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THE INFLUENCE OF HATE SPEECH AND TROLLING IN MODERN MEDIA ON THE PROCESS OF SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL MINORITY IN POLAND*

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The article examines the phenomenon of hate speech in the Polish public space, mass media, public debate, social media and the Internet. And their influence on the process of shaping the national identity of the Ukrainian minority. In the article, hate speech tools and their implications have been approximated.

Key words: hate speech, social media, national identity, hate, diaspora, hybrid warfare.

Freedom of expression is one of the most important pillars of democracy. It testifies to the state of democracy, personal freedom of citizens and social development of a particular nationality. It is a very important aspect of a healthy, evolving democratic society in today's world. For centuries, people have been fighting for the possibility of free expression, life and self-determination. In some countries, this process is 100 percent complete, while in others are more or less done. However, there are places in the world where we cannot express our opinion, and we must remember this every time when someone tries to restrict freedom of expression. However, is there any restriction on freedom of expression? Certainly so, especially when that freedom violates another person's dignity, his personal freedom and his good name.

Opportunities to express their opinions have increased as a result of technological development and the introduction of Internet media. By that time, most communities were passive participants in the media sphere. The Internet enabled them to participate actively, expressing their opinions, as well as reporting and commenting on events.

Active participation is most commonly seen as engaging in discussions on online forums, commenting on articles, and sharing and commenting in social media. Blogging is also an additional element, but it is a much smaller group compared with social media users. Unfortunately, the Internet was initially a source of unrestricted access to information, the idea was to unite society but it is became a tool for its division.

What really is the phenomenon of the hate speech? The definition of the hate speech is ambiguous and complex, and can be divided into four parts:

1. Hate language – does not give a specific image of the enemy, but uses a series of associations chains, metaphors. Does not give a clear message “who else is bad”.

2. Hateful Language – it has been defined in many ways. Myroslav Karvat defines it as all the codes and signs that are an expression and at the same time a tool for spreading hatred¹.

We will return to this definition of hate speech in the later part of the article.

3. Mechanisms of Stigmatization – Stigmatization has been included in the Internet phenomenon as a spontaneous factor that has previously caused shame. In the criteria of functioning of the modern Internet such a factor can be anything.

4. Trolling – does not have the same genesis and intention, but uses the same tools². Rather, it is an instrument for promoting and shaping politics through the act of influencing society through hateful language.

Genesis of the hate speech

According to many scholars, the hate speech has its foundation in many aspects of life. It is the result of various phenomena and processes arising from a particular historical and social context. Hate formation is influenced, among other things, by stereotypes and prejudices, as well as by the cultural and historical determinants of a region or country. As the name implies, this type of public discourse is conveyed by negative beliefs or feelings, which for various reasons are directed at representatives of groups and social categories who act as the scapegoat in society. Also can be defined as the internal state of man and must be analyzed in terms of psychology³.

Walter Lippmann defined it as a simplified, schematic and one-dimensional representation of a phenomenon in a person's head. It is formed on the basis of information that we consciously and unconsciously collect, based on, for example, sensitive thoughts, media messages, our own fantasies, books, films or songs⁴. Prejudice is the second definition that only has a negative meaning, because stereotypes can also be positive. In the concept of the hate speech, both meanings have only negative connotations. The very language of hatred, which is an instrument of the hate speech phenomenon, has been fairly well defined by the Council of Europe: all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin⁵.

However, the world is not perfect, and any formal attempt to impose the desired behavior in society leads to the paradox of political correctness. Where another wave of intolerance leads to aggravated this phenomenon, and next paradoxes.

¹ Dynkowska, J., (2017), Hejterstwo nowa praktyka kulturowa? Geneza, przypadki, diagnozy, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego. s. 19.

² Ibidem. s. 19.

³ “Geneza Hejtu”. *Humanity in Action Polska*. URL: <http://uprzędzuprzędzenia.org/czym-mowa-nienawisci/geneza-hejtu>

⁴ Sarata, N. “Zagrożenie stereotypem”, *Słownik*. URL: <https://rownosc.info/dictionary/zagrozenie-stereotypem/>

⁵ Council of Europe (2015), “The conference of the No Hate Speech Movement campaign Mobilising, Planning and Networking for Campaigning Effectively with Young People Against Hate Speech Online.” *European Youth Centre Strasbourg* 2013, p. 13.

The hate speech as a psychological phenomenon based on stereotypes occurs when there are any sub-points in a community or a person:

- fear of “other” peoples and “other” cultures,
- sense of danger and struggle for social position,
- Aggression is fed with feelings of hurt or frustration
- lack of knowledge of people and groups classified as “alien” and “other”
- lack of education
- cultural experience
- less professional qualification of the aggressor than his victim and related envy.

Hate speech occurs not only on the Internet, but also in the press and television. Many of these cases are symbolic of related instance. In this case, the historical and cultural context, as well as the political games, are main components.

Historical context as the base of hatred

Many Poles still think that their country is monoculture, but many do not realize it has never been. The Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was the most multicultural country of its time. Many peoples also forget that at the time of The Second Polish Republic, Ukrainians – Rusyns made up 1/3 of the population. And many of their descendants live into the present-day Polish borders to this day, most of this group are autochthonous people, including Lemkos, Boykos, Ukrainians from the Podkarpackie and Lubelskie Voivodeship

Ukrainians, Belarusians, Jews, Tatars, Gypsies, Germans, Austrians and Slovaks was always a minorities in Poland. However, the lack of education and large-scale political agitation through which many seek to make political capital seem to have led to a wave of hatred. Many try to excuse their records with historical events such as the Khmelnytsky Uprising, Stepan Bandera’s policy and the Volyn tragedy also⁶.

In the comments on many articles, which usually represents neutral culture information, or news from the Donbas war, there are discussions about the content that is far from the topic, as well as the norms of cultural expression. The most common term for Ukrainians, both living in Poland and new emigration, is:

Heirs of Bandera “Spadkobiercy Bandery”

Polish Trojan horse “Koł trojański polski”

Cement them and to the Vistula and Odra “Zacementować ich i do Wisły i Odry”

Ukrainians living in the Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodeship are referred to as a directly organized crime group, which collects weapons and ammunition and is associated with secret military organizations⁷. There are also negative comparisons contemporary Ukrainians to famous Cossack Bohdan Khmelnytsky, in both cases as a source of evil.

Such comments appear under every article, information, or photo about whether it is: Ukraine, the Donbas war, the life of the Diaspora, or even tourist offers. Sometimes the comments on different websites are so similar to one another that it begs the question whether this is a propaganda war. Historical references act as an opinion and as an argument, if comments appear to protect the Ukrainian population or refute absurd theories reproduced by Internet users, there is a mass attack on that person or comment immediately.

⁶ Siewierska-Chmaj, A. (2016), *W pułapce wielokulturowości*, Warszawa – Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego – Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki Zarządzania, s. 118.

⁷ Ibidem. s. 118.

CaecArt: Do not touch the past, which you are also guilty in many ways. I wrote once that I do not support murders, but also I don't want to be bullied in our community Pray for yourself and we for ourselves.

ozii42: Typical Bandera justification ...⁸.

This is a fragment of a discussion on one of the portals popular among young people and people under the age of 35.

The inside enemy as part of a political campaign

Creating political capital on the antipathy to other nationalities is a practice known since ancient times. If the "enemy" is inside the country, it's even easier to score points in a political game. The practice is condemned by thinkers and ethicists, but it is characterized by measurable material and political advantages. This tools are hate speech and trolling as a the tube of geopolitical propaganda.

"If we want to change the climate of public debate, we need to create an atmosphere of fraternity and solidarity". Debate over hate speech and racism related to this has been going on in the European Union for years, but recently we are aware that there is a tremendous amount of power stemming from major and negative comments and innovations from online media resources. Several directions have been identified to combat this phenomenon: We need to be well aware of the problems that arise in hateful online appearances, where everything within the digital community can be multiplied and shared instantly. The Internet is a space of freedom, but it can be misused as a means of simplifying wrongdoing and harmful acts. Continued the discuss of the responsibilities of States and international organizations in the case of hatred, to pinpoint this phenomenon, and further discuss ways to resolve the dilemma between free speech and hate speech. Since freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, we must find a way to stop the hatred language and its consequences⁹.

Political discourse is getting tougher, and hate speech at all levels can be noted in a political speech. Although the number of racist remarks, relative to minority groups in Europe, has increased, the level of tolerance of such language in the public sphere has also increased. Elections are usually an opportunity to highlight important topics for public behavior and to facilitate a platform for hate speech¹⁰. Unfortunately, the widespread perception of offensive comments and statements has become commonplace as a normal. And the growing wave of hatred stimulates more and more aggressive behavior. In the case of Poland, the largest group of contributors of this nature are members of regular political parties and some priests of the Roman Catholic Church.

The most characteristic face of this phenomenon is the Roman and Armenian Catholic priest Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski. This is a media figure, a politician, a "scandalous" priest. Until recently, he is also an active shareholder of television programs, famous for unjustified chauvinistic and racist statements about the Ukrainian minority in Poland. The

⁸ "Ukraińcy protestują ... Prawda boli?", *Wiocha.pl*. URL: <http://www.wiocha.pl/1194255,Ukrajnicy-protestuja>

⁹ Council of Europe (2015), *"The conference of the No Hate Speech Movement campaign Mobilising, Planning and Networking for Campaigning Effectively with Young People Against Hate Speech Online"*, European youth center Strasbourg 2013, pp. 32–33.

¹⁰ Council of Europe (2015), *"The conference of the No Hate Speech Movement campaign Mobilising, Planning and Networking for Campaigning Effectively with Young People Against Hate Speech Online"*, European youth center Strasbourg 2013, p. 51.

language of contempt which he used led to TV invitation cancellations; to not worsen Polish-Ukrainian relations. It was similar during the discussion of the movie “Wołyń”. However, the priest himself in many articles, blog and Twitter feeds offensive behavior and hatred. Together with PhD. Lucyna Kulinska, they further spread the myth that the Vistula Action was a necessary activity. They both stated that Vistula Operation had the moral approval and acceptance of Polish society as the only effective means of stopping further bloodshed Polish blood. *“This action should be seen as a realization of Poland’s “raison d’État” of national interest and the necessary measures in these areas ... Blaming Poland yesterday and today for finally successfully defending its citizens and cutting off the territory shouldn’t be considered abuse”*¹¹.

And all after the events of February 27, 2007, when Polish President Lech Kaczyński and President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko in a joint statement condemned the Vistula Operation and declared that it was contrary to fundamental human rights. But this is not the only example of arrogance and lack of sympathy on the part of a clergyman whose articles, to put it mildly, negatively oriented to the Ukrainian minority in Poland. Isakowicz-Zaleski expressed his indignation by an examination question through Twitter: propaganda deserving of Gomułka, not in times of “good change”¹². He also disseminated untrue information about the Lemko’s Vatra Festival in Zdynia¹³; and also about the events at the Kiev Maidan¹⁴. Both in the Ukrainian media and in the Polish media, there were reports of his harmful actions on Polish-Ukrainian relations, and the presumption of deliberate advocacy for third parties.

This is an example how the statements of the priest, politicians, some scholars and Internet users influence the deterioration of social relations, vulgarization of stage and political life, public debate, and the rise of aggression. Virtual aggression, however, transitions into the real world, not only content with verbal abuse, but with physical attacks and beatings. Many of participants in virtual life lose the ability to think realistically and logically and cannot separate the fiction from the truth. Such actions evoke feelings of fear and lack of security among this national minority.

The influence of hate speech in public space on the process of national identification of Ukrainians in Poland

Identity is identification

- towards the individual: self-awareness
- Facts, features, personal information that allows you to identify the person

¹¹ Isakowicz-Zaleski, T. (2017), “Czy Akcja „Wisła” była koniecznością?”, *RMF.FM*. URL: http://www.rmf24.pl/tylko-w-rmf24/isakowicz-zaleski/blogi/news-czy-akcja-wisla-byla-koniecznoscia.nId.2358077#utm_source=paste&utm_medium=paste&utm_campaign=firefox

¹² Rosiejka, R. (2017), “Isakowicz-Zaleski oburzony pytaniem na maturze. “Wierzyć się nie chce”, *Wp.pl*. URL: <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/isakowicz-zaleski-oburzony-pytaniem-na-maturze-wierzyc-sie-nie-chce-6121481960871553a>

¹³ “Ukraiński fotograf w prowokacyjnej koszulce na festiwalu Łemków” (2009), *Wp.pl*. URL: <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/ukraiński-fotograf-w-prowokacyjnej-koszulce-na-festiwalu-lemkow-6036287905211009a>

¹⁴ Dańko, I. (2015), “Ks. Tadeusz Zaleski: Od Majdanu nie jeżdżę już na Ukrainę.” *Gazeta Krakowska*. URL: http://www.gazetakrakowska.pl/arttykul/3835365_ks-tadeusz-zaleski-od-majdanu-nie-jezdze-juz-na-ukraine.id.t.html

- regarding the community: awareness of common features and a sense of unity¹⁵.

Consideration is given to both the search for the identity of a person and the society which was created from a set of individual units. Because the actions of independent individuals shape the culture of a group, a society. Identification search can occur according to different rules and levels. This can happen at the level of a person, family, social group, ethnic minority, nation or group of peoples who create other tribes.

As mentioned, the fate of these two nationalities is linked to the common millennial history, glorious, difficult, and sometimes tragic. In the background of all these statements, events, the Ukrainian minority in Poland, remembering the Vistula Action and the eviction of Ukrainians from Poland to the USSR in the years 1944–1946, hides its origin, polonizes or cultivates its traditions at home. After the negative experience of the post-war years, Ukrainians are reluctant to admit their origins, even today, in a democratic country, as this democracy can be fragile¹⁶.

Observing the events from the political world over the Vistula, there is a feeling that I have already seen and heard everything, especially when it concerns the Ukrainian community in Poland and the attitude of the state authorities to the needs and expectations of national minorities¹⁷ as in the most difficult times in Poland, are intolerance and chauvinism like a in the Second Commonwealth. Quoting a statement by activist of the Ukrainian community in Sanok, Marian Reitar given in an interview with the weekly Ukrainian minority newspaper in Poland, “Nashe Slovo” – the political tension surrounding the “Ukrainian issue” will affect our future. Already, people are reporting that the atmosphere of tension is increasing, they are afraid to speak their mother tongue so as not to hear the phrase “Ukrainian are ...”. In my opinion, hate speech about Ukrainians has its source in the Kremlin. There are no such incidents in our territory. Even when there are anti-Ukrainian provocations in Przemysl or other border cities, the tension is not growing up between local Poles and Ukrainians, but between states¹⁸. In large cities, however, intolerance is gaining ground, with acts of verbal and physical aggression, and the destruction of national and ethnic symbols are common¹⁹.

All of this has affiliation with the spread of fake news and media propaganda. Journalist Paweł Bobolowicz notes that “Fake news” is a tool commonly used by Russians in the information campaign, propaganda and ordinary lies²⁰. Most of the comments contained false information. ABW press spokesman Stanisław Żaryn informed about the arrest of Russian scientist Dimitry K. who was the organizer and inspector of activities aimed at the security

¹⁵ Słownik języka polskiego PWN, (2019), “Hasło: identyfikacja narodowa, etniczna”. URL: <https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/to%C5%BCsamo%C5%9B%C4%87;2530211>

¹⁶ Мігус, С. (2018), “Одні українці бояться своєї тіні, інші полонізуються”, *Наше Слово*. URL: <http://www.nasze-slowo.pl/odni-ukrainci-bojatsja-svoiei-tini-inshi-polonizujutsja/>

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Лопата, О. (2018), “Нацменшинне дежавю”, *Наше Слово*. URL: <http://www.nasze-slowo.pl/nacmeshinne-dezhavju/>

¹⁹ Мігус, С. (2018), “Історичні уроки” продовжуються в суді”, *Наше Слово*. URL: <http://www.nasze-slowo.pl/istorichni-uroki-prodovzhujutsja-v-sudi/>

²⁰ LK, (2017), “Fake newsy” są powszechnie używanym przez Rosjan narzędziem w walce informacyjnej, propagandzie i zwyczajnym kłamstwie”, *WNET.FM*. URL: <http://wnet.fm/2017/05/16/fake-newsy-popularnym-narzedziem-rosjan-walki-walce-informacyjnej-propagandzie-zwyczajnym-klamstwie/>

of Poland²¹, similarly to reports from recent months about the arrest of a Russian citizen Jekaterina C. she was supposed to be an organizer and coordinator of anti-Ukrainian activities in Poland²². In fact, after these events the number of hateful and false comments that had their apogee in 2016–2017 decreased. In articles not related to the problems of the Polish Ukrainian, virtually all these types of entries have disappeared, which may indicate a paid trolling used as one of the tools of the information war. The content-containing entries that raised doubts about the authenticity of the comments and accounts on the portals *Jak świat światem Ukrainiec nie jest mi bratem* into Polish internet sources, and analogous content on Ukrainian portals *Як світ світом Поляк не для мене братом*²³. Published at the same time, always the same formulated, large font, only the object of hatred changed, where there was a probability of copying or automatic generating by false accounts and trolls. After a series of arrests, the number of negative comments actually decreased, in some cases they even disappeared completely.

Conclusions

Hate speech appearing in online media and public debate has a direct impact on shaping national identity. Also, the reckless actions of politicians who want to build political capital on national hatreds do more harm than good and destroy the lives of ordinary citizens of different ethnic backgrounds. Paid trolling and hate speech as the tools of this practice fuel hatred and antisocial behavior, especially if they end up in the fertile ground of extreme right-wing activists who in all of this unconsciously play the role of a useful idiot, thoughtlessly pursuing the policy of foreign forces (with particular regard to the Russian Federation).

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²¹ “PiS szokuje! Ujawnili “dowód na rosyjską wojnę hybrydową” w Polsce” (2018), *PIKIO*. URL: <https://pikio.pl/pis-szokuje-ujawnili-dowod-na-rosyjska-wojne-hybrydowa-w-polsce/>

²² Rosiejka, R. (2018), “ABW zatrzymała obywatelkę Rosji. Działania hybrydowe przeciw Polsce”, *Wp.pl*. URL: <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/abw-zatrzymala-obywatelke-rosji-dzialania-hybrydowe-przeciw-polsce-6252768383895681a>

²³ “У Польщі – скандал через україномовний гурт” (2013), *Волинь-post*. URL: <http://www.volynpost.com/news/17488-u-polschi--skandal-cherez-ukrainomovnyj-gurt>

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ВПЛИВ МОВИ НЕНАВИСТІ ТА ТРОЛІНГУ В СУЧАСНИХ МЕДІА НА ПРОЦЕС САМОІДЕНТИФІКАЦІЇ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ МЕНШИНИ У ПОЛЬЩІ

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У статті проаналізовано явище мови ненависті у польському публічному просторі, засобах масової інформації, публічних дискусіях, соціальних медіа та Інтернеті, їх вплив на процес формування етнічної та національної ідентичності української меншини. Особливий акцент зроблено на онлайн-форумах та коментарях у цифрових медіа. Розглянуто засоби мови ненависті та наслідки їх використання.

Порушено питання впливу мови ненависті, представлені у польському медіапросторі, на польсько-українські відносини на території Польщі. Помічено, що мова ненависті, представлена в польських соціальних медіа та на дискусійних форумах популярних веб-сайтів, негативно впливає на процес самоідентифікації громадян Польщі українського походження. Також було доведено, що подібна риторика впливає на вразливу до пропаганди частину польського суспільства, відображаючись у актах насильства, включаючи словесну та фізичну агресію.

Розглянуто сприйняття української меншини польським суспільством, – з особливим акцентом на стереотипи, усталені за віки співіснування. Проаналізовано значення цих стереотипів, насильницьких вульгаризмів та платного тролінгу як пропагандистського інструменту, спрямованого на поширення соціальної ворожнечі та соціально-геополітичну дестабілізацію в контексті гібридної війни, що використовується «третіми» країнами (у т. ч. Російською Федерацією). Доведено, що після втручання польських правоохоронних органів у рамках боротьби з гібридною діяльністю російської сторони, в Польщі кількість расистських та шовіністичних вчинків різко зменшилася, а подекуди повністю зникла.

Ключові слова: мова ненависті, соціальні медіа, національна ідентичність, діаспора, гібридна війна.