






The Phenomenon of Social Invisibility of Certain Ukrainian Citizens Categories during Crisis Periods

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The Phenomenon of Social Invisibility of Certain Ukrainian Citizens Categories during Crisis Periods

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Abstract

Social invisibility is a complicated psychological and social phenomenon reflected on particular strategies of the society's attitude to individual groups, their marginalization or "invisibility", which is especially noticeable in the periods of crises. Ukraine has experienced revolutions, a partial territorial occupation, a pandemic and a large-scale invasion since 2013. The crises of these years influenced the society's life, its readiness or unreadiness to tolerate particular social issues. The analysis of the tendency in covering the issues concerning the LGBT community in the Ukrainian online media of *Ukrayinska Pravda (UP)*, *Gazeta.ua (G)*, *Obozrevatel.com (Ob)* during 2010 – the first part of 2022 based on statistical and content-analysis of publications gives a chance to prove that.

The research findings demonstrated that, in general, publication activities of the media do not demonstrate tendencies to increased amount of media content devoted to the problems of the LGBT community. The thematic range of publications is also relatively limited, its core is the issues of the Equality March organization and holding, social reaction to this event, world's news and activity of local politicians.

The serious analytical publications concerning the problems of the LGBT-community are at the periphery of the themes. Stories of the LGBT-community representatives, including media persons who demonstrate positive examples of social adaptation, an issue of gender-based tolerance in the society, etc., remain beyond the attention of the editorial staff, observation of human rights, issues of the queer culture. The reasons for such situation can relate to the editorial staff's policy and influence on formation of the narrative in the country concerning the rights of the LGBT-community representatives.

The research of other top-rated media publications is also prospective not only with regard to quantity and themes, but also quality; in particular, compliance with journalist standards and ethical norms by the authors. That will allow reception of a more complete picture concerning the representativeness of the LGBT community's problems in the media environment of the country and the specification of the indicators influencing their formation, as well as understanding mechanisms of social invisibility in media.

Keywords: LGBT, gender, media studies, social invisibility.

I. Introduction

The social invisibility of certain population groups is usually associated with emphasizing the other groups' needs, which can be especially aggravated during periods of wars, pandemics or revolutions. Since Ukraine has experienced all of the above-mentioned crises during the period analyzed, the media do not pay enough attention to the issue of social security of certain groups, the level of their civil rights, etc. Studying how the social image of particular population groups is

represented in the media of an individual country is important for several reasons. First, media influence the formation of public opinion giving a rise to discrimination, stereotypization or stigmatization of individual population categories. Sometimes they can be an instrument of propaganda for totalitarian societies; that does not provide for diversity of the society under any parameters. It is especially topical for Ukraine in the light of its course to accession to the European Union and adoption of the social values of the democratic world. With this regard, it is important to form in a society a healthy environment of mutual respect, balance and perception of diversity, which actualizes the second reason. However, media can be an education tool for democratic societies, as well as for the countries committing to releasing from their totalitarian past and to building new democratic principles of cooperation in the society through the relevant influence on the legislative, social and cultural areas. One of the most sensitive issues for post-totalitarian societies is human and civil rights of the LGBT-community. Representation of the problems of this population group in national and regional media is revealing for understanding the processes characterizing a particular stage of society's development and the processes of communication in it (discriminating phenomena, non-provision of human and civil rights at the legislation level, stigmatization of the group and its individual representatives, aggression, etc.) and requires fundamental research.

II. Literature review

One should state that in Eastern European, particularly, the Ukrainian scientific context, there are no complex researches related to the description of the LGBT-community's representatives' social image by the national media, moreover, the phenomenon of social invisibility in crisis periods and thus, social protection of these citizens are absolutely not accentuated. For example, in 2020, the non-governmental organization of Institute of Mass Information published a report dated June 12-18, which contained the monitoring results of the Ukrainian media concerning the exposure of information about the LGBT-community and its representatives (Mashkova, 2019). The research data certified a low visibility level of social otherness by gender in the national media publications, and even lower in regional ones. On one hand, the majority of materials have no straight homophobic statements or headlines, manipulations, incorrect terms, etc.

On the other hand, according to the monitoring, first of all, the editorial staff published content about an annual pride. These data are assumed to be specified by the fact that the monitoring was held before the regular Kyiv Pride (started on June 16). Contrary to one-theme researches, comprehensive analysis of a LGBT representatives' social portrait in the media of the countries with different legislations can become a model for further work with this regard for Eastern European scientists, particularly, the Ukrainian ones. The monograph by Laura Faludi *The Vietnamese LGBT Movement and the Media* (2016) can serve as an example. The author analyses archetypical mental structures forming a negative LGBT image by the Vietnamese media resources, TV, in particular.

Phillip M. Ayoub and Jeremiah Garretson (2016, p. 28) study the pre-requisites for formation of a socially healthy image of LGBT in the consciousness of the representatives from different nations. The authors specify that this category of the population should be provided with platforms for disclosing their social positions, and they give an example of Russia which enacted the anti-gay legislation in 2013. This led to disappearance of a gay discourse from the public media

environment. As the example of developed countries proves, media encourage the formation of a tolerant attitude to lesbian and gay people. The results of this influence must be the subject for further researches (Ayoub, Garretson, 2016, p. 28).

M. Lan and Y.Cheng make a conclusion that the deeper social awareness about LGBT, positive perception of its representatives, recognition of their social rights are formed when the Internet and new media appeared. (Lan, Cheng, 2020, p. 421). Everado Duarte Nunes considers the phenomenon of social invisibility as a scientific notion (Nunes, 2020), as one of key ones in the area of social psychology and social communications. Even when the researchers do not use the notion of "social invisibility", many researches are devoted to the problem itself. E.M. Fullmer, D. Shenk, L.J. Eastland pay attention to social invisibility of elder women-LGBT representatives individually. The scientists determine and describe two indicators of their invisibility – sexual orientation to the age (Fullmer, 1999).

Thus, a comprehensive analysis of the LGBT-community representatives' social image in national and regional media of the country are perspective and topical as its results can provide better understanding of the processes of stigmatization or toleration of certain groups of the population and the role of media in these processes.

III. Research methods

During the research it was performed a statistical and content analysis of the publications in the social-and-political online news outlet of *Ukrayinska Pravda (UP)*, *Gazeta.ua (G)* and *Obozrevatel.com (Ob)* for the period of 2011 - first half of 2022. In the website traffic rating these media take correspondingly the 1st, 6th and 17th positions (Bratushchak, 2020).

The positions of these media also differ with regard to the content quality exposed. According to the data of monitoring 2021, *UP* occupies one of the first positions among the Ukrainian online media concerning the adherence to journalist standards and ethical norms (over 96% of qualitative publications). *Ob* has 64% of such publications, and *G* was not included into this monitoring (Golub, 2021). Let us mention, that history of *UP* resonates with the history of development of Ukraine as an independent state. It was established in 2000 to draw attention of the world's community to strengthening censorship and to the oppression of liberty of speech in the country. *UP* became a symbol of the Ukrainian independent journalism and of fight for freedom when it was reported about the murder of Heorhii Honhadze, its founder and editor-in-chief. Thus, the influence of this news outlet on the condition of perception by the society of certain social issues is quite notable; to the contrary, its content can demonstrate, to some extent, the level of "social order" for exposing or a course of exposing of issues in question.

The purpose of the statistical analysis is to determine frequency of publications on LGBT–community issues during a calendar year, which provides an opportunity to track the topicality of the theme in certain media and, in general, in the future, in the Ukrainian media environment.

The purpose of the content analysis is to determine the visibility level of the social problem of gender difference in the Ukrainian environment, readiness of the Ukrainian media to raise a problem as a social, psychological, moral one, etc., to determine general depth of the problem exposure. The content analysis determines general approaches of media to the exposure of a

particular society part's social portrait, which is quite indicative for estimation of its readiness to tolerate diversity itself.

IV. The findings of the statistical analysis of the media publications

The research aims at determining the frequency and thematic courses in representation of the problems related to the LGBT-community in Ukraine, depth in exposing issues concerning gender diversity, social tolerance, human rights of the persons belonging to the LGBT-community.

The first stage of the research establishes the frequency of the publications mentioning a notion of "gay", "LGBT"; covers the problems related to this gender category in top three of the most visited online-media. As Table 1 shows, the lowest indicator of publications on the LGBT themes is seen in the most visited news outlet of Ukraine – *UP*, however, other two media demonstrate almost identical amount of publications for past six years.

G demonstrates notable gradual increase in number of publications on the LGBT themes during past ten years – from 3 in 2010 to 34 in 2021. *Ob* shows relevant stability in exposing the issue during past 5 years, however, *UP* does not demonstrate a tendency to deepening the problem whilst in Ukraine the movement for equal social rights for all gender categories of the citizens has strengthened significantly. Absence of interest from the editorial staff to these themes requires more grounded research, that is why this publication is devoted to a content analysis of the publications exactly in this news outlet.

Table 1: Number of publications on LGBT problems in Ukrayinska Pravda, Gazeta.ua and Obozrevatel (2010-2021)

Years	Number of publications in the media		
	Ukrayinska Pravda	Gazeta.ua	Obozrevatel
2010	1	3	-
2011	2	2	-
2012	9	18	-
2013	15	25	11
2014	2	9	25
2015	5	19	20
2016	7	22	16
2017	3	36	30
2018	4	25	35
2019	5	37	28
2020	5	32	31
2021	9	34	28
Total	67	262	224

During January-June 2022, media of *UP*, *G*, *Ob* published totally 21 materials about LGBT: 6,4, and 11 publications correspondingly.

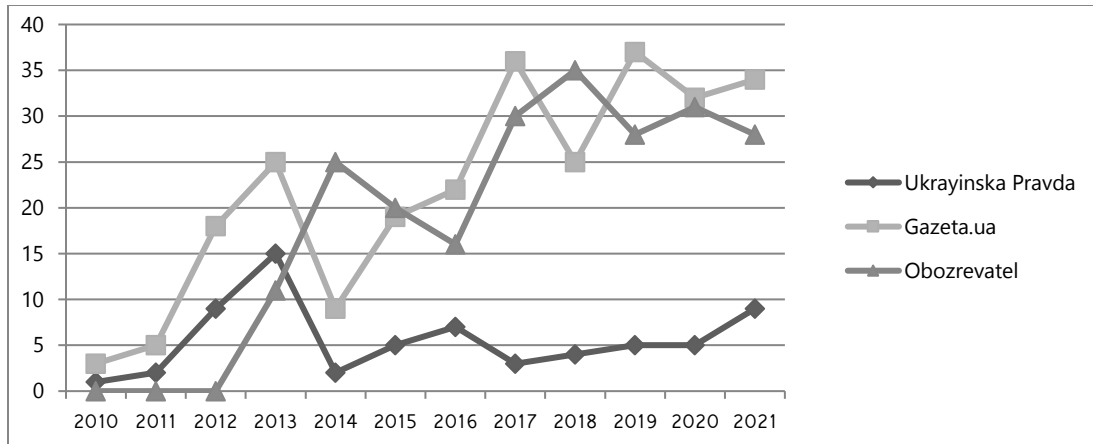


Figure 1: Number of publications on LGBT problems in *Ukryinska Pravda*, *Gazeta.ua*, *Obozrevatel* (2010-2021)

The Figure 1 shows that peak points and points of decline for different media do not coincide, thus, it is hard to say about certain tendencies of changes in exposing the issue of gender tolerance in the Ukrainian society, and the content analysis shows in general that three leading Ukrainian online media prefer restrained rationality in covering the problems of tolerance in the Ukrainian society.

In *UP* the majority of publications falls on 2013, i.e. the period before the armed aggression of Russia on Donbas started. Later, the media did not pay to this issue significant attention which illustrates marginalization of certain themes important for the society through actualization of certain crisis issues.

In the media of *G* the amount of the publication has been growing for last years; however, it fell down dramatically with the beginning of armed hostilities in 2022. The media of *Ob* demonstrates quite relative stability of the quantitative indicator. Thus, it can be supposed that 2022 will not be significantly different: 11 publications during half a year allows assuming an expected indicator from 20 to 30. The frequency indicators of the publications on this issue in two quite popular media allows developing a hypothesis that media actively respond to actualization of the crisis problematics in the society decreasing the amount of the publications on a particular theme and increasing on another one. Another parameter of the comparison is thematic measurements of the issue exposure, diversity of the questions raised, particular accents of information about the LGBT-community.

As it is seen from Table 2, during 10 years, the publications in *UP* are divided by content as follows: almost half of the publications (49.1%) concern holding the Equality March, three times fewer publications are devoted to the events in the world (4.72%) and activity of local politicians (4.13%) related to the problems of the LGBT-community. 3 publications per year during these ten years are deep analytical materials or are devoted to life stories of the LGBT-community representatives. However, *UP* does not contain stories of media persons whose life is connected with the LGBT-community, particularly, coming-out. Also, it does not cover the problems of gender tolerance of the society and adherence to human rights with this regard. The news outlet does not also pay

attention to criminal news about the LGBT-community, particularly, activists attacked by the representatives of radical groups of the society.

On one hand, the media does not pursue “hot topics” trying to reflect the Ukrainian society’s life in a balanced way, and on the other hand, it factually avoids deep coverage of triggering themes unwilling to go against the expectations of the reader, as the researchers suppose. Instead, this is the media that published comprehensive analytical materials and stories from life of the LGBT community’s representatives, which the other media did not do. However, they include only three publications for the period determined, the media does not deepen the theme coverage.

Thus, the availability of these three publications does not allow saying about a smart policy of the media concerning the formation of tolerance in the issues of gender diversity. Moreover, these publications belong to 2015-2016 years, when in the Ukrainian society it was notable a request for Europeanisation.

Table 2: Problems of the LGBT-community covered in publications of *Ukrayinska Pravda* (2010- 1st half of 2022)

Problems of LGBT-community exposed	Number of publications	Percentage of publications
Holding Equality March	30	41
World's events related to the LGBT-community	8	10.9
Activity of politicians concerning the LGBT-community	7	9.5
News related to media business and VIP stars	-	-
Analytical publications about problems of the LGBT-community	3	4.1
People' stories demonstrating the matter of the question	3	4.1
Gender tolerance and human rights	3	4.1
Criminal news about LGBT-community	-	-

Thus, the information statements about holding the Equality March, social confrontation related to this event are the most frequent among the publications. The publications that connect this issue with particular political forces are presented equally, however, these are, first of all, comments given by the representatives of these forces specifying their personal or party’s attitude to the LGBT-community.

The resource almost does not provide serious analytical content on the theme – for 10 years they have had only 3 publications of that type, but only 1 publication demonstrates the author’s intention to carry out a particular statistical analysis and to present the level of tolerance concerning the perception by the Ukrainian society of the otherness by different parameters (internally displaced people and gays).

Table 3 provides the data on how the thematic courses concerning the issue exposure are presented in the online-media of *G* for the period analysed.

Table 3: The problems of the LGBT-community covered by the publications of *Gazeta.ua* (2010- 1st half of 2022)

The problems of LGBT-community exposed	Number of publications	Percentage of publications
Holding the Equality March	92	34.5
World's events related to the LGBT-community	83	31.2
Activity of politicians concerning the LGBT-community	27	10.1
News related to media-business and VIP stars	82	30.8

Analytical publications about the problems of the LGBT-community	8	3.0
People's stories that represent the matter of issue	2	0.7
Gender tolerance and human rights	44	16.5
Criminal news about the LGBT-community	3	1.1

As Table 3 shows, the content representing the process of organization and holding the Equality March in Ukraine is the most frequent content in this news outlet, the content about the LGBT representatives in show-business and events abroad related to the community are also quite frequent. Actualization of events in the show-business area relates to the focus of the media on entertainment, drawing attention to events with participation of celebrities.

Table 4 provides the data concerning how the thematic courses in issue exposing are represented in online news outlet of *Ob* for the period analyzed.

Table 4: The problems of the LGBT-community covered by the publications of *Obozrevatel* (2010- 1st half of 2022)

The problems of the LGBT-community exposed	Number of publications	Percentage of publications
Holding the Equality March	64	27.2
World's events related to the LGBT-community	51	21.7
Activity of politicians concerning the LGBT-community	32	13.6
News related to media business and VIP stars	46	19.5
Analytical publications about the problems of the LGBT-community	-	-
People's stories that represent the matter of issue	-	-
Gender tolerance and human rights	53	22.5
Criminal news about the LGBT-community	15	6.3

As it is seen from Table 4, the content representing the procedure of organization and holding the Equality March in Ukraine is also the most frequent in this news outlet, the materials about the LGBT representatives in show-business and the events in the world related to the community are quite frequent. Individually, the media raises a question of gender tolerance (more often non-tolerance); however, it does not offer any wide generalizations or conclusions.

If to compare the percentage-based indicators, it is seen that the messages about the Equality March in *UP* amount to 41%, instead, in *G* – over a third (34.5%) and in *Ob* – almost a third (27.2%). The ways of exposing the issue in the second news outlet are more diverse, it raises an issue about gender tolerance and the human rights in the society, provides 8 analytical publications. The-media covers the issue deeper and more diversely, moreover, the number of publications is growing up. *Ob* does not offer an analysis on the issue being studied, does not provide people's stories demonstrating a social condition of the LGBT representatives, although periodically refer to the statistical data that illustrate the level of intolerance of the Ukrainian society to the otherness. It is telling that the materials on key areas of the LGBT community's problems – holding the events, events abroad, tolerance in the society are distributed quite equally in this news outlet.

It is not accidental that information statements about the Equality March prevail in the three media under analysis because it concerns the event which draws attention of the information consumers every year, does not leave them indifferent regardless of their positions, so these pieces of news are clickable. Moreover, the theme is media "safe", because it is about a factual event, i.e. pro

forma the media covers the issue of LGBT-community but on the other hand it does not take risk to cause criticism from their subscribers or lose their loyalty.

The same way, the readers are attracted by the publications related to the show-business or world's events. These messages are safe for the media, do not raise fraught debates or a radical response. It is seen that not all media demonstrate bravely intolerance of some politicians or political forces; for example, *Ob* writes about this comparatively little, however, *UP* covers it deeper, since the media focuses to a large extent on balanced coverage of the Ukrainian society's life.

The analysis of the publications themes in the three top-rated online-media for the period analysed does not provide grounds to make conclusions that media community of the country does its best to form a general high level of the tolerance in the society, including tolerance to gender diversity. Thematic range of publications demonstrates prevailing orientation on odium of a particular newsworthy event related to social, cultural, educational or political areas. In general, the focus on the social need to enhance all areas of social cooperation, on formation of the European human context of equality by all attributes is not seen. An intention to demonstrate intolerance by the society to the Equality March as an event, to the symbols of the LGBT-community as a demonstration of gender otherness, high level of aggression or non-admission of the LGBT representatives as the members of society prevail in the publications. Although the majority of the content is of stating nature with no comments from the author or expression of a personal opinion, the thematic range of publications persuades in existence of general concealment of a request from a part of the Ukrainian society for social and civil acknowledgment, a need for securing equal rights in the civilized country.

In general, the hypothesis that prompted the study is confirmed: the emphasis of publications about the LGBT community in the Ukrainian media demonstrates the general mental marginalization by the majority of the Ukrainian society of this social group, the high pressure of stereotypes and hostility generated by it. This is what motivates online media to cover the problem carefully in their desire to have a high rating among readers.

V. Results of Content Analysis of UP Publications on the LGBT Issues

The rating of *UP* specifies a need for grounded content analysis of peculiarities in informative reporting concerning the social cross-section of the LGBT-community's problems exactly in this news outlet, as it is specified above. First, as it was mentioned, the news outlet does not demonstrate growth rates in quantity of publications, but the amount of the publications reached the peak in 2013, when the Eurocentric sentiments were very powerful in the Ukrainian society and it was seen in all social areas. During the period analysed, the news outlet has stated that in the Ukrainian society the issue of gender tolerance remains unsolved. For example, the publications in 2011 say that Ukraine is almost the only country in Europe where there is no developed pride-movement.

The 2021 publications emphasize the available resistance of certain organizations and categories of the population to the pride and its representation in society, and the danger in which the participants of the movement find themselves. It is seen that while entering the environment of the European Union, social tendencies concerning the perception of issues related to LGBT as a

category of citizens, rights of the category are changing, however, currently it does not indicate social relief in this area. The biggest breakthrough is made with this regard in 2022 – a petition to legalize same-sex marriages is gaining necessary 25,000 votes on the website of the President of Ukraine. *UP* publishes an article “To give the Russians the Darwin Prize and to change grains for weapons: 15 extraordinary petitions from the president's website” (15.07.2022), which states that “several petitions received more than 25 thousand signatures are currently waiting for the reaction of the head of state. These include petitions to legalize same-sex marriages, a ban on issuing draft notices at fuel stations, checkpoints and streets, a petition to ‘thank the president’, etc.” (Figure 2).

Information on the issue of granting equality to all citizens of Ukraine, regardless of identity, is put in a row with rather odious questions and, in fact, levelled in this way. The publication has more than 6,700 views as of 19.09.22, the comments do not relate to the analysed social request, since the accents are noticeably shifted.

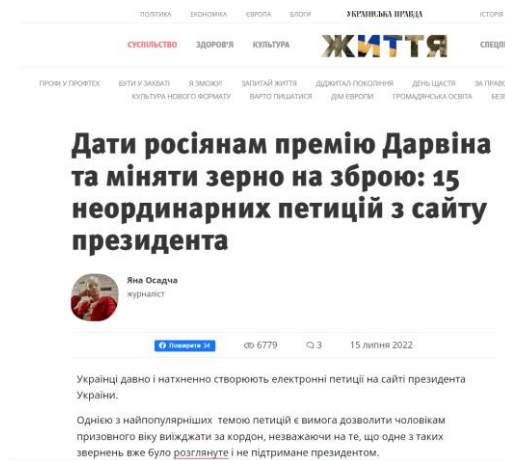


Figure 2. Screenshot of *Ukrayinska Pravda* publication “Give Russians the Darwin Prize and to change grains for weapons: 15 extraordinary petitions from the president’s website” (15.07.2022)

The author of the publication made another material on the theme of “The petition on the legalization of same-sex marriages received more than 25,000 votes” (09.07.2022). The publication provides statistics that should deepen the level of coverage of the problem (Figure 3). However, the journalist resorts to data manipulation, which is seen from the comparison of the publication text with the report text cited by her, as presented in Table. 5. In addition, the journalistic material uses the estimated vocabulary “only 23.6%”, “even less”.

Table 5: Comparison of the publication text in *Ukrayinska Pravda* and of the analytical report it cited (Perception, 2022)

UKRAYINSKA PRAVDA (LIFE)	PERCEPTION OF LGBT PEOPLE AND THEIR RIGHTS IN UKRAINE (analytical report)
According the data of the survey ordered by LGBT Human Rights of “Nash Svit”, only 23.6% support the legalization of the same-sex marriages. In 2016 there were 4.8%.	Inconsistency of the respondents’ answers concerning the LGBT rights is seen in the issue of the registered partnership for the same-sex couples without a right for coupled adoption. Even for such format, support is equal to 24% while at the same time 42% do not support this initiative. Simultaneously, 27% are indifferent to this issue. If to sum up the votes, 51% in total have chosen “yes” or “I do not care”, which is about a half of the population and is higher than 42% of the opponents.

In addition, the illustration to the publication demonstrates the stereotypical nature of LGBT people as a social group.

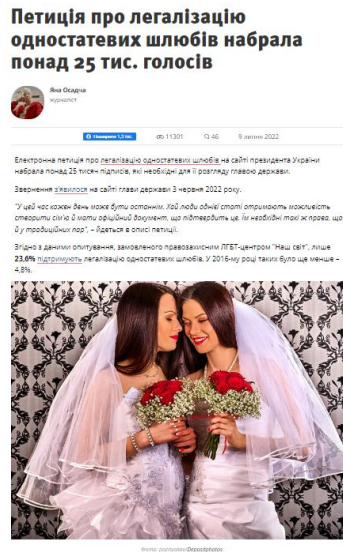


Figure 3. Screenshot of *Ukrayinska Pravda* publication “Petition to legalize same-sex marriages received more than 25,000 votes” (09.07.2022)

In total, during the analysed period, the media publishes 28 publications on the legalization of same-sex marriages, the majority of them exposes the attitude to this issue in other countries. In 2016, the media publishes analytical material on the issue of registered partnership, this is the most thorough publication for the period under analysis. It is significant that despite the increased percentage of the Ukrainians who are ready to accept the legalization of same-sex partnership in the society, and such newsworthy event as a petition on the President's website, *G* does not expose them this year, and *Ob* publishes two materials in July 2022, one of which aims at debunking the main myths about same-sex relationships.

It is telling that with fewer materials concerning the LGBT problem, *UP* has yet quite grounded materials forcing the reader to think about the issue on formation of a tolerant society, materials that demonstrate a positive image of the LGBT representative, humanization of the people who are often demonized or stigmatized in intolerant societies.

1. Raising a question about the oppressions and reception of civics.

The publications represent repeated requests of the LGBT representatives to the authorities and different political forces, for example, “Ukrainian gays ask Yanukovich for help” (March 2010). Publications say that gender self-determination cannot become the reason for social discrimination, which is quite high in Ukraine. Some publications of the news outlet make topical a social request for formation of civil equality when gender otherness. The vast majority of such publications falls on 2015-2016, then attention to the problem decreases.

2. Organization of parades

It is telling that first the authors of publications in *UP* use a definition of “gay-parade” and gradually from 2013 – “pride”. The publications actualise the purpose of these promotions – to state a need to establish equal rights of the citizens of Ukraine regardless of their sexual self-identification. A few publications say about powerful resistance to such events from different civil

and political forces, for example, "Gay parade rescheduled because of Cossacks" (May 2011). The other media under analysis underline the same powerful oppression to holding the Equality March in the towns of Ukraine.

The headlines of individual publications emphasize that among the Deputies there arose confrontation, a kind of rift, due to the issues related to the rights of the LGBT-community, particularly, a question concerning the holding of parades (Equality Marches). Manipulations with this issue are possible because the law on peaceful meetings in Ukraine is imperfect, which gives an opportunity to prohibit the events. Since the Equality March is held in Kyiv and other towns of Ukraine, a range of materials is devoted to revealing a position on this issue by local administrations.

The Equality March becomes a newsworthy event for the publications every year. It is tracked both in *UP* and in two other media being analysed. In general, the tendency is as follows: it is stated that event holding faces obstacles in different forms; it emphasizes an aggressive resistance to the March from individual political forces, representatives of individual groups, religious organizations, etc.; events of aggressive behaviour with the March participants, beating, cases that can be qualified as criminal ones take on importance. These strategies point at the consequences of the influence of totalitarian manipulative discourses, built on contraposition of the otherness to a certain declared "normality" under the principle of contrasting white/black, right/wrong.

3. Homophobic sentiments of the Ukrainian society, the result of which is civil confrontation and aggression

A necessity to protect their rights forces representatives of the LGBT-community to contact the representatives of authorities demanding to stop avoiding solution on important social issues, for example, "Gays and lesbians ask politicians to decide if they are with homophobes or not" (May 2012). Until 2014, during the time of government of President Yanukovich, the top managers of the country in many social issues were oriented on relevant policy of Russia where the pressure concerning the LGBT-community is quite significant.

4. Connection of the issue concerning the LGBT rights with certain political forces

First of all, it is about transmittance of homophobic beliefs, absence of social tolerance from official representatives of political parties, for example, "The communist became number one in the rating of homophobes, other politicians were also notable" (July 2012), "Lutsenko: a gay parade in Khreshchatyk is better than tanks in Kyiv" (10.11.2015), "Nationalists blocked the centre of Kyiv to impede the LGBT parade" (18.06.2017). Among politicians it is seen a tendency to "flirt" with different groups of population, which, according to researches, demonstrate a low level of tolerance on any issues. Correspondingly, media fix the change in politicians' opinions regarding which electorate groups they refer to.

5. Intervention of the government and organizations of other countries in the issues related to the protection of sexual minorities' rights in Ukraine

In the three media analysed one can mark out the publications demonstrating a request from the international community concerning the formation in Ukraine of a tolerant democratic society;

however, there are also the publications providing quite unattractive context for this request – ruining the national values.

6. World events

A range of publications are devoted to the events in the neighbouring country – Russia, for example, “More than 60 people arrested at the event devoted to protection of sexual minorities in St. Petersburg” (June 2013). Events in other countries are also covered, for example, “In Istanbul police broke up the LGBT-march with gas” (19.06.2016); “The Prime Minister of Luxembourg, a married gay, criticized homophobic campaign of Duda” (10.07.2020). As we can see, the media focuses attention first of all on the events occurring due to the Equality March, facts of attacks on representatives of sexual minorities, i.e., on the events which are newsworthy events in the country and abroad.

Moreover, the media does not pay attention to other aspects of the issue, almost does not invoke a fundamental analysis of general social background, issues of tolerance, social status of these persons. The media does not provide any stories from the lives of the families, successful stories of professional self-implementation, does not analyse a judicial side of the issue using services of professional lawyers. Thus, publications, in their majority, cannot influence the perception by the information consumers of so acute issue for the society in any way.

VI. Trends in Coverage of the LGBT Community’s Issues with the Beginning of the Active Phase of Russia’s Armed Aggression in Ukraine

With the beginning of the active phase of Russia’s armed aggression in Ukraine, the social context in the country has significantly changed. The dominant topic of publications of all media is the war. Against this background, the level and focus of the LGBT community issue exposure is noticeably changing. Media of *G* gives only 4 publications for six months of 2022, where the problem of tolerance in the society associated with sexual orientation is mentioned only in passing.

In *Ob* there are 11 publications related to some extent to the events in the LGBT community. However, they mainly concern the scandal around the intolerant statement of singer Irina Fedishin (6 publications), 2 relate indirectly to the military confrontation between Ukraine and Russia, highlighting the intolerant attitude from representatives of the show business and political circles of Russia to the otherness.

One publication of the media is devoted to Kyiv Pride, which was held in Warsaw this year because of the war. Its authors emphasize that Poland refuses the Russian LGBT representatives to participate in the pride. Among others, the materials in *UP* covering the LGBT community’s rights related primarily to hostilities draws attention. In particular, they include the article about law 5488, “aimed at overcoming intolerance”, publication about a video clip in support of the LGBT militaries, publication on the adoption of the Istanbul Convention, etc.

The publication “Ukrainians and Poles will hold a joint pride in Warsaw” (a source of information is the Reuters agency), raises an important issue of reducing the level of intolerance towards LGBT+ in the country during the war. The authors note that “since many LGBT+ representatives

in Ukraine joined the combat activity for their country, the activists expressed hope that the war would help break stereotypes" (25.06.2022).

None of the analyzed online media paid attention to exposure of the issues of community participation in hostilities, although this is often reported on social networks, in particular, Facebook. Also, the media do not cover the situation of migrants belonging to the community, etc. As the country submitted an application for joining the European Union, the problem of gender tolerance and attitude to gender violence is actualized more.

Thus, during the six months of 2022, four of which fall on the period from the beginning of the active phase of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, the frequency of publications on the outlined theme has not changed significantly. In the future, a comparison of views of problems related to gender tolerance in Ukraine in the top-rated media in the country, social networks and personal blogs is an interesting field for the study.

VII. Conclusions

The analysis shows that after the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, Ukrainian society was very active in signalling its readiness to enter the European democratic context with an awareness of tolerance as the main basis for interaction between citizens. The themes of most publications in 2015-2021 indicate that the issue was actualized –the analytical content covering the problem more deeply fall exactly on this time.

From this particular moment we can see that the number of publications covering the issue is growing, the number of newsworthy events is growing. Instead, it is worth noting that Ukrainian media, focusing on the low social readiness for tolerant perception of the otherness, prefer a socially safe focus – the exposure of newsworthy events, most often a pride, as an annual event.

The issues of tolerance in educational institutions, at the workplace are not thoroughly covered; little attention is paid to the issue of the possibility for all groups of the Ukrainian population to acquire the same social rights, in particular the right to legitimize relations. Despite the fact that statistics proves that society's tolerance level has increased since 2013 to 2022, the media do not respond properly to these changes in society, which is gradually being implemented in the European Union due to obtaining a visa-free regime, the policy of an open state in the information field, the formation of a new generation of citizens free from the totalitarian patterns of the past.

The behaviour of the editorial staff of the Ukrainian media in covering the problems of the LGBT community reminds walking through a minefield, when, on the one hand, the media tries to cover all issues of social life, and on the other hand, flirts with its seemingly intolerant reader not to lose their loyalty. Instead, the task of the media on formation of a competent attitude of a society to sensitive issues, of providing everyone with a balanced coverage is not fulfilled.

Serious analytical publications concerning the social problems of the LGBT community, success stories or the lives of its representatives are on the fringes of publications themes. There are no stories of media personalities who can demonstrate successful examples of social life, practically no issues of gender tolerance and violations or respect for human rights thereto related are raised (isolated publications devoted to the organization of Marches of Dignity). Issues of the queer culture remain out of the editorial office's attention.

During the crisis period of hostilities, mass migration of the population, thematic publications are also on the fringes, while in a part of publications there is a violation of journalistic standards, manipulation of data.

Further study of the leading media's content will allow getting a more complete picture of the representation of the LGBT community problems in the country's media environment and forming a vision of the social portrait of its representatives built by the media.

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