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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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**The Media System of Ukraine and its
Transformation in the Context of the
Russian-Ukrainian War**

Master's thesis

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Academic year: 2023/2024

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC ENTRY

Ardan, M. 2024. *The Media System of Ukraine and its Transformation in the Context of the Russian-Ukrainian War*. [Unpublished Master's thesis]. Charles University

Word Count: 103 400 characters (including spaces)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express gratitude to my supervisor PhDr. Roman Chrenčík for his expert guidance, patience and readiness to assist throughout the process of writing this thesis. Additionally, I would like to thank my beautiful family for their unwavering support.

ABSTRACT

The thesis focuses on the Ukrainian media, the Ukrainian media system and its transformation especially in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The aim of the thesis is to describe and to understand the transformations of the media system along with it the trends among Ukrainian media consumers. In the introductory part of the thesis, the historical-political context of the country and its ideological and political fragmentation are explained. The developments in the country are characterised through the lens of different presidencies, which quite plausibly symbolize the direction of the country in time. The paper summarizes important approaches in the field of comparative media studies. The dominant media outlets in Ukraine and their ownership structure are described. The analytical part of the work focuses on the development of the Ukrainian media system from 2019 to 2023; an analytical framework for characterizing the media system in a wartime context is introduced (with an emphasis on audiences); the criteria embedded in Hallin and Mancini's typology are combined with criteria focusing on trust in the media and its development; and current Ukrainian media system is categorised according to Hallin and Mancini's original typology.

ABSTRAKT

Diplomová práce se soustředí na ukrajinská média, ukrajinský mediální systém a jeho proměnu především v kontextu Rusko-Ukrajinské války. Cílem práce je popsat a pochopit proměny mediálního systému, popsat jej a spolu s ním i trendy mezi ukrajinskými konzumenty médií. V úvodní části práce je popsán historicko-politický kontext v zemi a její ideologická a politická roztržitost. Vývoj v zemi je popsán optikou různých prezidentských období, která poměrně věrohodně symbolizují směřování země. Práce shrnuje důležité přístupy na poli komparace mediálních systémů. Jsou popsány dominantní média na Ukrajině a jejich majetková struktura. Analytická část práce mapuje vývoj ukrajinského mediálního systému od roku 2019 do roku 2023; vytváří analytický rámec pro charakteristiku mediálního systému ve válečném kontextu (s důrazem na publika); kombinuje kritéria zakotvené v typologii Hallina a Manciniho s kritérii soustředícími se na důvěru v média; a klasifikuje současný ukrajinský mediální dle původní typologie Hallina a Manciniho.

KEY WORDS

Media system, Ukraine, Media, Media system of Ukraine, Media landscape, Comparative media studies, Russian-Ukrainian war

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Mediální systém, Ukrajina, Média, Mediální systém Ukrajiny, Mediální krajina, Komparativní mediální studia, Rusko-Ukrajinská válka

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Introduction

As of April 2024, Ukraine has been defending itself against ongoing Russian aggression for over two years. Wars profoundly transform societies and their institutions in numerous ways. This thesis focuses on analysing the transformations in media and their audiences in Ukraine, as well as examining the developments of Ukraine's media system in its entirety.

To reach its objectives, the thesis explores the historical, political, and ideological context of Ukraine, analysing significant events and trends in the media and beyond. To do so the history of independent Ukraine is divided according to separate presidencies and important trends in media, society and politics are described. Next, the thesis outlines key theoretical frameworks from comparative media studies. The theoretical section concludes the most prominent media outlets and structures of their ownership in Ukraine.

In the latter half of the thesis the methods are explained. The objectives of the thesis are: 1) to describe the development of Ukraine's media system from 2019 to 2023; 2) to provide an analytical framework that evaluates the media system that is suitable for a country at war (reflecting the audience's trust in media) 3) to characterize the Ukrainian media system using a selection of modified criteria from Hallin and Mancini, along with additional criteria; 4) to compare the current media system in Ukraine with the original typology presented by Hallin and Mancini (2004).

1. The Historical and Political Context of Independent Ukraine & the Development of Mass Media in Ukraine

To comprehend the media system and complex development of media in Ukraine, it is essential to understand the fundamental sentiments that have shaped Ukraine's trajectory since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Gaining insight into the ideological and political developments within this relatively young state becomes crucial for a comprehensive understanding of formation and the evolution of its media system.

Since gaining independence, Ukraine has found itself caught between two powerful political and ideological currents. On one hand, there is the West, embodied by the European Union and NATO, while on the other, there is the direct heir of the Soviet Union - Russia, that is reluctant to lose its influence over the region.

Historically, Ukraine's Western territories have gravitated towards the West, aligning with pro-European direction, whereas its Eastern regions have leaned toward pro-Russian and Euro-sceptic views. The tensions between the West and the East were evident in the changes of government, and particularly in the exchange of presidents aligned with both directions. Such dynamics relatively often fuelled dissatisfaction to the point of sparking revolutions in the country.

Following paragraphs will describe historical periods significant by the individual presidencies and constant ideological tension between the East and the West of Ukraine.

1.1 The Fall of the Soviet Union and Leonid Kravchuk's Presidency (1991 – 1994)

Ukrainian Soviet parliament (The Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR) proclaimed Ukraine's independence from the Soviet Union on 24th August 1991. The independence was legitimized with a referendum held on 1st December 1991. The vast majority of Ukrainians voted for independence. Less than 8% of the votes were against the separation from the Soviet Union and the referendum's result significantly contributed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself. During the first years of existence of the independent Ukraine the elites from the past regime held the dominant power in the state (Rychlík, Zilynskyj & Magosci, 2015).

The former chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR Leonid Kravchuk who supported the idea of independence and pursued the shift toward the independence among the ruling communist party won the initial presidential elections on 5th December 1991 and became Ukraine's first head of state. During Kravchuk presidency Ukraine committed to the process of denuclearisation in exchange for security assurances – this process was finalized on 5th December 1994 in Budapest when Budapest memorandum was signed (Wesolowsky, 2022). This historically often misinterpreted event may seem as a terrible mistake from Ukraine's

government, although at the time the situation was not as clear as it may seem – especially with consideration that Ukraine inherited the nuclear arsenal without the actual ability to control or use it. Also - both the West and Russia exerted pressure to rid the country of nuclear weapons (Goncharenko, 2022). During Kravchuk’s presidency the Ukrainian economy performed very poorly. There were many factors that determined economical struggles of the country, especially the unsuccessful transition from planned economy toward the free market. Gorchinskaya (2020) implies that the incomplete transition was one of the reasons that caused the immense corruption in Ukraine and that carries throughout the history of the state.

Since Kravchuk's presidency there has been significant institutional tensions between the president and parliament in the political system. According to the initial constitution the presidential mandate was formally rather weak during Kravchuk's presidency. Despite this president Kravchuk formed a parallel power structure with his cabinet - which led to the political crisis in the country and was resolved with presidential and parliamentary elections in 1994 (Šedo, 2018).

1.1.1 Ukrainian Mass Media During Kravchuk’s Presidency (1991-1994)

After gaining independence Ukrainian mass media started evolving rapidly. A plethora of state, public, and commercial media producers were suddenly active in the media market which had to be newly formed (Ianitskyi 2024). This time period in Ukrainian media is characterized by the lack of legislative framework. The absence of regulation and legislative oversight spawned significant amounts of independent media outlets (Голубев, 2015).

During the era, the prevailing circumstances resulted in open medialization of politics and political processes in the country. According to Голубев (2015), this served as a cue for the dominant political forces in Ukraine to assert control over mass media.

Throughout the post-Soviet era, state-owned Ukrainian media outlets have suffered from chronic underfunding, which contributed to the oligarch capital to be the dominant factor in the following years (Ianitskyi, 2021).

1.2 Leonid Kuchma's Presidency (1994 – 2004)

Second presidential elections were held ahead of schedule due to the jurisdictional disputes between the parliament and president Kravchuk. The elections were won by former Kravchuk's prime minister Leonid Kuchma who defeated the incumbent president. As opposed to moderate and compromise-seeking Kravchuk who in the time of his election was acceptable to both western-nationalist electorate and eastern Russia-leaning voters (Goncharenko, 2022), Kuchma was primarily supported in Eastern regions of the country.

During the early years of Kuchma's presidency, significant reforms were applied towards transitioning to a free market economy (Åslund, 2009). Also, the previously mentioned denuclearization efforts were completed. During the elections Kuchma positioned himself as a pro-Russian candidate. After being elected he claimed to aim for cooperation with both Western allies and Russia and declared intention to aim for so-called multi-vector policy (Pifer, 2014). Critics of the policy claimed that instead of building strong connections with both currents - Kuchma's multi-vector policy intentionally slowed Ukrainian integration with the Western structures (Kuzyk, 2015).

In 1996 President Kuchma managed to impose the constitutional reform that granted the president a wider range of presidential competencies which shifted the country legally toward the presidential system (Šedo, 2018).

In 1999 Kuchma won re-election and became the president for the second time. According to many critics the elections were fraudulent (Yakelchyk, 2014). After the outbreak of his corruption and political scandals, particularly the so-called *Cassette scandal* Kuchma leaned toward Russia more explicitly. Numerous scandals escalated the protest campaign *Ukraine without Kuchma* that lasted from 2000 to 2001. These protests foreshadowed the number of protests that took place in Ukraine in the following years (Yakelchyk, 2014).

1.2.1 Ukrainian mass media during Kuchma's presidency (1994 - 2004)

This time period in the history of Ukraine marked the finalization of the transition from Soviet era planning to a free market. This transition was especially relevant for the media market.

Major media outlets and media production companies relevant in Ukraine to present day were consolidated at the beginning of this period (Голубев, 2015).

As the media shifted towards a free market, it became important for outlets to seek funding opportunities. There was a significant demand for funds within the media landscape, together with a presence of wealthy individuals (usually associated with the past regime to a certain extent) who were able to gather significant amounts of capital by the half of the decade. This proved to be a highly effective match - Ukrainian oligarchs invested massive amounts of finance in the media and in exchange gained effective channels for pursuing their interests. The process referred to as oligarchisation of the media also shifted mechanisms of the state control of media. During the soviet-era the control of the state was direct— state's regulatory institutions-controlled media production in the country, censoring it if needed. In the era of a free market and several commercial media outlets, the trend of oligarchisation necessitated indirect control that was focused on the owners and sponsors of the specific media (Голубев, 2015).

The issue with oligarchs and their funding lies in the ability of oligarchs to manipulate the agenda and messages conveyed by the media outlets under their ownership (Janitskyi 2021). Oligarchisation, especially under the presidency of Leonid Kuchma, resulted in indirect pressure on media outlets, often directed at their owners. Indirect pressure was strikingly evident in the utilization of mass media as a tool by Kuchma during the political pre-election campaign. This was for instance manifested in the unequal distribution of airtime among candidates and unequal frequency of mentions of candidates in the news coverage. The state's exertion of pressure on the media sparked intense public discourse, drawing attention from international human rights organizations and the global community. In 1999, the Committee to Protect Journalists in New York placed President Leonid Kuchma on the list among the "ten worst enemies of the press." In addition, in the ratings of international organizations, such as, Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders, Ukraine was classified as an "unfree" country characterized by numerous violations and problems in the sphere of freedom of speech, press and protection of human rights (Голубев, 2015).

1.3 Orange Revolution and Viktor Yushchenko's Presidency (2004 - 2010)

Fourth Ukrainian presidential elections were initially won by the incumbent prime minister Viktor Yanukovich. Opposing candidate pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko contested the election results as well as numerous Western observers because of the electoral manipulation (Åslund 2006). The manipulated results of the elections combined with distrust toward the Kuchma's successor Yanukovich escalated yet another series of protests. The protests in support of Viktor Yushchenko known as *The Orange revolution* were yet another step opposing Eastern influence in Ukraine. The Supreme Court of Ukraine declared the results of the second round to be invalid and ordered a rerun of the second round of the elections. In the rerun, Viktor Yushchenko won in the second round re-run with 52.77% and became the third president of Ukraine.

In 2004 the constitutional reforms were implemented and since 2006 the presidential mandate has weakened in favour of parliament. Since then, the prime minister and majority of cabinet members were selected by the parliament (with the exception of the ministers of foreign affairs and defence, but the president's role in their appointment was solely ceremonial). Consequently, the president lacked the authority to remove the prime minister at their discretion. Despite the formal reduction of powers of the presidential role, president Yushchenko actively engaged in governance, often exceeding the boundaries of his official authority (Šedo, 2018).

As opposed to the expectations Yushchenko's presidency lacked clear vision (Gorchinskaya 2020) and despite advocating for the principles of liberal democracies, the oligarchic practices and levels of corruption reached unprecedented heights. Yushchenko had numerous disputes with his former political ally Yulia Tymoshenko, who served as prime minister of the country in 2005 and from 2007 to 2010. Disputes between the president and parliament, coupled with corruption, led to the dissolution of trust, and decrease of engagement among the Western electorate.

1.3.1 Ukrainian Mass Media during Orange Revolution and Yushchenko's Presidency (2004 - 2010)

As a result of The Orange revolution and the election of Viktor Yushchenko, the media landscape saw a notable increase in independence and reduced state pressure which was again evident on international monitoring organizations (such as Freedom House or Reporters without Borders) focusing on freedom of speech and quality of democracy in researched countries (Голубев, 2015).

Simultaneously, the overall situation within the media sector remained unchanged in terms of significant financial reliance on private owners – especially Ukrainian oligarchs. The position of these owners transformed in a sense – specifically the state pressure was not as powerful as during the Kuchma era hence the media outlets and its owners could decide more freely to which political fracture they belonged. As the political landscape in Ukraine evolved, media outlets found themselves less reliant on the favour of the state. Consequently, the media began to align themselves with the political forces in the country that pursued the interests of their owners. Media outlets often covered politics and political life while adopting the viewpoint of specific political factions, irrespective of their affiliation with the current government (Голубев, 2015).

It is important to note that when President Yushchenko came into power, there was a significant increase in penetration from foreign capital in Ukraine's media market and increase of general interest in investing in Ukrainian media. There was an expectation that this could lead to massive positive shifts in the media system. However, the foreign capital soon withdrew from the Ukrainian media market, mainly due to economic reasons. Additionally, This led to another redistribution of ownership among Ukrainian media owners (Голубев, 2015).

1.4 Viktor Yanukovich's Presidency and Euromaidan Revolution (2010 - 2014)

The decrease of engagement of the western electorate during subsequent 2010 presidential elections resulted in the victory of none other than Viktor Yanukovich, who defeated Yuliia

Tymoshenko in the second round. In 2010 Yanukovich claimed that Ukraine is supposed to remain a neutral state and to cooperate with both Western structures and Russia. The integration with the European Union was also mentioned to be one of the strategic aims for the country (Alexe, 2010).

Yanukovich managed to legally change the political system gaining more presidential competencies - the Constitutional Court successfully overturned the constitutional reforms, which resulted in restoring the presidential powers to the level they were at during Kuchma's era (Šedo, 2018).

Throughout his presidency Yanukovich was accused of attempts to destroy the opposition and opposing independent media several times (Interfax-Ukraine 2012). The prime example of eliminating political opposition was the imprisonment of the main leader of the opposition and the leader of the second biggest political party, former prime minister Yuliia Tymoshenko in 2011.

President Yanukovich, despite claiming to seek cooperation and even integration with Western structures (namely the European Union), continued to tighten relations with Russia. This process culminated with the decision not to sign the European Union–Ukraine Association Agreement. This specific step together with above-mentioned corrosive practices toward democracy in the country and general corruption associated with the president spawned massive demonstrations in Kiev's Independence square known as Euromaidan. Protesters were demanding Yanukovich's resignation as well as the resignation of the prime-minister Mykola Azarov's cabinet. The protests were violently suppressed resulting in 108 deaths of protesting people and 13 deaths of pro-government forces (OHCHR, 2016).

The Euromaidan protests resulted in the removal of both President Viktor Yanukovich and Azarov's government. Yanukovich and Azarov secretly fled to Russia. In February 2014, Russia initiated the annexation of Crimea without sparking a military response from Ukraine. The events of Euromaidan also led to a series of counter-protests in the eastern parts of the country in support of Yanukovich supported by Russia and its intelligence services (Reuters, 2014). After the military annexation of the peninsula and organizing an illegal referendum that (unsurprisingly) resulted in favour of annexation, separatist groups emerged in other eastern regions of Ukraine, specifically in Luhansk and Donetsk regions. These groups, unofficially

backed by Russia, later initiated military actions with the aim of seceding these regions from Ukraine. In this instance, as opposed to Crimea annexation, Ukraine responded with military actions (Rychlík, Zilynskyj & Magosci, 2022).

1.4.1 1.4.1. Ukrainian Mass Media during Viktor Yanukovich's Presidency (2010 - 2014)

During Viktor Yanukovich's presidency, noticeable escalation in government pressure on media outlets took place. Also (or maybe because of the state pressure) the redistribution of media ownership took place in favour of oligarchs aligned with the government of Viktor Yanukovich and his political party – *Party of Regions*. Previously mentioned process of withdrawal of the foreign capital continued during this period - there was a pattern of foreign media entities being marginalized from the Ukrainian media market (Голубев, 2015).

Viktor Yanukovich and his political party, the Party of Regions, received substantial support from the *Ukrainian Media Holding*, international multimedia company, at this time period owned by pro-Russian oligarch Serhiy Kurchenko, who openly announced the connection to the pro-governmental structures (Голубев, 2015).

During Yanukovich's presidency, the situation in the Ukrainian media system was particularly hostile towards the opposition press. Numerous opposing journalists reported significant pressure. These processes collectively contributed to a more isolated media environment, increasingly influenced by political power circles. These negative developments, coupled with escalating tensions between Eastern and Western parts of Ukraine, played a role in escalating the political crisis in Ukraine, ultimately leading to Yanukovich's removal from office (Голубев 2015).

1.5 Petro Poroshenko's Presidency (2014 - 2019)

Following the events of Euromaidan, Oleksandr Turchynov was appointed as interim president by the parliament. In the following presidential elections held in May, Petro Poroshenko was elected in the first round and became Ukraine's fifth elected president. Poroshenko, billionaire,

owner of chocolate manufacturer *Roshen* and during that period - the owner of one of the biggest television channels – *Channel 5* gained popularity as one of the most significant financial supporters of Euromaidan (Olszański, Wierzbowska-Miazga, 2014).

In the light of the revolution, Poroshenko's presidency pursued pro-Western, nationalistic policies (notably the promotion of Ukrainian language) that vigorously opposed pro-Russian separatists, Russian influence, and communist past of the country in general. Another significant step in restricting the Eastern influence was that President Poroshenko initiated unification of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its separation from the Moscow Patriarchate.

Poroshenko's presidency marked yet another formal return to the 2004 constitutional reforms. Despite legally diminishing presidential powers even amidst the systemic instability and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine it did not alter the president's actual influence. The president continued to play a pivotal role in the political system (Šedo, 2018).

Poroshenko's administrative and government cabinets of prime ministers Yatsenyuk and Hroysman made attempts to fasten the integration of Ukraine to the European Union and NATO. These attempts were only partially successful - Ukraine became a member of the free market agreement *Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area*, Ukrainians also gained visa-free regime with EU states (Rychlík, Zilynskyj & Magosci, 2022).

1.5.1 Ukrainian Mass Media after the Euromaidan Revolution and during Petro Poroshenko's presidency (2014 - 2019)

After the events of Euromaidan - the information war heated up over Ukraine, especially in the South-East and Crimea, both sides started blocking each other's television broadcasting. Only news channels aligned with the ideology and worldview of the conflict side were permitted to broadcast in territories under its effective control. In early March 2014, Ukraine's National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council commanded local providers to stop airing Russian TV channels first temporarily, then later banned many of them for good (Вишневецкая, 2014). Ukrainian channels stopped airing in Crimea, and they were to some extent substituted with Russian channels (Bender 2014).

The self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics reinstated the airing of Russian TV channels in several controlled regions, while Ukrainian channels were taken off the air. This further expanded the confrontation into the realm of information warfare.

Following the Euromaidan revolution and Yanukovich's ousting from office, the vast majority of Ukrainian media embraced a pro-Western and pro-European vector. This stance was to an unprecedented extent aligned with the ruling pro-European presidency of Petro Poroshenko and ruling executive governments of this period. From 2014 until 2017 the vast majority of Russian channels were banned on the territory of Ukraine. Publications linked to the Yanukovich's regime faced financial struggles. Pro-Russian journalists were detained and threatened, some were even killed - including Oles Buzina in 2015 and Pavlo Sheremet in July 2016 (Голубев, 2015).

Positive developments at this time period in Ukraine include the rapid growth of independent Internet media and TV. Also, the foreign investments increased in the Ukrainian media system (Голубев, 2015).

During Poroshenko's presidency, Ukrainian media predominantly aligned with the pro-European orientation of the country while creating pressure on resisting Eastern influences in the media. These processes were interconnected and influenced not only by the Euromaidan events but also with the separatist military actions and Russian support in the pro-Russian tendencies in the East.

To a similar extent, sentiments of marginalizing opposing worldviews were evident from the other side of the conflict, with Russia and its media portraying the post-Euromaidan Ukrainian government as illegitimate while opposing its pro-Western direction.

1.6 Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Presidency and Beginning of the Full-Scale Russo-Ukrainian War (2019 – present)

In the 2019 presidential elections Petro Poroshenko ran against a completely new political force – comedian, producer, and owner of production company *Kvartal 95* Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Before running for office, Volodymyr Zelenskyy gained prominence by creating and starring in the popular television satire "*Servant of the People*" where he portrayed a high-school teacher who unexpectedly becomes the president (in 2018 political party with the same name *Servant of the People* was created by Zelenskyy's team). Before the elections Zelenskyy was often described by the political observers as a blank slate and ideologically rather unpredictable individual (Hodge, 2019).

Volodymyr Zelenskyy won the elections in the second round against former president Poroshenko with more than 73 percent of the vote. Zelenskyy positioned himself as a anti-establishment and anti-corruption president who advocated for e-government initiatives. As opposed to Petro Poroshenko's Wester-centric, nationalistic rhetoric, he promoted unity among both Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking citizens (Hosa, Wilson, 2019).

Following the clear victory of Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the presidential role was again endowed with expanded formal powers. Legislation passed during this period diminished the parliamentary authority, reinforcing the already strong presidential position (Kyrychenko, 2019).

As opposed to Petro Poroshenko's Wester-centric, nationalistic rhetoric, Zelenskyy promoted unity among both Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking citizens (Hosa, Wilson, 2019). Despite that the Russo-Ukrainian relations have steadily deteriorated since the Euromaidan revolution; Ukraine military efforts were not able to definitively suppress separatist movements supported by Russia in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Since autumn of 2021, massive Russian military forces have gathered near the Ukrainian borders under the pretext of military exercises. On 21st February of 2022 Russian federation officially declared to recognize separatist republics, this step provided a pseudo-legal basis for Russia to militarily engage in those regions. On February 24th, the Russian military not only entered the separatist regions but also initiated a large-scale attack on the entirety of Ukraine (Rychlík, Zilynskyj & Magosci, 2022).

The Russian attempt to overthrow or force Zelenskyy to flee proved unsuccessful and Ukraine decided to defend militarily against Russian armed forces (Rychlík, Zilynskyj & Magosci, 2022).

1.6.1 Ukrainian Mass Media during Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Presidency (2019 - present)

In November 2019, President Zelensky issued a decree "*urgent measures to reform and strengthen the state*" The decree mandated the government to draft legislation establishing standards for media. The stated aim was to enhance journalists' accountability and to stop the dissemination of inaccurate and false information. The decree prohibited Russian citizens from owning or financing media outlets in Ukraine - due to the ongoing conflict in Donbas, (Krasnikov, 2019).

The decree's critics have raised concerns about government interference in journalism, fearing that the decree may pave the way for censorship and pressure on the press (Krasnikov, 2019).

Since 2021, Ukrainian governmental authorities have intensified sanctions against oppositional and EU-sceptic media. President Zelensky imposed sanctions on prolific media owner Taras Kozak (also opposition state deputy from the *Opposition Platform for Life party*). Kozak was closely associated with pro-Russian politician and oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk (Ianitskyi 2021). The imposed sanctions resulted in the withdrawal of licenses for three major opposition television channels: *112 Ukraine, NewsOne, and ZIK* (Данілов, 2021). These television channels often shared similar messages to those from Russian media. For instance, often framing political situations in the following manner: *Ukraine is failing as a country, or the changes to the Ukrainian economy are really just giving it away to the West*. (Ianitskyi, 2021).

Since the Russian invasion, Ukraine's media system has changed significantly. One year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, all levels - local, regional, national, and international media outlets operating within the country have been altered. Over 100 regional media outlets in Russian-occupied regions no longer produce content, with an undisclosed number of journalists killed (Bodine, 2023).

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Moreover, nearly 75% of Ukrainian media lack adequate funding, leaving a quarter of local journalists unpaid, as reported by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine. Energy infrastructure suffers by attacks disrupting internet access. During the ongoing conflict, it's unclear how the media in Ukraine will change. Platforms like Telegram and Viber have become really important for sharing information

among Ukrainian audiences, yet because of lack of regulation these can spread disinformation or misleading information (Bodine, 2023).

Zelensky's presidency is marking yet another period characterized by the division and tension between Eastern and Western influences within Ukrainian society and media. Pro-Western influences were notably in the forefront in media during the Zelenskyy's presidency. Which was furtherly escalated with the large-scale military invasion of Russian armed forces in Ukraine in February 2022.

2 Media System: Important Theoretical Frameworks and Definitions

In order to create a framework for examination of the Ukrainian media system before and after the full-scale war it is useful to define the terms and summarize the history of the field and highlight important models presented in the past.

2.1 *Media System* Definition

Initially it is important to establish the understanding of how this paper conceptualizes the *media system*. Media system (often referred to as *media landscape*) is a crucial term in Comparative media system research. According to Reifová (2004) the media system is one of the subsystems within a social system. The social system comprises subsystems, organizations, institutions, and social role units, which interact directly or indirectly, creating demographic, political, economic, or cultural units within a society.

McQuail (2020) describes the media system as a complex arrangement of media organizations, technologies, and procedures within a specific society. According to McQuail it is crucial to think about the media system as an interconnected system where institutions, channels, and audiences are collectively involved in media production, distribution, and media consumption.

This paper approaches the term as a complex description of relevant institutions, organizations, individuals, audiences, and channels (technological frameworks) that are a relevant part of media creation, media distribution and media consumption within a certain country.

2.2 Four Theories of the Press by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956)

The field of comparative media system research has its roots in the seminal study *Four Theories of the Press* by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956). Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm established normative categorization of four archetypical media systems that were present at the time of its publishing. This work, despite being published in the midst of the Cold War (and often being criticized for its ideological approach), formed the idea of interconnection of media systems and political systems within a country. This contributed largely to the field and provided a blueprint for the following studies.

Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm described the following media systems (or as they called it *theories of press*): 1) Authoritarian theory, 2) Libertarian theory, 3) Social responsibility theory and 4) Soviet Communist theory.

These four normative categories differ based on 1) the role of media/press within a society, 2) who controls the media within a political system, 3) the purpose of the media within a political system.

2.2.1 Authoritarian Theory of Press

According to Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, in this media system, the ruler is in control of the press and uses it to (either directly or indirectly) select information that should be distributed to the consumers. The rulers possess all the formal rights to change or create policies concerning media and to grant required licenses. The press might be censored if needed. The media operates in a subservient manner to the rulers, permitting only the existence of media producers aligned with the ruler's ideology.

2.2.2 Libertarian Theory of Press

This theory emphasizes the press' role as an additional check on governmental actions. According to this theory it is necessary for the media to be independent. The media serves as a supervisory element that controls the government. For instance: if the government (or individual governor) is abusing or exceeding its authority – the media informs the public and initiates public tension or response in order to correct the situation, to punish the violator governor/government or replace the violator governor/government.

2.2.3 Social Responsibility Theory of Press

This theory considers the media to fulfil the role of cultivator of public's opinion and educator of public in general. Accordingly, the media are supposed to be objective, accurate and reliable. It emphasizes the need for source verification. The theory insists on separation of opinion-based journalism and factual information distributed via media.

2.2.4 Soviet-communist Theory of Press

According to this theory it is not possible to privately own media. The media are directly under control of the state. The media are considered to be instruments used to conduct social change and follow social control in favour of Soviet-communist ideology and regime. The theory is directly associated with the socio-political regime present at the time of publishing of the study in Soviet Union

2.3 Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics (2004), by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini

More recent seminal work in the field of comparative media system research was created by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini with their study *Three Models of Media and Politics* (2004). The study focuses on Western democracies, specifically on 18 countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, United States) and

categorizes its media systems based on media landscape criteria and political system criteria present in those countries of focus. As opposed to the normative approach of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm - Hallin and Mancini empirically focus on existing nation states, specifically relatively homogenous Western democracies, they compare and research specifics of their media and political systems and create the categorization based on the results.

Hallin and Mancini focus on following dimensions of media systems in each researched country: 1) state of the newspaper industry (the level of newspaper circulation, target audiences of the relevant press, evolution of the mass press throughout history), 2) political parallelism (the degree to which media mirrors political divisions in the country (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, Hardy 2008), 3) level of professionalization of media system and journalists, 4) role of the state in media system (level of intervention from the state, level of press freedom, relevance of public broadcasting).

Hallin and Mancini focus on following dimensions of political system in each researched country: 1) political context and political development of the country (focus on tradition of conflict and consensus in the politics and polarization of its party system) 2) consensus or majoritarian government (focus on governments decision-making process), 3) individual vs. organized pluralism, 4) role of the state (focus on involvement of the state on economy and the strength of welfare state) 5) rational-legal authority (focus on development of legal authority within the country).

Based on media system characteristics and political system characteristics the authors present the categorization of three models of media and politics in those 18 countries. These include 1) Mediterranean/Polarized Pluralist Model, 2) North/Central Europe or Democratic Corporatist Model, and 3) North Atlantic or Liberal Model.

2.4 2.4. Hallin & Mancini - Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World

Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini extends the framework from "Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics. In this work they examine media systems of countries outside Western world. The book aims

to describe how media systems are organized, function, and evolve in contexts of Latin America, Africa, Asia or the Middle East (Hallin, Mancini 2011).

Since the previous work was often criticized for Western centrism, *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* focuses on a number of important extensions and offers alternative approaches toward non-Western media systems. In order to examine non-Western media systems authors, consider a more complex range of variables that influence individual media landscapes. (Hallin, Mancini, 2011).

Authors are describing a wide range of systems with completely different economic and political backgrounds: post-colonial nations, countries with authoritarian regimes, emerging democracies, and states undergoing rapid economic transformation. The book takes the economic backgrounds of the individual countries to the consideration. It also focuses on the phenomenon of globalization and general penetration of information across national borders, the influence of global media corporations, and the growing role of digital and social media. (Hallin, Mancini, 2011).

2.5. Dobek-Ostrowska: Comparative Media Systems: European and Global Perspectives

In *Comparative Media Systems: European and Global Perspectives* Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska et al. offers an exploration of the transformation of media systems in Europe and beyond, especially after the fall of communism in 1989. The work focuses on the evolution from normative media system frameworks toward systematic comparative research. It researches the impact of foreign media ownership in post-communist regions and interconnects it with media freedom. It comparatively describes the relation of the mass media and political systems. The book delves into the professionalization of journalism across political cultures, focusing on the autonomy of journalists and role of the state. (Dobek-Ostrowska et al., 2010).

3 Dominant Ukrainian Media Outlets & Media Ownership in Ukraine

3.1 Television in Ukraine

Television is historically the most popular medium in modern Ukraine - the vast majority of the population relied on television in Ukraine since the Soviet era. Ukrainian television has undergone a number of shifts toward liberalization of the market and also shifts toward the opposite of that - when state pressure increased on television significantly. The formation of the free media market in Ukraine has been a wide variety of television channels focusing on a plethora of topics and audiences. In recent years it is possible to witness studies witnessing the importance of television is decreasing among audiences with increasing popularity of social networks and online media outlets.

A 2018 study conducted by InMind for Internews Network suggests that 77 percent of Ukrainians watch television at least once a month, with 74 percent relying on TV channels as their primary weekly news source (InMind 2018, Ianitskyi 2021). According to the following studies conducted by InMind since 2018 the television's popularity is decreasing significantly. In 2021 the most common source of information for Ukrainians about events in Ukraine and the world was national television channels with 67% of Ukrainians using television as its main source for information (Koshkina 2022). According to research by Civil Network OPORA in 2023, social networks have become the most relied upon medium in Ukraine, overtaking television, which now ranks second. Television remains popular, with 62.5% of the Ukrainian population relying on it for information. Despite that, television remained the most trusted source among the participants in 2023 (Snopok, Romaniuk, 2023).

Ukrainians historically most commonly follow into TV channels that blend news programs with entertainment content. Based on data from survey by Detector Media, the most popular television channels in Ukraine in 2021 were: "1+1" (with 43% share of audience), "Ukraine" (34%), STB (32%), and ICTV (31%) being the most popular among them. In contrast, less than 10% of respondents watched channels primarily focused on broadcasting news and political

talk shows. The number of respondents who trusted specific TV channels was half that of those who regularly watched them. Nonetheless, the ranking of TV channels by trust closely matched their popularity in order: 21% of viewers trusted "1+1", followed by "Ukraine" at 17%, STB at 15%, and ICTV at 13%. (Detector Media, 2022).

3.1.1 Television Ownership in Ukraine

In Ukraine, media ownership is concentrated among the country's oligarchs, this phenomenon also extends to the television outlets. All of the top five television channels in Ukraine are owned by influential oligarchs, who often have stakes in multiple outlets (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski 2023).

The most popular television channels are owned by following influential oligarchs: *1+1* is under the control of Ihor Kolomoyskyi, *Ukrayina* (Ukraine) is owned by Rinat Akhmetov, and *STB*, *ICTV*, and *Novyi Kanal* (New Channel) are affiliated with Victor Pinchuk (the son-in-law of former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma). Notably, the sole exception, a channel that does not belong to a specific oligarch, among the 10 most viewed channels is *Suspilne* (Public), Ukraine's public broadcaster. However, it occupies the 10th spot while reaching less than one percent of the audience. (Ianitskyi, 2021).

Channel Ukraine (*Ukrayina*), the leading television channel in 2021, is owned by Rinat Akhmetov, a billionaire oligarch from Donetsk. Akhmetov was a close associate and sponsor and even the unofficial leader of the pro-Russian Ukrainian political party of President Viktor Yanukovich *Party of Regions*. Akhmetov later founded the "Opposition Bloc," a pro-Russian opposition party. After the Euromaidan events in 2014, Akhmetov had numerous assets confiscated. Despite this, he maintains his status as one of Ukraine's wealthiest individuals and is the exclusive owner of SCM Holdings - the parent company of the channel Ukraine (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023). In July 2022 Akhmetov announced that the Media Group Ukraine will involuntarily relinquish all broadcast and satellite television licenses, as well as the licenses for its print media operations in Ukraine, to the state as the reaction to the law on oligarchs introduced in 2021 (Hromadske.ua, 2022).

Ihor Kolomoisky, also one of the wealthiest and most prominent Ukrainian billionaires and oligarchs, holds the majority stake in the 1+1 Media Group. The media conglomerate which is responsible for operating eight TV channels along with two significant digital platforms, UNIAN and TSN.ua. Kolomoisky stands out among Ukrainian oligarchs for not identifying with pro-Russian stances actively. Kolomoisky is known for his connections with the current Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and is reported to have financially supported Zelenskyy's run for the presidency. The significant minor part of 1+1 Media Group was once held by Ihor Surkis, who reportedly sold the stakes to Oksana Marchenko, wife of Viktor Medvedchuk, a pro-Russian oligarch (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023).

Viktor Pinchuk and his wife, Olena Pinchuk, are the owners of the other two leading Ukrainian TV stations, *ICTV* and *STB*. Although the precise ownership structure of their media conglomerate - StarLight Media Ltd, remains unclear, it's generally acknowledged that Viktor Pinchuk exercises factual control over the company (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023).

Ownership of television in Ukraine is largely in the hands of Ukrainian oligarchs who maintain connections with both local and foreign political powers. Leading television owners have established relationships with past Ukrainian presidents: Leonid Kuchma and Viktor Yanukovich, as well as the current president - Volodymyr Zelenskyy. A plethora of these owners are politically active, holding positions in government or establishing political parties (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023).

Especially in recent years - there are significant efforts to limit the oligarchic power in the media, especially from the side of the current president Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his cabinet. The aforementioned law on oligarchs is largely aimed to limit oligarchic influence on public life and media in particular.

3.2 Social Networks in Ukraine

The social networks' importance is rapidly increasing in the process of media production and information dissemination process in Ukraine in the past two decades. As of late more recent

studies suggest the social networks have already surpassed television as the most used medium in the country (Ianitskyi, 2021). According to a 2019 InMind study, 68% of Ukrainians relied on social networks for news, while only 66% relied on television. Since then the social networks are gaining even more popularity according to the InMind studies.

According to Olha Snopok and a study conducted by OPORAUA.org (2023) in 2023 the social networks are used by 77.9% of respondents as opposed to 62.5% of the respondents who are relying on television. According to Koshkina (2022), traditional media was experiencing a decline in the latter half of 2010s as social networks and messaging platforms increasingly captured a wider audience.

Facebook currently holds the dominant position on the market of social networks in Ukraine, facing significant competitors such as video platform *Youtube*, *Tik Tok*, *Telegram*, or *Twitter*. Previously, Russian social networks *VKontakte* (In contact) and *Odnoklassniki* (Classmates) enjoyed vast popularity, but this changed drastically in May 2017. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, acting on a decision by Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council, imposed sanctions on certain Russian Internet services, including the biggest ones: *VKontakte* and *Odnoklassniki*. These sanctions persist under President Zelenskyy. *VKontakte*, the Russian alternative to Facebook was not subject to blocking on territories not under government control, hence it is still accessible on those territories. According to Detector Media In 2021, the usage of social networks as source of information in Ukraine was distributed as follows: Facebook was the leader with 56%, Instagram followed at 25%, Viber at 24%, and Telegram at 13%. (Koshkina, 2022).

Traditional newsrooms as well use various forms of video production through social networks in order to engage with their audience (for instance live-streaming on Facebook). (Ianitskyi, 2021).

Ianitskyi (2021) emphasizes that as social media usage rises for sharing information, it also is used for disinformation campaigns and information warfare. Since the events of the Euromaidan revolution and annexation of Crimea, the Kremlin has been accused of spreading disinformation campaigns against Ukraine and Western nations, using online trolls and state-controlled outlets (for example *RT* and *Sputnik*). Social media platforms in general are used for disinformation campaigns, serving as their primary dissemination channels (Russian platforms

such as *Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki* were identified as the most evident threats, leading to their prohibition). The Russian position opposes these claims stating that Western countries conduct information warfare against Russia, with Ukraine on front, despite official Russian documents emphasizing the use of information as a weapon advocating for Russia's participation in the information warfare. (Ianitskyi, 2021).

3.3 Online Media in Ukraine

According to a Factum Group Ukraine study (2018), the vast majority of Ukrainian citizens, approximately 65 percent of the country's population (21.35 million people), are regular Internet users. In the beginning of 2023, Ukraine experienced significant digital adoption and an increase in usage of online technology. According to Kemp's report there are 28.57 million active internet users. This concludes an internet penetration rate of 79.2 percent. Mobile connectivity also increased with 55.88 million cellular mobile devices active in 2023. These figures underscored Ukraine's increasing usage on digital platforms and communication channels (Kemp, 2023). Since then, internet use has maintained a figure of 79.2 percent of the total population at the start of 2024 (with 29.64 million internet users in Ukraine in January 2024) (Kemp, 2024).

Ukr.net, a website that compiles news from various sources on the internet, ranks as the top online media destination in Ukraine. Second and third most popular online media outlets that dominate online in Ukraine are *Ukrayinska Pravda* and *Obozrevatel.com* (these outlets create their own content as opposed to the Ukr.net). Fourth and fifth most-visited online outlets are *Korrespondent.net* and *UNIAN.ua* (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023).

All major Ukrainian media houses operate its news websites, TV channels and radio stations are also broadcasting online. This results in the dominance of the large media conglomerates over the most popular news websites. The majority of news websites provide the possibility for user individuals to establish their own content in the form of articles, columns or contributions, which are usually curated by editors. Consequently, individuals seeking such columns must possess fame and/or compelling insights (Ianitskyi, 2021).

Online media in Ukraine experience less regulation, offering a possible space for harmful

influences. On the other hand, they also afford journalists the opportunity to scrutinize the government without dependence on traditional media owned by oligarchs. These online spaces also provide possibilities for new participants to join the Ukrainian media landscape (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023)

3.3.1 Online Media Ownership in Ukraine

Leading online media platforms in Ukraine have slightly more varied ownership compared to conventional media channels, although oligarchs maintain influence in the online sphere as well, for example through the online presence of their conventional media outlets (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023).

Website *Ukr.net* was established in 1998 by Borys Komissaruk, Olha Grach, and Vitali Kushnir, who are also the owners of the website. Olena Prytula, the long-standing owner of *Ukrayinska Pravda*, declared that she has transferred full ownership of the media outlet to Tomas Fiala's Dragon Capital Group (pro-Western group with ties to George Soros). *Obozrevatel.com*, a website initially founded by Mykhailo Brodsky, is currently owned by his close family - his sons and wife. Oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky is the owner of *Korrespondent.net* and *UNIAN.ua*, the fourth and fifth most frequented news websites in Ukraine (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023).

3.4 Print media in Ukraine

The Ukrainian print market is relatively vast but does not generate large revenues. In 2019, there were over 3000 newspapers and magazines issued periodically in Ukraine (more than 1/3 of these newspapers and magazines were issued in the country's capital). Altogether there were around 660 million copies of printed media issued every six months at the end of 2010s. Press in Ukraine reflects the country's language division - over 1300 outlets publish in Ukrainian, over 600 in Russian and over 400 use both languages. There are also regional print media outlets that are publishing in minorities' languages such as Hungarian, Polish, or Romanian (Ianitskyi, 2021).

Since revenue from newspaper and magazine sales is minimal, advertising earnings are the key

source of financing of the printed media in Ukraine. However, according to research conducted by the *Ukrainian Institute for the Future*, the contribution of print media to the advertising market is relatively insignificant and only 10 percent of the advertising market concentrates on the printed media (Ianitskyi, 2021). Based on research conducted by InMind - in 2018 - 21 percent of Ukrainian citizens follow print media on a monthly basis. This number dropped to 3% in 2023 (InMind, 2023).

3.4.1 Print Media Ownership in Ukraine

In Ukraine, the print media market is overwhelmingly private (Opryshko, 2023). Print media in Ukraine is also largely controlled by oligarchs. The ownership patterns reveal similar names, with Ihor Kolomoisky who purchased UMH Group in 2020, which includes newspaper *Argumenty i Fakty*, the newspaper with the highest circulation, and Rinat Akhmetov's SCM Holdings being the owner of *Segodnya*, ranking as the fourth highest in circulation within Ukraine (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023).

Before 2015 private owned media dominated the print market, with state and community-owned outlets accounting for up to 22 percent of Ukrainian newspaper producers. From 2015 Ukrainian state authorities were banned from starting or co-starting printed media outlets (Interfax 2015) and the outlets owned by the state authorities until 2015 were directed to be privatized in following years (Ianitskyi 2021). Between 2016 and 2018, 90% of the editorial offices belonging to Ukrainian state and municipal print publications underwent reform, transitioning into privately owned enterprises (Opryshko, 2023).

According to Ianitskyi (2021) the absence of transparency regarding media ownership structures supports the spread of disinformation. For instance, media channels (with unclear ownership) operated by Ukrainian politicians who have sought refuge in Russia are utilized, among other purposes, to orchestrate disinformation and propaganda efforts in favour of Russia. The Ukrainian press remains inaccessible in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as in Crimea, where only Russian and local newspapers are in circulation (Ianitskyi, 2021).

3.5 Radio in Ukraine

In Ukraine, radio ranks as the second least relevant medium. Despite its insignificance in recent years, radio stations started attracting a younger audience, caused by the rise of online radio platforms. This increase in popularity of the medium has been facilitated by the widespread adoption of smartphones and the introduction of the new generations of accessible and fast mobile Internet connection (Ianitskyi, 2021).

Together with online radio, FM stations dominate the Ukrainian radio market. The focus is on mainstream music programs that primarily feature either Ukrainian or Western popular music. In the Ukrainian radio market news-and-analysis and opinion-making radio stations are in significant minority. The Ukrainian radio market consists of public radio stations, commercial radio stations, international radio stations and non-commercial radio stations (typically Christian radio stations) (Ianitskyi, 2021).

In the recent past (during Poroshenko's presidency), Ukrainian lawmakers enacted language quotas for radio stations, mandating that they air a minimum of 30 percent of songs in Ukrainian. Subsequently, this quota was raised to 35 percent. This legal change is designed to support the Ukrainian-language music industry (Ianitskyi, 2021).

There are no radio stations broadcasting continuously in national minority languages other than Russian. Public broadcasting stations *Suspilne (Public)* offers specific radio programs in the majority of national minority languages through its local radio stations (Ianitskyi, 2021).

In the non-government-controlled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk, as well as Crimea, there have been significant challenges in providing radio coverage since the event of 2014. (Ianitskyi, 2021).

3.5.1 Radio Ownership in Ukraine

The most popular radio outlets in Ukraine are also under the control of Ukrainian oligarchs. The most popular radio station Hit FM is under control of *The Tavr Media Group* controlled

by the Pinchuk and Bagrayev families. Both families' members are considered oligarchs or had direct connections to Ukrainian politics. Other popular radio outlets - Radio Pyatnica and Avtoradio, both former holdings of Serhiy Kurchenko's UMH Group were seized from the holding after 2014. Subsequently, *Radio Pyatnica* was acquired by Denys Kozlitin, while Ihor Kolomoisky purchased *Avtoradio* from the government as part of the UMH Group package (Dumont, Solis, & Zaleski, 2023).

4 Methodology

To describe the transformation of the media system in Ukraine, this work focuses on two criteria that have their origin in Hallin and Mancini's media system dimension's characteristics, modifies them to a certain extent (in order to reflect current online media and social networks usage) and since the full-scale war results in a wide array of responses within the media landscape both from state and non-state actors - the thesis combines aforementioned criteria with additional war-related criteria. The analysis focuses on the developments from the year 2019 (a year when current Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy was elected) to the year 2023 (first year of the full-scale war).

This thesis' aims are: 1) to describe the trends in media system development in Ukraine from 2019 until 2023, 2) to create framework for analysis of media system in country that reflects audience's trust in media that is suitable for monitoring media system of country at war 3) to describe Ukrainian media system based on selected modified criteria from Hallin and Mancini and additional criteria 4) to compare Ukraine's current media system with the original Hallin and Mancini's typology.

The thesis uses combination secondary data analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to describe the developments of the aforementioned media system criteria - specifically the analytical part focuses on development of 1) the media system structure of Ukraine 2) development of the role of the state in media and additional criteria: 3) the development of trust among audiences in national-wide media in the country and 4) the development of trust in national telethon the *United News* since the war started in 2022 to 2023.

4.1 Methodological Framework for Describing and Measuring Media System Criteria - selected Hallin and Mancini's criteria

In the following paragraphs the methodology of appointing how the media system in Ukraine developed in the past years according to selected criteria by Hallin and Mancini is defined. Hallin and Mancini's third and fourth criteria - *Professionalism of Journalism*, and *Political Parallelism* are included in the final part of the analytical part. But since there is no efficient data to describe the development of these categories convincingly in the selected time period - short literature review is conducted in order to compare the current media system with original Hallin and Mancini typology.

4.1.1 Methodology of Describing the Criteria: *Media Structure in Ukraine* and Data Sources

The development of the media structure will be described using four criteria and their development from 2019 to 2023: 1) newspaper popularity for accessing news and importance of newspapers as a news source, 2) television popularity for accessing news and importance of television as a news source, 3) online media popularity for accessing news and importance of online media as a news source, 4) social networks popularity for accessing news and importance of social networks as a news source.

The data this thesis incorporates for the description of the media structure of Ukraine are taken from the research *Ukrainian media use and trust in 2023* conducted by InMind Research & Consulting with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The research *Ukrainian media use and trust in 2023* uses quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative methods (conducting focus group discussions) in order to describe trends in media consumption in Ukraine. First - the focus groups codetermine the design of the questionnaire used in the quantitative research conducted on approximately 3250 interviewees in a nationwide survey that is measuring key indicators of media consumption and trust in the media as well as and media literacy in Ukraine in 2023. The results from this survey are again

interpreted in focus groups to extend possible analytical interpretation. The final stage of the research creates a number of focus groups discussions and conducts a number of in-depth interviews among the specific demographic groups. The last series of the focus group discussions and interviews are conducted in order to precise the results of the research and to describe the specificities of media consumption, media trust, and media literacy for specific population groups. The study also compares recent acquired data with data from previous years which enables us to seek for further interpretation and secondary data analysis.

4.1.2 Methodology of Describing the Criteria: *Role of the state* and Data Sources

The development of the role of the state in the media system is analysed primarily through the perspective of press freedom, utilizing the level of press freedom in the country in time according to the relevant reports on press freedom from 2019 to 2023 from non-profit organization Freedom House and non-profit organization Reporters Without Borders.

The first dataset used in order to determine the development of the role of state are the ratings and yearly reports that are rating freedom and press freedom in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 by the non-profit organization Freedom House. Freedom House research developments of media freedom - and reports on the developments yearly by rating the media freedom from 0 (*the least free*) to 4 (*the most free*). The reports also describe the general freedom of the country and rates the country on a yearly basis. The overall freedom ratings span from 0 (*the least free*) to 100 (*the most free*). Freedom House uses a broad array of sources, including news articles, analyses, reports from nongovernmental organizations, professionals, and on-the-ground research. The final score reflects the collective agreement of the aforementioned analysts, advisers, and staff. The questions typically researched by the analysts are for instance: *Are the media directly or indirectly censored?*, *Is self-censorship common among journalists?* or *Are journalists subject to pressure or surveillance aimed at identifying their sources?* (Freedom House, 2019). The full list of the researched questions focused on media by the Freedom House analysts is in the annex.

The second dataset used in order to determine the development of the role of the state (more specifically freedom of the media) - the thesis uses the reports from international non-profit

and non-governmental organization dedicated to protecting the right to freedom of information Reporters Without Borders. Specifically, it focuses on the overall ratings (World Press Freedom Index) from 2019 to 2023 and on the legislative indicator referring to the legal framework for media in the country from the reports from 2022 and 2023. The indicator is determined by pooling the responses of experts to a questionnaire designed by RSF and it measures the impact of the legislative framework on media freedom. The legislative indicator questions particularly focus on: 1) the extent to which journalists and the media can operate freely without facing censorship and legal obstructions, or to what extent legal framework puts limitations on their right to free speech, 2) the fairness in information access across media and the possibility of safeguarding of their sources, 3) whether individuals committing violence against journalists are held accountable.

4.2 Additional Criteria

When a country is engaged in full-scale war, its media system undergoes numerous shifts and reacts to turbulent circumstances. The media system is crucially reliant on the internal political situation - in the case of ongoing war the extremity of the situation brings a plethora of additional challenges. Also, the media system transforms throughout wartime - the state of the media system in the beginning of the conflict may differ from the consolidated situation that may occur in the latter stages of the conflict. Even though some of the expected war-related transformations are partly included in the aforementioned Hallin and Mancini criteria and others are partly included - this thesis suggests that in order to describe the media system of a country at war it is useful to seek and to define additional criteria that are not incorporated in the traditional theoretical frameworks and typologies.

The additional criteria that describe the media system should reflect individual specifics of the extreme situation that war brings. Among the criteria connected to war that could be followed are for instance following: the trust in media, the level of public engagement and media consumption, the amount of international journalists present in the country, the level of government control and censorship (this criteria is the example of criteria deeply interconnected with the aforementioned criteria 'role of state'), the level of propaganda and disinformation on social networks, the amount of the war-related news in media, the level to what extent journalists integrity and safety is secured, the level of emergence of alternative

and underground media in the country, the level of solidarity and media collaboration. All these criteria could be relevant in order to examine the media system that is encountering the events of war.

In order to describe the media system at war the criteria this thesis sets for the analysis are the ones connected to audiences, their perceptions and especially their trust in media. The following criteria had also been chosen because the data for the selected time period is available and reliable. The additional criteria added is: 1) the development of trust in the national-wide media in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 and 2) the development of trust in the national telethon *United News* since its start in 2022 to 2023. According to these criteria we manage to determine whether the audience's trust is increasing or decreasing toward the media in general in the selected time period and whether the media system is trustworthy and stable for the audiences in the time of war. Secondly the thesis focuses on the level of trust toward the telethon news coverage.

The data that are used for the description of the audience's trust in media are also based on the research *Ukrainian media use and trust in 2023* and *Ukrainian media use and trust in 2022* conducted by InMind Research & Consulting with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

5 Ukraine Media System Structure from 2019 to 2023

The development of media system structure is focusing on levels of use of certain types of media to reach news content from 2019 to 2023. Since this thesis focuses primarily on the audiences – the popularity of the mediums is examined. The data reflect whether the respondents used a specific medium in the past month to get news in each specific year.

5.1 The Print Media Popularity from 2019 to 2023

The survey asked interviewees what the type of media was used in the past month to reach news content by the participants of the survey. According to researched data - the print media

are very insignificant and growing even more insignificant among the Ukrainians in the past years.

In the selected time period only 15% of the interviewees followed print media to get news in 2019. Since 2019 the print media audience interest lowered even more drastically. In 2020 8% of the survey participants followed print media in the same category. In 2022 and in 2023 only 3% of the interviewees followed print media to reach news content. The print media in Ukraine's media system are historically a very diverse but unpopular medium among the mass audience.

Monthly Use Of Print Media from 2019 to 2023 To Reach News Content Among Ukrainians

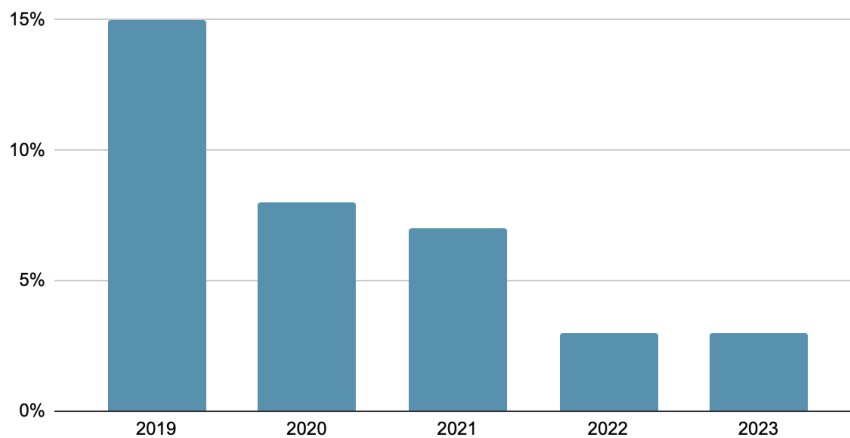


Figure 1: Monthly Use of Print Media from 2019 to 2023 to Reach News Content Among Ukrainians (InMind - InterNews 2023)

5.1.1 Interpretation of the Print Media Popularity as a News Source decrease in Ukraine

The constant decrease of the medium's use is rooted in many factors. Specifically, constant pressure on up-to-dateness of the news is one of them. This was only amplified with the full-scale Russian invasion of the country. Print media in Ukraine are very regional and even among the interviewees who often use it for consumption of news - the regional print media were dominant. In every other medium examined category (television, online media) the national outlets' popularity prevailed over the regional outlets. This phenomenon is interconnected with the type of content that is more likely to be distributed via regional printed media, content

which extends beyond news (such as culture) content - or on the other hand news content with a regional focus.

5.2 Television Popularity from 2019 to 2023

The survey asked interviewees what was the type of media used in the past month to reach news content by the participants of the survey. According to researched data - the television outlets' popularity among the participants is declining dramatically in the past years. In 2019 66% of the interviewees used television media to get their news content, every year since then the popularity of the television decreased significantly. In 2020 52% of the interviewees answered that television is one of the means to reach the news. Only 46% of the respondents used television to reach news content in 2021. Yet another decrease in television popularity was measured in 2022 when only 36% of the respondents' admitted television is part of their news-acquiring routine. In 2023 the percentage of the survey respondents decreased to 30%.

Monthly Use Of Television from 2019 to 2023 To Reach News Content Among Ukrainians

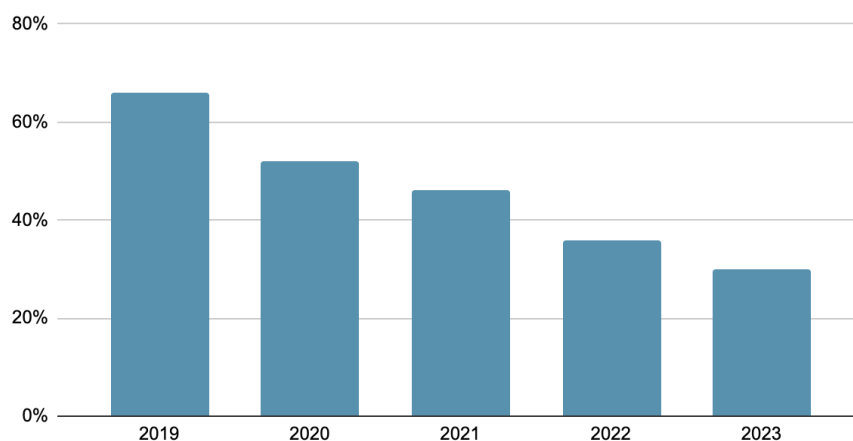


Figure 2: Monthly Use of Television from 2019 to 2023 to Reach News Content Among Ukrainians (InMind - InterNews 2023)

5.2.1 Interpretation of the Television Popularity as a News Source in Ukraine

Television (as described in the theoretical part of the thesis) was historically the most important media in Ukraine. Since the formation of the independent state the medium played a crucial part in the Ukrainian media system. According to the data in the last few years the television audience decreased and in 2023 its importance as a news source is high only among the older

generations. The middle-aged demographic tends to watch TV news during specific times of the day especially when dining (breakfast, dinner) or during their free time (for example during weekends). The youngest respondents in the study watch TV news scarcely or do not own a television at all.

5.3 Online media Popularity from 2019 to 2023

Online media in Ukraine (understood as news websites) are significant but also decreasing in popularity. In 2019, 59% of the respondents described news websites as a commonly used source of the news content. Since then, the popularity of news websites has decreased. In 2020 and in 2021 48% of the survey participants were using news websites in order to consume news. In 2022 43% of the interviewees followed news websites and in the next year 2023 - only 42% respondents used news websites to reach the news.

Monthly Use Of Online News Websites from 2019 to 2023 To Reach News Content Among Ukrainians

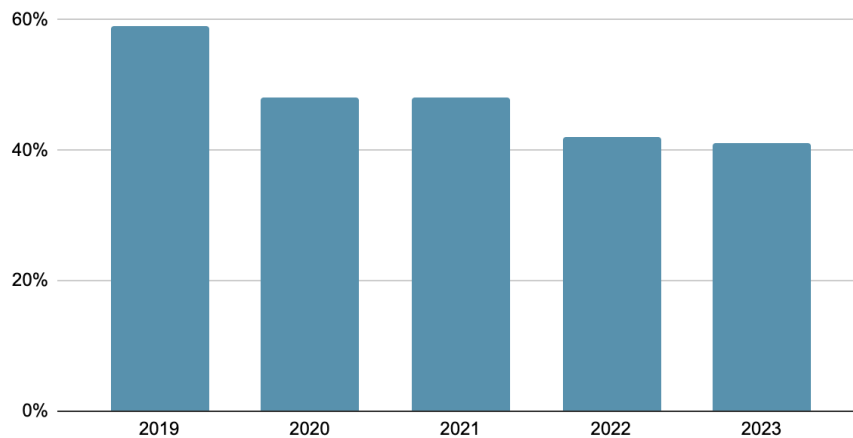


Figure 3: Monthly Use of Online News Websites from 2019 to 2023 to Reach News Content Among Ukrainians (InMind - InterNews 2023)

5.3.1 Interpretation of the online media popularity in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023

Online media were very important in the past decade and a half and can be viewed as one of the reasons print media in the country tend to have little attention from the readers. Since there is a pressure on up-to-dateness of the news and at the same time there is a part of the consumers who prefer written text over video content - online media platforms fill the gap in this demand sufficiently. The decrease in the usage of the news websites was also not as significant as in the case of television. Participants in the focus group predominantly use their smartphones to access news, making it their main source of information. The rising popularity of mobile devices (smartphones in particular) contributed to the popularity of online content - but there is a significant trend of rising popularity of social networks that deflects the audience's attention from traditional news websites.

5.4 Social Networks Popularity from 2019 to 2023

Social networks are the only category where there was an increase throughout the selected time frame. In 2019 68% of the interviewees used social networks for reaching the news content. Following year, in 2020 the only decrease in this category in the selected period took place - 62% of the respondents used social networks for reaching the news content. In 2021 63% of the survey participants were using social networks to get news. In 2022 (the research was conducted in the latter half of the year, hence after the war started) - the numbers of users increased to 74% and in 2023 yet another increase took place and the percentage reached 76% of the active users who were getting their news content from social networks.

Monthly Use Of Social Networks from 2019 to 2023 To Reach News Content Among Ukrainians

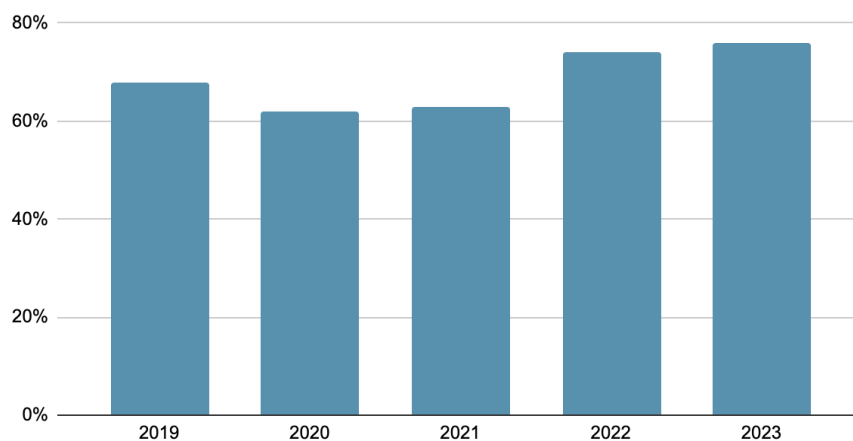


Figure 4: Monthly Use of Social Networks from 2019 to 2023 to Reach News Content Among Ukrainians (InMind - InterNews 2023)

5.4.1 Interpretation of social Networks popularity from 2019 to 2023

The most popular social networks in Ukraine from 2022 to 2023 were: 1) Telegram (a platform that has been especially popular in the past years both for communication and news consumption), 2) Facebook (network giant that is losing its popularity constantly, yet still popular especially among the older audience), 3) YouTube, 4) Instagram and 5) TikTok.

Social networks are probably the most immediate platform for the audiences - the rapid increase of the already high percentage in 2022 is most likely connected with the events of the war which started on 24th February 2022. The constant increase in internet usage in the past years

contributed to the social networks' popularity as well as the increasing popularity of mobile devices (smartphones in particular). As of 2023, 89% of people reported they use the internet daily, and this percentage rises up to 98% among the younger demographic (aged from 18 to 35 years old). When it comes to consuming news on smartphones, 87% of the overall audience does so, compared to 97% of young adults (aged from 18 to 35 years old). Both of these factors contribute to the rising popularity of online content and especially social networks.

6 The Role of the State in Media System of Ukraine from 2019 to 2023

Criteria of *role of the state* is analysed through the ratings and reports focused on media freedom from the organisations Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders.

6.1 Role of the State and Media freedom in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 according to Freedom House

The reports emphasize that Ukraine's constitution protects free speech, but media pluralism (which is present throughout the selected time frame) is often challenged by ownership from politically motivated business magnates - in Ukraine often described as oligarchs. Despite bans on Russian news sources, internet access remained largely free throughout the selected time frame. Despite the criteria of Media freedom rating remaining unchanged throughout the period (mainly due to the limited scale) - there had been significant shifts toward state-controlled media after the start of the war, that are described in the summaries below.

Freedom House - Media Freedom & Overall Freedom in Ukraine ratings

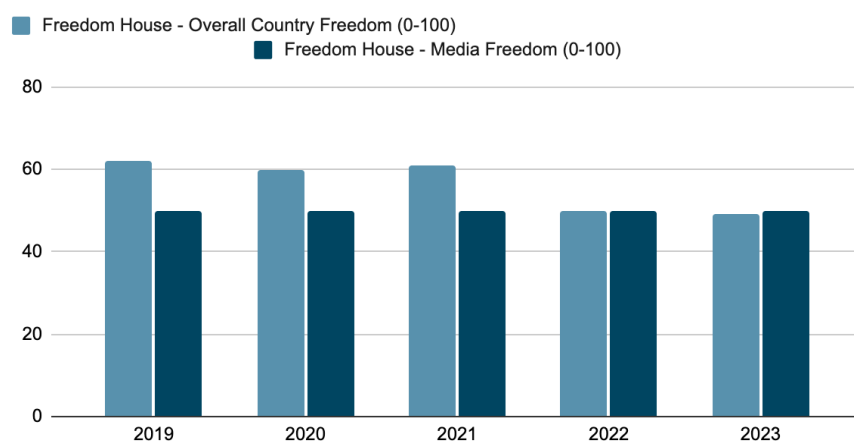


Figure 5: Media Freedom & Overall Freedom ratings in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 (Freedom House)

Even though there are relatively significant developments in Media freedom and role of the state that are described in the paragraphs below, the rating of the freedom of the media in Ukraine stayed unchanged throughout the selection period. Every year from 2020 to 2024 Freedom House reports the metric for Media freedom indicated ranking of 2/4 points which on the scale from 0 to 100 equals to 50 points.

Overall freedom according to the non-profit organization Freedom House oscillated around 60 points out of 100 possible points until the 2023 report when the significant decline of 11 points occurred and the rating went from 61 points to 50. This development reflected the beginning of the war in the country. In the 2024 Freedom House report the country received 49 points. According to the reports Ukraine is ranked as '*partly free*' in the selected duration.

6.1.1 Summary of Freedom House reports from 2019 and from 2020 regarding Media Freedom and the Role of State in Media

According to the Freedom House report - in the time period leading up to the 2020 Freedom House report - president Petro Poroshenko refused to sell his television network - *Fifth Channel*. Russian media faced bans, and there was an increased pressure to support Ukrainian-language publication and television channels, risking the closure of non-Ukrainian language outlets such as the Kyiv Post. In the time period from the last report leading up to the 2019 Freedom House report Ukraine saw over two hundred media freedom violations, including violence and intimidation against journalists. Legal and police actions often compromised journalists' rights, evident in aggressive law enforcement against media and protesters and invasive surveillance practices. According to the reports the situation was extremely chaotic in separatist-held Donbas, with harsh press freedom violations and censorship by local authorities.

Oligarch Igor Kolomoisky supported President Zelenskyy's campaign openly with his media empire. Despite legal protections, the administration has restricted media access and upheld bans on Russian media, enforcing language laws for Ukrainian content. Ukraine continued to restrict Russian news entities and upheld bans on Russian-language cultural materials in 2019. In 2019 threats and assaults against journalists occurred and were reported, notably the fatal attack on anti-corruption journalist Vadym Komarov. Despite the dangers, law enforcement's response remains inactive, with significant cases unresolved. On the other hand, the arrest of suspects in journalist Pavel Sheremet's 2016 murder is an instance of positive action against crimes targeting journalists.

6.1.2 Summary of Freedom House report from 2021 regarding Media Freedom and the Role of State in Media

According to the Freedom House report - in the time period leading up to the 2020 Freedom House report - Oligarch Igor Kolomoisky continued to support President Zelenskyy openly with his media empire. President Zelenskyy's administration continued to limit media and continued to enforce a ban on Russian media and continued to pursue language requirements for content in favor of Ukrainian language.

Ukraine's journalists and reporters continued to face physical assaults, intimidation, and a lack of protection from authorities. In 2020, media watchdogs called for action after an investigative team was targeted. By year's end, suspects were identified in one case. The Institute of Mass Information reported 205 media freedom violations in 2020, including physical violence, cyberattacks, interference, and more, with the Ukraine's Police investigating 200 incidents. Despite legal protections, challenges persist for Ukraine's journalists.

6.1.3 Summary of Freedom House report from 2022 regarding Media Freedom and the Role of State in Media

According to the Freedom House report - in the time period leading up to the 2022 Freedom House report - Ukrainian oligarchs may have been influencing content to follow their interests, including continuous support for President Zelenskyy from outlets controlled by Igor Kolomoisky. Russian media are banned, and content must often be in Ukrainian.

Additionally, in 2021, Zelenskyy's administration pursued legal actions against outlets with alleged Russian ties. In February three channels (channel ZIK, channel NewsOne, and channel 112) linked to pro-Russian oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk were banned. As a result - the European Commission voiced concern for proportional measures. Journalists yet again faced violence and intimidation in 2021.

6.1.4 Summary of Freedom House report from 2023 regarding Media Freedom and the Role of State in Media

According to the Freedom House report - in the time period leading up to the 2023 Freedom House report - Despite bans on Russian news sources, internet access remained largely free. With the 2022 Russian invasion, Ukrainian state centralized television channels under the government-run telethon *United News*. Later, a law signed by Zelenskyy granted the government extended control over media. These legal steps aimed at Russian propaganda but were criticized as a threat to free speech and a shift away from the European Union standards.

During the first year of the war - journalists were facing direct attacks from Russian forces and risked their lives reporting about the events of the ongoing war in Ukraine. In 2022, dozens were killed, including both Ukrainian and foreign reporters.

6.1.5 Summary of Freedom House report from 2024 regarding Media Freedom and the Role of State in Media

According to the Freedom House report - in the time period leading up to the 2023 Freedom House report - Ukrainian media landscape has faced challenges, especially following the Russian invasion. Before the full-scale war, there was significant media diversity, despite oligarch-cantered ownership and bans on Russian outlets. The invasion prompted the government to centralize TV channels under a state-controlled platform - United News that continued to broadcast 24/7 in 2023. A law passed in December 2022 which further tightened government control over Ukrainian media, allowing the shutdown of unregistered news sites without judicial control, aiming to suppress Russian propaganda.

In 2023, the ban on Russian media and restrictions on their news channels and websites continued. Journalists in Ukraine have faced severe threats from Russian forces that were militarily invading the country. Over 500 attacks were reported, including kidnappings and killings.

6.2 Role of the State and Media freedom in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 according to Reporters without Borders

According to Reporters without Borders' *World Press Freedom Index (WPFI)* Ukraine achieved 67,5 points out of 100 possible in 2019 and ranked 102nd out of 180 countries that were ranked. Year later with approximately the same amount of points Ukraine ranked 96th. In 2021 Ukraine gained 67 points and ranked 97th. In 2022 Ukraine was ranked 106th with approximately 55,8 points. In 2023 Ukraine was ranked 79th with approximately 61,2 points. From 2022 Reporters without Borders also publish several indicators and ranks countries according to selective segments influencing freedom of press. One of the indicators - *Legislative indicator* ranks legislation of the country according to which Ukraine ranked 36th globally with 79,5 points in 2022 and in 2023 it received 80,7 points and ranked 26th.

Reporters without Borders ratings

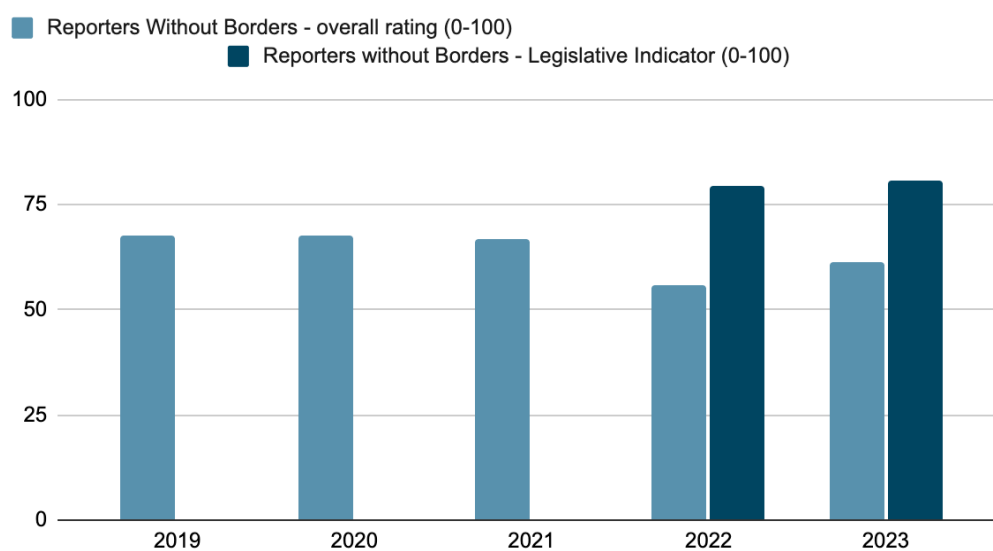


Figure 6: Press Freedom Ratings & Legislative Indicator from 2019 to 2023 in Ukraine (Reporters Without Borders)

According to the Reporters without Borders Ukraine managed (after years of preparation) to enact a new media legislation in late 2022 to align Ukraine with European media standards. After the beginning of the war there has been a decline in the overall ranking of press freedom but in 2023 the ranking improved. The legislative indicator is on a high level both in 2022 and in 2023.

The role of the state increased in Ukrainian media in the selected time period and with the

beginning of the war, press freedom decreased. According to the ratings the decrease was not especially dramatic. Among the important changes it is crucial to mention the state's efforts to limit Russian influence and the influence of oligarchs in the media.

7 Political Parallelism in Ukraine

Political parallelism is one of the features of media systems described by Hallin and Mancini as: *"the character of links between political actors and the media and more generally the extent to which media reflects political divisions"* (Hallin & Mancini 2004, Hardy, 2008).

The Ukrainian context is specific - historically there are strong and varied links between political actors and important mass media in the country. On the other hand, recently the media itself (even though having varied political inclinations and orientations) do not fully reflect the party bias in the country (Макарчук, 2020).

Even though powerful and wealthy individuals (who are often politically active) are involved in the media, which is one of the most defining phenomena taking place in Ukrainian media throughout the history of the country - the oligarchisation does not bring clear ideological and political bias into the media system. According to Макарчук (2020) this may also be caused by general lack of pluralism of political views in society represented in the mass media.

The media system in Ukraine can also be described by its internal pluralism, a concept described by Hallin and Mancini as *"pluralism at the level of each individual media outlet or media organization"* (Hallin & Mancini 2004). Internal pluralism is yet another factor that further suggests a rather limited degree of political parallelism within the media system (Макарчук, 2020).

8 Professionalisation of Journalism in Ukraine

The professionalization of journalism refers to a spectrum that spans from independent journalism to instrumentalized journalism (journalism under control of external actors). It describes the degree of autonomy that journalists have in their work, the development of

distinct professional norms and rules, such as routines and ethical principles, and the public service orientation of journalists - whether it emphasizes an ethic of public service over the interests of individual persons. (Hallin & Mancini, 2004)

There is no legal requirement for Ukrainian journalists to undergo any kind of professional preparation or studies. There are numerous professional development courses available, offered by various organizations. Primarily, these courses can be found at universities and postgraduate educational institutions. Professional education for journalists is widely available in Ukraine. In total 39 Ukrainian universities are holding licenses to provide college education in the area of journalism. Among the journalist community to obtain such education it is regarded as beneficial and professional in the field. (Ianitskyi, 2021).

There are several ethical guidelines for journalists, for instance the *Code of Ethics of Ukrainian Journalists* (MediaWise, 2011) or more recent *Guide to Journalism Ethics* (Internews Ukraine 2023) which define the main moral and ethical guidelines to be achieved by journalists.

According to Ganzha and Pogorelov (2015) only 30 percent of journalists in Ukraine are familiar with the principles of the code. Vaskiv (2019) also argues the professional education of the journalist should be applied more vastly among Ukrainian journalists in order to pursue higher professional standards of journalism in the country.

The professionalization of journalism in general in Ukraine remains rather weaker - yet according to Reporters without Borders (2016), Ukraine stands out among post-Soviet states for its dynamic media journalism culture, which promotes constructive discussions on standards and professional issues within the industry.

9 The level of trust in media from 2019 to 2023

The trust in media does not fully reflect the viewership - it is deeply rooted in the perception of the audience who is following the media. Audiences include sceptical followers as well as those who trust the media without significant critical approach. In the time of war, the trust of the audience is crucial in order to ideologically mobilize its audience. This is the main reason

this chapter focuses on dynamics of trust among the viewers of nation-wide mediums in each aforementioned category.

9.1 Trust in national television in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023

In 2019 the total 49% of the total sample of respondents from InMind study answered they *trust* or *partly trust* information from television. In 2020 there was a significant decrease in the percentage of people trusting television; the percentage moved to 41% and a year later in 2021 to 40%. In 2022 there was an increase to 48% and in 2023 the trust reached 49% among the respondents. Despite decreasing viewership of television, the trust among the respondents in the medium is increasing.

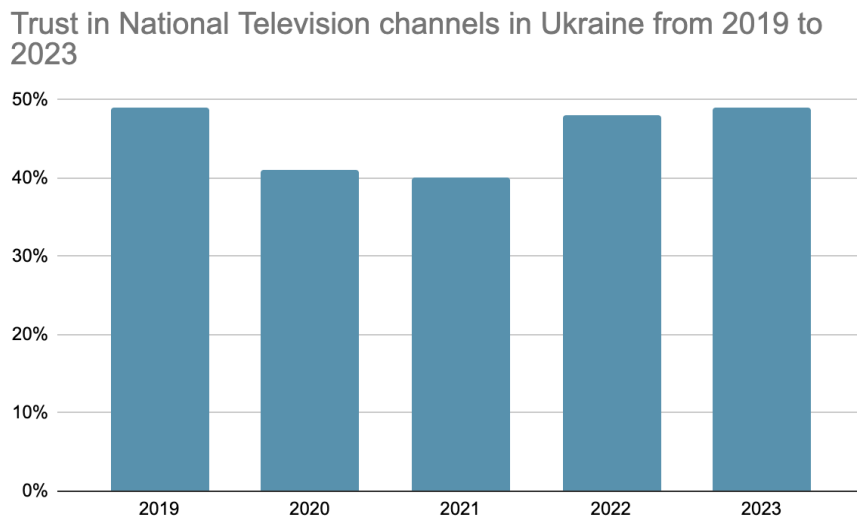


Figure 7: Trust in National Television in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 (InMind - InterNews 2023)

9.2 Trust in Social Networks from 2022 to 2023

Social Networks are the most popular and the most trusted medium in Ukraine. In 2022 the total 60% of the total sample of respondents from 2023 InMind study answered they *trust* or *partly trust* information from social networks. Following year there was a slight decrease in trust - the percentage moved to 59%.

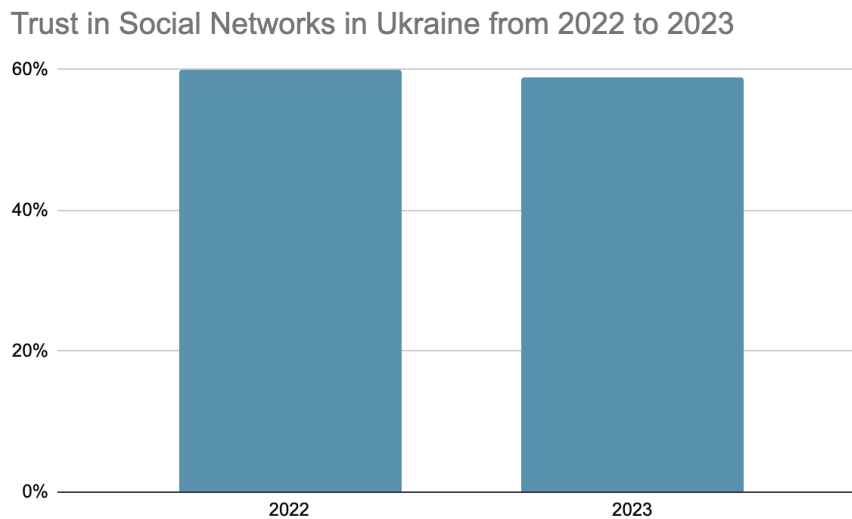


Figure 8: Trust in Social Networks in Ukraine from 2022 to 2023 (InMind - InterNews 2023)

The strong position of social networks both in high popularity in the last years and in the high trustworthiness of the platforms is also connected to the perception of the audience that is described by Kasinska-Metryka and Pałka-Suchojad (2023) that audiences are aware that traditional media may present different narratives of a conflict to specifically suit the audience and in order to affect the target audience in a certain way. On the other hand, on social networks, there are also first-hand accounts that are often viewed as more credible by the audience.

9.3 Trust in Online Media in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023

Online media are the second most trusted medium in Ukraine in the examined past years. In 2019 the total 51% of the total sample of respondents from 2023 InMind study answered they trust or partly trust information from social networks. Two following years in 2020 and in 2021 there was a slight decrease in trust - the percentage shifted to 48% and then to 47%. In 2022 and in 2023 the level of trust among respondents increased again - in 2022 54% proclaimed to trust the online media and in 2023 56% proclaimed to trust the online media.

Trust in National Online Media (News Websites) in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023

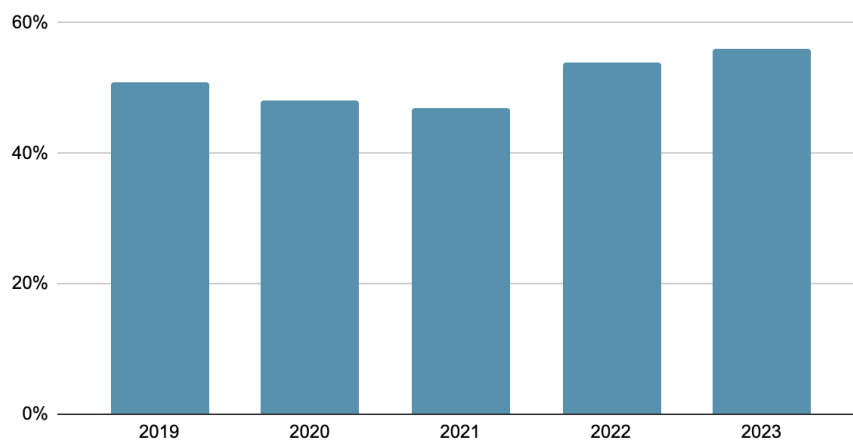


Figure 9: Trust in Online Media (News websites) Television in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 (InMind - InterNews 2023)

9.4 Trust in National Print Media from 2019 to 2023

The trust toward the print media among the respondents was significantly higher than its actual following in the examined time period. In 2019 and in 2020 19% of the total sample of respondents from InMind study answered they *trust* or *partly trust* information from social networks. In 2021 the trust among the respondents slightly increased to 22%. In 2022 there was a decrease among the interviewees and only 16% of the respondents declared to trust national press media to certain extent. 24% of the respondents trusted the printed media in 2023.

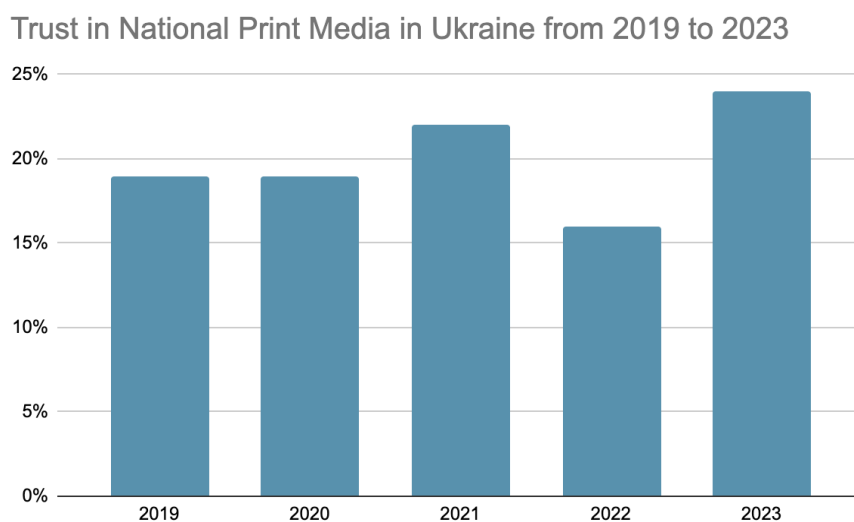


Figure 10: Trust in National Print Media in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 (InMind - InterNews 2023)

9.5 Trust in National Radio from 2019 to 2023

Radio is the second least trusted and second least used medium in Ukraine. In 2019 - 22% of the total of respondents from InMind study answered they *trust* or *partly trust* information from radio. In 2020 - 21% of the respondents trusted the radio. In 2021 - 24% of the respondents trusted the radio. Year later in 2022 - 23% of the participants claimed to trust the medium. In 2023 there was a significant increase in trust - 28% of the respondents answered they trust radio to a certain extent.

Trust in National Radio in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023

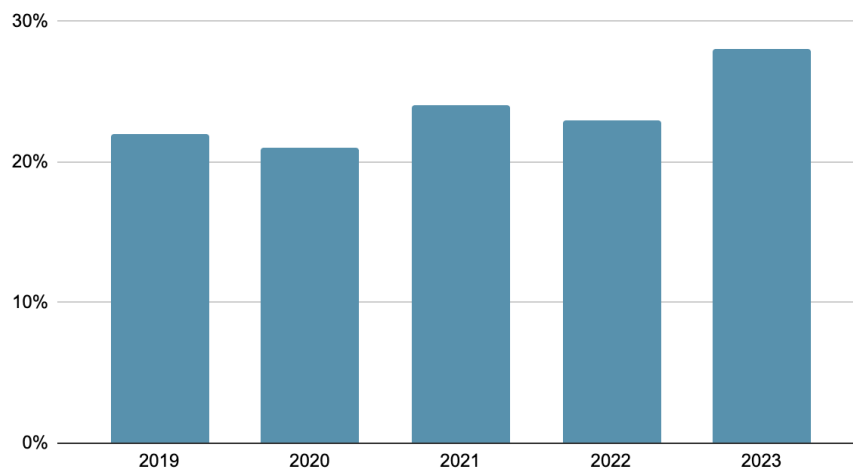


Figure 11: Trust in National Radio in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023 (InMind - InterNews 2023)

The study attributed the increase in trustworthiness of national radio in 2023 to a disappearance of the pro-Russian radio stations in the country and overall emphasis on news content even on traditionally entertainment-focused radio stations.

10 Interpretation of Development of Trust in Media in Ukraine & Findings from Focus Groups

According to the data the development of trust in media was not drastically affected by the war in 2022 and in 2023. There is a noticeable trend of trust slightly increasing on most of the platforms in 2022 and in 2023. The slight increase and overall consolidation of the trust in the media in the country after the war started suggests stability and relative reliability of the media system. Highest levels of trust are attributed to social networks and online media which might be problematic since the social networks are generally more vulnerable to convey disinformation and misinformation in the media process. According to the focus groups conducted in the same research - interviewees view media sources especially trustworthy when they allow the audience to comment and discuss their media coverage.

Despite the war - most of the researched mediums were gaining trust of the respondents in small portions but steadily over the selected time period. This trend is especially interesting in contrast with the decrease in usage of the majority of the mediums except social networks.

11 Trust in the Telethon *United News*

At the time of completion of this thesis it is currently over two years since the war in Ukraine started. In the scope of those two years the majority of important television media consolidated its pro-Western positions and were to increased extent under the control of the state.

Telethon *The United News* (in Ukrainian: Телемарафон Єдині новини) is collaborative televised broadcast launched on 24th February 2022 as a reaction to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. From the beginning of the war, it was initiated to keep the Ukrainian public informed about the developments in Ukraine following the Russian invasion and to counteract Russian disinformation and enhance the morale of the society of the defending country. Since 26th February 2022, television networks belonging to four Ukrainian media conglomerates: 1+1 Media Group, Starlight Media, Inter Media Group, and Media Group Ukraine (until its discontinuation on July 22, 2022), together with My-Ukraine (from November 8, 2022) along with the public broadcaster Pershyi and Rada TV, have been operating non-stop. Each network currently contributes by broadcasting a 6-hour segment to the continuous coverage.

11.1 Trust in the telethon *United News* in 2022

After the war started - the telethon's popularity and notoriety were on high levels. In 2022 only 6% of the Ukrainian television audience were not aware of the telethon, the vast majority of the rest watched it regularly at least once a week. The level of trust in 2022 was at a very high level. Trust to telethon reached significantly higher levels than measured trust in television in general in the country in 2022. Among the telethon viewers there was 84% who trusted the telethon in 2022 with 28% of the audience fully trusting the broadcast and 56% mostly trusting the broadcast. Among the viewers who did not trust the telethon 9% mostly distrusted the telethon, 3% fully distrusted the telethon. 4% of the respondents were undecided.

Audience trust in the telethon United News in 2022

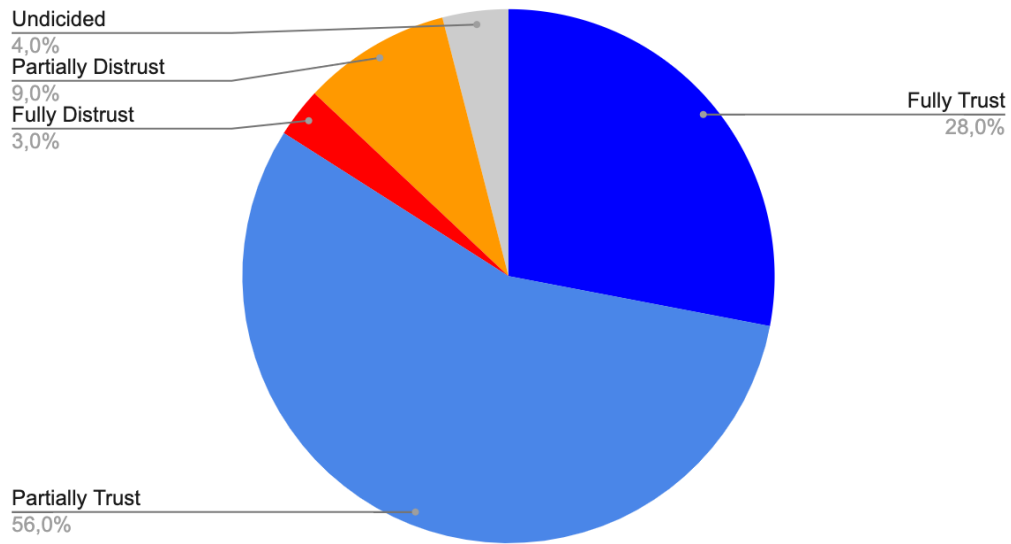


Figure 12: Trust in National telethon United News in 2022 (InMind - InterNews 2022)

11.2 Trust in telethon *United News* in 2023

In 2023 InMind research the general levels of trust to *the United News* decreased but still remained significantly higher than trust in general television - 71% of the followers of the telethon trusted the broadcast in 2023. 15% of the respondents fully trusted telethon, 56% of the respondents to some degree trusted the telethon. Among the 21% who did not trust the telethon 15% partly distrusted the broadcast, 6% fully distrusted the broadcast. 9% of the respondents were undecided in 2023.

Audience trust in the telethon *United News* in 2023

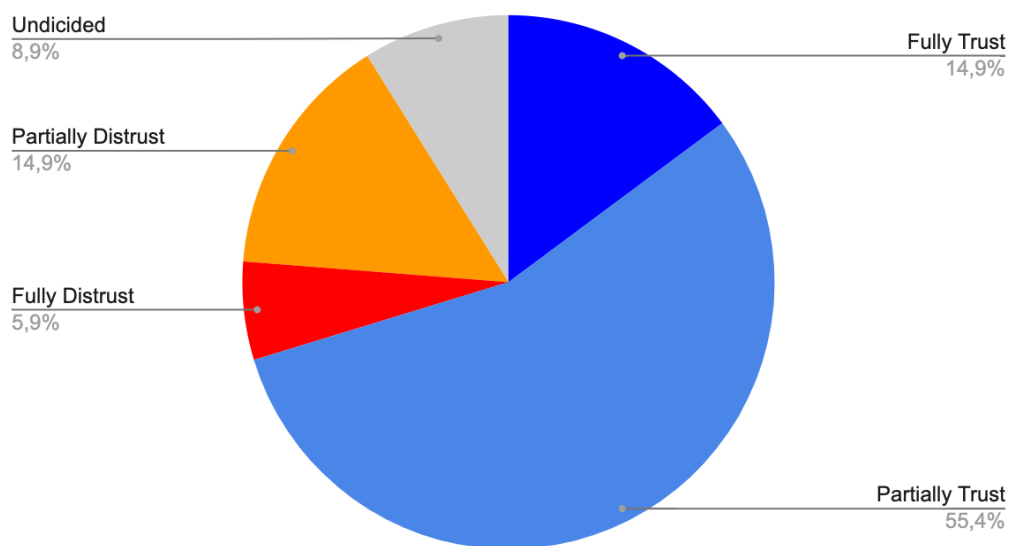


Figure 13: Trust in National telethon *United News* in 2023 (InMind - InterNews 2023)

The decrease in trust of the *United News* might be caused by a plethora of the factors. One of them is that the audience understands the broadcast as a propaganda tool and a tool of information war of the Ukrainian government (Méheut, Mitiuk 2024).

On the other hand, the majority of the audience from the study trusts the telethon - the level of trust among the respondents in the selected time frame and 65% of the interviewees in 2023 agreed it is important for the broadcast to continue existing at least until the war ends.

11.3 Telethon *United News* as tool of Ukrainian propaganda

Except the conventional battlefield which in Russo-Ukrainian war extends over one thousand kilometres there is also informational battlefield, as Kasinska-Metryka and Pałka-Suchojad (2023) put it the *the fighting for the rule of mind* affects the war to crucial degree. One of the vital means of fighting this battle became the united telethon which started airing on 24th February 2022 at the same day the war started. The telethon has been broadcasting continuously 24 hours a day 7 days a week since then.

According to Oksana Romaniuk, head of the Kyiv-based Institute of Mass Information (Méheut, Mitiuk 2024) Ukrainians have become tired of Telemarathon after 2 years of continuous broadcast. Initially viewed as an important platform to unify and inform the attacked nation, it is now increasingly criticized as a government propaganda tool. Méheut, Mitiuk are describing that viewers of the telethon are expressing concerns that the program frequently presents an overly optimistic view of the war, especially related to the events at the frontline.

Reporters without Borders (2024) also criticize the telethon - Jeanne Cavelier, the head of RSF's Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk, describes the telethon as outdated and highlights that Ukrainian television channels have developed the capability to independently counter Russian propaganda while still upholding their editorial independence. The article from February 2024 also described the telethon as a threat to media pluralism in the country and decreasing viewer ratings among its audiences and overall perceived relevance.

12 Findings & Conclusions

12.1 Trends in Media in Ukraine from 2019 to 2023

Audiences in Ukraine are moving their attention in the direction of social networks - the majority of the traditional media are losing their audiences. The social networks are also the most trustworthy media platforms in Ukraine as of late.

The media system of Ukraine withstood the events of war in the first two years and the general trust in media was increasing especially in 2022 and in 2023 - in the examined period the trust.

In response to the war - the most relevant Ukrainian television channels united and created the telethon *United News* - broadcast that informs Ukrainians about the events connected with Russian military forces entering Ukraine. According to the examined data from 2022 and 2023 the telethon is perceived positively among the audiences, but the popularity and trustworthiness decreased in 2023.

Throughout the examined time period the legislative restrictions to Russian influences and Russian content in media were taking place. The period under review was also notable as the government focused on limiting the influence of oligarchs in general, including those who are prominent media owners.

12.2 Framework for analysis of media system in country that reflects Audience's Trust in Media Suitable for Monitoring Media System of Country at War

In order to describe shifts in Ukrainian media system as well as the current state of the media system itself during the period from 2019 to 2023 (period affected by Russian invasion) the thesis focuses on audiences and examines popularity and trustworthiness of separate mediums in Ukraine. Beside the criteria that originated in Hallin and Mancini original typology the thesis

includes criteria of trustworthiness - criteria that is deeply interconnected with the information warfare and important factor when a country is engaged in war.

The suggested framework combining the modified criteria from Hallin and Mancini together with criteria of perceived trustworthiness is universal and might be applied across the spectrum of media systems.

12.3 Description of the Ukrainian media system based on selected & modified criteria based in Hallin and Mancini and Additional Criteria

The Ukrainian media landscape in recent years can be described by the following characteristics, according to the data analysed: There is significantly low newspaper consumption and radio consumption. Television remains the most significant medium among traditional media, although its popularity is on the decline. Today's most popular media platforms in Ukraine are rooted in online content, with social networks gaining especially significant traction. According to data from 2019 to 2023, the popularity of social network platforms has shown a steady increase.

The role of the state in the media system increased with the start of the war considering legislation targeting Russian content, media owners with pro-Russian ties and legislation targeting oligarchs in general. According to the ratings from the Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders from 2019 to 2023 the overall freedom of the media did not decrease dramatically.

Despite the historically significant ties of politics and media in Ukraine symbolized by oligarchisation of the media - the specific media outlets do not reflect political divisions in Ukraine in a substantial way. Hence the political parallelism in this sense is rather limited in Ukraine.

Professionalism of Journalism in Ukraine is on a relatively low level. Legally, the journalist profession does not require any professional education nor training. On the other hand there

are a number of university programmes across the country specializing in journalism or media studies and obtaining such education is regarded as beneficial across the professional community.

Trust in the media in Ukraine started increasing after the beginning of the war in 2022 and in 2023 among the respondents. According to the data from InMind study (2023) the most trusted traditional medium was television. The most trusted medium in general were social networks. The trust in the media in the selected time frame did not display any substantial signs of instability in the media system in the wartime.

12.4 Ukraine's Current Media System & Original Hallin and Mancini's Typology

Based on the characteristics described above and according to Hallin and Mancini original typology, the Ukrainian media system is close to the Polarized Pluralist Model.

It is important to pinpoint that there are a number of differences between the Ukrainian media system and systems that are typically described as the polarized pluralist. These differences include for example: limited political parallelism in Ukraine or early development of print media in Ukraine. Nevertheless, is also important to note that recently - traditional media included in Hallin and Mancini typology are losing their audiences while online media and social networks are rapidly gaining traction.

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Annex 1:

Freedom House - Media freedom - complete list of questions for the criteria

- *Are the media directly or indirectly censored?*
- *Is self-censorship common among journalists (the term includes professional journalists, bloggers, and citizen journalists), especially when reporting on sensitive issues, including politics, social controversies, corruption, or the activities of powerful individuals?*
- *Are journalists subject to pressure or surveillance aimed at identifying their sources?*
- *Are libel, blasphemy, security, or other restrictive laws used to punish journalists who scrutinize government officials and policies or other powerful entities through either onerous fines or imprisonment?*
- *Is it a crime to insult the honor and dignity of the president and/or other government officials? How broad is the range of such prohibitions, and how vigorously are they enforced?*
- *If media outlets are dependent on the government for their financial survival, does the government condition funding on the outlets' cooperation in promoting official points of view and/or denying access to opposition parties and civic critics? Do powerful private actors engage in similar practices?*
- *Do the owners of private media exert improper editorial control over journalists or publishers, skewing news coverage to suit their personal business or political interests?*
- *Is media coverage excessively partisan, with the majority of outlets consistently favoring either side of the political spectrum?*
- *Does the government attempt to influence media content and access through means including politically motivated awarding or suspension of broadcast frequencies and newspaper registrations, unfair control and influence over printing facilities and distribution networks, blackouts of internet or mobile service, selective distribution of advertising, onerous operating requirements, prohibitive tariffs, and bribery?*
- *Are journalists threatened, harassed online, arrested, imprisoned, beaten, or killed by government or nonstate actors for their legitimate journalistic activities, and if such cases occur, are they investigated and prosecuted fairly and expeditiously?*
- *Do women journalists encounter gender-specific obstacles to carrying out their work, including threats of sexual violence or strict gender segregation?*
- *Are works of literature, art, music, or other forms of cultural expression censored or banned for political purposes?*

Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky FSV UK	
Teze MAGISTERSKÉ diplomové práce	
TUTO ČÁST VYPLŇUJE STUDENT/KA:	
Příjmení a jméno diplomantky/diplomanta: Ardan Michal	Razítko podatelny:
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Studijní program/forma studia: Žurnalistika - prezenční	
Název práce v češtině: Mediální systém Ukrajiny a jeho proměna v kontextu rusko-ukrajinské války	
Název práce v angličtině: The media system of Ukraine and its transformation in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war	
Předpokládaný termín dokončení LS 2023	
Charakteristika tématu a jeho dosavadní zpracování (max. 1800 znaků): Diplomová práce se bude zabývat mediálním systémem Ukrajiny. Mediální systém bude zařazen do kontextu existujících teorií mediálních systémů, podrobně budou popsány jeho charakteristické rysy, nejdůležitější mediální kanály, nejdůležitější jednotliví mediální producenti. Praktická část práce se bude zabývat analýzou mediálního systému, jeho proměny v souvislosti s vypuknutím rusko-ukrajinské války v únoru 2022, změny rámcování obsahu v souvislosti s rusko-ukrajinskou válkou. Zároveň práce zahrne obsahovou analýzu vybraných mediálních sdělení před únorem 2022 a po něm, aby byla výstižněji shrnuta proměna ukrajinských médií a jejich produkci v souvislosti s ruskou invazí.	
Předpokládaný cíl práce, případně formulace problému, výzkumné otázky nebo hypotézy (max. 1800 znaků): Diplomová práce bude cílit na zprostředkování co nejpřesnějšího popisu mediální krajiny Ukrajiny. Důraz bude kladen na proměnu obsahu a celkové atmosféry v médiích v čase, především v souvislosti s vypuknutím rusko-ukrajinské války v únoru 2022. Mediální systém do jisté míry reflektuje politickou situaci v dané zemi. Jako dobře pochopitelný příklad adaptace médií na válečné období je možné uvést vytvoření programu Єдині новини (Jediné zprávy), kdy přední televizní média v zemi spoluvytváří relaci, ve které referují o válce v zemi, situaci v jednotlivých regionech postižených válkou. Zároveň je možné v kontextu této relace sledovat i spoty propagující ukrajinskou armádu a její úspěchy. V současné době se Ukrajina již více než půl roku brání ruské agresí. Je tedy vhodné analyzovat jakým dílem se ukrajinský mediální systém válečné situaci přizpůsobil, jak média v této zemi reagují na válku, jak se proměnila mediální krajina, jak se proměnily dominantní rámce mediálních sdělení. Zároveň je	

možné i následně diskutovat do jaké míry mohou být právě ukrajinská média jedním ze zásadních hybatelů válečného vývoje v zemi.

Předpokládaná struktura práce (rozdělení do jednotlivých kapitol a podkapitol se stručnou charakteristikou jejich obsahu):

Teoretická část diplomové práce

Mediální systémy - existující teoretické koncepty, definice

Charakteristika socio-politického prostředí Ukrajiny

Dominantní média v Ukrajinském mediálním systému

Dominantní producenti mediálního obsahu v kontextu Ukrajiny

Vlastnická struktura médií na Ukrajině

Zařazení mediálního systému Ukrajiny do kontextu existujících konceptů

Praktická část diplomové práce

Komparace mediálního systému Ukrajiny před ruskou invazí a po ní

- K jakým změnám v ukrajinském mediálním systému od vypuknutí války došlo?
- Došlo k důležitým změnám vlastnictví dominantních médií?
- Ukončila některá média po vypuknutí války svou činnost, za jakých okolností?

Analýza obsahu vybraných ukrajinských periodik v určitém časovém období

Dominantní rámce v kontextu ukrajinských médií v čase

Komparace obsahu mediální produkce před válkou, po začátku války

Závěry

Vymezení podkladového materiálu (např. titul periodika a analyzované období):

Práce bude čerpat z archivů předních ukrajinských masových médií. Jednotlivá média budou vybrána na základě relevantnosti. Jako příklad je možné uvést přední televizní média, kterými jsou:

1+1 (www.1plus1.net)

Kanál 5 (www.5tv.com.ua)

Inter (www.inter.ua)

Nový kanál (www.novy.tv)

ICTV (www.ictv.ua)

STB (www.stb.ua)

První národní kanál (<http://1tv.com.ua/uk/>)

Kanál Ukrajina (<http://kanalukraina.tv/>)

Tonis (<http://www.tonis.ua/>)

K1 (<http://www.k1.ua/uk/>)

TET (<http://tet.tv/uk/>)

Analýza se bude soustředit na určité časové období mezi revolucí Euromajdan na konci roku 2013 (tedy před vypuknutím války) a určité časové období po invazi ruských vojsk na Ukrajinu, tedy po únoru 2022.

Metody (techniky) zpracování materiálu:

- literature review
obsahová analýza
analýza rámců v mediálních sděleních

Základní literatura (nejméně 5 nejdůležitějších titulů k tématu a metodě jeho zpracování; u všech titulů je nutné uvést stručnou anotaci na 2–5 řádků):

Boyd-Barrett, Oliver. "Ukraine, mainstream media and conflict propaganda." *Journalism studies* 18.8 (2017): 1016-1034.

Text se zabývá rusko-ukrajinskými vztahy před vypuknutím války, po anexi Krymského poloostrova. Nevynechává jadernou hrozbu, kdy proti sobě mohou stát dominantní velmoci. Soustředí se na mainstreamová i alternativní média, přičemž jmenuje 10 rámců, které se v informační válce snaží prosadit.

Mejias, Ulises A., and Nikolai E. Vokuev. "Disinformation and the media: the case of Russia and Ukraine." *Media, culture & society* 39.7 (2017): 1027-1042.

Text se zabývá důležitostí informací a dezinformací a jejich výskytu v kontextu konfliktu. Klade důraz na jinakost jejich původu. Porovnává dezinformační praktiky starých a nových médií v kontextu Ruska a Ukrajiny.

Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge university press, 2004.

Zásadní práce, která kategorizuje mediální systémy v Evropě.

Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini, eds. *Comparing media systems beyond the Western world*. Cambridge University Press, 2011

Rozšíření kategorizace mediálních systémů Hallina a Manciniho za hranice Evropy.

Diplomové a disertační práce k tématu (seznam bakalářských, magisterských a doktorských prací, které byly k tématu obhájeny na UK, případně dalších oborově blízkých fakultách či vysokých školách za posledních pět let)

IERMOLYCHEVA, Olena. Mediální systém Ukrajiny optikou teorie Daniela Hallina a Paolo Manciniho [online]. Brno, 2017 [cit. 2022-09-09]. Dostupné z: <https://theses.cz/id/deyv79/>. Diplomová práce. Masarykova univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií. Vedoucí práce Mgr. et Mgr. Michal Tkaczyk.

NAIMUSHINOVA, Anastasiia. Analýza mediálního obrazu války na Ukrajině ve vybraných médiích. Praha, 2021. Diplomová práce. Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Katedra mediálních studií. Vedoucí práce Miessler, Jan.

ŠRÁMKOVÁ, Zuzana. Mediální obraz ukrajinské krize ve zpravodajství vybraných deníků České a Slovenské republiky. Praha, 2015. Bakalářská práce. Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Katedra německých a rakouských studií. Vedoucí práce Šafařík, Petr.

Datum / Podpis studenta/ky

.....

TUTO ČÁST VYPLŇUJE PEDAGOG/PEDAGOŽKA:

Doporučení k tématu, struktuře a technice zpracování materiálu:

Případné doporučení dalších titulů literatury předepsané ke zpracování tématu:

Potvrzuji, že výše uvedené teze jsem s jejich autorem/kou konzultoval(a) a že téma odpovídá mému oborovému zaměření a oblasti odborné práce, kterou na FSV UK vykonávám.

Souhlasím s tím, že budu vedoucí(m) této práce.

Příjmení a jméno pedagožky/pedagoga

.....
Datum / Podpis pedagožky/pedagoga

TEZE JE NUTNO ODEVZDAT **VYTIŠTĚNÉ, PODEPSANÉ** A VE **DVOU** VYHOTOVENÍCH DO TERMÍNU UVEDENÉHO VE VYHLÁŠCE ŘEDITELE INSTITUTU, A TO PROSTŘEDNICTVÍM PODATELNY FSV UK. PŘIJATÉ TEZE JE NUTNÉ SI **VYZVEDNOUT** V SEKRETARIÁTU PŘÍSLUŠNÉ KATEDRY A **NECHAT VEVÁZAT** DO VÝTISKU DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE.

TEZE NA IKSŽ SCHVALUJE GARANT PŘÍSLUŠNÉHO STUDIJNÍHO PROGRAMU.