standards, give unevaluated facts, informing about important events in the country. This format mostly refers to formal occasions at the highest level, pre-term elections to the Ukrainian parliament, the issue of international law, the MH17 Boeing shot down over the territory of Ukraine, the construction of a gas pipeline “North Stream-2” bypassing Ukraine, partially about the presidential elections, the conflict in the East of Ukraine, about Ukraine's participation in the PACE, and the events in cultural and tourism spheres.

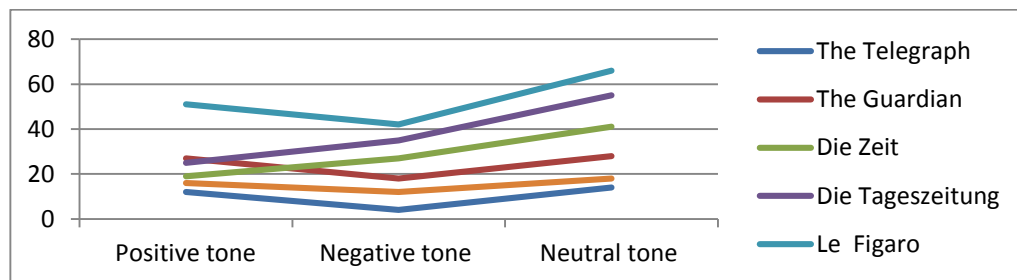


Figure 4. The tone of the Ukrainian context in the European media (by editions)

The pattern of the location of the curves on the diagram (Figure 4) indicates that the British newspapers The Telegraph and The Guardian and the French Le Figaro and Le Monde are more positively oriented towards Ukraine, while the German Die Zeit and Die Tageszeitung are more critical of the situation in Ukraine and the events in the world associated with it. The negative tone is observed in the assessment of Ukraine's domestic policy, its legislative framework, the government's actions in terms of reforms in medical, educational, social and economic spheres, issues of observance of human rights and freedom of speech. Positive materials are related to the themes of culture, tourism, history, religion. Disputable, as authors have already stated, though with a generally positive evaluation, are the materials about the will expression of the Ukrainians during the presidential elections in Ukraine.

The main emotional and evaluative dominant, determining the positive or negative tone of the Ukrainian context of the texts under discussion, are determined by objective social, political, and economic processes in the society and the subjective views of different media, acting on behalf of their states. For example, they differently assess the pressing issue for Ukraine regarding the return of the Russian Federation to the PACE. Newspapers The Telegraph and The Guardian voice support for Ukraine, which left PACE in protest. The United Kingdom, Poland, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania supported it. Although there is no clear assessment in the materials, there is no explicit criticism of the Council of Europe because Russian Federation's return means the end of the financial crisis that has struck the Council of Europe after Moscow suspended its membership fees, leaving in 2018 a “black hole” of 53 million euros. German newspapers responded differently to the event. Die Zeit did not even mention Ukraine's

response to the decision of the PACE, which abolished sanctions against Russian Federation for the annexation of the Crimea, and *Die Tageszeitung* sharply criticized the decision of the PACE, thus expressing its commitment to Ukraine: “The Council of Europe decision in favor of Russian Federation is a bitter image loss for the entire institution. This will continue to worsen the strained relationship between Moscow and Kyiv”. *Le Monde* seems to justify PACE, the decision was actively supported by the representatives of France, as in case of Moscow's absolute withdrawal, the Russians would not be able to apply for support to the European Court of Human Rights. Supporting the same view, *Le Figaro* adds that the decision of the PACE will put an end to the institutional crisis with Moscow, which did not pay about 75 million euros membership fees (with interest) because of sanctions (Wursan et al., 2021; Popović & Popović, 2014).

The analyzed editions have distinctive thematic priorities, in addition to the common ones, in the formation of Ukrainian content. For example, the newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* paid attention to the issues of economic cooperation and sharply criticized the violation of the rules of agricultural production, compliance with technological conditions of production, etc., a “dialysis” scandal in Ukraine. Particularly acute criticisms were made of the violations of freedom of the press in Ukraine. Thus, for the first four months of 2019, according to the report of the Union of Journalists, 23 cases were recorded in Ukraine; in particular, there was an armed attack and serious injury to the journalist V. Komarov, who conducted an investigation into the corruption schemes in Cherkasy region, attack of the right-wing Radicals on the journalist-operator O. Makaryuk in Kharkiv. *Le Figaro* reacts equally to this subject: “Journalists have a relative freedom of speech in Ukraine with a pluralistic media landscape, but security remains a problem: attacks on professionals in the field of information are not uncommon, and the investigation often does not succeed” (Ukraine: passé à tabac..., 2019). Materials on the participation of Ukrainians in drug trafficking do not favor the image of Ukraine (the French law enforcement of Subutex traffic between France and Ukraine through Poland to the amount of 10 million euros). *Le Figaro* forms the positive image of Ukraine in many materials on sports topics. This is the success of the Ukrainian football team in qualifying matches for Euro 2020; the victory of the Ukrainian youth football team at the U-20 World Cup. Despite the selectivity of the Ukrainian content, all publications unanimously condemn Russian Federation's actions in the escalation of armed conflict in the East of Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimea. They support Ukraine to restore the borders of its territory and the integrity of the state, its pro-European focus of reforms.

Although the share of materials with a positive Ukrainian context (29.5%) is only 2.5% more than the materials with a negative assessment of the events in Ukraine (27%, respectively) for the first six months of 2019, authors can observe positive trends in changing the media image of Ukraine. Thus, according to the information from the director of the Ukrainian Institute in London A. Gunder, in 2012, the negative information about Ukraine in the world media reached up to 80% (Expert: 80% of the information..., 2012). According to the number of references in the information content of the analyzed editions, Ukraine is inferior to the information about the USA, China, and Russia, the countries, which attract the main international attention. At the same time, Ukraine is an attractive

source of news in shaping the agenda and is constantly within the scope of news visibility. The catalyst of interest in the topic of Ukraine in 2019 was the events of the period of the presidential election campaign – the results affect the country's political course on the international arena, which may indirectly affect the geopolitical landscape and political climate in Europe.

Ukrainian topics in the analyzed publications are represented with balanced messages of neutral and increased evaluating tones, which, accordingly, form the subject and information, and conceptual and evaluative spheres of the country's media image. The vast majority of the neutral tone materials are presented in a news format, without author's assessment of the information, based on the knowledge and evaluation already existing in the minds of the audience, and contains important defined data. First of all, European newspapers represent the interests of their states. In spite of different typological characteristics and various political guidelines, they generally adhere to similar emotional and evaluating dominants. The British newspapers *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* and the French *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde* are more positive in assessing Ukrainian events, while the German *Die Zeit* and *Die Tageszeitung* are more critical of the situation in Ukraine and the world events associated with it. The negative evaluation tone of the media messages about social, economic and cultural issues explains the availability of negative stereotypes in the perception of Ukraine, which content is determined by social and political factors, superficial knowledge formed historically, as well as biased attitudes towards Ukraine. Positive evaluative materials reflect the general information policy of the European media about breaking old stereotypes in the perception of Ukraine as a former Soviet republic, as a state with low political culture and high level of corruption. The European press supports the notion that Ukraine is a European state. Although the country is slow in the reform process, it is consistently evolving towards constitutional democracy. The media are constantly broadcasting the idea that Ukraine should be supported in its aspiration to become a European state (Johansson, 2014; Turk, 1985; Putrayasa, 2017).

Conclusion

Authors consider the media image of Ukraine a stable emotional attitude based on perception and processing of the information about it. The ranking of a problem and thematic aspects of the information allowed to build a value scale of the priorities of Ukrainian events. The image of Ukraine is formed mainly on the political image of the state. In its structure, the leading notions are the image of the political leader, Ukraine-Russian Federation-Europe relations, and the conflict in the East of Ukraine. The main tendencies of the formation of the media image of Ukraine by the European media are as follows: 1) strengthening the positive image component; 2) strengthening a negative component in the image of Russian Federation as an aggressor state, which forms a tense geopolitical situation both in Ukraine and in Europe as a whole; 3) shifting emphasis from ethno-geographic to the state image (politics, new leaders, new decisions); 4) changing the self-image of Ukraine (pro-European state).

Among the factors that influence the formation of a media image in the European media most of all, authors can name the following: a) foreign and domestic policy

of Ukraine; b) foreign policy of the European “broadcasting” countries, and their geopolitical and international economic interests; c) Russian Federation's geopolitical strategy; d) the annexation of the Crimea; e) the conflict in the East of Ukraine; g) Ukrainian political realm (elections, political leaders, political parties, and political reforms). The lack of attention from the European media to the culture, history, religion, international economic cooperation, tourism, and sports, which are the most attractive structural elements of the media image in shaping the country's external image, cause the formation of an unattractive image and obstructs Ukraine's entry into the international space.

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