

Alisa NECHYPORUK

Kyiv, Ukraine

The image of Europe in the modern media. The analysis of Ukrainian weekly *Zerkalo nedeli*

Abstract: Due to the fact that the European vector acts as a promising direction for the transformation of Ukrainian society, this study aims to clarify the nature and prospects for such changes. The media, in this case, are the most suitable object of study given their functional concept of integration and social interaction in the formation of a civil society. For the analysis 14 issues of the newspaper *Zerkalo nedeli* from 20 September to 20 December were selected, to explore the image of Europe in the current conditions of transition, as well as specific changes in the work and the views of the newspaper. The analysis is quantitative in nature. 38 publications devoted to European topics were identified and analysed. In order to form an objective sample, publications were selected according to the category specified in the Internet-version of the publication.

Keywords: European integration, media, weekly, society, Ukraine

Undoubtedly, the media are a phenomenon which expresses not only the overt features of social reality, but also more in-depth processes, whose connection with the media is not directly observed. Revealing these connections is the function of modern media studies.

In particular, the output of the mass media, such as newspaper and magazine articles, are studied with the help of statistical methods. The quantitative study of the media and the rates of their messages promote an awareness of the probabilistic nature of social ties and relations, allowing us to determine regularities. In the complex process of studying media content one can reveal the essential characteristics of the social life. Media provide the simplest and most direct insight into the processes of social construction from its basic to most complex forms.

The media as such is a social phenomenon which are determined by limited conditions of time and space and is influenced by external factors (socio-economic, environmental, household, etc). According the theory of D. McQuail (McQuail, 1994) the relations between media and society have both political and socio-cultural aspects. The most important political aspect is the question of freedom and control.

The media constitute one of the four domains involved in the solution of social problems, along with authorities, businesses and the public. The main functional indicators of the media include, among others:

- 1) the ability to quickly respond to changes;
- 2) formation of public opinion;
- 3) public trust;
- 4) the ability to communicate important information to people with social problems;

5) the ability to promote attempts at the solution of social problems by means of criticising the authorities, business and the public.

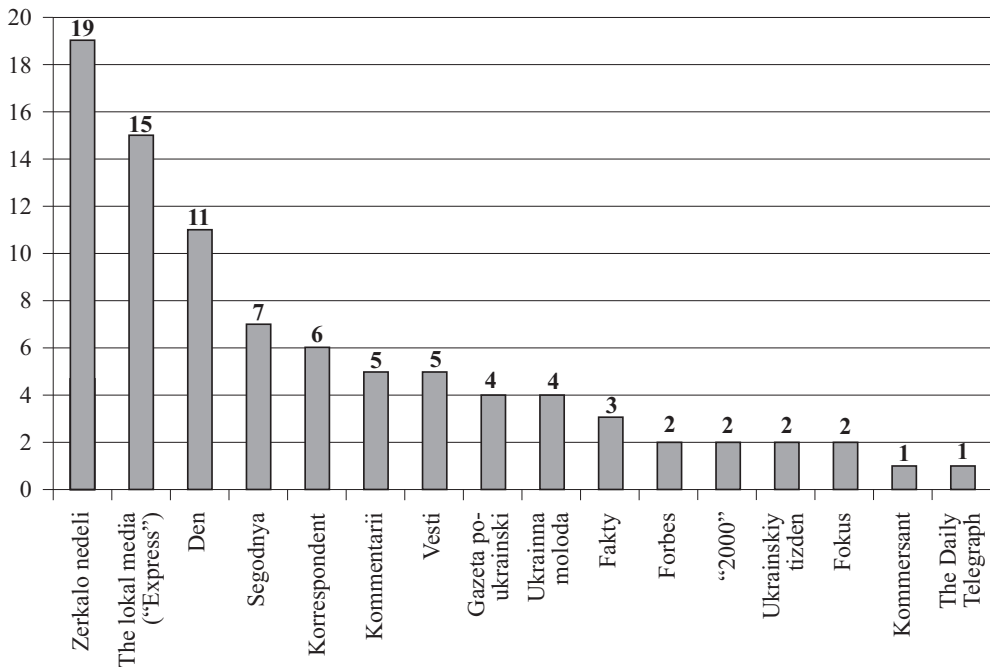
With regard to these benefits, the media provide the most varied subject matter for the study of the topical problems of a dynamics of social reality.

Ukrainian society operates under the conditions of transformation in the political, administrative, spiritual and ideological spheres. In terms of the prospects for updating the system of values of Ukrainian society, a comparative analysis of the dynamics of public opinion is most urgent. In this study the content of the media serve as a reflection of social processes, as well as the subject of the study.

The choice of newspaper is based on the character of their editorial policy – to inform about the most significant events in the country and the world. As far as the type of publication is concerned, this newspaper is an informational and analytical weekly, published every Saturday.

Research conducted by the Academy of the Ukrainian Press has allowed them to establish that *Zerkalo nedeli* is most popular among experts and, therefore, is the most influential paper on socially and politically active citizens.

Chart 1. Rating of the most influential Ukrainian publications according to media experts (research results of the Academy of the Ukrainian Press)



Source: Academy of the Ukrainian Press.

Zerkalo nedeli magazine is an international social and political weekly which analyses political, economic and socio-cultural events in Ukraine with the following characteristics:

- frequency: weekly, on Saturdays,
- language: Ukrainian, Russian,
- region of the publication: Ukrainian,
- the region of distribution: Ukraine,
- thematic coverage: Internal and international politics, macroeconomics, foreign economy, science, education, culture, society,
- format: broadsheet,
- print: black and white, colour on the front page,
- volume: 24 bands,
- circulation: 57,515 copies.

The *Zerkalo Nedeli* weekly received numerous awards, including the following: 2001 – the ZEIT-Stiftung Foundation awarded it the Gerd Butserius prize for “Young press of Western Europe”; 2000 – highest award in the journalism industry, the “Golden pen” (the Ukrainian annual mass media contest); 1999 – winner of the “Man of the year 1999” in the “Newspaper of the year” category; 1999 – journalist of the year title, for Sergey Rachmaninov – editor of the politics department of *Zerkalo nedeli* in “Man of the year 1999”; 1998 – laureate of national program “Person of the year in 1998” in the “Newspaper of the year” category; 1998 – winner of the title “National recognition”, all-Ukrainian festival of journalism; 1997 – Winner of “Man of the year 1997” in the “Newspaper of the year” category; 1997 – Winner of “Man of the year 1997” in the journalist of the year category for Yulia Mostovaya, Deputy chief editor.

An analysis of the materials also allows us to highlight the main socio-demographic characteristics of the magazine’s readers. The profile of the average reader looks as follows:

- age: 40 years (the most socially active age group),
- gender: male,
- education: higher,
- occupation: a qualified specialist, head of a department,
- activity: science and culture, involved in the organs of state power.

To analyse the content of the edition, it was divided into thematic and problem blocks. Their proportions are shown in charts designed by the author.

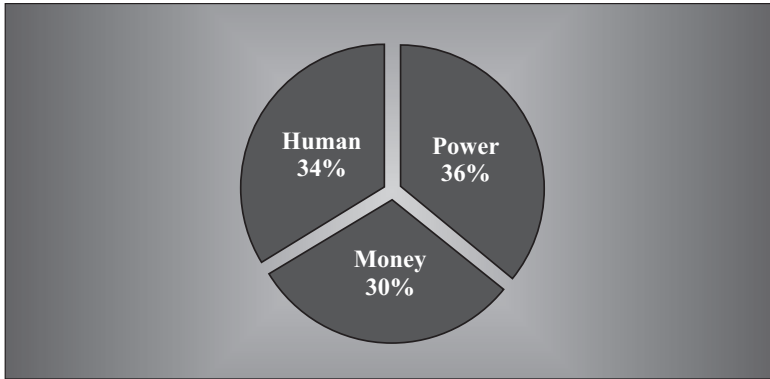
All the tables and charts were compiled by the author, based on the results of the research into the *Zerkalo nedeli* weekly.

The study of the European issue is topical, in the conditions of the formation and implementation in Ukraine of the national programmes and strategies of the European model, in accordance with the Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement on the Access of Ukraine to the European Union’s Programmes (November 22, 2010). The political and ideological vector, in this case, provides the greatest impact on the nature of the policy and management system of the Publisher of *Zerkalo nedeli*.

Taking into account the likelihood of the stereotypical perception by Ukrainian society of European ideas, this study aims to analyze and critically rethink the mechanisms of media construction of stereotypes. The media, in this case, are the most suitable object of study given their functional character in the processes of integration and the formation of a civil society.

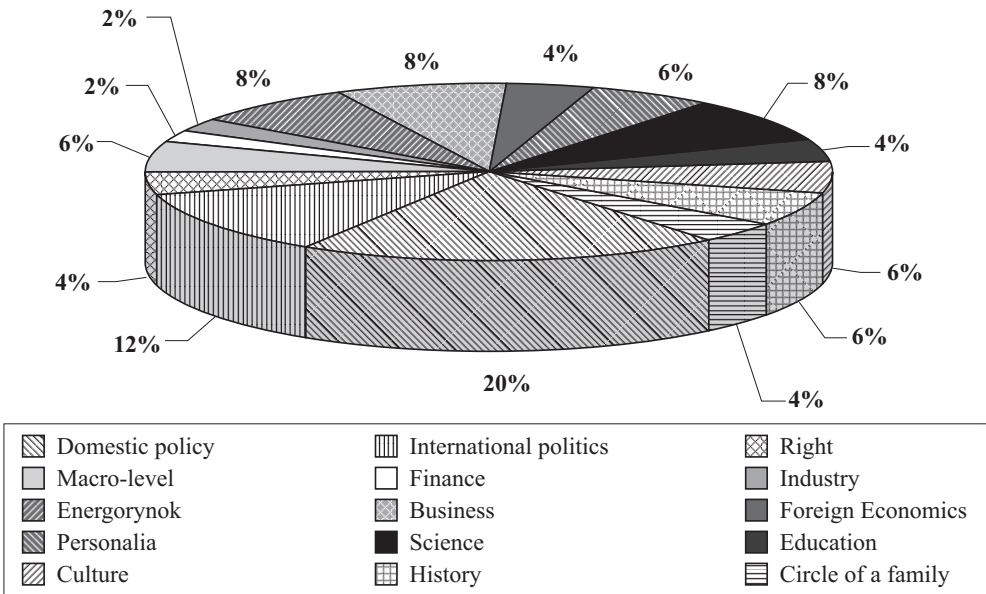
The examination of this issue is based on empirical research of the *Zerkalo nedeli* weekly journal. The purpose of the study was to identify the typical image of Europe in

Chart 2.¹ Representation of the content in ZN



Source: Author's own study.

Chart 3. Representation of the content in ZN



Source: Author's own study.

the contents of *Zerkalo nedeli*. To achieve these objectives the following tasks were carried out:

- 1) identification of the position of the European topic in the contents of the weekly;
- 2) study of the themes, problems and genres representing European issues;

¹ All the tables and charts were compiled by the author, based on the results of the research into the *Zerkalo nedeli* weekly.

3) identification of the position of the weekly on the subject area.

The research method that was selected involves the content analysis. The essence of this method of gathering relevant empirical information is that we can, relying on the qualitative characteristics of the aggregate text on the level of words, phrases or sentences, make a conclusion about the image of Europe in the Ukrainian media.

The main hypothesis is that the modern Ukrainian mass media do not objectively reflect European themes and do not carry out the function of shaping social dynamics.

The following research hypotheses were to be tested:

- European issues occupy the smallest proportion in the content;
- most publications on European issues are political in nature;
- European themes are presented in the form of articles, as far as the genre is concerned;
- authors' assessments are typically neutral.

Fourteen issues of *Zerkalo nedeli* from 20 September to 20 December were selected for the analysis, to explore the image of Europe in the current conditions of transition, as well as specific changes in the work and the views of the newspaper. The analysis is quantitative in nature. Thirty-eight publications devoted to European topics were identified and analysed. In order to form an objective sample, publications were selected according to the category specified in the Internet-version of the publication.

To identify the placing of European topics in the general content of the newspaper, we resorted to the method of analysing the content. The following areas were identified with respect to the category of locality: Europe, Asia, North and South America, Australia, and Africa. The choice of the areas is based on the ranking of the keyword presented on the website of *Zerkalo nedeli*.

In order to understand the role of European issues in the general content of the weekly, the proportion of the studied publications in the total volume of the content of *Zerkalo nedeli* was assessed. For clarity, we will present the results of the study in the form of a diagram.

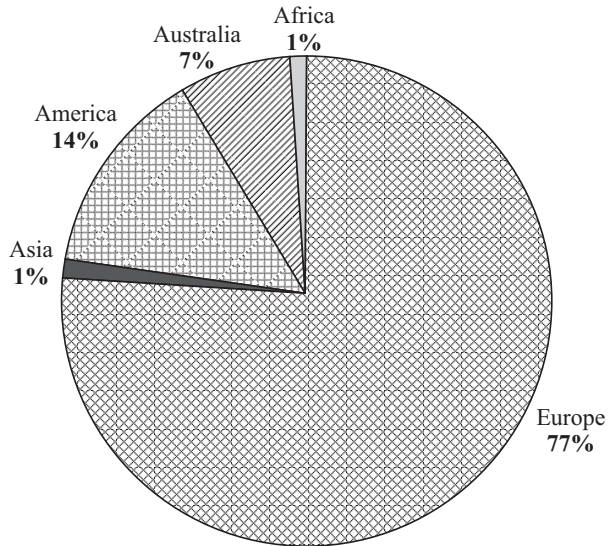


Chart 4. Representation of thematic content according to category "locality" in *Zerkalo nedeli*

Source: Author's own study.

As it turned out, a large part of the publications of the periodical is devoted to European themes, followed by American themes in second place.

The *Zerkalo nedeli* periodical does not position itself as political, but, nevertheless, represents an information space for the expression of the subjective opinions and ideolog-

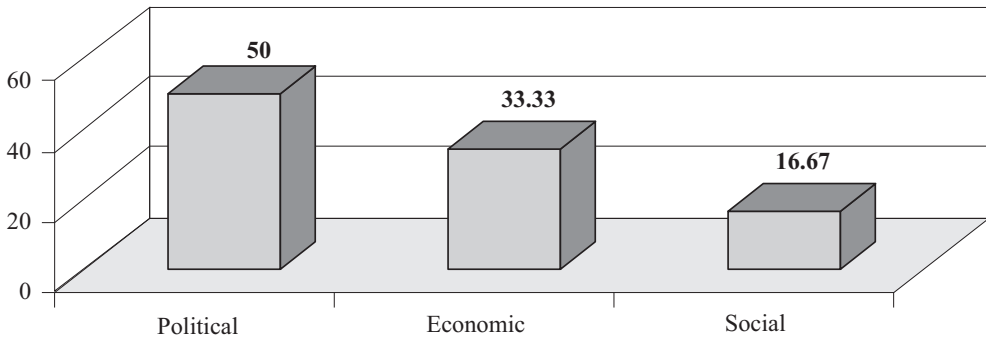
ical beliefs of many leaders of public opinion. According to the results of the analysis on the subject by “locality,” it can be assumed that:

- 1) in the system of information and analytical programming the latter dominates, welcoming the author’s position in the system of ideological editorial policy;
- 2) the formation of the concept and editorial policy of the periodical is based on a democratic political idea;
- 3) the functional concept of the edition is formed in the conditions of the European integration movement.

Professional study of the content also includes the selection of the main characteristics, of which most attention will be given to the multi-dimensional image of the periodical’s concept of the image of Europe. Among the criteria for the analysis of the periodical we gave preference to the themes, problems and genre.

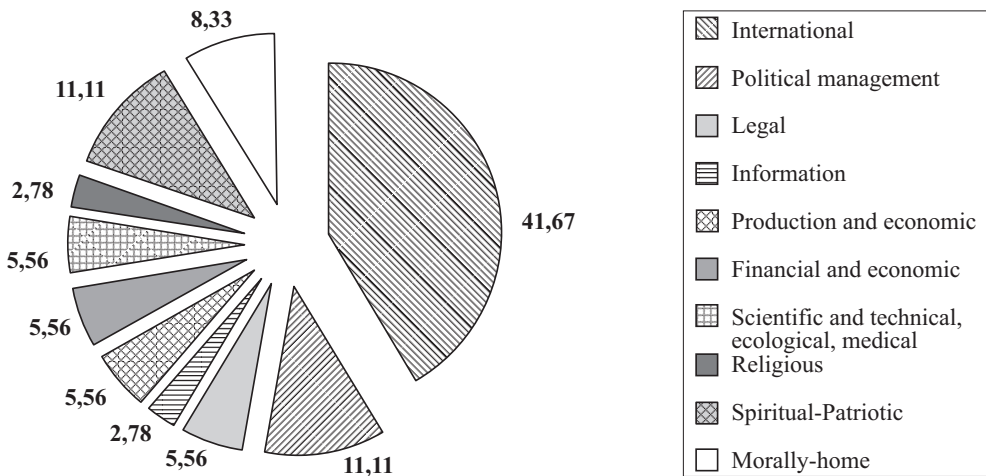
Grouping European materials of the specified parameters gives the following results:

Chart 5. Thematic structure of the European content of *Zerkalo Nedeli*



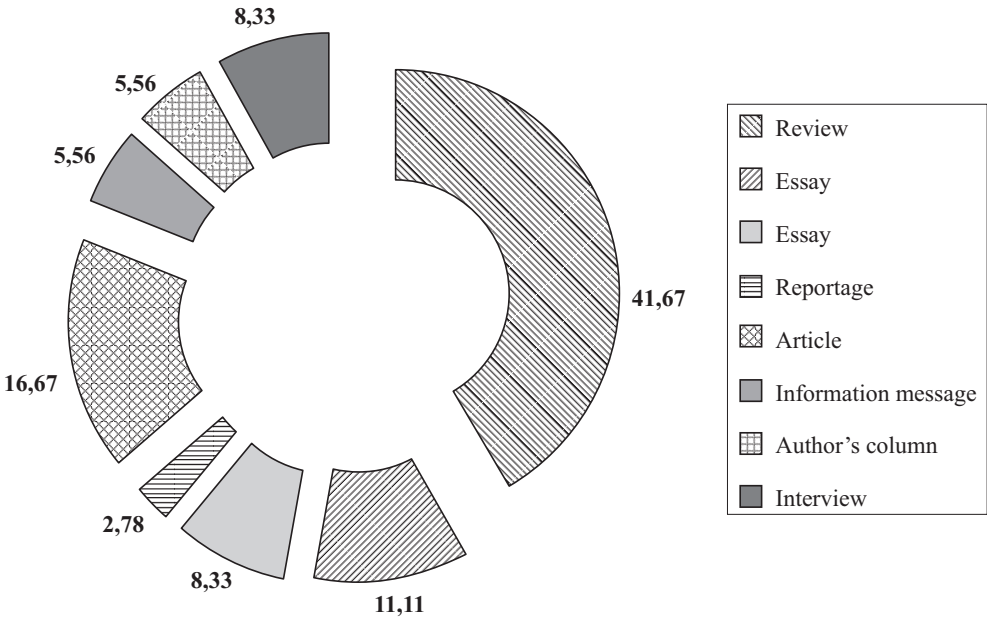
Source: Author’s own study.

Graph 6. Problems covered in the European content of *Zerkalo nedeli*



Source: Author’s own study.

Graph 7. Genre structure of European content of *Zerkalo Nedeli*



Source: Author's own study.

The analysis of the chart shows that the most common genre characteristic of European publications is the international political review. This trend indicates the high professional level of the publication (in the application of panoramic-prognostic methodology for the analysis of social reality within the genre review), as well as the character of the needs of society (the content is based on the system of reader's ratings: the consciousness of the recipient goes beyond domestic policy).

In addition, there is an equivalent of the trend towards social orientation materials that allows us to distinguish the characteristic trend of the international social survey. This thematic balance testifies to the adequate representation of the socio-democratic political ideas of modern Europe. Thus we can speak about the full realisation of the functions of social dynamics in terms of events and facts from the life of European society and European integration processes.

Comparing this trend with the typical characteristic of the thematic and problem structure of the journal, a conclusion can be reached about the high degree of interest of Ukrainian society in matters of international policy and the progress of the mutual understanding between the Ukrainian government and leading European organisations.

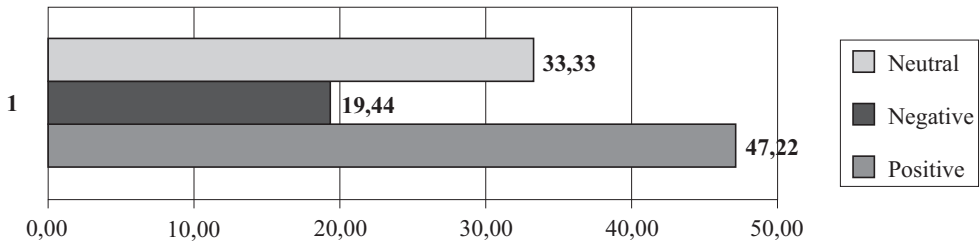
We can clarify the position of the periodical in respect of the subject areas by analysing the copyright contextual position. For this we use content analysis. The unit of analysis is the author's viewpoint, the unit of account is the number of publications on the specific position, the semantic unit accounts for the character of the appeal to a potential recipient. The unit of analysis is represented in the form of quality values: positive, negative, or neutral (balanced). The results of the research are presented in the form of tables and graphs below.

Table 1
Author's position in *Zerkalo nedeli* concerning European issues

Author's position	Frequency	Proportion (%)
Positive	17	47.22
Negative	7	19.44
Neutral	12	33.33
Total	36	100.00

Source: Author's own study.

Graph 8. Author's position in *Zerkalo nedeli* concerning European issues



Source: Author's own study.

The authors' positive assessments of the European context dominate, though this indicator is not at its maximum. Along with the quite large number of neutral evaluations, it allows us to reach the conclusion that there is a high degree of objectivity in the materials, as well as the proximity of the editorial policy to the European principles of freedom and equality.

Our research focuses on the search for the image of Europe in the Ukrainian mentality of a new period. The components of this image have been adapted to enable a comparative analysis of the results of the content analysis. The study was made in two ways: the traditional and personalised. The first involves the consideration of Europe as an institutional system using the appropriate framework for analysis: economic system, political ideology, organisational culture, type of society.

The unit of analysis here is the proposition, the unit of account is provided by the number of propositions that contain keywords (components criteria).

The results of the analysis can be represented in the following form:

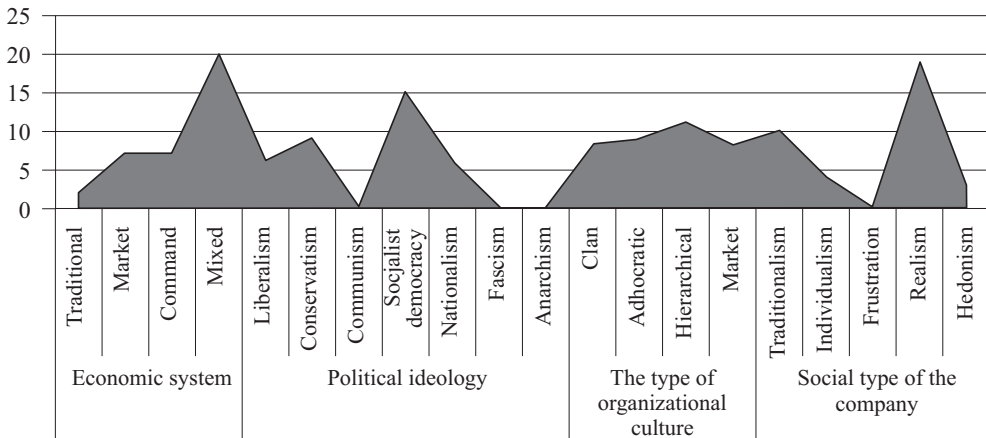
Table 2
The traditional image of Europe in the content of *Zerkalo nedeli*

Economic system	Traditional	2
	Market	7
	Command	7
	Mixed	20

Political ideology	Liberalism	6
	Conservatism	9
	Communism	0
	Socialist democracy	15
	Nationalism	6
	Fascism	0
	Anarchism	0
Type of organisational culture	Clan	8
	Adhocratic	9
	Hierarchical	11
	Market	8
Social type of the company	Traditionalism	10
	Individualism	4
	Frustration	0
	Realism	19
	Hedonism	3

Source: Author's own study.

Graph 9. The traditional image of Europe in the content of *Zerkalo nedeli*



Source: Author's own study.

The repertoire of traditional images of Europe in the content of *Zerkalo nedeli* comprises the following:

- Economic system: Mixed

A mixed economy involves the use of the regulatory role of the state and the economic freedom of manufacturers. Entrepreneurs and workers are free to move between industries without government interference. The state is responsible for anti-monopoly, social, fiscal (tax) and other kinds of economic policy, which to varying degrees facilitate economic growth and improve the living standards of the population.

- Political ideology: Socialist democracy

The main values proclaimed the ideals of freedom, justice, and solidarity. Social democrats are convinced that democratic principles should be extended to all areas: the economy should be pluralistic; the opportunity to work and receive education should be available to all; and so on.

- Type of organisational culture: Hierarchical

This type of organisational culture has a place in formalised and structured organisations. All the activities of workers are controlled by procedures. Management is provided by rationally thinking organisers and coordinators. The organisation appreciates people in charge of maintaining the progress of its activities, which are unified by official policy and formal rules.

- Type of society: Realist

Combines the desire for self-realisation with a strong sense of duty and responsibility, healthy scepticism with self-discipline and self-control.

The second approach involves consideration of Europe as a collection of people, a society which is reflected in the figure of the citizen. In this case, the analysis was personified in terms of gender, age, social status, nationality, gender and area of activities, primary need, and key values.

The unit of analysis for different categories was the words, sentences, and themes. The unit of account was provided by the number of the units of analysis containing the keywords. The semantic units include concepts, topics, names of people, events and facts.

The results of this phase of the study are presented below:

Table 3

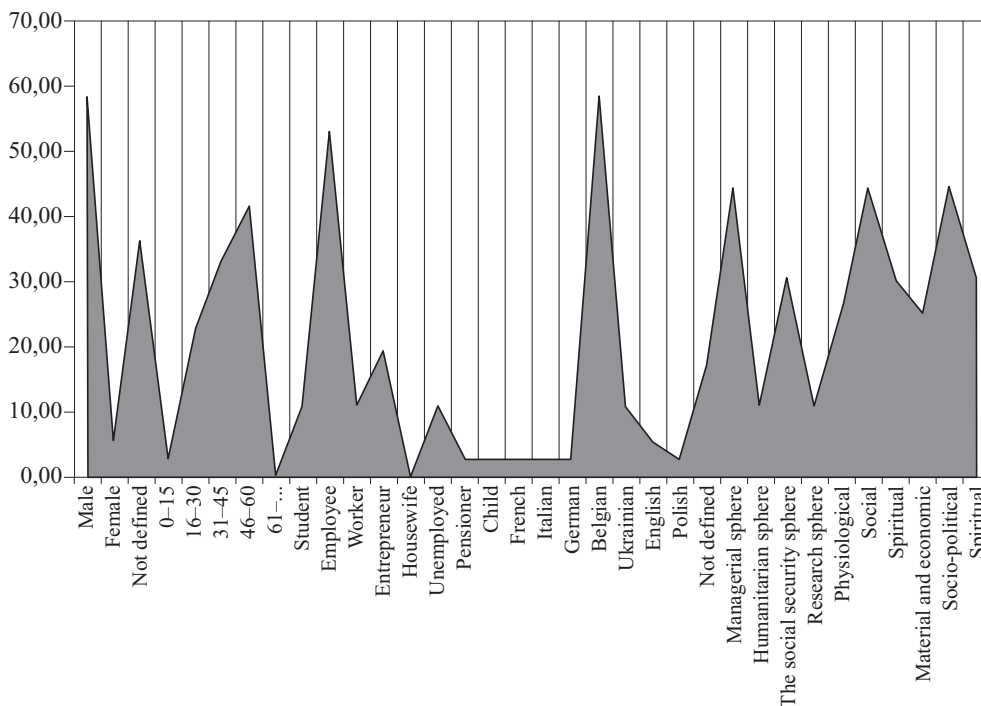
Customised image of Europe in the content of *Zerkalo nedeli*

1	Characteristic	Frequency	Proportion (%)
1	2	3	4
Sex	Male	21	58.33
	Female	2	5.56
	Not defined	13	36.11
Age	0–15	1	2.78
	16–30	8	22.22
	31–45	12	33.33
	46–60	15	41.67
	61+	0	0.00
Social status	Student	4	11.11
	Employee	19	52.78
	Worker	4	11.11
	Entrepreneur	7	19.44
	Housewife	0	0.00
	Unemployed	4	11.11
	Pensioner	1	2.78
Child	1	2.78	

1	2	3	4
Nationality	French	1	2.78
	Italian	1	2.78
	German	1	2.78
	Belgian	21	58.33
	Ukrainian	4	11.11
	English	2	5.56
	Polish	1	2.78
	Not defined	6	16.67
The kind and scope of activity	Managerial sphere	16	44.44
	Humanitarian sphere	4	11.11
	The social security sphere	11	30.56
	Research sphere	4	11.11
Primary need	Physiological	9	25.00
	Social	16	44.44
	Spiritual	11	30.56
Key value	Material and economic	9	25.00
	Socio-political	16	44.44
	Spiritual	11	30.56

Source: Author's own study.

Graph 10. Customised image of Europe in the content of *Zerkalo nedeli*



Source: Author's own study.

The profile generated as the result of the analysis of the “Customised image of Europe in the content of *Zerkalo nedeli*” is as follows:

- gender: male,
- age: 46–60,
- social status: employee,
- nationality: Belgian,
- the kind and scope of activity: management,
- Primary need: social,
- core value: socio-political.

Based on this analysis of content it is possible to refute the main hypothesis of the study. Based on the socio-political position of the weekly journal *Zerkalo nedeli*, we can conclude that the modern Ukrainian mass-media present European issues in quite an objective and balanced manner. Carrying out the adaptive function of social dynamics in the format of a panoramic review of key facts and events, the periodical participates in the process of formation of public opinion in the tradition of social-democratic ideas.

The progressive tone of the publications is formed by the informational mission and the formation of the image of Europe by an associative model. In particular, it is worth noting the tendency towards the contextual connection of Ukrainians with the European community.

In general, the image of Europe seems progressive, realistic and socially responsible. Taking into account the need to promote a positive thinking of Ukrainian society, the functional purpose of the mass media is of particular importance and a real influence on the character and dynamics of the public opinion formation.

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**Wizerunek Europy w nowoczesnych mediach.
Analiza ukraińskiego tygodnika “Zerkalo nedeli”**

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem niniejszego tekstu jest wizerunek Europy przedstawiany na łamach ukraińskiego tygodnika “Zerkalo nedeli”. Celem analizy jest wyjaśnienia natury i perspektyw zmian w wizerunku Europy w nowoczesnych mediach, co jest uzasadnione faktem, iż czynnik Europejski jest ważnym kierunkiem w kontekście przemian społeczeństwa ukraińskiego. W pracy analizowano pod względem ilościowym 14 wydań tygodnika – w okresie od 20 września do 20 grudnia 2013 r. (uwzględniono 38 publikacji poświęconych tematyce europejskiej).

Słowa kluczowe: integracja europejska, media, tygodnik, społeczeństwo, Ukraina

