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'Who contributes more?' How Ukrainian media construed migrants' life strategies vs. what the Ukrainian public wanted to know

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Having chosen the topic of active contribution to social life, one of the most important aspects facilitating deeper social integration, we present the results of a three-staged sociological discourse analysis of media messages related to migrants and migration. In our study, we consistently used a number of methods — a quantitative and qualitative content analysis, semantic analysis, discourse positions' analysis, critical discourse analysis, and an in-depth analysis of focus group interviews. The combination of them all helped us reveal specific details of media image constructing as well as requests for information on migrants' life strategies. We took into account media discourse in fifteen top Ukrainian media over the span of time between 2015 and 2018, focusing on the differences between media discursive strategies based on the form of ownership (state/private), audiovisual type (printed/TV/Internet) and the degree of trustworthiness/popularity of the media among Ukrainians, the actors that had the advantage of being quoted in the media and the groups of migrants being displayed to practice certain active or passive life strategies. The messages with implicit meanings regarding the active migrants' life strategy were less present in the state-controlled top media and the most trusted/popular top media. Similarly, the messages with implicit meanings regarding both the active and passive migrants' life strategies featured less frequently in the top printed media. In the context of understanding 'goodness' as equivalent to 'activity', we found that in the top Ukrainian media there were two 'good' categories of migrants: first, internal migrants in Ukraine and, second, migrants from Ukraine (Ukrainian emigrants). However, it turned out that the first place regarding the presence of implications about 'passivity' (i.e., 'badness') went again to internal migrants in Ukraine. The opinions held by Ukrainians about what the media should have shown were clearly in favor of what migrants were offered by their destination society (thus, in favor of 'passive' media image), and all that the Ukrainians would like to see and hear included both favorable and unfavorable objective social life conditions.

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Introduction

There is no doubt how total the influence of the media has become. G. Strohmeier defines media influence as follows: '(it) is the process and result of television action that changes the behavior, intentions and perceptions of the audience. Informational-psychological influence is an influence on the consciousness of a person and the population in order to make changes in their behavior and worldview' (Strohmeier, 2008: p. 34). It is a great challenge for social researchers to analyze media discourse and the effects of media influence. This is because media discourse is an 'interpretive wrapper' with its internal structure framing the event and 'allowing' the media to capture strategies for identifying, constructing and promoting a particular image, including the image of migration. In the classic introduction to framing, G. Lakoff argues: 'Frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world. As a result they shape the goals we seek, the plans we make, the way we act, and what counts as a good or bad outcome of our actions. In politics our frames shape our social policies and the institutions we form to carry out policies. To change our frames is to change all of this. Reframing is social change' (Lakoff, 2004: p. 25). The media use framing and frames as projections of certain phenomena. At the same time, we should mention here D. Mathison's opinion that news makes sense only within a certain social context, that is, the news depends on it and strengthens it: '…the news reflects society's experiences. Moreover, when the media create a picture of the world, this picture is, in fact, very close to what the members of the given society already know' (Mathison, 2013: p. 45). Another important assertion is that mass audiences desire irrational and fascinating rather than meaningful and reliable content (Marakasova and Chudova, 2015), which is consistent with the definition of our era as a 'post-factual age' (Kunushevci, 2018). Through a critical approach, we wanted to test the extent to which media messaging about migration and migrants corresponds to general trends in contemporary media operations. To this end, we used the data obtained in the international research project 'Migrants. Analysis of media discourse on migrants in Poland, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Albania and the Czech Republic (MAD)' financed by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange as part of the 'International Academic Partnerships' under decision no. PPI/APM/2018/1/00019/DEC/1. We conducted a 'sociological discourse analysis' (Ruiz, 2009) of relevant messages in fifteen top Ukrainian media outlets presented over the period of 2015 to 2018, and analyzed the results of focus group interviews conducted in 2019 with active media users living in large Ukrainian cities (Kyiv, Kharkiv, L'viv) to learn about their perception of media informing on migration and migrants. The main research questions were asked in this research:

1. What is the tone of the discourse on migrants? What vectors (components) does it offer to the Ukrainian audience?
2. Do the media present different types of migrants in an identical way, or do they give a positive/negative hidden meanings to specific types of migrants only?
3. Does media discourse form a complex image of migrants in an (inter)national context, or does it create mosaic content about migrants?

Methods

At the first stage of our research, we carried out a quantitative content analysis to identify the most common frames offered by the top Ukrainian media; then we did a qualitative content analysis and semantic analysis. According to J. R. Ruiz's scheme, it was *the textual level* to search for a general idea of the key informational occasions and characteristics. At the second stage, we did a situational discourse analysis by analyzing discourse positions; *the contextual level* gave us 'the first step to linking specific discourses with the social space in which they have emerged' (Ruiz, 2009). At the third stage, we conducted a critical discourse analysis or, as J. R. Ruiz had called it, *the sociological interpretation* in which discourse was interpreted as ideology: 'Discourse is therefore understood to mirror mechanisms of ideological domination' (Ruiz, 2009).

Quantitative content analysis. The sample was taken from media reports for the period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2018 from fifteen leading Ukrainian media of various types (printed/TV/Internet) and forms of ownership (state/private): *Uryadovyy kur″yer* (Governmental Courier), *Vesti, Sehodnia* (Today), *Den′* (Day), *Hazeta po-ukrayins′ky* (Newspaper in Ukrainian), *UA:Pershyy* (UA:First), *TRK 'Ukrayina'* (Ukraine), *1 + 1, TK Inter* (Inter), *TK ICTV* (ICTV), *Ukrayins'ka pravda* (Ukrainian Truth), *Tsenzor.net* (Censor.Net), *Radio Svoboda* (Radio Liberty), *Strana* (Country), *24.ua*. The general set of messages was obtained automatically by The Center for Content Analysis using the 'Mediateka' tool and contained more than 39,000 publications that mentioned our keywords for the period under the study. Such a partly mapped structure of the channels, from which the messages were subsequently included in the sample set (12,000 messages), could provide a slightly different methodology for study (Yuzva, 2017b: pp. 98–100). Since all media messages were analyzed in the text format (video and audio materials were presented as transcripts) and selected on the basis of one key (related to 'migration', 'migrant', 'refugee', 'IDP' and 'zarobitchanyn', i.e., 'migrant worker'), the documents were coded according to a single toolkit with the use of manual coding of the latent type that took into account the meanings of the words. The modality of posts was coded relying on the triad scale: positive, neutral, negative. The Center for Content Analysis maintained the classical media analysis procedure (Yuzva, 2018). The activity of this Center is based on the fundamental norms and values of corporate relations enshrined in the statute of the company; its activities are built on the principles of the rule of law recognizance in all spheres of socio-economic life. Thus, research was conducted in compliance with all requirements of the methodology.

Qualitative content analysis. This form of analysis was applied to a sample of media texts from text units produced every February in the period of 2015–2018 (selecting every tenth, we had got 355 texts out of 2036; duplicates and only casually touching migrants/migration texts were avoided). T. A. van Dijk underlines that 'mental models are typically much larger than the semantic representations (of the sentences) of the text. Discourses in that respect are like icebergs: most of their meanings are *implicit*. Implicit meanings are part of the mental models of the language users, but are not explicitly expressed in the text. <…> [The] *semantic understanding* is not limited to the construction of actually expressed meanings of discourse (*intensional understanding*), but rather involves the construction of mental models of what the discourse is about (*referential or extensional understanding*). <…> We may summarize these complex processes with the term *semantic comprehension* — a first and basic aspect of all discourse understanding and interpretation in more general terms' (van Dijk, 2011: p. 6). So, we looked for relatively independent groups of implicit meanings (i.e., *implications*) — it did

not contradict the general principle of qualitative content analysis, namely, the systematic interpretation of texts through highlighting themes and trends in them (Ivanov, 2013). At the same time, we acted in line with the so-called 'paradigmatic' approach (Content analysis in mass communication research, 2005), resp., the units of analysis did not have clear boundaries and were not all texts in full, but some kinds of sets of words/sentences synthesizing some patterns of characterizing migrants and migration according to the categories of analysis. We focused on the fact of presence/absence of media information relevant to those categories, i.e., any mentions about migrants' life strategy understood in a broad perspective — a basic distinction between 'activeness' and 'passiveness' (Muradyan, 2014: p. 20) was only essential for us. To be honest, our interest in the portrayal of migrants' life strategies arose in addition to security, economic and cultural issues, that were fundamental to the MAD project. We discovered the polarization of the images of modular towns/houses for IDP in Ukraine and refugee camps located in other countries: the Ukrainian buildings were presented as nice, joyful and festive places, and the non-Ukrainian camps were constructed as a concentrate of violence, humiliation, illegality, death, exploitation, poverty and dirt. It supported the social stereotype that the other migrants in other countries were 'wilder' than Ukrainians. Also, we met with the problematization of the risks in life strategies' realizing by youth on the borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe, that was made by our colleagues (Sokurianska, Shchudlo, 2017). It prompted us to think about both contribution to social life and unequal empathy issues (WMR 2018 New York Launch — William Allen, 2017), the last ones we confirmed through introducing focus group results. Owing to specifics of interpretive content analysis (Sogorin, 2016: pp. 43–44), we didn't rely on a rigid coding scheme, but on our expertize in methodologically and thematically similar studies as well as our *theoretical sensitivity*, and the coincidence of our coding on the test sample was 71.5%.

Semantic analysis. We used the artificial semantic analysis performed by an automated online 'Advego' tool. It was based on the analysis of linguistic expressions, and aimed to reveal which ones were carriers of a particular form, and which ones were not. Turning to the notion of framing also seems to have been appropriate in the context of this analysis. The frame analysis was first used in sociology in 1974 by E. Goffman, who proposed to perform it in relation to four aspects: (1) name framing; (2) framing of symbolic meanings; (3) framing through meanings; (4) framing the identities of the participants (Goffman, 2004). By developing the ideas of Goffman, D. Yanou and M. van Hulst proposed a so-called 'dynamic approach' to framing to be applied in quite different areas of knowledge, and they identified other four aspects of framing: (1) meaning-making; (2) implementation through selection, categorization and names; (3) implication through storytelling; (4) meaning construction regarding the meanings of problems, identities, relations and interactions (Yanou and van Hulst, 2011: p. 93). Our research strategy, with extensive use of document analysis methods, allowed us to combine the functionality of semantic analysis with one aspect of framing, namely — meaning-making. The selection of the range of meanings to be coded depends both on the specific framing option chosen by the information translator and on the sociopolitical or other significant situation and, ultimately, the dominant 'cultural code'. That is, it follows that framing always begins with selecting certain meanings with their subsequent names. The name is designed to assign a certain meaning, which was revealed in details during the categorization, to some sense. On the other hand, semantic analysis allows one to record the components of semantic cores used as frames (meaning/name). Therefore, our research attention was drawn to the semantic cores of the messages that contained politonyms and ethnonyms.

Discourse position analysis. We considered the differences between various discursive strategies adopted by the media depending on the following: (1) *forms of ownership (state/private)*. It is customary to perceive the state-controlled media as the government's 'pocket agents', as broadcasters of a single official point of view, while private media are expected to give a voice to different opinions and be a means of gaining goodwill for some particular economically empowered actors (Media, 2018); (2) *audiovisual types (printed/TV/Internet)*. In line with trends established by other researchers, we hypothesized that Ukrainian printed media (or press) spread a wide variety of opinions and offer information relying mainly on the attention of large cities' residents; TV channels were assumed to present a smaller variation of opinion and remain the dominant means for receiving information by the whole population (but especially by middle-aged and elderly people); at last, the Internet media (or online media) were assumed to be alternative to the traditional media and to have developed as the main source of information for many people, but predominantly the youth (Print Media Market, 2016; Online Media Market, 2016; Television, 2017); (3) *a greater or lesser degree of popularity and trust in media materials among Ukrainians*. When the presentation of information is trustworthy and gains popularity, it is more likely to be remembered and affect the attitudes of media consumers — the media know this circumstance and fight for it (Costrubscaia, 2018: p. 124). We took the data on popularity of the media and trust in media materials from survey results by InMind (Attitudes of the population to the media and consumption of different types of media in Ukraine, 2018: pp. 20–21) and Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (Attitudes of Ukrainians to political information on Ukrainian TV channels, 2018). By the way, the results of a later InMind survey testify to how difficult and rapid the struggle for popularity and trust has been since 2018 (Attitudes of the population to the media and consumption of different types of media in 2020, 2020: pp. 15–16), and the results of Social Monitoring Center survey gave reason to reflect on the growing gap between the media in the balance of trust/distrust in favor of Internet media (Thoughts and views of the population of Ukraine: August 2020, 2020: p. 30).

Critical discourse analysis. The first point of CDA was related to quotation because the ideas about 'discourse access profile', the media quoting the elite/dominant groups of society and imposing their beliefs were very attractive for their clarity and as a source of unwavering research interest. Here, are two quotes as an example: 'Thus, top business managers have exclusive access to executive board meetings, in which the most powerful is usually associated with the chair, who also controls the agenda, speech acts (e.g., who may command whom), turn allocation (who is allowed to speak), decision-making, topics and other important and consequential dimensions of such institutional talk. At the same time, managers have access to business reports and documents, or can afford to have those written for them; they have preferential access to the news media, as well as to negotiations with top politicians and other top managers. Similar profiles may be sketched for presidents, prime ministers, political party leaders, newspaper editors, anchor(wo)men, judges, professors, doctors or police officers' (van Dijk, 1993: p. 256); 'News discourse is intent on persuading audiences that the truth is being reported. To achieve this, journalists substantiate their assertions with statements from reliable sources who in many cases are

representatives of well-established institutions. <…> Persuasion is therefore a major aim and function' (Kalantari, 2017). So, we looked for who and what were quoted by the top Ukrainian media. Also, we could not overlook one of the central assumptions of critical discourse analysis: 'Ideologies are fundamental, socially shared mental representations of social groups: racists, anti-racists, pacifists, militarists, feminists, sexists, neoliberals, socialists, and so on. They are typically organized by polarization, (good) in-groups vs. (bad) out-groups, a polarization that may also be expressed in discourse, e.g., between (good) Us vs. (bad) (Them), <…> Ideologies represent the characteristic identity, actions, aims, norms and values of a group, and may control more specific attitudes, e.g., about immigration, integration or adaptation of migrants (or other attitudes, such as abortion or the death penalty). These more specific attitudes, in turn, may influence the personal mental models of (e.g., migration) events of the members of an ideological group' (van Dijk, 2018: p. 242). Therefore, the development of the topic of 'goodness' and 'badness' was the second point we have been working on. Choosing the critical research strategy did not prevent us from admitting that only a few of the most general intentions remained from the initial critical discourse analysis due to its theoretical and analytical diversity that had come into sight as well as its 'latent crisis', 'immersion in details', 'mainstreamness', 'commercialization' and 'escaping from reality' (van Dijk, 2001; Pereverzev, 2009; Pakhalyuk, 2018). Also, this method could become controversial because of its 'last' place. We recognize the other authors' right to be guided by a different hierarchy of methods, and our decision was to accept the original analysis logic of J. R. Ruiz and move from discourse *as an object* to discourse *as a singular event* and discourse *as information, ideology and social product*.

Focus group interviews. FGI were conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in Kyiv, Kharkiv and L'viv in late December 2019. The participants of the focus groups were respondents who are active users of the media (online media and TV predominantly). The media that were the most frequently mentioned in the selection forms were: *Ukr.net, Strana.ua, Censor.net, Ukrainian Truth, Radio Liberty*, websites and social media pages of TV channels — *Channel 24, TSN*. Respondents of various ages, various education levels and income statuses, as well as equal numbers of men and women were represented in the groups. Each of three focus groups included 8 participants; in total, 24 respondents participated in the study. The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology is one of the leading research associations together with, in particular, the Sociological Association of Ukraine (SAU), the Ukrainian Marketing Association (UMA), the European Society of Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR), the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR). Thus, in its activities the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology adheres to ethical principles and norms recognized by these associations. All the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology surveys comply with the provisions of the Code of Professional Ethics for Sociologists, approved by the SAU (2004) and the International ICC/ESOMAR Code (2008).

The key informational occasions of mentioning 'migration', 'migrant', 'refugee', 'IDP', and 'migrant worker'

As for the most generalizing words — '**migration**' and '**migrant**', — the Ukrainian media actively monitored the events and retransmitted the dominant discourse in the EU caused by the so-called 'migration crisis' (the critical influx of illegal migrants, who were sometimes called 'refugees', from the Middle East and Africa). The peak in the coverage of the topic was reached in September 2015, when the beginning of the active phase of the war in Syria and, consequently, the first wave of migration happened. Special attention was paid to A. Merkel's position (see Fig. 1a). To a lesser extent, but with quite a lot of attention and interest, the Ukrainian media followed the D. Trump's immigration policy regarding illegals from Mexico and South America. In the coverage of the topic, neutral messages prevailed, although the share of negative ones was noticeable. In the negative light, the words 'migrant' and 'migration' appeared in allegations and publications about *terrorists, terrorist acts, confusion, illegal actions and crimes, clashes with security forces, and US migration policy*. Positive posts were mainly triggered by informational occasions associated with *assistance to illegal migrants from the countries of the Middle East and Africa, as well as creative projects devoted to this problem*. In fact, this distribution of tonality might be related to the general migration situation in 2015. As the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), W. L. Swing, noted in his speech, '2015 will be remembered as a year of human suffering and migrant tragedies. Over the past 12 months, over 5000 women, men and children lost their lives in search of protection and a better life. Tens of thousands more have been exploited and abused by human traffickers. Moreover, millions have been made into scapegoats and become the targets of xenophobic policies and alarmist rhetoric' (International Migrants Day 2015 — Statement and Video, 2015). Consequently, the media more actively covered *the fight against migrants, the counteraction to the influx rather than assistance and acceptance of them*. Also, the activity of the State Migration Service of Ukraine became a notable topic in Ukrainian media, especially in the context of the process of *granting Ukraine a visa-free regime with the EU*.

Refugees were most frequently mentioned in the Ukrainian media in the context of world migration crises that arose from armed conflicts and wars in different parts of the world. Refugees from the Middle East and Africa were often identified with 'illegal migrants', both definitions periodically occur in the same publications as synonyms for the same groups of people. The same problem with the incorrect use of terms was indicated by O. Kostryba in his own research (Kostryba, 2016). As *the crises caused by the escapees of the war-torn regions were primarily known as migration*, most of the informational drives on illegal migrants/refugees referred to 'migration' and 'migrant'. Other informational drives referred to 'refugee' in a stricter sense of the word. Thus, the most popular informational drive, which showed the highest number of contacts with the audience, was about *the statistics on the number of refugees in the world*. Moreover, O. Kostryba noted the same situation: the topic of refugees in the media exploded with extraordinary force in August 2015, causing discussions of terminology, visual support, manipulation and ethical norms; the problem was more dominant in the media field of the EU countries, as an event of international significance, which was covered in other countries, as well as in Ukraine (Kostryba, 2016). It is also worth noting another study that was conducted by Media Detector and drew attention to the coverage of 'migrants'/'refugees' by the media, but from the standpoint of a comparative analysis of Ukrainian and Russian media. Therefore, this study mostly highlighted a number of theses on migrants and refugees, which were marked as manifestations of Russian propaganda in the Ukrainian media. The Russian propaganda, which was considered to have been used mainly in the information sphere where the interests of the states of Russia and Ukraine intersected, was recorded in the information field about the EU (Bakhteev, 2016). Returning to the results of our own research, we can add that the Ukrainian top media also devoted a lot of attention to the *events connected with the Ukrainians from the*

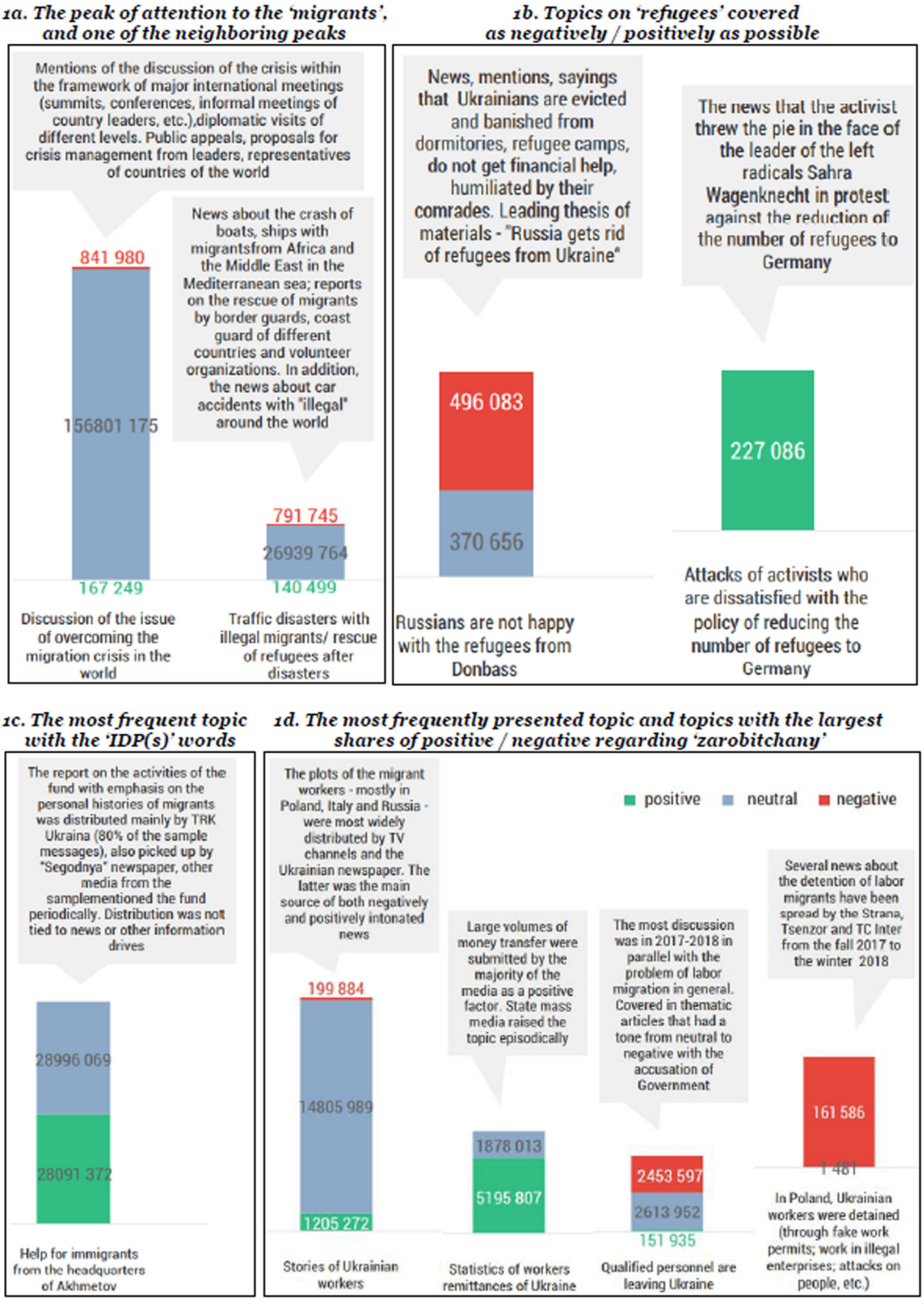

Fig. 1 Some key informational drives on migration and migrants in the top Ukrainian media (2015–2018). Source: The Center for Content Analysis elaboration based on quantitative media content analysis (infodrives for illustration were selected and combined by L. Yuzva). Data source: The Center for Content Analysis research based on quantitative media content analysis, 2019. The bar charts report the number of media mentions of searched terms (**a** — 'migrants', **b** — 'refugees', **c** — 'IDP(s)', **d** — 'zarobitchany') whose tone of messages was color-coded (green indicates positive mentions, blue indicates neutral mentions, red indicates negative mentions). The other colors do not have a semantic load and are used to delimit areas for the sake of visual convenience.

Donbas region, who sought asylum (because of the war) and tried to obtain refugee status in different countries abroad (see Fig. 1b). The media kept on presenting waves of fugitives, and 'refugee' became an even more widespread term thanks to *the expulsion of M. Saakashvili from Ukraine and the court subsequently granting him refugee status*. Also, during the analyzed period Ukrainian media regularly reported on *the granting of refugee status to Russians who sought political asylum in Ukraine*.

As for **internally displaced people** (IDP), the interest of the media in them was falling from 2015 to 2018 due to the reduction in the number of combat operations and, accordingly, the number of newly arrived IDP. Such a situation was also recorded by L. Yaroshenko (Yaroshenko, 2018). She mentioned some quantitative indicators showing that the media had paid little attention to the issue of IDP: an average of 19 sec of airtime per TV channel every day; 0.06 A3 newspaper pages, 504 characters devoted to IDP by online media. According to her study, it was possible to expect IDP to be one of the main newsmakers of 2015–2016 (not only in the all-national but also in local media), given that: (1) every 26th Ukrainian became IDP, according to official data; (2) the emergence of the social category of IDP led to changes in legislation as well as to new economic, cultural and demographic phenomena in most regions of Ukraine; (3) the emergence of IDP adjusted the priorities of numerous public and charitable organizations, humanitarian missions, etc. (Yaroshenko, 2018: p. 347). Moreover, the issues of *assistance to IDP, the problems of social payments, the crossing of the checkpoint of entry-exit, the participation in elections and assistance to IDP status applicants* was confirmed to have been relevant throughout our study period too (see Fig. 1c). The coverage of the IDP topic also demonstrated the end-to-end use of the so-called 'jeansa' (i.e., pure advertising of certain actors being paid by themselves or other actors) in a variety of topics. As N. Lihachova claims, this is due to the 'oligarchic nature of ownership of major media assets in Ukraine' (Lihachova, 2015). The vast majority of media reports on IDP in our sample had a neutral tone. The minimum percentage of negative references was due to reports of *discrimination of IDP by the state and businesses, blocking social benefits, non-voting rights in local elections*. TV channels favored the positive tone themes with accents on *personal stories*, and Internet media, by contrast, more actively discussed *problematic political issues*, but mostly in a neutral key. It is interesting that the two state-controlled media showed a different activity: the *Uryadovyy kur˝yer* devoted more attention to the IDP than the *UA:Pershyy*; however, both of them ignored issues related to IDP problems in the legislative field (e.g., unrealized voting rights in local elections).

Finally, a few words about the **migrant workers** (or '**zarobitchany**' in Ukrainian). The absolute majority of messages on the issue was neutral (see Fig. 1d). The largest share of the positive content was provided by the publication of *statistical data on migrant workers' money transfers to Ukraine, which the media presented as an important factor in the country's economic development*. The percentage of negative messages was low, it appeared due to the discussion of *the loss of skilled personnel* as well as the news about *accidents and crimes involving migrant workers*. This situation contradicted Mathison's theory discussed above — namely, it did not reflect the state of affairs in society on the issue of employment. After all, according to Eurostat, as of 2020, Ukrainians were the one of the largest groups of illegal migrants in the EU along with citizens of Afghan, Morocco and Syria (Immigration law enforcement in the EU — figures for 2019, 2020). In the vast majority of cases, this illegal migration of Ukrainians was related to their going abroad for work/employment. Studies on youth (including students) also show attitudes towards migration to EU countries in order to work there (Yuzva, 2017a). In general, the top media attention to migrant workers was kept at a constant level, which was low in comparison to other analyzed keywords, but it sharply increased in 2018. This was facilitated by: (1) legislative initiatives on social protection of the population that affected the interests of the migrant workers; (2) the growth in migration, resulting in increased attention of the Cabinet of Ministers to this phenomenon, which in turn caused a wave of the news in various media. TV channels and Internet media were interested in the topic more than printed media; among the printed publications the issue was actively disseminated only in the *Hazeta po-ukrayins'ky*. Special attention has to be drawn to the state-controlled media's silence against the backdrop of lively discussions in private media.

Mentions of the characteristics of the socio-political migrants' portrait and their active or passive life strategy

To deepen the understanding of the results obtained and described above, we identified and interpreted the semantic cores of messages regarding the socio-political portrait of migrants. It was not possible to identify stable groups of implicit meanings, which that portrait consisted of. Of course, for the sake of the correctness and avoiding conflicts in societies, it was in line with the recommendations formulated by sociologists for journalists to provide the information as clear and formal as possible (Homanyuk, 2017). However, we noted that ethnonyms (designations of nations/nationalities/ethnic groups/ethnicities which migrants belong to) and politonyms (designations of state/country/administrative region which migrants belong to) were mentioned in the media regularly every February.

The use of **politonyms** in Ukrainian top media discourse was characterized by frequent references to the Donetsk region and the various cities there (see Fig. 2). This was due to the significant number of media reports in 2015 related to the start of hostilities in the region after the Revolution of Dignity and, consequently, the emergence of a significant number of IDP and other migrants in Ukraine. In those, we could see the official geographical names to have been mostly used in the media discourse. Gradually, these names are replaced by other types of names (based on non-geographical indication) — for example, *ATO zone, gray zone, war zone, 'DNR' and 'LNR', Russian-controlled territory*, etc.

Fig. 2 Semantic core for politonyms in the Ukrainian top media discourse (2015–2018, sample from every February messages). Source: L. Yuzva's elaboration based on qualitative content analysis (by L. Yuzva and A. Tashchenko) and semantic analysis (by L. Yuzva) of media messages. Data source: The Center for Content Analysis research based on quantitative media content analysis, 2019. The chart is a 'word cloud': the larger the font, the more often the name is mentioned. It reports the frequency of media mentions of settlements in messages on migration and migrants. Colors do not have a semantic load and are conditioned by the settings of the visualization program.

Mentions of Ukraine and Europe were also frequent, because, after all, it was the discourse of the *Ukrainian* media, and Ukraine had its own pain as well as an official course towards EU integration. In fact, Ukrainian migrants are gradually becoming interesting to the Ukrainians, which is of great significance for the nation for a long time subjected to various mechanisms of erasure of identity.

We observed the same frequency of references to Ukraine made through the use of **ethnonyms** while, during all the four years under analysis, politonyms had a numerical advantage over ethnonyms. During the study period, the use of the ethnonym 'Ukrainians' in the discourse grew quite rapidly (see Fig. 3). Despite the fact that the presence of a large number of IDP and migrant workers had traditionally been considered by the authorities and society as a problem, the recent years were characterized by a general vector of state policy to strengthen the Ukrainianisation. Accordingly, the influence of such a policy is reflected in the media and other influential discursive fields. For example, the Razumkov Center survey showed such a hierarchy of identities of Ukrainians which was dominated by 'citizens of Ukraine' (58%), while 68% of respondents viewed themselves as 'patriots'. The reasons, which had strengthened patriotism, were the Russian aggression and the Revolution of Dignity (Consolidation of Ukrainian society: ways, challenges, prospects (Information and analytical materials), 2016: pp. 4–5). Discussions about *Europeans, Russians, Poles*, etc., which were also frequent in the top media discourse, were related to the reasons already mentioned above, plus seasonal working in Poland and poverty/unemployment in Ukraine, that are associated with Ukrainians by Poles themselves (How is Ukraine perceived in EU countries? (Cases of Germany, France, Italy, Poland), 2020: p. 35).

The implicit meanings regarding **migrants' life strategy** category were formed as follows. If the life strategy of migrants was characterized as *active*, the most consistently emerging implications were related to four things: (1) adaptability; (2) expressing one's position; (3) working combined with charity; (4) using opportunities. Nevertheless, it was all about the same thing: the actions of migrants were viewed through *the framework of situational convenience for other people*. Thus, the media did the migrants a disservice, because Ukrainians themselves love freedom, but they have some problems with the perception of freedom-loving people (Tashchenko, 2019), and if in real life migrants are active outside the mentioned implicit framework, it will not be easy for them to be perceived without further conflicts. Moreover, if a life strategy of migrants was characterized as *passive*, the most popular implication was that *migrants were cared for by other people who did not stop giving/sending something and donating* (see Table 1), and it was far more suited to promoting the way of life of the helpers themselves than laying the foundations for the successful integration of migrants.

Migrants' life strategy through the lens of the media's discourse positions

The artificial realities offered by the media about migrants were most different in the presence/absence of messages with implicit meanings about an active life strategy (see Fig. 4). The most persistent differences (3–4 discrepancies out of 4) in the implications that appeared in the Ukrainian top media in 2015–2018 were observed for the following implications: (1) *'Migrants deserve respect'* (for any media division); (2) *'Migrants caught a wave'* (for divisions by audiovisual type and by trust/popularity); (3) *'Migrants are helpful'* (for the division by audiovisual type).

Messages mentioning *the expression of life/civic position by migrants* ('Migrants deserve respect' implication) had been first a feature of private and traditional media, and then they were allegedly 'transferred' to, resp., the state-controlled and online media. Such an image of migrants — the ones who don't give in and are patriots — is being ideologically approved by the majority and can be beneficial for the official reassurance in the lingering difficult situation (in particular, it can influence the opinion of young people being more optimistic and receptive than older people). Also, messages mentioning the expression of life/civic position by migrants were almost absent in the most trusted/popular media. These media are interested in preserving their 'social capital' (i.e., the audience and its attitude), and the constant glorification of migrants is not profitable for this purpose, because for the host society a migrant is always at least a little bit of a stranger, and the migrants themselves can get annoyed because everyone cannot be an outstanding hero.

Messages mentioning *the use of opportunities by migrants* ('Migrants caught a wave' implication) gradually 'wandered' from the press to TV and online media, and were completely absent in the most trusted/popular media. All special grants and programs have their own economic and political behind-the-scenes world; thus, we can see the prudence in switching the corresponding implication towards youth (who is greedier for using opportunities like that and doing it less critically than other age groups) and the utilitarian wisdom not to provide a mass audience with reasons to envy sporadic migrants' luck and become angry with migrants' sponsors.

Messages mentioning *the migrants' habit to work combined with charity* ('Migrants are helpful' implication) were slightly less frequently presented by TV compared to the press and online

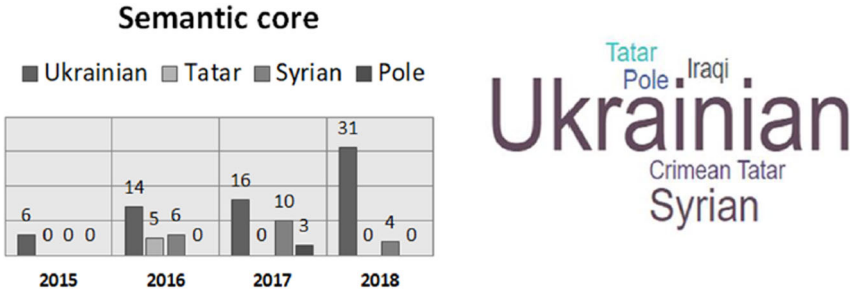

Fig. 3 Semantic core for ethnonyms in the Ukrainian top media discourse (2015–2018, sample from every February messages). Source: L. Yuzva's elaboration based on qualitative content analysis (by L. Yuzva and A. Tashchenko) and semantic analysis (by L. Yuzva) of media messages. Data source: The Center for Content Analysis research based on quantitative media content analysis, 2019. The bar chart leftward reports the frequency of mentions of ethnonyms in media messages on migration and migrants. Ukrainians (moderately gray), Syrians (gray), Tatars (light gray), and Poles (dark gray) were mentioned most often. The 'word cloud' rightward illustrates the frequency of mentions of different ethnonyms: the larger the font, the more often the name was mentioned. The colors of the 'word cloud' do not have a semantic load and are conditioned by the settings of the visualization program.

Table 1 Ukrainian top media implications regarding migrants' life strategy.

Category	Units	Groups of implicit meanings found
Migrants' life strategy	Active (tendency to be inclined towards some actions and achievement)	• '**Migrants are obedient**': migrants were presented as people adjusting quickly to the norms of the host side • '**Migrants deserve respect**': migrants were presented as people who had and expressed their life or civic position (approved by the majority) • '**Migrants are not parasites**': migrants were presented as people with a habit to work • '**Migration improves people's characters**': migrants were presented as people with a habit to work, which was combined with emerging concern for other people's interests • '**Migrants are useful**': migrants were presented as people with a habit to work, which was combined with quick adjustment to the norms of the host side • '**Migrants are helpful**': migrants were presented as people with a habit to work, which was combined with charity for other migrants and/or the host side • '**Migrants are tough cookies**': migrants were presented as people who overcame impressive difficulties • '**Migrants caught a wave**': migrants were presented as people who opened themselves up to the world through the use of opportunities — special grants and programs, or simply a profession suitable for migration • '**One can only count on oneself after migration**': migrants were presented as people who found their feet without the promised help
	Passive (tendency to be opportunistic and provided)	• '**Migrants are indebted to those who deal with their problems**': migrants were presented as burdens for those who are obliged/those who volunteered to help them • '**Lies and fraud are rife due to migration**': migrants were seen as a 'supportive environment' for the emergence of fraudsters or a 'field', which the fraudsters can hide in, and even non-fictitious migrants were seen as engaged in knocking out their pennies from the state and complaining • '**We are indebted to the benefactors of migrants**': migrants were presented as objects to which generous material/humanitarian aid was poured and poured • '**Migrants are dependent people**': migrants were presented as weak/poor/disadvantaged people who were happy even with petty/routine help

media. Maintaining TV as a medium is the costliest of all the audiovisual media analyzed, so, it is more expedient to boast of the work and generosity of the owners in relation to migrants (in order to maintain the owners' reputation) than of the good deeds of the migrants themselves. In Fig. 5 we presented in the most compressed form how the artificial top media realities, which were created from February 2015 to February 2018, coincided with the presence/absence of implications related to migrants' life strategies.

Sociocognitive critical examination of the media discourse on migrants' life strategy. We scanned our entire sample of media messages looking for the presence/absence of any direct quotes, indirect speech and references regarding migration and migrants. To use P. Bourdieu's terms (Bourdieun and Shmatko, 2005; Bourdieu and Savkin, 2007), we found that absolutely all fifteen top Ukrainian media leaned on the authority of the *bureaucratic, scientific and economic fields of social space* (see Fig. 6).

If we compare this picture with the quotations, for example, from the collection of migration statistics and the review of migration development made by the IOM in Ukraine (Migration in Ukraine: figures and facts, 2019), the leaders are almost the same. However, this may be just a cover in order to express and present the 'as-if-biased' thoughts of low-powered or/and medium-powered actors in a favorable light. Thus, it is also important to take into account the quotation order, as well as the media grouping of actors into 'pro-migrant' and 'anti-migrant' categories, which is not always consistent with the quotation order and even more so with the number of quotes. Among the very obvious examples that we had come across in a sample of media messages, there were reports of fraudsters among migrants, fraudsters who emerged due to migration and fraudsters whose existence was contributed to migration. Below we illustrate the quotation hierarchies in some top Ukrainian media reports along with our comments about 'winning' ('pro-migrant')/'losing' ('anti-migrant') actors (see Fig. 7).

Also, we checked what categories of migrants the various implicit meanings applied to in different top Ukrainian media. It seemed logical to us that the implicit meanings characterizing the migrants' life strategy to be active would contribute to the positive perception of migrants, and the implicit meanings characterizing the migrants' life strategy to be passive would contribute to the negative perception of migrants. Moreover, we assumed that the images of migrants would be ranked in the order in which they are presented by us in Fig. 8.

That is, we assumed the most implications about 'activeness' to refer to internal migrants in Ukraine while the least implications about 'activeness' would refer to 'double-other' migrants, and we expected the exact opposite case for implications about 'passiveness'. However, for all the studied Ukrainian top media there were the two 'good' categories of migrants — internal migrants in Ukraine (the best) and from-Ukraine migrants (slightly less good) — but the first place regarding the presence of implications about 'passiveness' also went to internal migrants in Ukraine. At the same time, it was impossible to find any convincing tendency that would allow us to say: 'Aha! It is thanks to *this divide* one can see which media are the most embittered and which are the kindest!' This once again testifies to the fact that the topic of internal migration in Ukraine has turned into a kind of media soap opera with a 'permanent cast' and 'expendable material'. To omit a banal political detail in our analysis, this turning-into is

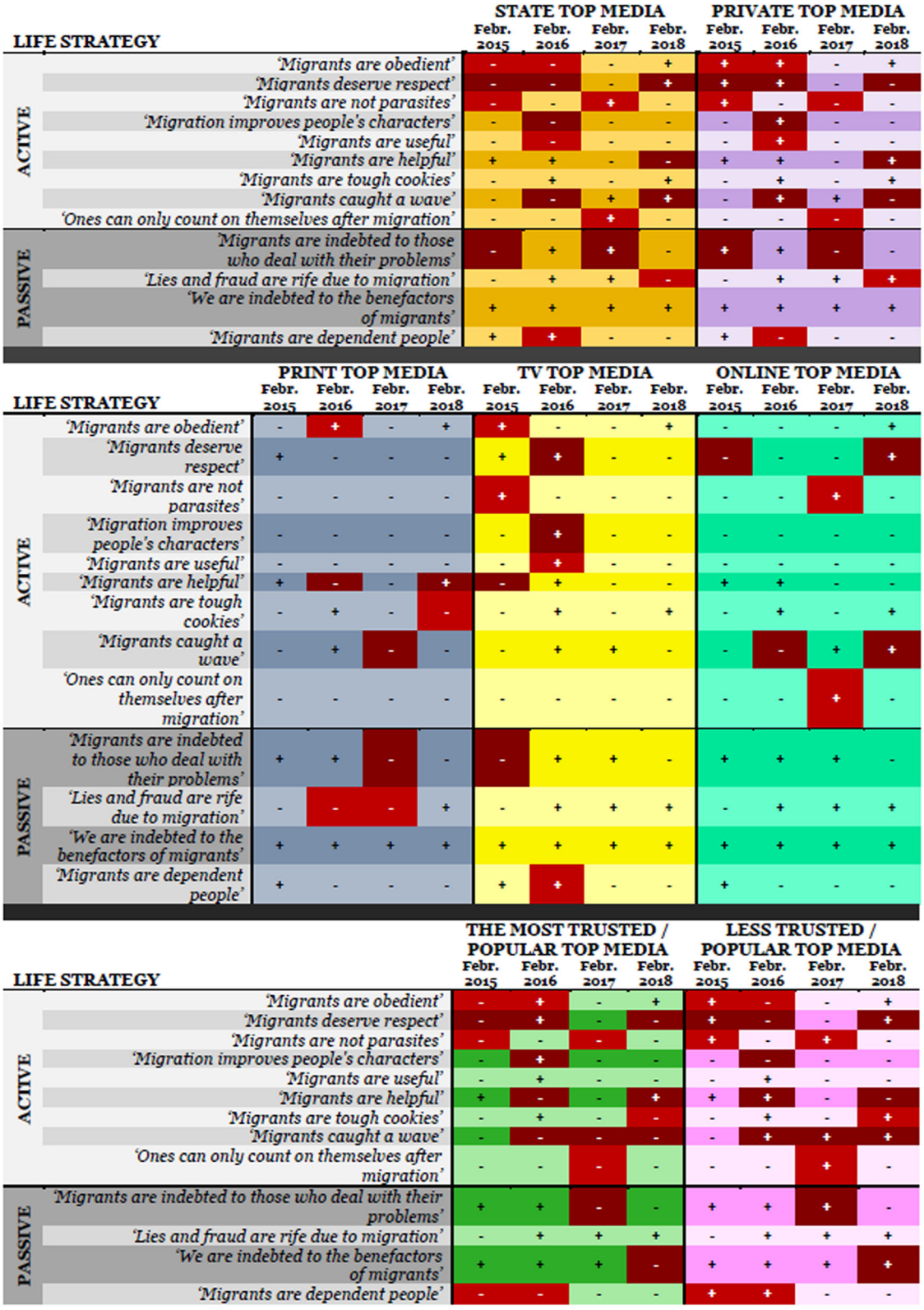

Fig. 4 Life strategy hidden issues related to migration and migrants in different types of Ukrainian top media (2015–2018, sample from every February messages). Source: A. Tashchenko's elaboration based on qualitative content analysis (by L. Yuzva and A. Tashchenko), analysis of discourse positions and sociocognitive critical discourse analysis (by A. Tashchenko) of media messages. Data source: The Center for Content Analysis research based on quantitative media content analysis, 2019. The comparative illustration demonstrates the dynamics of dissimilarity (highlighted in dark red) of different implications' emergence: '+' indicates the presence of implication, '-' indicates the absence of implication. All other colors are used to delimit areas for the sake of visual convenience.

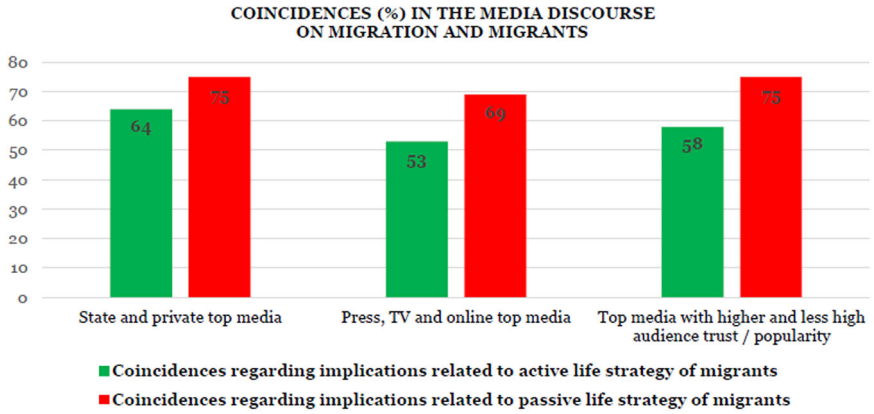

Fig. 5 Coincidence of presence or absence of implications related to life strategies of migrants in different types of Ukrainian top media (2015–2018, sample from every February messages). Source: A. Tashchenko's elaboration based on qualitative content analysis (by L. Yuzva and A. Tashchenko), analysis of discourse positions and sociocognitive critical discourse analysis (by A. Tashchenko) of media messages. Data source: The Center for Content Analysis research based on quantitative media content analysis, 2019. The comparative bar chart illustrates the proportions of media discourse similarity between media with different discourse positions: green bars show in what percentage of cases the presence or absence of implications about an active life strategy coincided; red bars show in what percentage of cases the presence or absence of implications about a passive life strategy coincided.

perennially convenient for filling out news bulletins — there would always be something to write about even if migrants were integrated, because in fact they 'were once different', and it will be interesting, because they were coming both 'from us' and 'to us'. This is even more important than the political detail, because even when formally the professional ethics are respected by the media and/or the true positive splashes over the edge, it is deep-rooted entertaining speculation on culture, social differences and common love for receiving pleasure from transitory information.

What was lacking in media messaging on migration and migrants according to Ukrainians

Finally, let's look at the relatively ordinary Ukrainians who took part in focus groups in 2019: were they interested in learning from the media about some 'unknown' migrants and hearing more about the self-determination of migrants? In their characterization of the shortcomings of the media broadcasting, there were issues related to life strategies, but they fit into a classification that complements the division of life strategies into 'active' and 'passive' ones. Sociologists also distinguish the 'objective' and 'subjective' sides in life strategies: the *objective* one includes the existing institutional prerequisites for the realization of one's potential, ideas about the prestige of certain models of social behavior, current social norms; the *subjective* one includes interests, needs and values (Muradyan, 2013: p. 51). What the focus group participants talked about fell just into this divide. Naming directly or implying some categories of migrants, *about whom the interviewees would like to see/hear something more*, also partly coincided with our previous hypothesis about who among migrants is nicer/dearer to Ukrainians. First in this respect came Ukrainian emigrants, and the rest of migrants were mentioned literally once (the relevant information is highlighted in the quotes of the participants below):

- *I feel like (having) more information about where to go to get help [for Ukrainians abroad].* **(Kyiv)**
- *I believe that the media don't work as much as necessary in this regard. We said that for the last three months there has been practically no information. It has to be covered objectively. The real number of illegal migrants (I'm talking about Ukraine), who work, it's well-known, there is the border control. It's just that no one is involved there, that's the first thing. Secondly, if a person has left, it's necessary to follow his/her destiny at least a little bit, how things are, what things there are there. It's necessary to monitor if a person doesn't make it a permanent place of residence. The state shouldn't spy, but should monitor the movements of its citizens. <…> In order to prevent the negative things in the long run, and to do more positive things to those who decided to go to work, to help somehow in this process. There might be some kind of service at the embassies so that people, if they get into a difficult situation, know where to go and that they won't be kicked out.* **(L'viv)**
- *I'd like to see more talk about our embassies and consulates. I'd like our culture to be more developed there. Accordingly, they make some kind of a shell. <…> [I'd like to see] where children can be taken so that they learn. For example, if either the wife or the husband [in a family abroad] is Ukrainian.* **(Kyiv)**
- *I'd like that, at the state level — migration as is, to continue to exist. The state should raise those issues at the state level with our closest neighbors, so that they comply with the laws of the country where [our] migrants work. <…> And the agreements. Let there be a representative in the Ministry of Social Policy, or a migration committee be set up, so that they directly cover and work with this state where such crimes against people are committed.* **(L'viv)**
- *I wish it would be a twofold piece of news. There are emigrants who have brought something. Not even ours, not necessarily our emigrants, who are pouring money into the budget. And emigrants from other countries too, what they brought, what they did for our country. Just because it's interesting. In order to avoid such direct harsh, active discrimination. In order for us to be more tolerant about this. In order for us to know that these people are also helping us, they are also doing something for us. Well, and, of course, what happens to emigrants going to other countries. <…> In order to know what real organizations exist to help these emigrants. In order for us to know that everything is fine with them. Or they aren't alright. But to make it more specific.* **(Kharkiv)**
- *I want the media to talk more about the risks that may arise. <…> In the main, when the Ukrainians leave. When they arrive.* **(Kyiv)**
- *I am in favor of the media covering more of the events that are about how [Ukrainian] people who have migrated are living. How their life develops there. I want them [i.e., the media] to cover this.* **(L'viv)**

Fig. 6 Quoting different actors on migration and migrants in different types and subtypes of Ukrainian top media (2015–2018, sample from every February messages). Source: A. Tashchenko's elaboration based on qualitative content analysis (by L. Yuzva and A. Tashchenko), analysis of discourse positions and sociocognitive critical discourse analysis (by A. Tashchenko) of media messages. Data source: The Center for Content Analysis research based on quantitative media content analysis, 2019. The comparative illustration demonstrates the similarities and differences in the presence (indicated by lilac and dark lilac for better line-by-line perception) or absence of direct and indirect quotes of different actors in the media with different discourse positions. All other colors are used to delimit areas for the sake of visual convenience. Additional bold highlighting leftward shows the names of the most frequently quoted groups of actors.

Date Media About	Febr. 2016 TRK 'Ukrayina' Internal migrants in Ukraine	Febr. 2016 TK Inter Internal migrants in Ukraine	Febr. 2017 1+1 From-Ukraine migrants
Quoting:			
1.	Institutions related to economy and labor	Internal migrants in Ukraine	Ordinary people
2.	Institutions related to security	Media	Institutions related to migration
3.	Internal migrants in Ukraine	Charity actors	Experts, science actors and scientific data
4.	Institutions related to security	Internal migrants in Ukraine	Juridic actors and documents
5.	Institutions related to economy and labor	Political / administrative actors and documents	From-Ukraine migrants
6.	Charity actors	Charity actors	Experts, science actors and scientific data
7.	Institutions related to economy and labor	Institutions related to economy and labor	Ordinary people
8.	Ordinary people	Charity actors	From-Ukraine migrants
9.	Internal migrants in Ukraine		Experts, science actors and scientific data
10.	Institutions related to economy and labor		Ordinary people
11.	Internal migrants in Ukraine		Institutions related to migration
12.	Institutions related to economy and labor		
13.	Internal migrants in Ukraine		
'Who is who'	Benefactors and ordinary people win, Ukrainian IDPs both win and lose	Benefactors and media win, Ukrainian IDPs both win and lose	Ordinary people win, illegal migration offices lose, from-Ukraine migrants both win and lose

Date Media About	Febr. 2017 Radio Svoboda Internal migrants in Ukraine	Febr. 2017 Ukrayins'ka pravda Migrants from-other-into-other countries	Febr. 2018 Tsenzor.net From-Ukraine migrants
Quoting:			
1.	Experts, science actors and scientific data	Political / administrative actors and documents	Ordinary people
2.	Internal migrants in Ukraine	Media	Experts, science actors and scientific data
3.	Ordinary people	Political / administrative actors and documents	Institutions related to migration
4.	Institutions related to migration	Institutions related to security	Ordinary people
5.	Experts, science actors and scientific data	Political / administrative actors and documents	Experts, science actors and scientific data
6.	Institutions related to migration		Ordinary people
7.	Institutions related to economy and labor		Experts, science actors and scientific data
8.	Media		Institutions related to migration
9.	Institutions related to economy and labor		Ordinary people
10.	Political / administrative actors and documents		
11.	Institutions related to economy and labor		
12.	Media		
13.	Institutions related to security		
14.	Experts, science actors and scientific data		
15.	Internal migrants in Ukraine		
16.	Political / administrative actors and documents		
17.	Experts, science actors and scientific data		
18.	Internal migrants in Ukraine		
19.	Experts, science actors and scientific data		
20.	Internal migrants in Ukraine		
21.	Charity actors		
22.	Media		
23.	Charity actors		
24.	People involved in settling migrants		
'Who is who'	Ukrainian institutions related to migration lose (while international ones do not)	'Good' politicians win over 'bad' politicians and interior minister	Ordinary people lose, as well as 'undisclosed' labor workers among them

Fig. 7 Examples of message quotation hierarchies in different audiovisual types (TV — upper part; Internet — bottom part) of Ukrainian top media (2015–2018, sample from every February messages). Source: A. Tashchenko's elaboration based on qualitative content analysis (by L. Yuzva and A. Tashchenko), analysis of discourse positions and sociocognitive critical discourse analysis (by A. Tashchenko) of media messages. Data source: The Center for Content Analysis research based on quantitative media content analysis, 2019. The comparative illustration shows the groups of actors quoted directly or indirectly in six selected media messages and what order they were quoted in. The names of groups of actors most-often-quoted are highlighted in lilac, the names of groups of actors that came second in terms of quotation frequency are highlighted in light lilac. All other colors are used to delimit areas for the sake of visual convenience. The 'Who is who' lines describe groups of actors implicitly presented in favorable or unfavorable light.

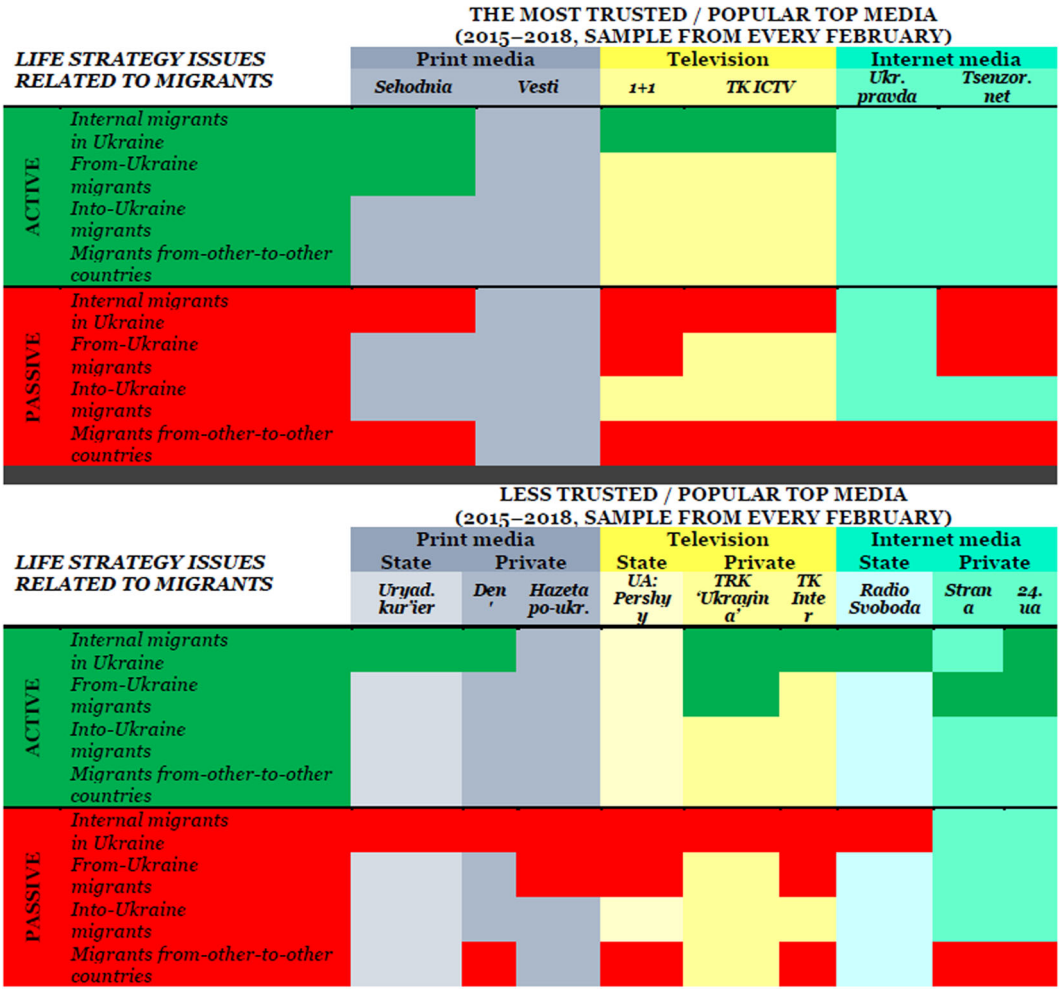

Fig. 8 Hidden images of migrants' 'activity' and 'passivity' in different types and subtypes of Ukrainian top media (2015–2018, sample from every February messages). Source: A. Tashchenko's elaboration based on qualitative content analysis (by L. Yuzva and A. Tashchenko), analysis of discourse positions and sociocognitive critical discourse analysis (by A. Tashchenko) of media messages. Data source: The Center for Content Analysis research based on quantitative media content analysis, 2019. The comparative illustration demonstrates the emergence of dynamics of implications about life strategies of four migrant groups in the media with different discourse positions: green color indicates the presence or absence of implications about an active life strategy; red color indicates the presence or absence of implications about a passive life strategy. All other colors are used to delimit areas for the sake of visual convenience.

- *What the media should do is to show how to do it right, where it's better to go, if such a phenomenon [of Ukrainian emigration] already exists. I believe that [Ukrainian] people who have emigrated will continue to emigrate until their quality of life improves.* **(L'viv)**
- *What is being missed by the media? Here is the first point — the material component for migrants. Let it be named how much the country is doing for internal migrants [in Ukraine] who have migrated. For example, I even have an acquaintance; he is a migrant from Crimea and a participant in hostilities. He has two statuses. That is, in 2014, he chose the path to be on the side of Ukraine. That is, he left Crimea in 2014 and lives in Kharkiv. He has been living in Kharkiv since 2014 and he was a participant in hostilities, he was in the ATO. That is, from 2014, the state has given him 'zero'. He is registered there in the city council, he has been registered for an apartment for four years, and hasn't received anything yet. And there are no, so to speak, material actions on the part of the state. He received 600 hryvnias as a migrant. <…> And what can we say about other migrants if our country does not help [even] its own [internal] migrants. Only in words.* **(Kharkiv)**

Thus, there was a recurring request for a predominantly 'passive' media image of Ukrainian emigrants and Ukrainian IDPs, a unique request for an 'active' media image of immigrants in Ukraine, and a unique request for a 'passive' media image of migrants in other countries.

Discussion and conclusions

Migration is associated with a different identity. People may perceive migrants as encroaching on the others' money, space, and goods ones, and the media can contribute to the formation of stereotypical migrants' images in the pursuit of effectiveness and sensationalism. Modern media have a number of effects (What is a media effect, 2020), and occupy the position of arbitrators and educators, so, they should perform a corrective information function, especially in Ukrainian society. M. McComb argues that any media agenda will generate a public agenda over time (Laughey, 2007: pp. 22–23). The results of our study illustrated that the Ukrainian media discourse on migration was presented in the vast majority of cases in a neutral tone. If we analyze the empirical research of the IMM (Content Research, 2021), we see that the tone of the content is related to the subject under

discussion. According to Vox Ukraine, the most negative topic is emergencies and investigations; mostly in a negative way, the media write about the war, the world and politics; positive news is most common in show business, lifestyle and science/technology (Tymchenko, 2021). Regarding the tone of coverage of the migration topic, unfortunately, there is no data in the Ukrainian segment of media content research. The distribution obtained in the study (neutral tone was the most frequent tone) could be explained by the superficial coverage of the migration topic in the Ukrainian media. Positive tone was formed mostly by reports about migrants from Donbas. Negative publications usually concerned illegal migrants and refugees in the EU. This is a classic scheme of *othering* — when 'one's own' is supported and 'others' are condemned — from a detailed overview of theories and sociological vision of *de-othering* forced migrants in modern society (Kutsenko et al., 2020). As for the media discourse about migrants in Ukraine, it is worth noting that the media was least interested in the topic of workers. That media agenda was at odds with the real statistical migration indicators in Ukraine. One of the recognized problems of Ukrainian society is labor migration. Thus, according to the IOM, Ukrainian long-term labor migration has increased since 2008 and continues to grow (Migration as a factor of development in Ukraine, 2016: p. 31). The media more often chose a more sensitive vector, one that evoked emotions — the topic of IDP from the East of Ukraine.

Also, the analysis of the components of the media discourse on migrants showed a low level of conceptual literacy: journalists used the same concepts to describe different types of migrants. Reports on the migration crisis in Europe and the USA have covered an even wider audience in four years than publications on the internal Ukrainian problem — migrants from Donbas. The Media Detector study indicated that IDP were ignored by central channels and in talk shows as well. Journalists tried to focus on the positive aspects of 'new life', but regional news revealed cases of negative stereotypes — migrants as an isolated and passive group with chronic problems with integration into a new community (Conflict-sensitive coverage of groups involved in the conflict, 2016). According to the results of our research, the media formed a neutral image with elements of negativity regarding illegal migrants and a neutral image with elements of positivity regarding to migrants, and there was a tendency to focus on 'new life' too. Journalists most often refer to politonyms related to the territories of Eastern Ukraine (in connection with the issue of migrants and refugees from the war), and the mention of ethnonyms was insignificant. That indicated the lack of creating a myth-image of the migrant as a representative of specific region and nationality — that is, the lack of a tendency to promote xenophobia towards migrants through Ukrainian media discourse. However, A. Tkalich illustrates the opposite example in the media from different countries (Tkalich, 2021).

The set of migrants' life strategies, which the media broadcasted about migrants, was also diverse. Among them, there were those that contribute to the formation of a positive image, and vice versa. In focus group research we recorded a lack of conscious understanding of 'what is migration', 'who is a migrant' (?). The media information was unlikely to help build a correct public agenda of the real state of migration theme. In general, the Ukrainian media discourse on migrants and migration could be described as superficial one.

Data availability

The datasets used and analyzed during the current study are available from the authors on reasonable request.

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Author contributions

Both authors contributed equally to this work.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethical approval

The Center for Content Analysis, that maintained the classical media content analysis procedure, proved its activity to have been based on the fundamental norms and values of corporate relations (enshrined in the statute of the company) and built on the principles of the rule of law recognizance in all spheres of socio-economic life. The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, that conducted the focus group interviews, proved its activity to have been adhered to ethical principles and norms recognized by the Sociological Association of Ukraine (SAU), the Ukrainian Marketing Association (UMA), the European Society of Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR), the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR).

Informed consent

All interviewees in the study gave their informed consent to participate.

Additional information

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