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CENTRAL FIGURES AND EVENTS OF UKRAINIAN HISTORY IN THE LIGHT OF CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE UKRAINIAN HISTORICAL YOUTUBE CHANNELS FROM 2014 TO 2022

Abstract. *The purpose of the research is to identify historical heroes and events that are top among the Ukrainians from 2014 to 2022, based on the processing of historical videos posted on the leading Ukrainian historical YouTube channels. The methodology of the research is based on a complex approach, which implies the use of special computer methods that have not been used in this way before. The methods related to complex network analysis (CNA) have been used, with the help of which a relational database containing information about the most popular characters, events and topics in the Ukrainian historical YouTube videos was depicted in the form of a graph, and the most significant characters and motifs were found out by measuring centrality (as graph vertices). The Louvain Community Detection and Clauset-Newman-Moore algorithms have been used to extract links between topics and the context of their creation (date). The scientific novelty consists in the fact of finding out the renowned historical heroes among the users of Ukrainian historical YouTube channels owing to the use of innovative computer*

methods. **The Conclusion.** Nowadays, YouTube, it is not just a platform for posting relevant video content. It is a social network that serves as a platform for learning, communication, exchange of ideas, and distribution of important information. Diverse interesting and important films and videos appeared on the Ukrainian YouTube channels with historical themes in 2014 – 2022, regarding the coverage of the Ukrainian view of its own history, which was carefully hidden or rewritten by colonial regimes for decades. As a result of the research, owing to the cutting-edge computer methods application, the authors found out that the top period of Ukrainian history for domestic producers of video products posted on the Ukrainian segment of YouTube is the period of the 17th century. Accordingly, the top historical hero is Bohdan Khmelnytskyi. However, for the Ukrainian users of these YouTube channels, the top historical hero is Ivan Mazepa, a symbol of the struggle for the Ukrainian and European statehood. The conducted research showed that the interest of the Ukrainians in the history of their own country has increased recently. This tendency is could be observed with the outbreak of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian War, which affected people's reception of their own past significantly. And this is, in fact, the beginning of the conscious nation formation, who seeks to get rid of its "backwardness" and the imperial past, and aims at gaining self-respect and respect of the European community of peoples. It is the foundation for getting rid of the Ukrainians' reception of themselves as the inferior. It is one of the important steps towards building a truly independent state, an equal partner in the international arena.

Keywords: historical heroes, events, content analysis, Ukrainian YouTube channels.

ЦЕНТРАЛЬНІ ПОСТАТІ ТА ПОДІЇ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ІСТОРІЇ У СВІТЛІ КОНТЕНТ-АНАЛІЗУ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ІСТОРИЧНИХ YOUTUBE-КАНАЛІВ з 2014 до 2022 року

Анотація. Мета дослідження – на основі опрацювання історичних роликів, розміщених на провідних українських історичних YouTube-каналах, визначити історичних героїв та події, які є топовими серед українців упродовж 2014 – 2022 рр. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на комплексному підході, в основу якого покладено використання спеціальних комп'ютерних методів, які до цього саме так не застосовувалися. Використовувалися методи, пов'язані з комплексним мережевим аналізом (CNA), за допомогою якого реляційна база даних, що містить інформацію про найпопулярніших героїв, події та теми в українських історичних відео YouTube, була зображена у вигляді графіка, а найбільш значущі персонажі та мотиви були з'ясовані за допомогою вимірювання центральності (як вершини графа). Алгоритми Louvain Community Detection і Clauset-Newman-Moore були використані для виділення зв'язків між темами та контекстом їх створення (датую). **Наукова новизна** полягає у з'ясуванні популярних історичних героїв серед користувачів українських історичних YouTube каналів шляхом застосування новаторської комп'ютерної методики. **Висновки.** Сьогодні YouTube – це не просто платформа для розміщення відповідного відеоконтенту, а соціальна мережа, яка виступає майданчиком для навчання, спілкування, обміну ідеями, поширення важливої інформації. Упродовж 2014 – 2022 рр. на українських YouTube-каналах історичної тематики з'явилася низка цікавих та важливих фільмів і роликів, присвячених висвітленню українського погляду на власну історію, яка упродовж десятків років старанно приховувалася або ж переписувалася колоніальними режимами. У результаті проведеного дослідження, шляхом застосування новаторської комп'ютерної методики, авторами було з'ясовано, що топовим періодом української історії для вітчизняних виробників відеопродукції, що розміщується в українському сегменті YouTube, є період XVII ст. Відповідно топовим історичним героєм – Богдан Хмельницький. Однак для українських користувачів цих YouTube-каналів топовим історичним героєм є Іван Мазепа, символ боротьби за українську, європейську державність. Проведене дослідження демонструє, що упродовж останніх років зріс інтерес українців до історії власної країни. Означена тенденція особливо спостерігається з початком повномасштабної російсько-української війни, яка суттєво вплинула на уявлення людей про власне минуле. А це фактично є початком формування свідомої нації, яка прагне позбутися "заширеності" та імперського минулого, ставить за мету здобути самоповагу і пошану європейської спільноти народів. Це є фундаментом для позбавлення сприйняття українцями себе меншовартісними. Одним із важливих кроків до побудови дійсно незалежної держави, рівного партнера на міжнародній арені.

Ключові слова: історичні герої, події, контент-аналіз, українські YouTube-канали.

The Problem Statement. Nowadays, YouTube is one of the most influential and convenient platforms not only in Ukraine and Europe, but also in the world in general. YouTube is a network, which provides access to videos at any time and from anywhere in the world, promotes the creation of communities that express their views on a particular issue, thereby increasing interest in it. In our case, it is about historical topics. From 2014 to 2022, a number of historical films and videos were created on the Ukrainian YouTube channel, both about leading historical figures and events in the history of Ukraine, the influence of which we observe even today. Under the conditions of a limited and full-scale war, in which Ukraine found itself, it is more relevant than ever to understand which historical video content is top among the Ukrainians and what explains it. To what extent the rhetoric changed in the reception and production of such video material among the Ukrainians during the specified period.

Hence, **the purpose of the research** is to identify historical heroes and events that are top among the Ukrainians from 2014 to 2022, based on the processing of historical videos posted on the leading Ukrainian historical YouTube channels.

The Analysis of Recent Research Papers and Publications. The issue of the pantheon of the Ukrainian historical heroes were raised by the Ukrainian researchers many times. However, in general, their works were written on the basis of processing traditional sources of information. For example, in 2017, a scientific article written by S. Baturina was published, in which the author highlighted the attitude towards prominent Ukrainian historical heroes: Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, Ivan Mazepa, and Danylo Halytskyi in Russian and Polish school textbooks (Baturina, 2017). However, modern historians are trying to attract data obtained from networks popular among the Ukrainians (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) increasingly actively nowadays. Such a tendency is especially observed in the studied issue of historical consciousness and historical memory of the Ukrainians.

Thus, there were numerous publications that emerged over the past 5 years, among which we can single out scientific articles, written by Ukrainian researchers R. Khardel, V. Vyzdryk (Khardel & Vyzdryk, 2019), A. Kasian, Ya. Platmir and D. Khomenko (Kasian, Platmir & Khomenko, 2020), K. Dzihora (Dzihora, 2022), in which the authors, based on the use of special software, analyzed the presence of certain video materials on the Ukrainian YouTube channels, as well as studied the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of communities that were dedicated to historical memory or related to the history of Ukraine, in modern social networks, including YouTube.

However, the topic offered by us is not analyzed nowadays. A similar study on trends. google sources was published by V. Telvak and V. Werner (Telvak & Werner, 2023), which concerned the coverage of interest in historical figures on the World Wide Web as a marker of historical consciousness in modern Ukraine. A joint monographic study edited by E. Rutten, Ju. Fedor and V. Zvereva (Rutten, Fedor & Zvereva, 2013) regarding viewing video content of media Facebook, Twitter. The research is based on qualitative methods.

The Results of the Research. It should be noted that a comprehensive approach was used in order to carry out the above-mentioned research, which was based on new computer methods that enabled the authors to identify connections between various aspects of historical videos on the Ukrainian YouTube channels, which are one of the most common sources for the Ukrainians to obtain information about their own history nowadays (fig. 1) (Kyivskyi mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologii, 2023, p. 10).

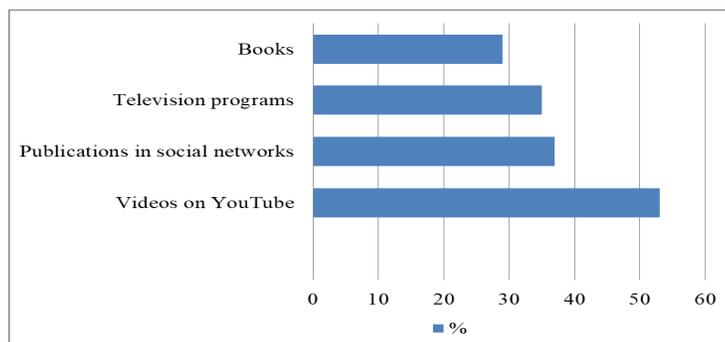


Fig. 1. Resources for the Ukrainians to Obtain Information about the History of Ukraine

The research was conducted in several stages. First of all, the selection of the most popular Ukrainian historical YouTube channels was carried out. One of the main criteria for this selection was the number of subscribers on the channel, which had to be at least 20,000. It was the very presence of signatories testified to the prevalence, interest, influence of historical video content on the audience, as well as the presence of a certain feedback. As a result, 14 Ukrainian historical YouTube channels were selected (fig. 2).

№	Channel name	Number of channel subscribers
1	TV channel 1+1	3,3 million
2	5 channel	1,61 million
3	named after T.H. Shevchenko	821 thousand
4	History without myths	645 thousand
5	WAS: Popular History	271 thousand
6	Iryna Farion	261 thousand
7	History for adults	212 thousand
8	Kozak.ua:	128 thousand
9	In search of truth	78,6 thousand
10	BUZINA.ORG	64,1 thousand
11	Real History	47,6 thousand
12	The last hetman	27,8 thousand
13	Oleksandr Alfiorov	27,5 thousand
14	History Verum	20,5 thousand

Fig. 2. Table of the Most Popular Ukrainian Historical YouTube Channels (data for April of 2023)

The next step was to create a list of the most influential and important historical figures in the lives of modern Ukrainians. A survey of outstanding Ukrainians of all time was taken and conducted by the sociological group “Reitynh” within the framework of the “Narodnyi TOP” project in October of 2022. There were involved 1,000 respondents aged 18 and over in this survey. All regions were represented, except for the temporarily occupied territories of the Crimea and Donbas, as well as territories where there was no Ukrainian mobile connection

at the time of the survey. The error of representativeness of the study with a confidence probability of 0,95: no more than 3,1% (Sotsiolohichna hrupa “Reitynh”, October 2022).

According to this survey, a popular TOP was formed – 100 such personalities, among whom we picked out historical figures of the 10th – 20th centuries, who played a significant role in the history of Ukraine and received the most votes among the selected audience (fig. 3).

№	A historical hero	Number of votes in %
1	Taras Shevchenko	63,9
2	Lesya Ukrainka	19,6
3	Bohdan Khmelnytskyi	17,3
4	Stepan Bandera	12,8
5	Mykhailo Hrushevskyi	11,6
6	Ivan Franko	10,1
7	Ivan Mazepa	8,8
8	Prince Volodymyr the Great	2,6
9	Yaroslav Mudryi	2,5
10	Ivan Sirko	2,4
11	Petro Sahaidachnyi	1,8
12	Roman Shukhevych	1,7
13	Pavlo Skoropadskyi	0,9
14	Nestor Makhno	0,6
15	Danylo Halytskyi	0,5
16	Symon Petliura	0,5
17	Petro Doroshenko	0,3
18	Leonid Brezhnev	0,3
19	Anna Kyivska	0,3
20	Volodymyr Vynnychenko	0,3
21	Ivan Bohun	0,3
22	Princess Olga	0,2
23	Evhen Konovalts	0,1
24	Ivan Vyhovskyi	0,1

Fig. 3. Table of the Most Influential Historical Heroes in Ukraine (data for October of 2022)

Taking into account the above-mentioned, 7 famous Ukrainian cultural and public figures were included in the first ten prominent figures, who were undeniably rated as positive: Taras Shevchenko, Lesia Ukrayinka, Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, Stepan Bandera, Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, Ivan Franko and Ivan Mazepa. Stepan Bandera and Ivan Mazepa were the most controversial figures among the above-mentioned over the past 20 years (fig. 4).

Their names were used by the Soviet propaganda to denote the nationalist movement in Ukraine for a long time. Accordingly, there were the so-called “Mazepyntsi”, “Banderivtsi” with a rather negative image in the Soviet times and in modern Russia. Due to the declaration of Ukraine’s independence, there was a change in attitude towards Ivan Mazepa, which had improved especially during the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko, when more and more historical truth became available. The turning point in the attitude towards Stepan Bandera

took place between 2012 and 2014, when 31% of the respondents already considered him to be a positive figure in the Ukrainian history. The second giant leap actually took place in 2022, 74% of respondents considered Stepan Bandera a positive hero (Dukhnich, 2022).

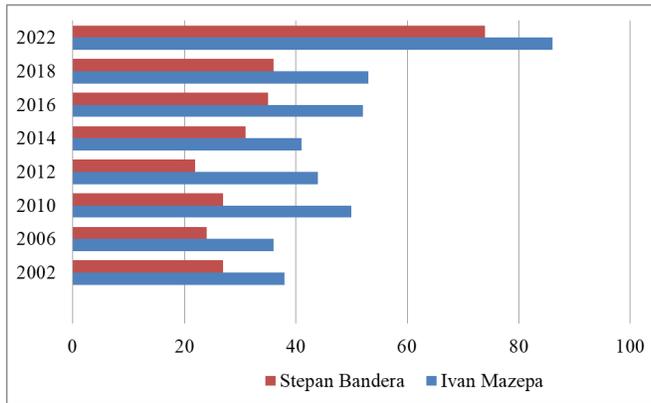


Fig. 4. Dynamics of the Positive Attitude of the Ukrainians to Ivan Mazepa and Stepan Bandera (2002 – 2022)

In addition, we also involved famous Soviet leaders of their time, the attitude towards whom was mostly negative during the previous decade, and especially sharply worsened in 2022. However, according to the tenth national survey conducted by the sociological group “Reitynh” in Ukraine regarding the ideological markers of the war (April 27, 2022), 13% of respondents had a positive attitude towards Volodymyr Lenin and 7% – towards Yosyp Stalin (except for western Ukraine) (Sotsiolohichna hrupa “Reitynh”, April 2022). The methodology of this survey was identical to the methodology of the October 2022 survey (fig. 5).

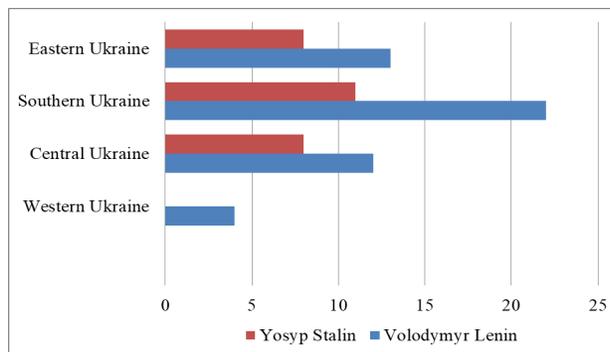


Fig. 5. Dynamics of the Positive Attitude of the Ukrainians to Volodymyr Lenin and Yosyp Stalin (April of 2022)

A sociological study conducted in January of 2023 by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) regarding the study of the opinions and views of the Ukrainian residents on various issues related to the reception of history, historical figures and events demonstrated that there are the Ukrainians, who continue to have a positive attitude towards such Soviet

figures as Leonid Brezhnev, Mykyta Khrushchov, Volodymyr Lenin and Yosyp Stalin (Kyivskiy mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologhii, 2023, p. 13) (fig. 6).

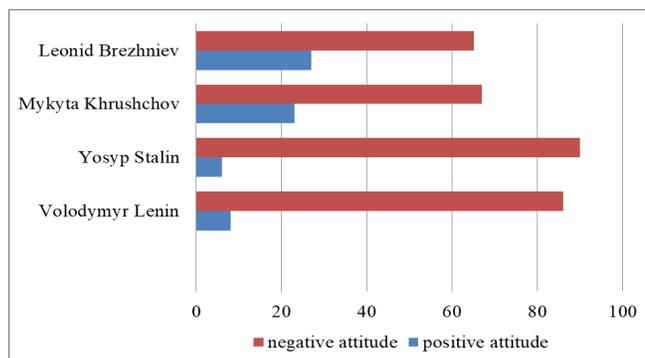


Fig. 6. Dynamics of the Attitude of the Ukrainians to the Soviet Political Figures (January of 2023)

There is the most positive attitude towards former Secretary General of the USSR Leonid Brezhnev. For many Ukrainians, especially those over 45 years old, the above-mentioned personality is associated with peaceful and stable times.

A database was created, based on this list of leading historical figures, by watching historical films and videos dedicated to these historical figures on the Ukrainian historical YouTube channels listed above. The number of viewed video material reached more than 100. The main criteria of this database were: historical heroes, historical events, metaphors.

It should be noted that when watching movies, the list of historical heroes increased significantly, because those historical figures, who were connected with the historical heroes singled out by us were also taken into account. For example, Petro I and Catherine II were among them, who had their supporters among the Ukrainians as it was depicted by sociological surveys during the 2002 – 2023 (fig. 7). It is interesting that, in fact, until the autumn of 2022, Catherine II did not appear in any of the above-mentioned sociological surveys. We do not know what is the reason for this. It possible to assume that the imposed historical myths of the so-called “Ruskyi mir” worked about this personality, who was perceived by numerous Ukrainians as an integral part of the history of Ukraine, the continuation of the statecraft of Petro I, therefore, her figure did not cause any doubts about her historical role.

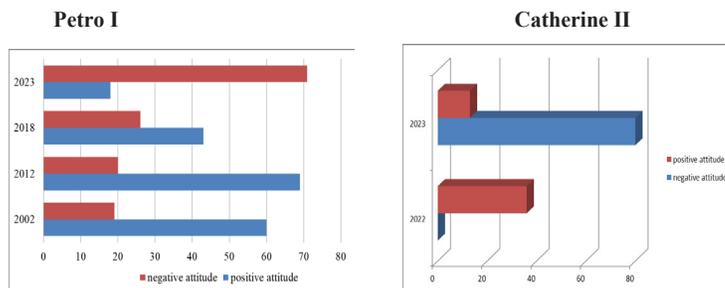


Fig. 7. Dynamics of the Ukrainians’ attitude to Petro I and Catherine II (2002 – 2023)

In the future, appropriate categories (historical heroes, historical events, metaphors) were defined from this database, on the basis of which a graph was formed as a topological module. It should be noted that exactly such graphs were used in various content analyzes on such portals as Twitter and Facebook to elucidate connections among objects, people, and events. The above-mentioned methodology is the basis of modern methods of data systematization and finding relationships between data. And it is used in the creation of graphic databases and knowledge graph. A similar technique is also used in the analysis of the content of the Internet known as the “semantic web”.

The following operations were performed in order to create the graph. There were selected such categories as the emergence of historical heroes and the appearance of historical events in selected films on the Ukrainian historical YouTube channels and the year of release of this film from the database. The categories were connected based on the appearance in the same year of different heroes and events. These connections were shown in a graph, where the year of the video and the historical characters are the top, and the number of connections between them in the movies is age (fig. 8).

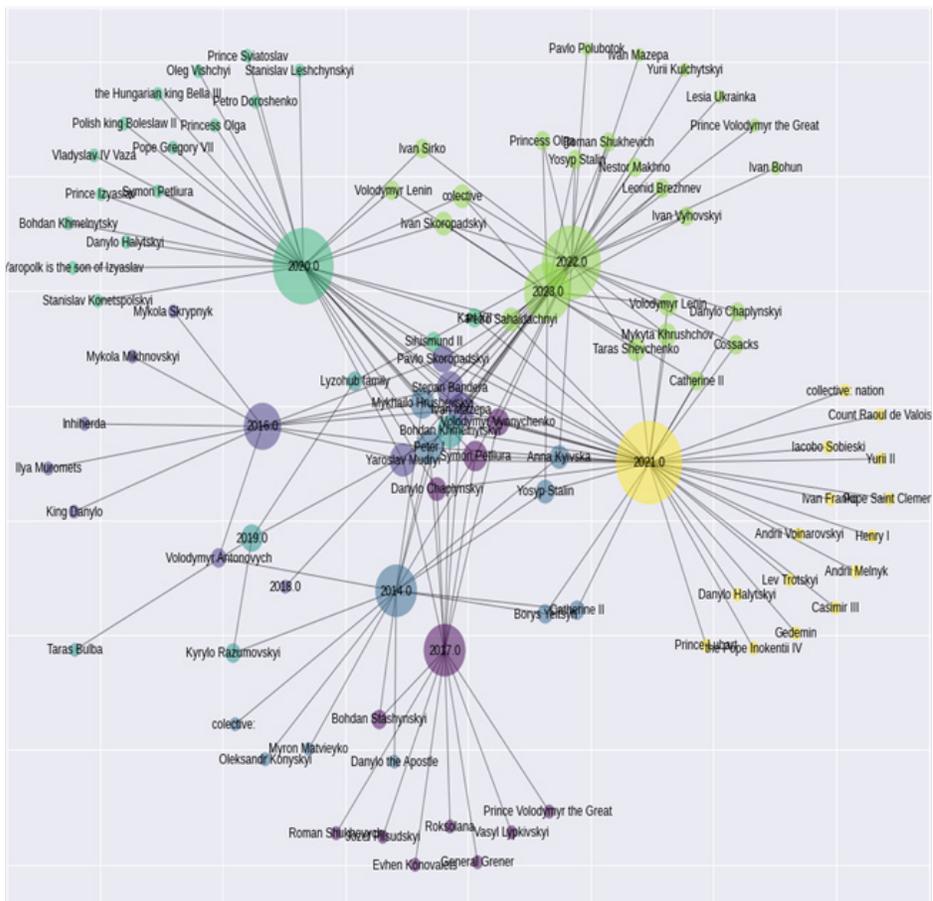


Fig. 8. Topological Graph Regarding the Appearance of Historical Heroes and Historical Events in Selected Films on the Ukrainian Historical YouTube Channels

The following parameter was applied in order to analyze this graph: *Betweenness centrality*. It is a measure of centrality in a graph based on shortest paths. For every pair of vertices in a connected graph, there exists at least one shortest path between the vertices such that either the number of edges that the path passes through (for unweighted graphs) or the sum of the weights of the edges (for weighted graphs) is minimized. The betweenness centrality for each vertex is the number of these shortest paths that pass through the vertex.

In our case, it indicates the importance of relevant historical heroes and events for the entire number of studied Ukrainian historical YouTube channels.

Diverse colours were used in the graph in order to highlight groups of vertices that were more strongly connected to each other than other vertices outside the group. The division into groups was carried out by a computer using two algorithms Louvain Community Detection Algorithm i Greedy modularity maximization. Louvain Community Detection Algorithm – it is an algorithm that works in 2 steps. In the first step, it assigns each vertex its own community, and then tries to find the maximum positive modularity increment for each vertex by moving each vertex to all neighboring communities. If no positive increment is achieved, the vertex remains in its original community. Greedy modularity maximization – an algorithm that starts with each node joining its own community and rejoining the pair of communities leading to the largest modularity until further modularity increases are impossible (maximum).

Taking everything into account, we can see that the years 2016, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 became decisive in the video content emergence, which was dedicated to or related to the leading historical heroes of Ukraine on the Ukrainian historical YouTube channels. At the same time, the decisive year is 2022, the period of the full-scale invasion of Russia on the territory of Ukraine, which became the fundamental catalyst for the coverage of nationally oriented Ukrainian history, without “The Soviet myths and fictions” and the actual interest of an adult audience in its history. The history of Ukraine is represented by leading historical figures of all times: from Kyivan Rus to the beginning of the 1980s.

In order to find out the existence of connections between the categories “historical heroes” and “events”, we created another graph, where the vertices were historical heroes and events, and the edges were their presence in the same film.

The *Betweenness centrality* parameter was also used in order to analyze this graph. In our case, it indicates the importance of relevant historical heroes and events for the entire number of studied Ukrainian historical YouTube channels

According to this graph, the top historical period for the Ukrainian producers on the Ukrainian historical YouTube channels was the period of the 17th century or the so-called the Cossack era (is repeated the most in films), where the period of the national liberation struggles led by Bohdan Khmelnytskyi is the most popular. Accordingly, an important historical figure is Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, who is a symbol of indomitability, strength of spirit, and the struggle for the independence of Ukraine for the Ukrainians.

The top event of this period in the films reviewed by us is the Pereyaslav Treaty (agreement) with Muscovy, signed in 1654 by Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, which actually changed the course of the history of Ukraine’s development. As it is known, B. Khmelnytskyi’s reorientation to Muscovy led to the transition of Ukraine from Western civilizational development to Eastern civilizational development. The decision made by Hetman affected not only the future of Ukraine, but also Poland radically. Ukraine lost its independence and was divided into parts, just like the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which suffered territorial losses in favor of Moscow, and later also lost its independence.

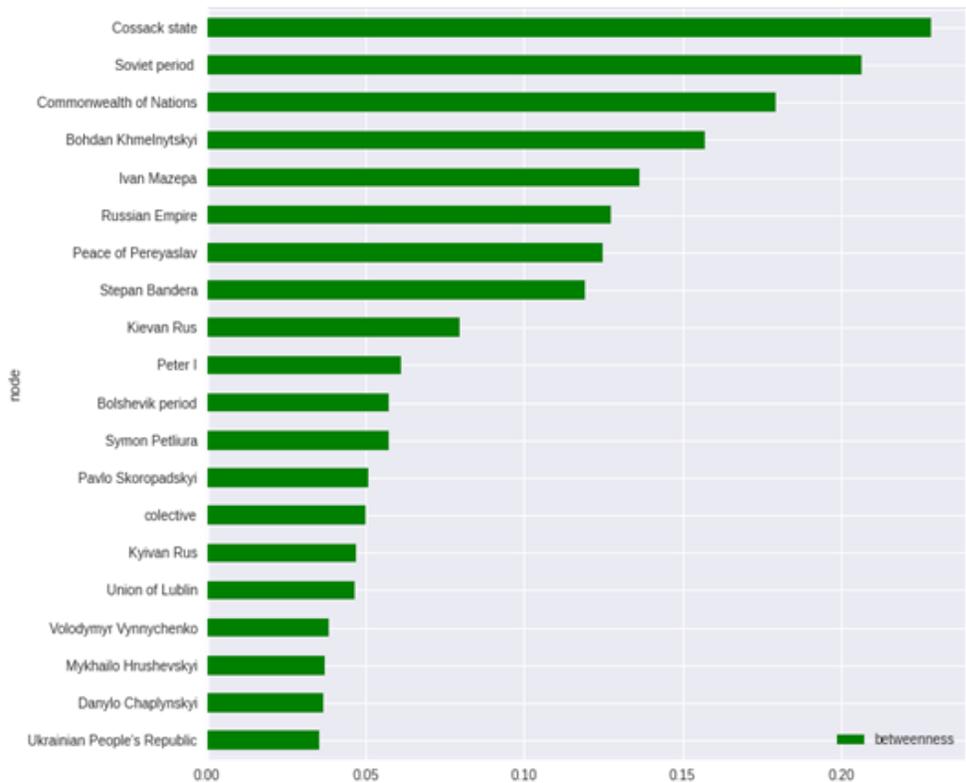


Fig. 9. Hierarchy of Vertices by Parameter Betweenness Centrality between the Categories “Historical Heroes” and “Events”

Note: historical heroes and historical events, **betweenness** – a quantitative indicator of the presence of connections between the categories of historical heroes and historical events. The highest betweenness index means that this vertex acts as a bridge between all other vertices.

In our opinion, the popularity of this particular period among the Ukrainian manufacturers is explained by the state policy, which is aimed at fighting Russian chauvinism. Acquaintance with the history of the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people for state independence during its historical path is of particular importance.

There are also important historical figures for the Ukrainian YouTube producers apart from B. Khmelnytskyi as Ivan Mazepa, Stepan Bandera and Symon Petliura. However, Ivan Mazepa is more popular among the Ukrainian users of these YouTube channels, who acts as a symbol of the struggle for the European Ukraine, the Hetman, who set out on the path of liberation from the “all-encompassing embrace of Muscovy”. Over the past 8 years, approximately 9,6 million users of the relevant Ukrainian historical YouTube channels watched films and videos about this outstanding figure, of which 158,403 people marked (like-ing) these films, 11,679 representatives left positive feedback about Ivan Mazepa, marking him as a significant role in the history of Ukraine. And, directly, they noted the importance of such videos for the formation of the Ukrainians’ consciousness.

There are the next prominent figures as Stepan Bandera, Bohdan Khmelnytskyi and Symon Petliura.

We came to this conclusion after conducting a thorough analysis of all films and videos about these historical figures on the Ukrainian historical YouTube channels we picked out. A quantitative method was used for the above-mentioned analysis. The calculation criteria were: the number of views by the YouTube channel users of films about a historical figure, the number of likes and comments on the film, clip. As a result, the total number of views, likes and comments of all films about the above-mentioned historical heroes was displayed (fig. 11).

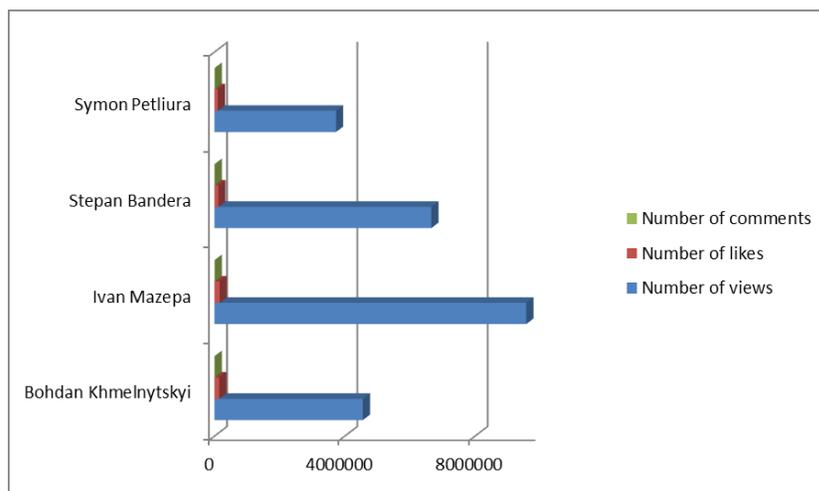


Fig. 10. The Most Popular Historical Figures among Users of the Ukrainian Historical YouTube Channels

One more graph was created in order to form a complete picture of the research and its objectivity, which showed the presence of connections between historical events and metaphors in films on the Ukrainian historical YouTube channels (fig. 12). In this case, the term “metaphor”, introduced by cognitive linguistics, (Kövecses, 2015, Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), was used not as a poetic metaphor (description and addition of new meanings), but as a conceptual metaphor that makes it possible to understand complex phenomena (and such are historical phenomena and processes) in relatively simple categories, related to human experience. For instance, the metaphor “genotype of the nation” indicated the constancy of certain ethnic traits in biological and medical terms, constructing an understanding of the nation as an immanent and inalienable good (like physical attributes).

In order to analyze this graph, the Degree centrality parameter was applied (fig. 13). Degree is a simple centrality measure that counts how many neighbours a node has. If the network is directed, we have two versions of the measure: in-degree is the number of incoming links, or the number of predecessor nodes; out-degree is the number of outgoing links, or the number of successor nodes. Typically, we are interested in in-degree, since in-links are given by other nodes in the network, while out-links are determined by the node itself. Different vertex colours indicate groups/communities extracted using the Louvain algorithm.

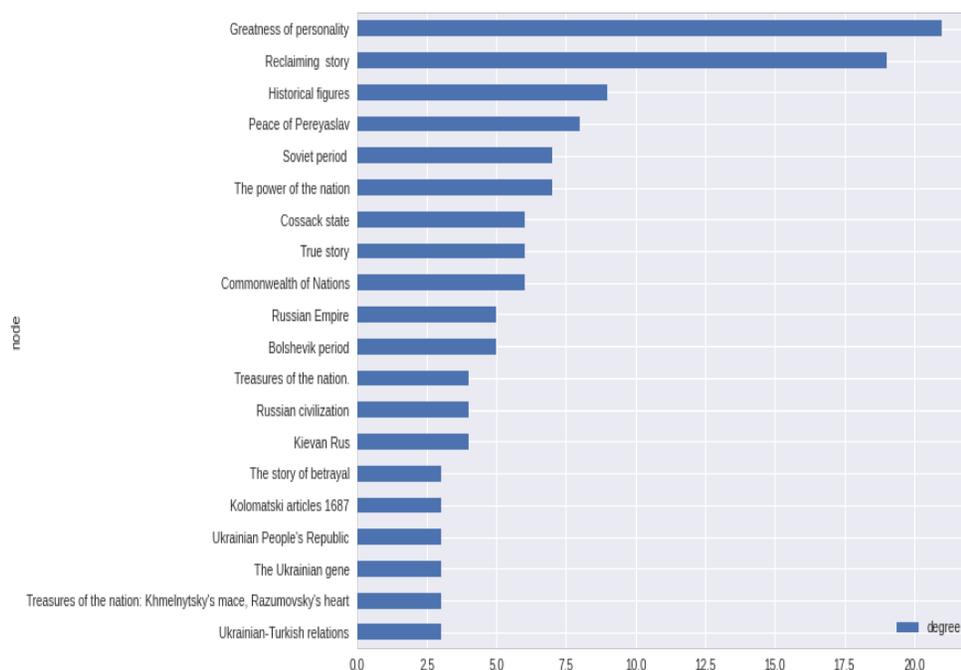


Fig. 12. Hierarchy of the Influence of Vertices According to the Degree Centrality Parameter in Relation to the Number of Connections between Historical Events and Metaphors

which was to bind Ukraine and the Ukrainians forever to themselves. The above-mentioned authorities emphasized the fact that Ukraine was a country created by Bolshevik Russia artificially, without its own history, identity and memory. The same narrative is spreading these days regarding Poland and the Baltic states.

The Conclusion. In the case of YouTube, it is not just a platform for posting relevant video content. This is a social network that serves as a platform for learning, communication, exchange of ideas, and distribution of important information. In 2014 – 2022, a number of interesting and important films and videos appeared on the Ukrainian YouTube channels of historical topics, regarding the coverage of the Ukrainian view of its own history, which for decades was carefully hidden or rewritten by the colonial regimes.

As a result of the research, based on the application of the cutting-edge computer methods, the authors found out that the top period of the Ukrainian history for domestic producers of video products posted on the Ukrainian segment of YouTube is the period of the 17th century. Accordingly, the top historical hero is Bohdan Khmelnytskyi. However, for the Ukrainian users of these YouTube channels, the top historical hero is Ivan Mazepa, a symbol of the struggle for the Ukrainian and European statehood.

The conducted research depicted that in recent years the interest of the Ukrainians in the history of their own country increased. The above-mentioned tendency is especially observed with the outbreak of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian War, which affected people's reception of their own past significantly. And this, in fact, is the beginning of the conscious nation

formation, which seeks to get rid of “backwardness” and the imperial past, sets the goal of gaining self-respect and the respect of the European community of peoples. This is the foundation for getting rid of the Ukrainians’ reception of themselves as the inferior. This is one of the important steps towards building a truly independent state, an equal partner in the international arena.

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