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POPULARIZATION OF THE POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE BY USING MEDIA RESOURCES IN UKRAINE

Abstract: Complicated situation in Ukraine's modern politics and mass media requires an examination of the historical background, in particular the situation of Ukrainian mass media on the eve of the elections to the Parliament of Ukraine on 28 October 2012. The main objective of the study is to analyze the activities and development tendencies of Ukrainian mass media on the eve of parliamentary elections of 2012. Methodology of the research is based on the use of historical and comparative-historical method in the analysis of the political content in mass media. The effect of information transmission as a factor of election influencing the mass media, the effect of political content carriers of the mass media, specialties of a particular mass media group activities are analyzed. The methodology for complex analysis of the mass media in election conditions is proposed.

Keywords: elections, government authorities, mass media, freedom, censorship

The relevance of the presented research is caused by several factors that cover information interaction issues between the media and government on the eve of elections. The realities of Ukrainian political and mass media space models of 2014–2015 make us seek not only causes of the state in which media find itself now, but also historical parallels with the past, when the problems of the present Ukrainian media appeared. Continuation of the political and mass media processes in Ukraine is evident[1]. Therefore, the problem of causality is raised in the development of mass media space[2]. Events taking place now in Ukraine, in particular, are the result of parliamentary elections in Ukraine, held on 28 October 2012. It is election time that

[1] O. Mitchuk, *Ukrainian Liberal Media Culture in the Social Communications*, Rivne 2014, p. 320.
[2] T. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, Akademycheskyj proekt, Moscow 2000, p. 880.

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is perhaps the most revealing not only in political orientations of Ukrainian media, but also in the mass media likes or dislikes of government authorities. Therefore, the problem of organization of the media during the election period is updated. Information transmission causes quite clear transformation. It is provided by the fact that over time the entire volume of information, showing dramatic changes of status, external features, themes, style and vocabulary, remains a demanded phenomenon in society. Hence, the effect of carrier of certain political media content as a point, a specific information pattern of shadow information source, which actually stands for the media, is updated. In the run up to elections, in the context of information, the most functional load falls on a specific group of media, each of which serves as a professional communicator, whereas information and analysis are its main social and professional purpose. Therefore, the problem of analysis of specific group of the media in election conditions is raised.

Aspects of the problem of information interaction of the media and government during the election period have become the object of research interest. Attention is drawn to the works of Ukrainian scientists who analyzed some aspects of the media during the election period, including works of V. Rizun (analysis of the behavior of the audience during the election period), V. Ivanov (analysis of the structure of the media during the election period, content and analysis of media materials), O. Chekmysheva (analysis of media appearances through the prism of compliance with standards of journalism), G. Pocheptsov (level of information stress in preparation for the elections). But generally, the problem remains not solved.

The aim of research is to analyze the activities and development tendencies of Ukrainian mass media on the eve of parliamentary elections in October 2012. Achieving this goal requires solving the following tasks: to analyze the effect of information transmission as an important factor of media functioning before election period; to explore the features of organization of media during the election period; to organize the effect of carriers of certain political content of the media; to offer the specific analysis of media in pre electoral terms. However, the whole problem is relevant.

The realities of Ukrainian political and mass media space of 2014–2015 show that the political conditions for the functioning of the media in Ukraine may lead to various forms of pathology of media market as well as to manipulation of public opinion. After a period of relative freedom in 2005–2010, the phenomenon of direct or indirect effects of government and business media control in Ukraine grew, what reversed the gains of the Orange Revolution in the sphere of media functioning. Media in Ukraine fulfilled the control functions i.e. to spread reliable information about the situation in the country and the world, which make public government officials, policy makers and politicians.

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The main causes of this phenomenon are: the concentration of the mainstream media in the hands of the largest Ukrainian oligarchs whose economic interests depend on the government; the use of media tools to deal with the political opposition and the business; focused management and control of the media by the authorities; repression against media that criticize government; the lack of independent public broadcasting. As a result, the impact of the media on the political process on the eve of parliamentary elections on October 28, 2012 was insufficient. Within five years after the Orange Revolution (2005–2010), media and journalism in Ukraine developed in conditions of relative freedom. Expanding of pluralism of political positions and objectivity in the media were considered one of the major achievements of the Orange Revolution. The owners of the largest media holdings almost seemed to have restored power and renewed a tight control of information policy, taking a conformist position on the formation of media content that is not provided and not to provoke conflict with authority and violate the democratic rights of journalists. As a result, on the eve of the parliamentary election in 2012, the most popular TV channels and print media supported the authority of the government and refrained from its criticism. The government operated a number of management tools of mass media, particularly in the form of financial and administrative penalties, which could negatively affect major media business companies of oligarchs.

On the eve of parliamentary elections of Ukraine significantly increased the number of violations of journalists' rights and freedom of speech. Critical to business freedom of speech was providing substantial preferences for pro-government media in regulatory sense. In 2010, the National Council for Radio and Television provided two additional frequencies – opposition Channel TVI and Channel 5 – to TV Channel "Inter" – the ruling and loyal to the new government. In August 2011, a television broadcaster TVI did not receive a license to broadcast in digital versions, which is mandatory for broadcasters from 2015[3]. A number of cable television broadcasting operators were forced to leave the market, some were obliged to resign from the package or remove objectionable speech opposing to the government channels, or move them to more expensive packages[4].

Symbiosis of the owners of the media and members of authorities leads to many pathologies. The most negative phenomena which appeared in the last months before parliamentary elections in Ukraine are: state censorship, which manifested itself in pressure on media owners and journalists of primarily news programs, as well as editors of local and regional newspapers; self-censorship of journalists and owners,

[3] Majdan (2012), *„Volya" turn off TVI?* [online] http://maidan.org.ua/2012/08/volya-vidkly uchaje-tvi/ [accessed: 23.03.2015].

[4] Telekritika (2011), *Journalist day 2011: in whose street festival* [online] http://www.telekritika.ua/prava/2011–06-06/63408 [accessed: 23.03.2015].

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that was embodied as an independent journalist limiting factor selecting the interpretation of evidence that was favorable to political or economic interests of the dominant medium.

Another common phenomenon in the Ukrainian media at the time was „jeans" – politically structured media order, which was paid for outside or aimed at promoting (*zamazuha*) or discrediting (*chornuha*) those who are disloyal to government entities, structures, interest. In August 2012, the leaders of „jeans" were such TV channels as: UT-1, TRK „Ukraine", ICTV[5]. Content analysis revealed that the leader of „jeans" in the print media sector was a daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda in Ukraine*, which contained about 20% of hidden political advertising[6]. Some regional media, whose role in the parliamentary elections was particularly important, contained 40% of such information[7].

Other pathology of Ukrainian media of appointed period was manipulation of public opinion through tangible lack of balance in the choice of politicians and commentators invited to the studio or in the newspaper. Main opposition politicians and parties suffered from marginalization, at the same time pro-government politicians were frequent visitors. The specific media practices of outlined period was that, despite noticeable regression of speech freedom in Ukraine, the society was more inclined to trust the media than not to trust: trust – 40%, did not trust – 28%[8]. However, almost 60% of respondents believed that the media operate in conditions of Ukrainian political censorship[9].

In Ukraine, there was a segment of the public media, but except UT-1, they did not play a significant role. The media was concentrated in the hands of a few political and business groups.

The key players of the media market on the eve of parliamentary elections in 2012 are television, newspapers, the Internet.

Television. According to public opinion polls in Ukraine, about 78% of public information on the situation in the country and the world comes from televi-

[5] Tyzhden.ua (2012), *TV channels Pinchuk and Akhmetov in August led in the number „jeans"* [online] http://tyzhden.ua/News/59731 [accessed: 23.03.2015].

[6] Vybory.mediasapiens.ua (2012), *Every fifth material in „Komsomolskaya Pravda" has elements of „jeans"* [online] http://vybory.mediasapiens.ua/2012/09/10/kozhen-p-yatyj-material-v-komsomolskoj-pravde-je-dzhynsoyu-imi/ [accessed: 23.03.2015].

[7] Tyzhden.ua (2012), *Study: every fifth publication in the regional media – „jeans"* [online] http://tyzhden.ua/News/54318 [accessed: 23.03.2015].

[8] Sociologichni ta marketyngovi doslidzhennya (2012), *The dynamics of the population's attitude to Ukraine sociological research* [online] http://kiis.com.ua/ua/news/view-152.html [accessed: 23.03.2015].

[9] Centr Razumkova (2012), *The survey: is there political censorship in Ukraine?* [online] http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=563 [accessed: 23.03.2015].

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sion[10]. This segment of the media market is largely monopolized by capital management group, often linked politically. Opposition television channel, which was quite moderately critical of the government or the opposition, had a much smaller audience. The popularity of television broadcasters and presented information products unquestioningly affect the level of outreach. This is especially the case with true flagship products, such as political talk shows with politicians, journalists, experts and the public[11].

Press. 40% of Ukraine's population indicated the print media as the main source of information[12]. Among the media covering national issues at stake, newspapers accounted for only 1–3% of content that newspaper as a means of spreading information contained distinct regional content.

Internet. As of mid-2012, the Internet was the main source of information for 17% of the population of Ukraine and one of the fastest growing segments of the media[13]. As in 2012, most print publications, television and specific programs have opened their own online versions. Quite a large proportion of printed magazines have online equivalents distributed over the Internet. The dynamic development of the media on the Internet and exchange of information through social networks are accompanied with a decrease in the popularity of traditional media such as television, radio and print media.

The motivation for using the network, however, is determined as the feature of the Ukrainian Internet. Lack of public broadcasting, high level of manipulation of public opinion and the low representation of social interests in traditional media forced Ukrainians to become supporters of searching objective and pluralistic media in such alternative sources as the Internet.

During the two years before the parliamentary elections in Ukraine in 2012, there was a systematic restriction of freedom of speech. This restriction of civil liberties is confirmed in the reports of international non-governmental organizations which make research for the protection of democracy, political freedom and human rights. Thus, in the ranking of speech freedom, prepared by the organization Reporters Without Borders in 2009, Ukraine ranked 89th, and in 2011–116th. According

[10] Media business (2012), *Results of the season political show* [online] www.mediabusiness.com.ua/?option=com_content&task=view&id=31115&Itemid [accessed: 23.03.2015].

[11] Telekritika (2006), *The results of content analysis of electronic and print media in the pre-election period* [online] http://www.telekritika.ua/monitoring-archive/2006–04-11/6833 [accessed: 23.03.2015].

[12] Live Internet (2012), *Top sites* [online] http://www.liveinternet.ru/rating/ua/ [accessed: 23.03.2015].

[13] Ukrayins`ka blogosfera (2012), *In Mind: number of Internet users in Ukraine continues to grow* [online] http://blogosphere.com.ua/2012/07/27/internet-users-in-ukraine-inmind [accessed: 23.03.2015].

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to the degree of democratic freedoms in the annual report *Freedom House*, Ukraine lost the status of „free" and moved to the status to „partly free" countries[14]. Philosophy of preparation for the upcoming parliamentary elections led to the situation when the authorities at all levels increased pressure to all criticism in the media. Opposition candidates had limited access to the most popular media.

Thus, the methodology of complex analysis of the media functioning in pre-electoral conditions is based on the following system study: information transmission as an important factor of pre-electoral functioning of the media; characteristics of the media during the election period; the specific implementation of a particular political content of the media; features of a particular group of media in electoral terms. On the eve of 2012, parliamentary elections have become all-embracing phenomenon of media's control functions coagulation as far as the transmission of reliable information on the situation in the world is concerned. This was caused by the concentration of the mainstream media in the hands of the largest Ukrainian oligarchs, using media tools to deal with the political and business opposition; management and control of the media by the authorities in the way they need; repression of the media as well as the lack of independent public broadcasting. Fusion interests of media owners and authorities led to the development of such negative phenomena as the growth of state censorship and self-censorship of journalists and owners. The most popular TV channels and print media supported the government authority and refrain from its criticism as authorities used such tools of mass media management as the imposition of financial and administrative penalties, providing significant preferences for pro-government media in regulatory sense. On the eve of elections to the Parliament of Ukraine significantly increased the number of violations of journalists' rights and freedom of speech, media pathology became stronger and the public had quite limited access to adequate and reliable information.

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