

Conceptualizing Europe in Ukrainian News Media Discourse

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Abstract

The subtle connection between European and Ukrainian identities is based on three axes: spatial, temporal and mental. Except for obvious connections existing by virtue of geographical position, historical processes, and political relations (in the past, present, and in the projected future), it is also possible to speak about shared and/or newly-adopted values and attitudes. This report is based on the analysis of a large corpus of data collected from Ukrainian weekly news starting from the Revolution of Dignity (November 2013) until November 2019, and offers insights into the features of the way Europe is conceptualized in Ukrainian news media of the period. The results of a previous research by Polegkyi (2016) are used as a basic framework for this analysis. He determined three major frames of conceptualizing Europe in Ukraine: Europe as a civilizational choice, Europe as an instrument for inner change, and Europe in geopolitical confrontation. These frames, relying on linguistic representation in news reports, are further elaborated on in the present paper, in terms of the conceptual metaphors constructing them.

Keywords

news media discourse

frame semantics

conceptual metaphor

Background

What is Europe? The question finds its universal answer for every person in the world in its encyclopaedic definition: “Europe, second smallest of the world’s continents, composed of the westward-projecting peninsulas of Eurasia (the great landmass that it shares with Asia) and occupying nearly one-fifteenth of the world’s total land area” (Berentsen, 2022). But conceptually, the answer would vary across representatives of different cultures, across adherents of different political views, ideologies, religions, and even across people with different negative or positive, purely personal experiences. The answers to this question would obviously depend on a subjective respondent, since Europe is in the eye of the beholder.

This article makes an attempt to find an answer to what Europe is, and to what being European means in the conceptual system of the Ukrainian people. Europe has always been playing a significant role in the formation of Ukrainian national identity, which has always gravitated between two powerful “Others”: the West (Europe) and the East (Russia). And since ‘any self-identification entails a struggle with alterity’, and ‘simultaneously involves a degree of self-reflection and a measure of projection onto the world of others seen as the world one wants either to associate with or dissociate from’ (Zaleska-Onyshkevych & Rewakowicz 2009: xv), this research will inevitably raise a discussion of three players in the triangle: Europe, Ukraine, and Russia.

The subtle connection between Europe and Ukraine is based on three major axes: spatial, temporal and mental, which, at the same time, is also true regarding the connection between Russia and Ukraine. The spatial dimension is self-evident: geographically Ukraine belongs to Eastern Europe, and is located between European countries and Russia.

In terms of the temporal dimension, Ukraine has a long-shared history both with Europe and with Russia. The temporal component, however, is associated not only with the historical past, but also with the present and with a projection of the future, as can be seen from geopolitical processes which started with the collapse of the USSR, and the events which have taken place over the past decades, where Ukraine had to choose which direction to follow: the West or the East. Its geographical position and long historical contacts (including the spheres of politics, economics, and culture) with the West and the East have created common ground for a degree of mental unity with both neighbours. But at the same time, the question of “choice” and the party to “associate with” or “disassociate from” remains an issue. As noted by Aaron Brantly (2019: 362), “Ukraine straddles the divide between Europe and Eurasia, and, consequently, European Union and Russian influence”.

However, there is evidence that for years Ukrainians have been in favour of the European direction. The report of the nationwide poll of public opinion of the population of

Ukraine *European Integration of Ukraine: Dynamics of Public Opinion*¹, comparing data from surveys conducted in preceding years, showed that Ukrainians tend to see their country as a member of the European Union, rather than of the Eurasian Economic Union with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The responses of Ukrainians to the question ‘If you were to choose only one option, then which Union, in your opinion, should Ukraine join in the long run?’ are presented in Table 1, and clearly indicate that the percentage of those who favour European choice has been growing steadily.

Table 1. European Integration of Ukraine: Dynamics of Public Opinion, %

	May 2013	March 2014	May 2014	October 2017	August 2018	November 2019
European Union	41.7	45.3	50.5	49.3	50.7	52.6
Eurasian Economic Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan	31.0	21.6	21.4	10.8	10.9	12.9
Do not join either the European or the Eurasian Unions	13.5	19.6	17.4	26.3	32.5	24.0
Hard to say	13.7	13.4	10.6	13.5	5.9	10.5

At this point, it should also be stressed that the preferences of Ukrainians are not homogeneous. The same poll showed that the situation differs across regions (see Table 2): the closer to Russian borders and Crimea the more people are inclined to favour Russia; however, the European direction is still more desired.

Table 2. Public opinion by region, 2019

	West	Centre	South	East
European Union	70.6	59.9	31.6	33.7
Eurasian Economic Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan	3.2	6.8	23.8	26.8
Do not join either the European or the Eurasian Unions	17.5	22.3	31.2	29.4
Hard to say	8.7	11.0	13.4	10.1

Even though the question of who to follow or who to join has been pending for Ukraine since it gained independence in 1991, the issue became a burning one at the end of 2013. In November 2013, the Revolution of Dignity or Euromaidan Revolution broke out when,

as a result of economic and political pressure exerted by Russia, then incumbent President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich and his government, decided to stall the ratification of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and European Union. Upon this decision, people virtually flooded the streets demanding to reverse it, their major slogan being “*Ukraine is Europe!*” With over 1,000 people injured and killed, the President fled the country by the end of February. In March 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, and in early April the armed conflict broke out in the East of Ukraine, with the subsequent proclamation of the largely unrecognized quasi-states of Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics with the support of the Russian Federation; the conflict has not been resolved yet.² In this turbulent period, Europe has not been standing aside, actively participating in the geopolitical game. Rich in public and political debate and confrontation, disturbing and tragic events, economic instability, this timeframe has been chosen as the background for the present analysis with the aim to show how Europe is conceptualized in Ukrainian mass media of the given period.

At this point, I would like to stress that this article does not represent any attempt at a political analysis, but solely an analysis of representation of Europe in Ukrainian news media discourse of the period stated (from November 2013 to November 2019).

Materials & Methods

The data for the present analysis were retrieved from “TSN Tyzhden” (Television Service of News Weekly) on Ukrainian channel “1+1”, from a total of 44 issues (November 2013 - November 2014), and 20 issues randomly chosen from each season in the subsequent years, where a total of 256 news stories featuring Europe were found. The overall dataset is represented by 1,079 expressions subjected to frame semantics analysis.

In order to obtain the broadest picture of how Europe is conceptualized in Ukrainian mass media, it was decided to include in the analysis all references to Europe and the European Union, European organizations (and their representatives/officers), international organizations with European participation, separate European countries (and their official leaders), as well as references to European lifestyle. It should be noted here that interviews and citations of any foreign representatives were not included in the analysis; only those produced by Ukrainian journalists, politicians, experts and interviewees were eligible.

The overall framework for this analysis is based on findings from previous research conducted by Oleksii Poleykyi (2016), who has analyzed the framing of European integration in Ukrainian newspapers during the 2005-2010 period and has defined three master frames: ‘Civilizational Choice’, ‘Instrument for Inner Change’, and ‘Geopolitical Confrontation’. Based on these findings, the hypothesis that these frames remain relevant today has been adopted, and that they are enriched by a further array of concepts, which are investigated here in more detail.

Overall, the analysis follows the logic of frame semantics developed by Lawrence Barsalou (1992), who suggests that frames are constructed of sets of attributes and their values. Thus, Europe would be described as, for example, a union (attribute) on a certain territory (value), of certain size (value), with certain governmental bodies (value), etc. The results of such an analysis would provide a meticulous encyclopaedic-like description of Europe. However, practical analysis of the linguistic material showed, even from the preliminary stage, that the research would not be sufficient without addressing more abstract units than attributes and values in their classical reading. Therefore, inspired by the theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), attributes in frame semantics scheme were re-thought as conceptual metaphors. Both theories were integrated into a methodology, which schematically follows the logic presented in Figure 1.

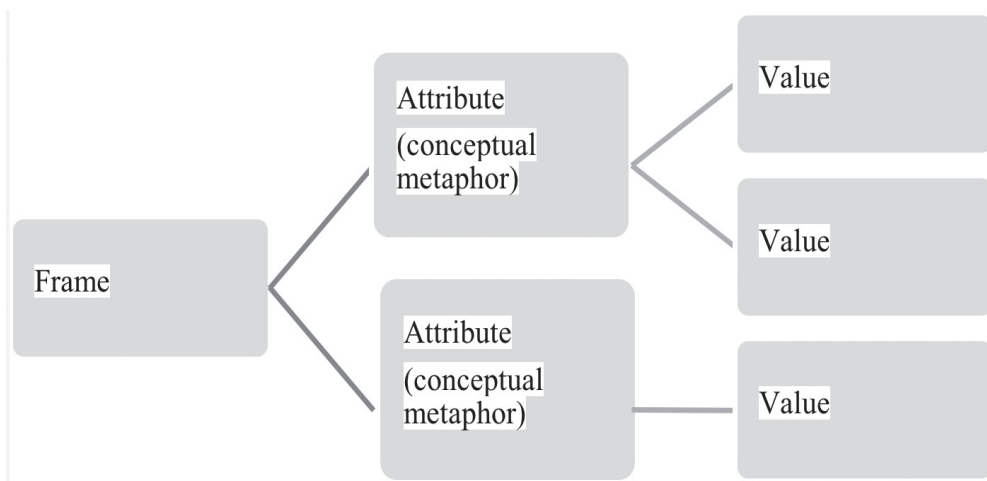


Figure 1. Integrated methodology for semantic frame analysis

It should be noted that this is just a schematic representation of the analysis followed in this paper, which means that the frames discussed below contain varying numbers of attributes (re-thought of as conceptual metaphors), which are further specified by varying numbers of values (verbalized representations of meanings).

Given that frames are dynamic relational structures consisting of attributes-values sets, which are flexible and context-dependent, at the preliminary stage it was expected that, upon completion of this research, the findings would show certain fluctuations in the way Europe is conceptualized within the boundaries of the three frames proposed above, with certain attributes and values being made salient depending on specific contexts.

The Analysis

All the conceptual metaphors found were distributed between three major frames representing Europe in Ukrainian news media discourse: Europe as a civilizational choice of Ukraine, Europe as an instrument for inner change in Ukraine, and Europe as a player in geopolitical confrontation (see Table 3). Some of the metaphors are present simultaneously in two frames (like PARTNER), or even in all three frames (PERSON). This is not pure coincidence; the frames intersect, and one and the same concept may appear in different discursive contexts and become part of a different frame. For example, the conceptual metaphor EUROPE IS DONOR/CREDITOR was found in the context of Europe making investments in Ukrainian economy, which allows placing it in the frame of instrument of inner change; at the same time, when this metaphor appears in the context of Europe providing funding for the Ukrainian army, it belongs to the frame of geopolitical confrontation.

Table 3. Framing of Europe in Ukrainian News Media Discourse & Major Conceptual Metaphors

EUROPE		
<i>Civilizational Choice</i>	<i>Instrument for Inner Change</i>	<i>Player in Geopolitical Confrontation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERSON • DREAM / HOPE • JOURNEY • BUILDING • HOME • FAMILY • EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE • QUALITY / STANDARDS • VALUES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERSON <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MENTOR / TEACHER – PARTNER – DONOR / CREDITOR – SUPERVISOR / AUTHORITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERSON <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PARTNER / ALLY – DONOR / CREDITOR – SUPERVISOR / AUTHORITY – PEACEMAKER / DIPLOMAT – VICTIM • FAMILY • EXCLUSIVE CLUB • POWER • UNION • VALUES

Another point to be made here is the relation between concepts. For example, in the frame of geopolitical confrontation, there are five attributes, and one of the attributes, namely, PERSON, has five values. Furthermore, as the discussion below will show, the attributes and values given in this table can be further subdivided into specifying values. This corresponds to the logic of George Lakoff:

A state is conceptualized as a person, engaging in social relations within a world community. Its land-mass is its home. It lives in a neighborhood, and has neighbors, friends and enemies. States are seen as having inherent dispositions: they can be peaceful or aggressive, responsible or irresponsible, industrious or lazy. (Lakoff, 1992: 465)

Here the concept of a STATE has the immediate attribute PERSON with the values of NEIGHBOR, FRIEND, and ENEMY, which in turn may further become more specific. Except for the ability to engage in social relations and have certain dispositions, as suggested by Lakoff, the metaphor of PERSON in conceptualizing states, and broader units like Europe, arises from perfectly human characteristics: emotions, mental states/activities, and even bodily features. Let's consider a few examples³: 'The European Union will now *feel offended* and will leave'; 'Europe is *shocked*'; 'Europe is *concerned*' (TSN 24.11.2013); 'Europe *has changed its opinion* of Ukraine because of the invincible will of the people'; 'Without official EU membership, *the heart of Europe started beating* in Kyiv' (TSN 23.02.2014).

Following the adopted framework, the conceptual metaphor EUROPE IS PERSON consists of the attribute PERSON and three values: emotions, mental states/activities, and bodily features.

Europe as a Civilizational Choice of Ukraine

In most general terms, the frame where Europe is conceptualized as a civilizational choice of Ukraine is closely related to the aspirations of Ukrainians to join the European Community rather than hold on to the ancestry of Russian Imperialism and the Soviet Union. Politically, the latter would mean joining Eurasian Economic Union (together with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan). The overall sentiment is clearly positive, looking at the bright side (regarding Western perspective), as opposed to the grim one (which is East-oriented). It is also notable that previous research and contemplations about a civilizational choice of Ukraine, reaching back to the first decade of the 2000s (cf. Zaleska-Onyshkevych & Rewakowicz 2009, Pachlovska 2009, Yavorska & Bogomolov 2010, Polegkyi 2016), bear similar implications. This is well-supported by the citation from Zaleska Onyshkevych & Rewakowicz:

Ukrainians are not looking for a "roadmap to Europe" since they feel that they have always been there – even during the periods when parts of Ukraine were in different empires or under different political regimes. Obviously, there have been some gaps and divergences, but Ukrainians feel that they share a *common culture* and *common values* with the rest of Europe, a culture that is reflected and manifested in so many fields. (Zaleska-Onyshkevych and Rewakowicz, 2009: xiii-xiv)

The frame of civilizational choice roughly translates as follows: Ukraine has a DREAM to go back (JOURNEY) HOME (BUILDING, FAMILY), because it is an example of GOOD PRACTICE, QUALITY, and STANDARDS, and because of shared VALUES. Let's consider an example where several metaphors are activated simultaneously, namely, that of a dream, values, and standards: 'Association Agreement with the European Union for ma-

ny Ukrainians was a *hope for a better life at home*, it is *Europe in their own country: freedom, democracy and standards of living*' (TSN 23.03.2014).

Even though the metaphor of Europe as a dream or hope appeared in quite pessimistic context, e.g. EU supporters have an *ephemeral hope* of signing the association; the tone is *fatal*, they write about *the death of the hopes* of the Eastern partnership (TSN 24.11.2013), the Association Agreement was signed, albeit the process took longer than it was expected; and the focus now shifted to the dream of EU membership.⁴

Europe and European integration are also conceptualized as a JOURNEY, e.g. The European Union is our *priority way* (TSN 1.06.2014); Ukraine's European integration *path* is our undeniable strategy (TSN 24.11.2013). Moreover, this is a journey home. Even the metaphor of Europe as a BUILDING (with doors and windows) appears in the contexts suggesting that Europe is waiting and welcoming Ukraine, e.g., the *doors* to signing the Association Agreement *remain open* in the future; a new *window* appeared for the agreement (TSN 24.11.2013). The metaphor of Europe being a common HOME overlaps with the metaphor of FAMILY. As can be seen in the example from a reportage from the Vilnius Summit 2013 where Ukraine and EU were supposed to sign the Association Agreement, both metaphors are activated by phrases like "closely connected", "integral part", and "reunion", which suggest the idea of reunion with family at common home: 'It is a palace of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, *closely connected* with Ukraine. Kyiv has been an *integral part* of its history since Prince Volodymyr. And the attempt at a *new reunion* right here in Vilnius is very symbolic' (TSN 1.12.2013).

The metaphor of Europe being an EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE is implicitly developed through stories about various aspects of life and lifestyle in Europe. Some of these stories are presented comparing the situation in Ukraine with that in Europe, and some are presented on their own; however, the implications are clear: all these stories are about those aspects of life which in Ukraine need urgent improvement, reconsideration, and reforming. For example, there are stories about efficient police, who are protecting people, namely, the stories about police action during terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015, and Barcelona in 2017 (TSN 7.06.2015, 20.08.2014), and the example of reforms implemented in Poland, which resulted in a high level of trust to police among population (TSN 16.02.2014). Regarding law and justice, numerous references are made to transparent European courts.

The rules are also transparent for business, 'small and medium business, which in Europe is the basis of economy, and democracy is supported by governments' (TSN 29.06.2014). This is exemplified, for instance, with comparing loans for businesses in Ukraine and the EU: 'If now we have loans for agricultural machinery at 27% rate, in the European Union a similar loan costs only 1-2%'.

Europeans are not spendthrifts, who would waste budget money on unnecessary luxury. As Ukrainian government claimed: 'we are moving towards *European practice*,

which means that we will have one car per ministry' (TSN 9.03.2014).

The concept of saving as a feature pertinent to Europeans appears in stories about energy-efficient and energy-saving households. A piece of advice given to Ukrainians on how to deal with rising utility costs based on experience from Germany reads as follows: '*Save. Follow the example of Europe*, where they pay only for the services they actually receive. It means *meticulously counting*, equipping every pipe and every wire with meters' (TSN 6.04.2014). Another example comes from the story about "utilities paradise" in Finland: 'the secret of the Finnish life: *save everything that is in your power*' (TSN 30.04.2017).

Multiple stories show Europe as corruption-free, with examples from countries that were able to eradicate corruption: 'Romania's experience shows that no know-how is needed; the main tool in the fight against corruption is the law' (TSN 24.06.2018). Corruption as something inadmissible refers not only to European officials, but also to businesses. Here the Ukrainian reality is used as a juxtaposition. As a Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Environment said: '[...] the misunderstanding occurred when officials (Ukrainian) were hinting at the need for a rollback, and *none European civilized business* was ready to work under such conditions' (TSN 28.08.2016). At the same time, one news story still referred to 'a long and very *scandalous corruption epic* in FIFA' (TSN 28.02.2016), however, this seemed to be an exception to the rule, since the general image of Europe vigorously constructed in Ukrainian news is overwhelmingly positive.

'People live there, but do not exist' (TSN 24.11.2013). This is the phrase showing how the quality of life and standards of living in Europe are construed by Ukrainians. The metaphor Europe is QUALITY/STANDARDS is realized through numerous references to prosperity and welfare, higher salaries, high quality and high standards of education and healthcare, high quality of food and quality control, strict rules on labeling products, convenient modern transport and safe traffic, cleanliness and order.

Europe is further conceptualized through values, such as democratic rights and freedoms, the rule of law, respect for cultural, ethnic, linguistic diversity of European countries, integrity, and solidarity.

Instrument for Inner Changes

Europe is also represented in Ukrainian news media as an instrument for inner change in Ukraine, mainly in the sphere of economics and modernization, politics, and strengthening democracy and justice. It is notable that, in this context, Europe is understood as having higher standards, and joining Europe is, therefore, seen as an impetus for Ukraine to adopt those standards by means of implementing reforms to adjust the laws and regulations in Ukraine to those of the EU.

The first metaphor which belongs to this frame is that of a MENTOR / TEACHER, who advises, teaches, gives homework, evaluates the results, rewards or criticizes:

[...] *as advised by Europe*, calls for violence, racial discrimination and intolerance will be punished (TSN 19.01.2014);

Europe does not offer anyone specific money, but *teaches* how to make one's own money (TSN 24.11.2013);

[...] but de jure Ukrainians are not able to take advantage of *the preferences that Europe has provided*, due to [...] Ukraine's *failure to complete homework* (TSN 7.06.2015);

The European Commission is waiting for the official publication of the text of the new law in order to *analyze* it and give their *assessment* (TSN 28.04.2019);

The EU will *evaluate* such successes of legislators (TSN 7.06.2015).

When more than 10 of these controversial laws that are considered by the West as restricting the rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens have been passed, *concern and criticism* of the very content of the laws *were expressed* (TSN 19.01.2014).

The metaphor also becomes more specific with other values. Europe is depicted as a MENTOR / TEACHER who is goal-oriented, highly-qualified, strict, objective, and just. Europe is conceptualized as a PARTNER of Ukraine, which means close involvement and cooperation in the sphere of trade and economics, security policy, and even support of church autonomy:

[...] the European Union *unilaterally introduced a free trade zone* with Ukraine by removing duties on its goods (TSN 29.06.2014);

The West [...] has already announced its *intention to overcome the Ukrainian crisis* (TSN 9.02.2014);

We appeal to our European *partners* to extend the mandate of the mission (TSN 1.12.2013);

[...] *joint security policies will be signed*, which is a symbol, a *manifestation of EU support* for Ukrainian independence and territorial integrity (TSN 9.03.2014);

Church of Cyprus *declares support* for Ukrainian autocephaly [...] We were *supported*, the Russians were criticized unprecedentedly (TSN 24.02.2019).

Even though in most cases Europe is described as increasingly loyal to Ukraine in terms of partnership, still a few news stories showed traces of disillusionment with the rhetoric and actions of some European countries. The first example, which appeared in December 2013 when the signing of the Association was still uncertain, shows the concerns Ukrainians had over a blurry European future:

Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras was in Brussels this week, talking

about Greece's *priorities* during the country's presidency of the European Union [...] *He remembered everything, but did not mention either the Eastern Partnership, or Ukraine* (TSN 8.12.2013).

Another example transpired in the news story about the law on education (signed in 2017), under which the language of instruction in Ukrainian schools is the state language, i.e. Ukrainian; however, national minorities are guaranteed the right to study their language in public educational facilities alongside Ukrainian. This was met with "sharp reaction" from European states, who felt that the rights of indigenous people of respective ethnicity were violated in Ukraine:

[...] our state felt the *sharp reaction* [...] Foreign Ministries of several European countries – Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary – *expressed their dissatisfaction* with the law [...] *Hungary's statements became sharp, the conflict moved to an unprecedented level: threats from official Budapest to block any actions of Ukraine on European integration issues are a powerful blow with the taste of blackmailing* (TSN 8.10.2017).

Europe is also conceptualized as a potential DONOR/CREDITOR who, depending on political and economic situation, may consider providing Ukraine with loans and investments, reduce or stall such cooperation, or require preliminary implementation of reforms:

EU *agrees to discuss financial compensation for possible losses* of Ukraine from signing the Association Agreement and free trade agreement (TSN 15.12.2013);

There is only one promise: money from Europe is a *long-term investment* aimed at the *economic growth* of the whole country (TSN 9.02.2014);

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is *reducing cooperation* with Ukraine, and the European Investment Bank *brings it at halt* (TSN 23.02.2014);

The Ukrainian government has only a few months for reforms [...] without international support, Ukraine is going to face default. And *donors* will give money *only when they see active reforms* (TSN 1.02.2015).

Furthermore, Europe is represented as a SUPERVISOR / AUTHORITY with the power to influence internal matters in Ukraine. This authority requires and demands, evaluates, recognizes, condemns or even threatens:

EU *requires* guarantees (TSN 15.12.2013);

Europe *does not offer* big money, but *requires* to work a lot (TSN 24.11.2013);

[...] the president signed the so-called «visa-free laws» this week. This is an anti-corruption package that the EU *demand*ed to introduce a visa-free regime for the Ukrainians. Now the European Commission is examining these laws (TSN 7.06.2015);

[...] Europe wanted to say that a legitimate government has *recognition*, now legally (TSN 23.03.2014);

The international community *condemned* the power dispersal of the Maidan [...] Great Britain, Sweden and Italy *summoned* Ukrainian ambassadors for *clarifications* (TSN 1.12.2013)

[...] diplomats of the democratic world [...] *will conduct an investigation* into the actions of the current government (TSN 8.12.2013);

[...] Angela Merkel [...] *should have used diplomatic levers*, now world leaders are *closely following* the political process (TSN 23.02.2014)

The West *threatens* with personal sanctions (TSN 22.12.2013).

Overall, the frame exhibiting Europe as an instrument for inner change in Ukraine shows that it is a challenging task to become part of the European community. If there is compliance with demanding Europe, and implementation of required reforms, the dream may become a reality. It is also worth mentioning that the situation has changed considerably since the early 2010s, where, as suggested by Korosteleva (2012: 83), “EU – Ukraine relations could at best be described as declaratory, binding in rhetoric but shallow in action. [...] Ukraine blames EU for the lack of adequate incentives and the EU deflects the remorse by pointing to Ukraine’s slow progress in adopting the EU regulatory acquis” (2012: 83).

However, on 1st September 2017, the EU – Ukraine Association Agreement entered fully into force, and it commits Ukraine to economic, financial, and judicial reforms in order to converge its legislation with the EU. The EU on its part agrees to provide Ukraine with political and financial support, access to EU markets, research and knowledge. Moreover, the agreement promotes gradual convergence toward the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy and European Defence Agency policies, which is vital for Ukraine in the view of the threat from the Eastern neighbour.

A Player in Geopolitical Confrontation

By virtue of several interrelated factors Ukraine has found itself in the centre of geopolitical confrontation between the West and Russia in terms of politics and ideology. First and foremost, this is due to its geographical position, which has influenced demographic, socio-cultural, ideological, and economic factors within its present boundaries throughout history. In the time of the Cold War, when Ukraine (along with a number of other

states, some of which now belong to the European Union) was part of the Soviet Union, there was the derogatory term “rotting / decaying West” to define mainly the USA and Old Europe. After the USSR collapsed, the term has gradually gone out of use, however, the basis of the concept, the West, without any additional hostile propagandistic attributes, started being strongly associated with progress, democracy, freedoms, high quality of life, peace, and welfare. On the contrary, Russia is strongly associated with radically polar concepts, and the ancestry of the USSR, which explains the wish of most Ukrainians to follow in the European direction, e.g. ‘I want to go to the European Union because I really do not want to go back to the USSR’ (TSN 24.11. 2013). Furthermore, Ukraine has become a battlefield of polar ideologies, which resulted in separatism encouraged by Russia. In an interview, Mustafa Dzhemilev, the leader of the Crimean Tatar National Movement and Ukrainian politician, compares Ukraine with a battlefield between civilized and predator world:

The *battle* for Ukraine has long gone beyond its borders. The state urgently needs to somehow change its foreign policy orientation. It is impossible to be equidistant from *civilized European countries* and from *predator countries* that want to bite off a piece. (TSN 2.03.2014)

It is notable that this state of affairs was apparent and predictable long before the events in question, as Oxana Pachlovska suggested:

If the European code of Ukrainian culture wins, a *reintegration* of Ukraine into the European space will take place, inasmuch as the European matrix will determine the formation of the national identity of Ukrainian culture. The opposite outcome would be self-evident and does not require supposition: Ukraine can exist only as part of the European continuum. Otherwise, it simply will not exist. (Pachlovska, 2009: 54)

The frame of geopolitical confrontation, therefore, involves three players: Europe, Ukraine, and Russia, and Europe is represented in a wide array of concepts. The first concept presents Europe as a FAMILY. It transpires in the metaphor of a love triangle, where Ukraine was engaged to Europe, but was stolen by Russia on the wedding day:

Negotiations in the Europe-Ukraine-Russia *triangle*; Ukraine has not shown weakness by *giving itself to the EU*; Ukraine and EU *engagement broke*; Russian press compared Ukraine to a *bride that Russia stole from under the crown*. (TSN 24.11.2013)

But after annexation of Ukrainian Crimea by Russia and the threat of the same scenario in the East of Ukraine, it became clear that ‘Ukraine can only *protect* itself by becoming part of the *European family*’. (TSN 23.03.2014)

The next example continues the idea of Ukraine flirting with Europe and also introduces the concept of Europe being an EXCLUSIVE CLUB:

EU is a little *embarrassed*, as it thinks that the EU is *an exclusive club* that is very difficult to get into. For 20 years there was a queue to get to the European Union, and Ukraine is so easily addressed with a “I want, I do not want to” attitude. (TSN 15.12.2013)

Furthermore, the metaphor of an exclusive club appears after the armed conflict broke out in the East of Ukraine, facilitated by Russia, where the club expelled Russia as a member: ‘They are the Group of Seven again, but they have expelled Russia from the *elite club G8*’ (8.06.2014). This action of the West was taken in Ukraine as an action to support Ukraine, and an attempt to restrain the aggressor. Logically, Europe is further conceptualized as a PARTNER and ALLY. First and foremost, Europe acted as a partner showing economic and political support to Ukraine also by introducing sanctions against Russia, which, as can be seen in the example below, was unexpected, since Europe was seen as being cautious and hesitant before:

From *cautious* Europeans, who played the role of diplomatic mediators, the opening of a virtually *second front – the economic one, was not expected*. And this is not only a *threat of sanctions* to Russia, but also *assistance to Ukraine, support* in the International Monetary Fund, *unilateral introduction* of a free trade zone, loans, investment programs, and the *rapid* signing of a political association agreement. (TSN 9.03.2014)

However, as can be seen in the next two examples which appeared in the news a few months later, Europe is shown as still being hesitant, due to pressure from Russia:

Europe is closely watching the match from the stands, *fearing problems with the supply of blue fuel*. (TSN 15.06.2014)

Geopolitical players did not change their positions in Ukraine: Europe is *vacillating*, Russia is manipulating the media, *trying to have partners quarrel*, both within the EU and the old Europe with the States. (TSN 13.07.2014)

However, the bitterest disillusionment on the part of Ukrainians is felt with respect to the expectations of receiving military assistance according to the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances (1994): ‘But Europe was one of the *guarantors*, Europe along with the United States. *Why did Europe not intervene? Why did she let Ukraine get attacked?*’ (TSN 8.06.2014). Instead, ‘Ukraine is promised help with walkie-talkies and helmets, but not with the army’ (27.04.2014). The general tone is that of disappointment: ‘for the Ukrainians, who daily bury their fellow citizens, restraining Putin at the cost of their lives, the efforts of Europe and NATO seem *insufficient*’ (TSN7.09.2014).

Another example shows that Europe is not uniform in its decisions, given differing and changing attitudes of the EU member states: '*Not all EU countries are ready to sympathize with Ukraine at a high cost, but a consolidated solution is needed to impose sanctions*' (13.07.2014). Moreover, Hungary, for example, has been mentioned several times as being supportive of Russia: '*Ultra-right-wing nationalist parties have joined Putin's allies in Europe*' (TSN 13.04.2014); '*official Kyiv could never say with confidence whether Budapest is a reliable partner for us in opposing the Putin regime*' (30.04.2017); '*Sometimes it seems that the Hungarian government plays on the side of Vladimir Putin, I mean international relations*' (TSN 24.06.2018). Conversely, Poland and Lithuania have been described as being the most supportive of Ukraine.

Europe is also conceptualized as a DONOR / CREDITOR, who is ready to supply Ukraine with non-lethal weapons (TSN 31.08.2014), as well as invest money: '*NATO countries through 4 trust funds are ready to invest about 150,000,000 euros in modernization of the Ukrainian army*' (TSN 7.09.2014). At the same time, this kind of help is interpreted as a price to pay for Ukraine protecting the security of Europe:

This, perhaps, is the help of the European Union to Ukraine, which now *protects Europe* in its eastern borders today, *protects the security of Europe*; it is today that our soldiers heroes, volunteers, the national guard, the army *defend the security of Europe, and they are ready to pay for it* (TSN 14.09.2014)

Furthermore, Europe is represented in Ukrainian news media as a SUPERVISOR and AUTHORITY:

The European Union *acts as a guarantor* of the fulfillment of promises and *provides protection* from unexpected surprises from Russia, a *controller* that the price will be unchanged, gas will be supplied, and transit will operate continuously. (TSN 2.11.2014)

This authority pertains to variable values, for example, it is described as active: '*From words about concern about the situation in Crimea, Western politicians have finally passed to concrete actions*' (TSN 2.03.2014), and passive: '*it is precisely those countries that have the greatest influence who are hesitant*' (TSN 3.07.2014). This authority is restrictive: '*The civilized world is ready to freeze Moscow's assets, speaks of its complete isolation, including visa issuing*' (TSN 2.03.2014). It is demanding: '*Angela Merkel appealed to Putin not to encroach on the sovereignty of Ukraine*'; '*French President calls for everything to be done to avoid military intervention*' (TSN 2.03.2014). It is also described as pressing: '*Western diplomats seem to have exhausted the entire arsenal of verbal arguments and imposed sanctions*' (TSN 9.03.2014); '*Newspapers even called Germany's harsh tone an ultimatum to the Kremlin*' (TSN 29.06.2014).

Europe is represented as a PEACEMAKER and DIPLOMAT, who has been urging

Ukraine, Russia, and separatists in the East of Ukraine to avoid military confrontation; however, this role is often described with some skepticism:

How Europe will respond to the threat of the Kremlin will show what the values of freedom and solidarity mean here, and whether the European Union deserves the high award received – the Nobel Peace Prize. (TSN 2.03.2014)

Given the previously described concepts of authority, of a supervisor, an ally, etc., Europe is certainly associated with POWER in many manifestations: economic (being able to provide financial support to Ukraine to overcome the military crisis), political (imposing sanctions on aggressive players), and military (being a member of powerful military blocs). However, alongside its power, its vulnerabilities are presented too. First and foremost, it has been described as being dependent on Russian gas, the metaphor of the wish or necessity 'to get off the Russian gas needle' together with 'gas blackmailing' has appeared in the context of Baltic countries and the Balkans. Further, alongside numerous news about military manoeuvres and military technological advancements, NATO, for example, was called a 'toothless tiger', and experts doubted its expediency in a peaceful Europe. Moreover, Europe is often referred to as being afraid of Russia: 'Europe is *afraid* to come into conflict with Russia; here they hear well how Moscow *rattles with atomic weapons*' (TSN 7.09.2014). And finally, the concept of a VICTIM and vulnerability arises also in the context of news about terroristic attacks, and in view of the ISIL, which is said to be supported by Russia: 'What is ISIL – this is the main threat to the civilized world, it is one of the projects actively fueled by the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation' (TSN 20.08.2017).

Europe as a UNION, which presupposes strength and integrity, joint solutions and action has also been shown as vulnerable. The overall message constantly revolves around Russia: 'Russia is trying to *undermine* the Western coalition by all means available to it' (TSN 7.06.2015). Mainly, this idea appeared in the context when, as described in Ukrainian news, pro-Russian politicians came to power in different countries of Europe. In Greece in 2015, for example:

The Trojan horse of the European Union and the horror of Europe: the European press writes about the new government in Greece. A new danger on the diplomatic front – manifested itself this week at the Council of Ministers of the European Union. At the negotiating table, where every vote has weight, another Kremlin representative actually appeared. The parliamentary elections in Greece brought to power the left-wing radicals, known for their special sympathy for present-day Moscow. (TSN 1.02.2015)

In Hungary, the news mentions that 'the pro-Russian lobby in the Hungarian parliament is 24 deputies of the Jobbik radical party; fighters for a better Hungary supported the annexation of Crimea' (TSN 30.04.2017). In the Czech Republic: 'Disappointing news from

the Czech Republic: according to preliminary data, it is a favourite of Putin, the current president of the country, Miloš Zeman, who won the presidential election' (28.01.2018).

And, last, but not least, Europe means VALUES. Within the frame of geopolitical confrontation, one of the most actively promoted concepts was solidarity. There have been numerous news reports about manifestations in countries of Europe held in support of Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression, as well as about manifestations condemning the aggressor.

Interestingly, on several occasions, the reaction of many world leaders also showed solidarity to Ukraine and disapproval of Russia, which was manifested through actions as well as words. For example, 'Western leaders have *boycotted Putin, refusing to stand next to him* (TSN 1.06.2014). Another example comes from a news story about the 70th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy:

[...] during a personal meeting, the British Prime Minister *did not give him a hand* [...] the Queen of Great Britain Elizabeth II *disdained*. She walked away from Putin, talked with Poroshenko [...] will Putin sober up with this *cold shower*, or a visit to Normandy will be remembered [...] as the last one when he was still accepted by the leaders of the democratic world. (TSN 8.06.2014)

A similar situation took place during the G20 Summit 2014 in Australia:

The troubles for Putin began already on the way to the summit; first Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, when shaking his hand, *bluntly told him to get out of Ukraine* [...] Putin had a *similar tone* with the British Prime Minister David Cameron [...] The *attitude* towards the Russian President was *not only expressed in words*: even at lunch, he was alone. (TSN 16.11.2014)

On another occasion the President was not invited to an event in commemoration of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp liberation:

The Kremlin aggressor *got another loud slap today*, this time from Poland. Putin was *not invited* to a solemn congress on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau. (TSN 1.02.2015)

This event is described as a 'slap', because the camp was liberated by the Red Army of the Soviet Union and, given the pride Russia takes in 'having won' WWII, this political gesture of the Polish leader must have been an insulting one.

Conclusions

The analysis provided above is an attempt to reveal how Europe is conceptualized in Ukrainian news media discourse. Major frames have been identified along with specific metaphorical concepts enriching them. It has been shown that there are certain fluc-

tuations within some of them, which proves that the perception of Europe and of different European member states may vary, depending on the constantly changing political situation. The frames of “civilizational choice” and “instrument for inner change” overall proved to be quite stable, enriched by conceptual metaphors with positive and overwhelmingly optimistic connotative values, while the frame of “geopolitical confrontation” showed that conceptual representation is not univocal, exhibiting instances of polar meanings (e.g. strength and vulnerability).

The findings related to how Europe is conceptualized in news media are important, because news projects the point of view not only of the journalists creating them, but also the way the audience perceives reality, the world, and their own selves in this world. It should be noted that frames created in news media are not *the* reflection of reality, but rather *a* reflection; as Entman suggests, framing is the selection of some aspects of reality, making them salient “in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman 1993: 52). Moreover, it is also true that “the lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it” (Gamson, et.al. 1992: 374). One and the same event may get a different coverage in different countries, and therefore would project different frames. The images produced may also vary depending on the media company producing them, which raises the question of media companies’ ownership. This fact creates the major limitation of this research, since all the data were collected from the news of one television channel. However, since the content of the news proved to be strongly pro-Ukrainian, and the channel producing them has the leading place in the rating of Ukrainian channels, it can be assumed that the frames produced by it have the leading impact on how reality is construed in the minds of Ukrainian viewers.

Endnotes

1. The poll was carried out by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in conjunction with the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology from November 4th to 19th, 2019. The survey was conducted in 110 settlements in all regions of Ukraine, except for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. In the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, surveys were conducted only in territories controlled by Ukraine. The survey was carried out with the financial support of the representative office of the European Union in Ukraine. For comparison, the results of nationwide surveys conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation together with the Razumkov Center and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology are given.
2. The article was first submitted for revision in 2020. Final version was submitted in July 2022 after Russia started a full-fledged war against Ukraine on 24th February 2022. However, no major corrections in the content of the article were made by the author.
3. All the examples provided in the paper are my translations of authentic material, which is originally in Ukrainian. All the material was transcribed from the website *TSN tyzhden* (2020). Available at: <https://bit.ly/3ZcJ5x8> (accessed 28th June, 2020).
4. EU awarded Ukraine candidate status on 23rd June 2022.

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