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THE ARCHETYPE OF UKRAINE IN THE «COUNTRY» SECTION (KRAJ) ON THE NEWS FEED OF THE POLISH NEWS AGENCY PAP

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Abstract

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the associated urgent need for international support actualize the importance of Ukraine's information presence in the European and world information spaces, support and promotion of the state's image while countering Russian information psychological operations (IPSO) and spreading false and manipulative messages aimed at discrediting Ukraine and its international partners. In such conditions, the analysis of the archetype of Ukraine, which is formed by European news agencies, in particular, the Polish news agency PAP (Polska Agencja Prasowa), which is a member of the European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA), seems relevant. For the analysis, the rubric «Country» (Kraj) was chosen, the purpose of which is to cover mainly Polish national events, which, in particular, concern Ukraine.

Key words

information society, citizen journalism, post-truth, media literacy.

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1. Introduction

The importance of the information component of hostilities, the unification of efforts of the countries of the democratic world in the information sphere was emphasized by British journalist and researcher of Russian propaganda Peter Pomerantsev. «In order not to lose to Russia and other authoritarian regimes, the countries of the democratic world will have to unite their efforts not only within the framework of military assistance to Ukraine but also unite their efforts by creating an informal information alliance

– the so-called «Information Ramstein,» he said. («Information Ramstein»: Western..., 2023).

The expert derived the idea of this type of Ramstein on the basis of a large-scale study for the United States in the first months of the war. «After we finished this extensive study, I gave an interview to *Ukrainska Pravda* and mentioned Information Ramstein. Then the idea was picked up by politicians. It has been transformed, but the basic principle remains the same...,» Pomerantsev said (Perun, 2023).

The initiative to introduce informational Ramstein was also expressed by Oleksandr Tkachenko, the then Minister of Culture and Information Policy of

Ukraine, at an online meeting of media ministers of the G7 countries. Oleksandr Tkachenko proposed the main steps within the framework of the Information Ramstein initiative to the G7 countries:

- implement joint measures to counter disinformation, in particular to promote cooperation between news agencies;
- impose sanctions against Russian propagandists who spread pro-Russian narratives in the world;
- promote international broadcasting of Ukrainian channels, in particular the FREEDOM TV channel;
- provide immediate support for the protection and preservation of media operating in Ukraine;
- expand «cultural sanctions»;
- ensure systematic cooperation at the government level;
- develop a digital database;
- ensure broad institutional cooperation;
- create a Foundation for the Support of Ukrainian Media (Information Ramstein and..., 2022).

By analyzing the materials of the rubric «Country» (Kraj) of the Polish news agency PAP (Polska Agencja Prasowa), the authors of the article explore how the conflict situation on the Ukrainian-Polish border affected the general archetype of Ukraine in the Polish media.

2. Results and Discussion

The chronological framework of the study is limited to the period from September 1, 2023, to March 1, 2024. It was during this period that the most acute phase of confrontations on the border of Ukraine and Poland occurred. In the fall of 2023, the European Commission decided to abandon the temporary ban on the import of Ukrainian grain and extend the permission for Ukraine to export its products to the EU without restrictions. At the same time, the Polish government expanded the list of bans and restrictions on the import of grains, rapeseed and sunflower seeds, as well as some processed products, in particular, wheat flour, bran and cake from Ukraine to Poland. This caused protests by Polish farmers, which manifested themselves in the blocking of the Polish-Ukrainian borders for Ukrainian cargo carriers.

During the study period, more than ten thousand publications were reviewed, among which 511 touched on certain issues related to Ukraine.

The main topics of the materials were:

- blockade of the Ukrainian-Polish border due to the import of Ukrainian grain crops to Poland;
- the war in Ukraine;
- Ukrainian-Polish relations;

- controversial events in the history of Ukraine and Poland;
- road accidents, offenses and crimes in which Ukrainians are involved;
- visits of Polish and Ukrainian statesmen;
- negotiations with leaders of European and world powers.

A special place is occupied by publications debunking fake narratives spread by Russian propagandists within the framework of IPSO.

Publications related to the blocking of Ukrainian-Polish borders related to the import of Ukrainian grain (such materials make up 29% – 148 publications) trace the history of the conflict and outline the position of Ukraine, Poland and the institutions of the European Union, in particular, the European Commission, on this issue. Polish statesmen, in particular, President Andrzej Duda, Prime Ministers Mateusz Morawiecki and Donald Tusk, Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski, former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Robert Telus emphasized that despite the unresolved problem with grain transportation, Poland will not stop supporting Ukraine, because, according to Donald Tusk, «there would be the greatest idiocy in the relations between the two countries if they quarreled and did not find understanding,» and «protests are a road to nowhere» (Premier o relacjach..., 2024). At a security conference in Monaco, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski stressed the urgency of solving the problems of Polish farmers and carriers so that «it does not overshadow the image of Polish solidarity with Ukraine» (Radosław Sikorski: musimy..., 2024).

Analyzing the reasons for the situation, high-ranking officials, in particular, Polish President Andrzej Duda, emphasized that «ordinary citizens of Ukraine have nothing to do with the grain conflict... The blame for grain should not fall on the shoulders of ordinary citizens, especially those who came to Poland fleeing the war. Ordinary Ukrainian farmers also have nothing to do with the conflict. Ukraine is divided between agricultural holdings that have farms of several thousand hectares. And then those oligarchs have an interest in exporting grain. Under all circumstances, Poland is at the forefront of countries helping Ukraine» (Jarco, Kostrzewa, 2023).

Robert Telus, former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Polish government, supported Andrzej Duda's opinion and emphasized that Ukraine is ruled by oligarchs, in whose hands most of the agricultural farms are concentrated, and their companies are registered outside Ukraine. Therefore, the blocking of borders is not against Ukraine, but under Polish farmers (Tkacz, 2024). Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk stressed that «the

war cannot cause dramatic losses for Polish farmers.» Nevertheless, «restrictions are not an easy solution for Poland, as it is engaged in helping Ukraine» («Drastyczne straty...», 2024).

Significant attention in the agency's publications during the period under study was paid to Ukrainian-Polish relations, which were influenced by a number of destabilizing factors: blocking borders by Polish farmers, protests in response by Ukrainian carriers, the introduction of a unilateral ban by Poland on the import of Ukrainian grain after the European Commission lifted the embargo, Ukraine's filing a complaint with the World Trade Organization, Volodymyr Zelenskyy's speech at the UN General Assembly in New York, etc.

Analyzing the relations between the two countries, PAP quoted a speech by Vasyl Zvarych, Ambassador of Ukraine to Poland, at the Congress of Reconstruction of Ukraine «Common Future» in Poznań: «Ukraine and Poland are doomed to each other, doomed to a strong union. And this is in the interests not only of Ukraine, but also of Poland and the whole of Europe and the Euro-Atlantic space (Jowska, 2023).

On the eve of the 2023 parliamentary elections in Poland, Donald Tusk, leader of the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska), stressed that «in the context of Polish-Ukrainian relations, the authorities in Poland (Jarosław Kaczyński's pro-government PiS party – Y.N.) lost controllability, if at all there is a strategy for current and future ties between our countries» (Al Shehabi, Kania, 2023). After the elections, Paweł Kowal, a member of the Sejm, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted that Tusk's visit to Kyiv is a restart of Polish-Ukrainian relations, which have been blocked in recent times by the PiS government (Nicałek, 2024). Minister Coordinator of the Special Services of Poland Tomasz Semoniak noted that «problems between countries are often inflamed and then used by Russia» (Iga Leszczyńska, Delfina Al Shehabi, 2024). In the context of Ukrainian-Polish relations, PAP devoted a lot of space to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's speech at the UN General Assembly meeting in New York. In particular, commenting on the problem with Ukrainian grain, he said: «It is disturbing to see how some in Europe, some of our friends in Europe, undermine solidarity with political theater, making a thriller out of grain. It may seem that they are playing their own role, but in fact they are helping to prepare the stage for the Moscow actor» (Speech by Volodymyr Zelenskyy..., 2023). Volodymyr Zelenskyy's speech was critically assessed in Poland and other countries. President Andrzej Duda commented that «he was embittered by Zelenskyy's words. As soon as I can, I will talk to him, but not in the light of the cameras, but face to

face, like friends who want to solve various difficult situations» (Kostrzewa..., 2023).

Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki warned the Ukrainian side «against playing on notes, which is immediately picked up by Russian trolls. According to him, all these provocateurs are happy that the seed of discord has been sown between our countries» (Małecki, Żurek, 2023).

The Polish news agency did not ignore the complex issues of historical relations. In particular, materials were published about the Volyn massacre and Operation Vistula during the period under study. For example, at the opening of a mass grave in Puzhnyky in the Ternopil region, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said that «there can be no complete unity of Ukraine and Poland without all the remains of the victims of the Volyn massacre. We must close that painful wound in the history of both peoples» (Premier: nie może być..., 2023). Joining the discussion about the Volyn massacre, the head of the Sejm Committee on Foreign Affairs, government representative responsible for the reconstruction of Ukraine, Paweł Kowal, expressed the opinion that Ukraine is not directly related to the massacre, because such a country did not exist then (Bogaczyk, 2024). At the same time, the head of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Piotr Gliński, in a letter of intent to establish a museum in memory of the victims of the Wołna Massacre in Chełm, stated that «Roman Shukhevych is directly responsible for the massacre» (Zbieg, 2023).

A lot of space on the news feed in the «Country» section is devoted to the coverage and analysis of the war in Ukraine, in particular, the issues of support for Ukraine, after the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022. Of the total number of publications, materials on this topic make up 32% of the coverage (165 publications).

On the eve of the second anniversary of the widespread war, Polish President Andrzej Duda emphasized in an interview with the BBC: «There would be no war in Ukraine if the country had been admitted to NATO on time. In 2008, after Russia's attack on Georgia» (Niedziński, 2024). A similar opinion was also expressed by James Nixey, an expert at the British Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), head of the Department of Russia and Eurasia. According to him, Poland and other Eastern European countries were right when they warned about Russia. «If the West had heeded these warnings, we would not be in such a situation now. The countries of the former Warsaw Pact, the Baltic countries and the Scandinavian countries were right from the start. And the West thought that they were all Russophobes» (Niedziński, 2023).

In the context of the war in Ukraine, many experts and statesmen emphasize the revival of Russian imperialism, the fact that Russia must not win, because it will not stop at Ukraine and will go further. Because Russia's goal is the destruction of Europe. In particular, Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski stressed: «Helping Ukraine is a way to distance the danger of invasion from Poland. What Putin is doing in Ukraine today – he can do in Poland in a couple of years. Ukraine has given us priceless time, which we have no right to waste» (Karol Kostrzewa, 2024). Marshal of the Sejm Szymon Hołownia emphasized that if «the world does not pay with money for Ukraine to win, the Poles will pay with the blood of their children» (Al Shehabi, 2024).

It also seems logical that the news feed is about countering Russian disinformation campaigns and attacks. Thus, commenting on Putin's infamous interview with Tucker Carlson, Radosław Sikorski refuted the Russian dictator's false narratives, in particular, that Ukraine was invented and about the «placement» of NATO bases in Ukraine (Nicałek, Małecki, 2024).

Stanisław Żaryn, the representative of the Polish government for the security of the information space, makes a lot of effort to debunk the Kremlin's lies. In particular, in his speeches, he refutes the Kremlin's claims that Poland is preparing to attack Ukraine, that it is preparing to attack Belarus, that the Polish government is strengthening its armed forces to carry out aggression against other countries, that Ukraine is threatening the Poles, that Poland is helping Ukraine because it is counting on the occupation of the country, that Ukraine is arming Hamas, that arming Ukraine by the West poses a threat, etc. (Główczewski, 2023; Stańczyk, 2023).

In PAP materials mentioning Ukraine and its historical past as part of the USSR, there are also inaccuracies. For example, Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski said that «The level of repression in modern Russia exceeds the level of repression during the Brezhnev era in the USSR. Now the Gulag is the reality of Russia» (Kostrzewa, 2024). Obviously, the period of repression dates back to the time of J. Stalin, and the Gulag (Russian – Main Directorate of Camps) was completely disbanded in 1960 (Shapoval, 2004). An inaccuracy also occurred in the material dedicated to the anniversary of the Holodomor, which mentions the law on «five ears of corn» (The law was adopted in 1932, 2025), while the text states that people were waiting for «death for the collected ONE ear of corn» (Kurek, 2023).

Among the sources used in the materials of the news agency concerning Ukraine, several groups can be distinguished: world media, in particular,

news agencies: Reuters, Associated Press; television corporations: BBC, CBS, TV Fox, TV MSNBC; global print media and their platforms in networks: YouTube Daily Telegraph, Financial Times, Politico, Brussel PlayBook.

In addition to its own materials, PAP refers to Polish media, in particular, TVP 1, TVP Info, TVN 24, Polsat News, TV Trwam, Program Pierwszy polskiego Radia, Program Trzeci Polskiego Radia, RMF FM, RMF 24, Radio Zet, Radio Gdańsk, Radio Wrocław, TV Trwam, Kanał Zero, Rzeczpospolita, Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, Gazeta Wyborcza, Wprost, Super Express, Kurier Lubelski, Nasz Dziennik, Onet portal.

In materials about protests at the border and about offenses, city police commandant's offices (KMP - Komenda Miejska Policji), for example, the KMP in Chełm, the KMP in Tomaszów, the KMP in Przemyśl, as well as representatives of the border guard service and local authorities, are often used as sources of information.

Many materials contain links to social networks of state authorities in Ukraine and Poland, as well as to the personal profiles of their representatives. Among the popular Polish sources are the X platform (former Twitter) of PiS, Mateusz Morawiecki, Andrzej Duda, Stanisław Żaryn, the Office of the President, Minister of the Chancellery of the Council of Ministers Michał Dworczak, the Minister of Culture Piotr Gliniński, the X General Staff of the Polish Army, as well as the Facebook platform of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mateusz Morawiecki, on which he uploads videos in Live format.

Among the Ukrainian media, the most commonly used links are those to the news agencies Ukrinform, Interfax-Ukraine, to the websites Ukrainska Pravda, focus.ua, the SBU website, the StopFake.org portal. Social networks are also cited, in particular, the Telegram of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, Commander of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Valerii Zaluzhnyi, platform X of the President of Ukraine, Denys Shmyhal, Minister of Economy Yulia Svyrydenko, and the website of the Ministry of Economy.

During the study period, the materials also used references to research institutes – the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Polster Institute for Studies (Instytut Badań Pollster).

Several publications included references to Russian sources, in particular, the Gulagu.net portal and the press service of Yevgeny Prigozhin's Concord company, as well as the Russian edition of the Voice of America.

Links to unidentified sources were recorded, for example, a post by a Telegram user under the

pseudonym Ne Oleksiy (with obscene language) and a link to a senior diplomat of one of the EU countries. Several quotes from Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Valeriy Zaluzhnyi were presented without reference to a specific source.

It is worth noting that both the Ukrainian and Polish sides saw supporting and inciting the conflict over the import of Ukrainian grain into Poland as an influence of and a benefit for Russian propaganda, whose purpose is to incite enmity between Ukraine and European countries, as well as damage the image of partners in each other's eyes. In particular, Tomasz Siemoniak, Minister and Coordinator of the Special Services of Poland, noted that «problems between countries are often inflamed and then used by Russia» (Leszczyńska, Al Shehabi, 2024). We are talking not only about the conflict on the Ukrainian-Polish border, but also about misunderstandings about differences in the interpretation of historic events.

3. Conclusions

An analysis of the «Country» (Kraj) section of the Polish news agency PAP (Polska Agencja Prasowa) shows that the largest number of publications that talk about Ukraine or mention Ukraine during the period under study are materials that focus on the war in Ukraine

and the related issues of comprehensive support for Ukraine and problems with the transportation of Ukrainian grain across the Polish border.

The formation of the modern archetype of Ukraine in foreign media is influenced by traditional archetypal images that convey certain models of behavior and values. In addition, the analysis of the reflection of people's behavior in conflict situations in the media allows us to identify recurring patterns that can be identified as the latest archetypes. Since archetypes are not static, supporting their transformation is urgently needed. In particular, the analysis of materials, their topics and the used information sources gives grounds to assert that there is a need to increase Ukraine's information presence in the European, and in particular, in the Polish information space through strengthening cooperation between news agencies of other European countries that are members of the European Alliance of News Agencies EANA.

It is also necessary to fill in the information gaps related to the historic past of Ukraine in its relations with Poland and other European countries. After all, the perception of the state by a foreign audience depends on the archetype of Ukraine broadcast in the media. It is important to emphasize that Ukraine is gradually transforming from the image of a victim to a security manufacturer.

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