

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF KYIV-MOHYLA ACADEMY  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES  
Department of International Relations

NATION BRANDING ON TWITTER ACCOUNTS OF UKRAINIAN DIPLOMATS:  
PROJECTING UKRAINE'S IMAGE THROUGH DIGITAL DIPLOMACY  
CHANNELS

Final paper on International Relations  
student of the fourth year of study  
Yemets Olha Vadymivna

Supervisor  
PhD. Mridula Ghosh., Senior Lecturer

Kyiv 2023

## CONTENTS

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter I. Theoretical bases for researching nation branding in digital diplomacy.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1. Defining nation branding and public diplomacy.....	7
1.2. Exploring a link between nation branding and public diplomacy.....	11
1.3. Historical evolution of digital diplomacy and twiplomacy.....	13
<b>Chapter II. The essence of nation branding .....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1. The potential for nation branding online.....	17
2.2. Ukraine’s nation branding .....	20
2.3. Nation branding in practice: examining examples from other countries.....	24
<b>Chapter III. Qualitative thematic analysis of Ukraine’s image on Twitter accounts of diplomats .....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1. Key Issues of Sample Design, Procedure and Methodology .....	29
3.2. Research findings .....	31
<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>38</b>
References .....	41
Appendix 1 .....	47
Appendix 2 .....	48
Annotation .....	49

## INTRODUCTION

*“It is strange how we have lived without any kind of brand for 27 years of our independence ( . . . ) Today, on May 10th, 2018, a new brand of Ukraine was born”*. These are the words of the Ukrainian then-prime minister on the creation of a single brand to promote Ukraine. (Banda Agency, 2018) While for Ukrainian officials, the question of nation branding arose only in the late 2010s, the initial excitement around nation branding appeared in the late 2000s (Kaefer, 2020). States sought to influence the perception of the international audience, which would consequently provide a favorable environment for their policy and international standing to be viewed as legitimate. It is absolutely crucial for countries striving to solidify their position as international actors to share favorable knowledge. In doing so, states fight simplistic depictions based on stereotypes or propaganda (Anholt, 2015). Otherwise, there is a chance to fall into the trap of misperception, which would further complicate or perhaps lower the chances of being recognized. The “father” of nation branding, Simon Anholt (2015), claims that a country’s brand image has less to do with the message it spreads to its audience. It instead creates the necessary context for interpreting these messages. No wonder promotional work can cause absolutely little positive influence on the perception of policies from countries with poor or weak reputations. In contrast, it is relatively easy to attract investments, tourists, and talented professionals when there is a powerful and positive international standing. As Anholt (2015, p.189) put it, “A weak or negative image usually means spending more to achieve less.” The advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT), as well as social networking services (SNS), has drastically changed our everyday communication. Such changes did not leave diplomatic practice behind, causing state officials to go digital, harnessing the power of the internet to project necessary narratives (Hocking, 2020). The potential of applying platforms like Facebook and Twitter in diplomatic platforms opens new doors to foster dialogue between foreign officers and their international audience (Manor, 2016) (Kampf, Manor, Segev, 2015) (Pamment, 2012). While the current scholarly work on applying digital diplomacy channels to public diplomacy is extensive and diverse, there

is much less scholarly attention to the use of SNS in nation branding. The aficionado of such studies is Dr. Ilan Manor, who offers comprehensive research on digital diplomacy and its application to different diplomatic practices. He suggests that the lack of scholarly work on the use of digital diplomacy to manage a country's image proactively could be caused by the novelty of nation branding and reliance on traditional media while practicing it (Manor, Segev, 2015). This study seeks to address the substantial gap and contribute to tackling this *problem*. In light of this, the study seeks to answer two *research questions*: (1) How can digital diplomacy further nation-branding practice?; (2) How do Ukrainian diplomats use Twitter to project Ukraine's brand image? I explore these questions by examining the Ukrainian nation brand on the Twitter accounts of Ukrainian diplomats. I employ a qualitative thematic analysis, which helps to find overlying and recurring themes. Thus, the *subject* of the study would be the narratives that Ukrainian diplomats share on their Twitter accounts, while the *object* is the tweets. Specifically, the data analyzed included tweets published by (1) Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba; (2) MFA of Ukraine (3) President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Thus, *I aim to* determine the relationship between digital diplomacy on social media and nation branding through the study of how Ukraine utilizes this new media environment to project its self-portrait on the social media accounts of its diplomatic representatives. Based on this, the central *claim* of this paper is that the application of digital diplomacy channels has to be conceptualized as an integral part of the practice of nation branding: first, to overcome simplistic, distorted, or inimical ideas about Ukraine that counter our interests (especially in times of war); (2) to project a real identity of our country by constructing a strategic narrative.

The fulfillment of the following *tasks* will provide the achievement of the aim as mentioned above:

- to characterize the main approaches to nation branding and its link to public diplomacy;

- to carry out a theoretical analysis of the role of digital diplomacy and twiplomacy in the management of national image;
- to explore nation branding examples (both on social networking services (SNS) and with other communication channels) from Ukraine and other countries;
- to indicate the main themes of tweets of Ukrainian diplomats through the qualitative thematic analysis of Ukraine's image.

There are two substantial and original *contributions* to the field that I offer. First, existing research diversifies the areas of analysis for nation-branding through digital diplomacy channels, which still needs improvement. Ukraine's example might be a source of valuable knowledge for nation-branding scholars. First and foremost, Ukrainian diplomats routinely employ social media and give daily updates on the situation in the country, which offers sufficient data for the analysis. Recognizing the opportunity to reach a wide audience through SNS, Ukrainian diplomats have been somewhat active in employing Twitter in their communication with other diplomats and the international public after the full-scale Russian invasion. The Foreign Minister of Ukraine and the MFA of Ukraine tweet daily on their Twitter accounts. Moreover, the resonance was caused by the communication of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Elon Musk's tweet about "Ukraine-Russia Peace" (Garrity, 2022). Zelenskyy posted a question on his account, "Which @elonmusk do you like more?" and offered two poll options "One who supports Ukraine," "One who supports Russia." This was his response to Elon Musk's offer to hold new elections in the annexed areas, leave Crimea to Russia and guarantee Ukrainian neutrality. Furthermore, despite all the attempts to mend the distorted image of the country, considering problems with corruption and military aggression from Russia, it is very likely that Ukrainian officials might be trying to alter this brand now. Secondly, we extend the research of digital nation-branding to the studies of countries that are facing dreadful crises like war, given that Ukraine is a country that has recently been invaded by Russia and is now waging war against the aggressor. Few studies have attempted to illustrate how social media can help to manage or alter a nation's image and reputation of a country that is

simultaneously facing crises caused by war. It is more common to either study nations that try to improve a negative image in the aftermath of an unwelcome and unexpected crisis (as in the case of the US in 2013) (Manor, Segev, 2015) or to states that try to render a distorted historic image (as in the case of Poland's strategy online) (Manor, 2016).

Our research rests on the constructivist approach as defined by Alexander Wendt. From the standpoint of constructivism, state identities and interests are, to a great degree, constructed by social structures of actors rather than given by human nature (Wendt, 1994). The theory grants importance to ideas and perceptions of self and others, and it is this perception of self in the context of inter-state interaction that forms the state's identity and interests. National interest and identity, then, is a social construction created after state officials interpret for themselves the nature of the specific situation they face and the place of their state in this international system. (Weldes, 1996) Research design, sampling and procedures to analyse the tweets have followed the methodology of qualitative thematic analysis, using the method of Braun and Clarke (2006). Discourse analysis is also used in this research.

The structure of this research consists of introduction, three chapters, conclusions, bibliography and annotation. In the first chapter, conventional concepts of nation branding and public diplomacy are discussed, elucidating the approach we apply in this study regarding the link between these concepts. The review of the historical background of digital diplomacy, and particularly Twitter, as one of the digital diplomacy channels, is also presented in the next section. The second chapter is mainly about the existing studies of nation branding both on social media and more traditional platforms. It then describes the development of Ukraine's international brand and offers nation-branding strategies in the US, Poland, Russia, etc. The final section outlines the qualitative thematic analysis of Ukraine's image on the Twitter accounts of Ukrainian diplomats. In this section, the methodology used for sample design, procedures and research findings are described.

# CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL BASES FOR RESEARCHING NATION BRANDING WITH DIGITAL DIPLOMACY CHANNELS

## 1. 1. Defining the Concepts of Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy

This section provides a theoretical ground on which to recognize nation branding and its link to public diplomacy. Public diplomacy and nation branding are two fields that are increasingly being used in the same context or even interchangeably. This derives from the fact that both concepts are being interpreted differently by politicians or scholars, who label them with meanings that best suit the needs of the state (Szondi, 2008). Nevertheless, the relationship between them remains ambiguous, given that both concepts have been interpreted in a plethora of ways. Much of the uncertainty surrounding their meaning and interconnectedness stems from the relative novelty of these fields, which still challenges scholars to reach the theoretical and practical position of public diplomacy and nation branding in different disciplines. In this part, we also strive to clear the confusion regarding the perceptual intersection between them by first examining their operational definitions separately.

### *Public Diplomacy*

The term public diplomacy (in its modern meaning) was coined by a dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, Edmund Gullion, in 1965; however, the practice of public diplomacy has been shared for thousands of years (Cull, 2020) (Yang, 2015). The term “public diplomacy” took off during the first years of the Cold War as an alternative to an older term, “propaganda,” which initially meant what we now refer to as “public diplomacy” but consequently accumulated malignant associations (Cull, 2020). Consequently, Gullion came up with a term that took a fresh turn of USIA’s (US Information Agency) work, eliminating negative connotations that existed around the words information. Governmental activities directed at information

policies were mostly perceived as propaganda, which had to be fixed (Cull, 2020). Gullion viewed public diplomacy as a sphere that deals with dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy. It encompasses the influence of foreign public opinions in order to facilitate the acceptance of their foreign policy. In this context, he opposes public diplomacy to traditional diplomacy (also referred to as “old diplomacy”), which usually keeps with a state-centered approach to international relations — focused on government-to-government engagement. (Golan, 2013) (Puybureau, Takam Talom, 2015). In this paradigm, a government diplomat is expected to perform three main functions: representation, communication, and perpetuate the international society as its member. While in this realm, any other actors aside from state representatives were excluded from the diplomatic arena, public diplomacy, on the other hand, offers an entirely different view. The traditional approach to public diplomacy interprets it as the government’s direct communication targeted at foreign audiences to influence public opinion through national activities in various fields: culture, education, sports, etc. Hence public diplomacy is focused on government-to-citizen engagement (Golan, 2013). Conventionally, public diplomacy is carried out through various cultural festivals, academic exchanges, exhibitions, and language education (Yang, 2015), (Vickers, 2004).

Public diplomacy offers a meeting point for many academic disciplines that drive to research this phenomenon, be it international relations, mass communication, or public relations studies (Anholt, 2015). There is a difference in the understanding of public diplomacy in recent studies from the earlier definitions offered by International Relations scholars (Szondi, 2009). When it first appeared, many scholars expected public diplomacy to target the “general” public that would further influence their government. In contrast, the contemporary understanding of public diplomacy does not put an emphasis on influencing governments as it is far more concerned with foreign public opinion and creating a receptive environment abroad (Szondi, 2009). James Pamment (2012) summarised the history of “public diplomacy” and demonstrated how its development is closely related to the shift in communication technologies. The

digital “revolution” in diplomatic practice expanded the number of tools to engage in a dialogue between diplomats and the foreign public (Sandre, 2013). The new media landscape gave rise to a new opinionated society, which was characterized by free access to information and the freedom to share information (Sotiriu, 2015). In light of that, contemporary twenty-first-century public diplomacy shifts its focus to engaging in symmetrical two-way communication that engenders relationship cultivation.

### *Nation Branding*

Simon Anholt introduced the concept of *nation brand* in an article from 1996, where he claimed that country’s reputation is equally critical for its prosperity, just like the brand images of products are to their companies (Anholt, 1996). He thinks of a brand as the context in which messages about a country are received — it is the pre-existing reputation that conditions how foreign audiences will perceive national foreign policies in the context of their current international image (Anholt, 2005). In some way, he compares a nation brand with a country’s reputation, claiming that “the reputations of countries, cities, and regions are just as critical to their progress and prosperity as the brand images of products are to the companies that own them” (Anholt, 2015, p.189). While literature on the history and practice of public diplomacy is abundant, nation branding remains a relatively new area of study, with only few books exclusively devoted to this idea. This is especially relevant to the studies of the application of digital diplomacy channels to nation branding. Most of the comprehensive studies are authored by Simon Anholt, who largely contributed to the evolution of nation branding, and Ilam Manor, who focuses on selfie diplomacy (more on this in the following chapters).

Nevertheless, the field is actively studied increasing the number of papers on nation branding. For many researchers who further explored the field, it was challenging to come to a common, comprehensive definition of the term ‘nation branding.’ Thus some highlight three groups within the debate that are distinct in their understanding of nation branding: (1) the first group believes that nations are equal to products in terms

of their branding, meaning that the same image management techniques can be applied to both of them; (2) the representatives of the second group do not believe in any commonalities that make it possible for nations to be branded like products; simultaneously they accept the possibility of applying branding tools to increase the value of nation's brand; (3) the last group is characterized by its belief in irrelevance of branding techniques when it comes to nations, considering their utterly different nature (Gudjonsson, 2005). For Aronczyk (2013), nation branding is the interpretation of commercial and public sector strategies to communicate national priorities to the international audience (both domestic and foreign). Here nation branding is also analyzed on several levels, each of which is distinguished by various outcomes that nation branding is expected to cultivate. First of all, it is seen as a conscious strategy of a particular nation to compete for international economic relations (in foreign direct investment, tourism, trade, etc.) with the engagement of both public and private sector resources. Secondly, it can be used to spread a positive international image; thus, it might help to fix poor or damaged reputations, manage international attitudes in the aftermath of some events. Lastly, nation branding serves as a tool to foster pride and patriotism within national borders (Aronczyk, 2013). Another study suggests a much simpler vision of nation branding, seen as a country's whole image on the international stage covering political, economic, and cultural dimensions (Fan, 2010). Fan claims that a nation brand exists irrespective of the conscious nation branding. While there is not a generally accepted definition for nation branding, Florian Kaefer explains what nation branding is not. For him, it most certainly is not about logos or slogans, as they are the last things to worry about in creating and managing a brand image.

It is essential to mention, though, that Simon Anholt specifically talked about nation brands, not nation branding, in his articles. In his later studies, he suggests that the term nation branding bears a misleading character (Anholt, 2011) (Anholt, 2015). He was concerned that some people would relate branding to specific techniques by means of which a country can enhance its image. In contrast, he finds the idea of manipulating a nation's image with the tools of commercial marketing unjustifiable. No studies prove

that simply advertising and marketing campaigns can build the way into a better reputation without a consistent and noticeable strategy of policy-making (Anholt, 2011). Anholt believes that no campaign can create a favorable environment for governmental policies abroad if the country's reputation is poor (Anholt, 2015). When perceived as the creation (or perhaps the change) of the context, nation branding becomes a challenging and demanding task to be achieved. First, context is a highly fragmented phenomenon, given that the audience is not homogenous in its beliefs and prejudices. Secondly, a country's image is being built throughout its existence, and this reputation was quite possibly held for decades (Anholt, 2005). Considering these concerns, Anholt coined a new term, "Competitive Identity," which, in his view, is entitled to show the better (and the only) way for countries to enhance their international standing — not with messaging but with actions (Anholt, 2015).

## **1.2. Exploring a link between nation branding and public diplomacy**

Many field practitioners cannot but mention public diplomacy when they speak about nation branding. Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers remain divided over the question of whether there is an actual link between nation branding and public diplomacy. On the other hand, Simon Anholt speaks about the undeniable relationship between them. In one of his studies, he suggests the fusion of public diplomacy and Competitive Identity as the only real chance for any country to create a reliable international standing (Anholt, 2015). There he sees Competitive identity as the application of tools to build your international image and credibility (how you *build* it); on the other hand, public diplomacy is how you manage this image (how you *wield* it). Anholt uses an example of the UK, which would most probably need to work on its Competitive Identity in relationships with China; however, in terms of its diplomacy with Canada, there is mainly the need to work on public diplomacy. Thus, nation branding and public diplomacy are not two interchangeable or synonymous concepts but rather complementary fields. In contrast, for Florian Kaefer (2020), public diplomacy and nation branding are two areas of diplomatic practice that share common

features: (1) they frequently share the infrastructure given that both require collaboration with cultural institutes and foreign representations; (2) they are mutual in their quest for a favorable reputation. Some other elements shared by the two concepts are: both target foreign audiences in order to promote national interests and national image; they aim to facilitate dialogue and build two-way communication (Szondi, 2008) (Manor, Segev, 2015).

Hence scholars have yet to reach a common ground as to what extent the two fields are related. Considering this, five different views have been identified with which one can interpret the link between public diplomacy and nation branding. (Szondi, 2008). According to the first view, the two are seen as distinct, unrelated spheres that do not share any common ground — nation branding is concerned with economic objectives, while public diplomacy deals more with national foreign policies and their promotion. The second model identifies the degree of integration between them, stating that nation branding is a broader concept that involves public diplomacy. The third view holds the exact opposite understanding, considering nation branding a part of public diplomacy, which engenders the ability for governmental policies to reach their target audiences. Another view is that two concepts are entirely equal and synonymous. As for the final model, it sees public diplomacy and nation branding as distinct yet overlapping ideas. In his earlier writings, Simon Anholt leaned towards the second model, considering public diplomacy a part of nation branding. However, as we have seen earlier, in his latest works, he has promoted public diplomacy to a more prominent position, where it is considered to be of the best efficiency in its fusion with nation branding. For the purpose of this research, I adopt the fifth model. This approach can be better described by Golan's model of integrated public diplomacy (Golan, 2013). This model identifies three layers of public diplomacy that need to interlink: mediated public diplomacy (short/medium term), nation branding and country reputation (medium/long term), and relational public diplomacy (long term). It is only through the integration of all three layers that governments have higher chances to build strong engagement with the public (Golan, 2013). The convergence of these practices is also explained by some

scholars by a common core that these fields share — they both, in their essence, intend to distribute information to improve the country's image abroad (Kunczik, 2001)

After examining the origins of nation branding and public diplomacy, as well as reviewing their operational definitions, we conclude that different practitioners attach various meanings to these concepts making it extremely difficult to come to a single comprehensive definition for each one of them. For this reason, they often part ways while defining the level of connectedness between public diplomacy and nation branding. While many scholars believe that there is no relationship between the concepts, I tend toward the position that sees them as distinct yet overlapping ideas. Adopting a more integrated approach to public diplomacy and nation branding will enhance the effectiveness of the outcomes of a country's international communication.

### **1.3. Historical evolution of digital diplomacy and twiplomacy**

In the study, I explore Ukraine's nation branding on the Twitter accounts of Ukrainian diplomats. Thus, we need to shed light on the topics of digital diplomacy and twiplomacy, which are briefly reviewed in this section.

#### *Digital diplomacy*

Brian Hocking (2020) states that new approaches to diplomatic practice that have been appearing throughout history reflect changes in patterns of communication. He believes that terms such as “open diplomacy,” “public diplomacy,” “track two diplomacy,” as well as “digital diplomacy” took the same path of evolution caused by new directions in diplomatic communication, which now embraces both governments and the public.

The advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT), as well as social networking services (SNS), has drastically changed the way we communicate with each other. The world was flocking to social networks like Facebook and Twitter, changing our communication environment to a more complex one. However, it is not unique to interpersonal relationships only. This caused many diplomats to challenge the

accepted notion of what diplomacy is. In the new environment, diplomacy had to reshape its forms and structure in order to adapt to these fundamental changes (Sotiriu, 2015). The application of SNS to a diplomatic practice is referred to as *digital diplomacy*. Thus, a general understanding of digital diplomacy rests on foreign officers' growing utilization of the Internet and new information and communication technologies to carry out diplomatic objectives. This opened new platforms to foster two-way dialogue between foreign officers and their international audience as well as to create web-based relations (Manor, 2016), (Pamment, 2012). While some authors argue that given the revolution in communication technologies, diplomats will have to perform their tasks in two different realms - offline and online, others stand on an integration of these two dimensions (this way, they emphasize the inevitability for diplomats to apply new information technologies in their practice). Nevertheless, both sides agree that the online realm is now becoming a new norm for the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Hocking, 2020). The key reason for diplomats to turn to digital diplomacy is to address the need to engage in a dialogue and foster long-term relations with the foreign audience. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook are the very tools to satisfy these aspirations, given the affective nature of social media to switch interaction from broadcasting to communication (McNutt, 2014). This applies also to all civil servants and state officials, not only diplomats, because SNS transcends borders.

### *Political evolution of twiplomacy*

This section provides a brief history of Twitter. Since its inception in 2006, Twitter has served as a platform to keep in touch with friends (Duncombe, 2019). With time Twitter has slowly evolved into the preferred and central technological tool in digital diplomacy. The predominance of Twitter led to the appearance of a completely new term 'twiplomacy', which essentially means the use of Twitter in diplomacy (Sotiriu, 2015). Interestingly enough, given the ambiguity regarding the definition of "digital diplomacy," many scholars believe that the advent of another term like twiplomacy would narrow the emphasis on one particular platform (although digital diplomacy is so much more than just the application of Twitter to diplomatic practice)

(Manor, 2018). Nevertheless, acceptance of the term implies the ever-growing usage of Twitter by diplomats who try to engage with the publics (Duncombe, 2019). Its dominance is reflected in the data published in the 2018 Twiplomacy report. There are over 200 MFAs and foreign ministries, around 400 heads of state, and 200 missions to UN institutions with active Twitter accounts, as well as 97 percent of UN member states that are posting on Twitter (Twiplomacy, 2022). Duncombe believes that it is the egalitarian nature of Twitter that makes it so attractive for diplomats, meaning that any user is capable of contacting political leaders on this public forum. In 2018 a district court in New York recognized Donald Trump's Twitter account as an official political platform and thus barred him from blocking his critics online (Wolfson, 2018).

Even though the popular media narrative about the “Twitter revolution” regarding the events of the 2011 Arab Spring (the narrative is used to describe the salience of social media in driving the revolution) exaggerates the impact of Twitter in these movements, social media nonetheless had its decisive role in the revolutions. Philip Seib (2012) claims that SNS was used in a variety of ways, such as organization and mobilization of civil society within the Middle East, sharing advice for protestors, or reporting crimes. The Social Media and Political Participation (SMaPP) lab also published research about the role of Twitter in the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity of 2014. The research demonstrated how posts on Twitter were mainly targeted at the international community, while Facebook was applied primarily for communication within domestic audiences (Barberá, Metzger, 2013). Ukrainian diplomats are also excessively applying SNS in work since the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022. In the aftermath of the invasion, the Ukrainian President was in the top 10 of the most influential leaders on Twitter, according to the 2022 World Leader Power Ranking (Twiplomacy, 2022). Nevertheless, there is a considerable gap in the studies of Ukrainian twiplomacy in practice.

In summary, digital diplomacy channels (like Twitter) are becoming more and more common for diplomatic practice. The main benefit they offer is the ability to

engage in a dialogue with the international audience. In the next chapter we will explore why countries apply digital diplomacy to nation branding.

## CHAPTER II. THE ESSENCE OF NATION BRANDING

### 2.1. The potential for nation branding online

Given our review in the first chapter, we define nation branding as a state's extended effort to project a favorable national identity by fostering engagement with the international public. The question remains: Why do countries even need nation branding? A literature review of the existing studies enables us to identify common arguments that resonate with regard to the salience of nation branding. Manor and Segev (2015) suggest three main aspects that explain the need for states to go for nation branding: the personal aspect, the financial aspect, and the cognitive aspect. Regarding the personal aspect, Anholt (2015) provides a straightforward explanation for why exactly countries go for it: "When you haven't got time to read a book, you judge it by its cover." Nation brand reflects multi-dimensional perceptions of a country by its domestic and foreign publics (how people see its culture, people, government, tourism, economy, etc.). These perceptions are oftentimes distorted by stereotypes (Kaefer, 2020). Having limited or no background of experiencing other culture, people are armed with only clichés that fundamentally affect their opinions towards countries as well as help to make sense of the world. Thus, many people build these cognitive connections between a place and what it represents (which are very simplistic and not always true): Japan is about technology, Germany is about engineering, and Ukraine is about war or corruption (Anholt, 2015) (Ukrainian Institute, 2020). Whether these views are positive or negative, fair or unfair, and are built by media, traveling, education, or social networks, they are integral to every country's international standing. (Papadopoulos, Heslop, 2002) Whereas a first-hand experience of a country you obtain from traveling abroad as a tourist or encountering a foreigner could form a more complete, unbiased, informed, and balanced perception, this direct source of influence has a very limited reach. (Hung, 2015). Nevertheless, there are indirect sources of influence (government-supported communication through nation branding and public diplomacy being one of them) that are far more accessible

and manageable for states (Golan, 2013) (Hung, 2015). Manor and Segev believe that the personal aspect, which stands for other people's international perception of the country, calls on the government to foster communication with foreign publics and promote their international reputation. One of the great examples of such engagement in Ukrainian diplomatic communication is live Q&A sessions with the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs on his Twitter page.

There is also the financial aspect to nation branding, as the field has always been understood as an inherently economic idea. In a competitive global trade environment, nations strive to positively differentiate themselves from one another as for to attract foreign direct investments, increase their exports and attract tourism. (Kaefer, 2020) Harvard University business professor Michael Porter who has devoted his life to the study of competitive strategies for the corporation had expanded his research to nations after his service in the Commission on Industrial Competitiveness during the presidency of Reagan. In his book titled *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*, he claims that in the new economic paradigm nation becomes an added value for the prosperity of firms through the country's differentiation. In contrast, governments serve as facilitators who create a favorable environment for this. The salience in maintaining the nation was due to the country-of-origin effect (Hung, 2015). The effect indicates that consumers rarely evaluate the product, its brand, and a country of origin separately on their own merits but rather merge them in stereotypes like French wine or a Swiss watch. Consequently, in order for the nation to become truly competitive, it was its culture that had to become competitive (Porter, 1990). Countries with competitive brands find it much easier to sell their products as well as to attract investors.

Finally, there is the cognitive aspect which stands for the need of a particular nation to change or soften its international image. (Manor, Segev, 2015) However, a nation's image is a cognitive aspect, and it suggests that altering its perception is a process that calls for interactions between governments and their international public (Manor, Segev, 2015).

It has been mentioned before that nation branding is oftentimes used in the same context as public diplomacy. Interestingly enough, one has also been increasingly referring to digital diplomacy together with public diplomacy and nation branding. Some see the connection between the three concepts, where digital “revolution” in diplomatic practice is considered an extension of both nation branding and public diplomacy. In this view, cyberspace adds to the first one by offering new platforms to promote nation branding and builds on the latter by broadening the range of tools to engage in a dialogue with the foreign public (Sandre, 2013) (Sotiriu, 2015). Do social networking websites really serve as efficient platforms for promoting nation brands, as some scholars claim? The study of Manor and Segev (2015) suggests that digital diplomacy can further nation-branding activities by altering an image of a nation that has taken root in the minds of international audiences (Manor, Segev, 2015). Their stance on the application of digital diplomacy channels to nation branding goes as follows: “Our main proposition is that nation branding practiced through digital diplomacy channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) can serve as an effective tool for image and reputation management and as such may help nations alter their status quo images.” (Manor, Segev, 2015, p.89) The study also employed a new extended term, **selfie diplomacy**, which is supposed to combine governmental attempts to proactively manage a country’s image with digital diplomacy channels that they apply for this. The authors also claim that social networks are instrumental in changing the overall image of a country or even mending national images following times of crisis. Selfie diplomacy is performed in two steps - individualization and branding. The first means that once diplomats or MFAs create social media, the country acquires its digital personality. It enters new relationships with domestic and foreign citizens, other diplomats, or international institutions based on the ability to interact with them through commenting or tagging. Only after the individualization and digitalization of the country, the branding process begins (or iBranding, as Manor puts it). (Manor, 2022)

Let us first dig a little into the advantages of applying social media to diplomatic practice in general. Corneliu Bjola and Lu Jiang highlight three core aspects: (1) an

effective tool for spreading a message, (2) reaching the target audience, (3) making it possible to engage in a two-way conversation between diplomats and the foreign public (Bjola, Jiang. 2015). Our stance on the adequacy of applying SNS to nation branding builds on the idea that digital diplomacy is highly relevant in achieving the main tasks of either nation branding or public diplomacy. Let us quickly review of how other scholars see the expected outcomes of nation branding. For Aronczyk (2013), it is, above all, the representation of national identity. The author states that promoting a distinctive national identity is a necessary step to encourage economic benefits and compete in a globalized world. Hence it is crucial for a country to promote what makes it distinct from other countries in order to make itself more presentable and attractive in the eyes of its various interlocutors (tourists, investors, etc.). Just like Manor and Segev, Aronczyk also believes that nation branding promises to mend a damaged reputation in the aftermath of some crisis. The overview offers that the ultimate goal of nation branding and public diplomacy is to reach the foreign public and manage the country's image within this public. We believe this can be achieved primarily through the application of SNS, which reaches the target audience as well as offers platforms for engagement and two-way communication between foreign ministries, embassies, and their online followers.

## **2.2. Ukraine's nation branding**

Before diving into the research of the Ukrainian brand promoted on the social media of diplomats, it would be of great use to first see what the prevailing international image of Ukraine has been for the last couple of years. This turned out to be a real challenge, considering little attention from scholars or government officials to the study of Ukraine's nation branding. Before the Revolution of Dignity, the international image of Ukraine was not acquainted with any sort of systemic work around it for its promotion and management (Ukrainian Institute, 2020). One of not so many institutions that studied the Ukrainian brand is a state institution called the Ukrainian institute. Although it does not deal with all-encompassing nation branding

but rather with part of it, through cultural diplomacy, the Ukrainian institute has been carrying out a research to study the brand of Ukraine for the last couple of years.

Half a decade after the Revolution of Dignity, Ukraine still lacked an effective communication strategy and state policies to manage its international image, and tools to evaluate the country's reputation abroad (Інститут світової політики, 2015). Viewing the results of the TNS survey commissioned by the Institute of World Politics in 2015, there were three core topics that foreigners associated with Ukraine — war, Russia, and poverty (Інститут світової політики, 2015). The following reasons explain why these obviously negative connotations become the international audience's main association:

1. Ukraine is primarily a source of “bad news.”
2. Faulty ideas that are mostly imposed by propaganda.
3. Ukraine is excluded from the global history and culture space, causing the international audience to have little or no cultural and historical associations with Ukraine.
4. The absence of Ukraine's proactive participation in cultural and scientific as well as media environment.

Above all, Ukraine's image is influenced by drivers like political and social problems within the country, its past as a part of the USSR, and the war. The last factor is especially vulnerable, as the war on a real battlefield is accompanied by information war, destructive propaganda, and disinformation.

In 2017 the government launched an initiative that was expected to project the true identity of Ukraine through branding. The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, in cooperation with a creative marketing communications agency, “Banda Agency,” came up with a brand that is reflected in the name of the campaign “Ukraine Now” (Banda Agency, 2018). The objective was to form a brand that would attract

international investing and improve Ukraine's tourist potential. The brand is mostly performing a function of visual identity that is expected to tell foreigners that Ukraine is a country where everything is happening now - new technologies, progressive start-ups, and festivals are being created at this moment (Banda Agency, 2018). There is a website of a new Ukrainian brand in open access that offers information about traveling, studying, investments, and help in times of war for foreigners (<https://ukraine.ua/study-in-ukraine/>).

Despite some well-planned attempts to brand Ukraine, the indices that evaluate brand images of countries do not show any tangible results in Ukraine's brand. The Good Country Index is Simon Anholt's project, which has been measuring the contribution of each country to the common good of humanity since 2014. It reports on the positive and negative external influences of every country. The overall rank is based on 169 countries, which are being evaluated in seven different categories (Science & Technology, Culture, International Peace and Security, World Order, Planet and Climate, Prosperity and Equality, Health and Wellbeing). Since 2016 Ukraine has been ranked 78th (2016), 54th (2017), 76th (2018), 72nd (2020), and 57th (2022). The most significant change has happened in the category of Science and Technology, where Ukraine has been ranked first since 2017. Some positive changes have also been noticed in the cultural dimension as Ukraine has moved from the 84th position to the 55th in 2018. However, the last ranking has placed Ukraine in the 90th place, showing negative dynamics in the last couple of years (The Good Country Index, 2022). Another annual study designed by Simon Anholt is the Nation Brands Index (NBI). It has been conducted since 2008, measuring the global perception of the brand image of 60 countries in six various aspects of a nation's identity (export, governance, culture, people, tourism, immigration, and investment). (IPSOS, 2020) If in 2021 Ukraine was ranked 48th, in 2022, it moved one position to 47th place out of 60, which is still a pretty low result.

Another study that proves the shaky international standing of Ukraine is a complex project of the Ukrainian institute that was launched in 2020 and covered

seven different countries (Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the USA, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, and Japan) (Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism,” 2020) (Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism,” 2021) (InMind research company, 2020) (European research agency ERA, 2020). The objective of the project was to find out the attitudes and expectations of people from the above-mentioned countries towards Ukraine. The institute offers an independent review of each country’s results, whereas we have tried to find similarities and summarised them into a single comprehensive image that dominates among all the countries. For all of them, the critical associations with Ukraine are primarily the same (moreover, they hardly differ from the ones that dominated in 2015): the Maidan, Crimea (in the context of its annexation by Russia), war, corruption, oligarchs, the Chernobyl disaster, the Holodomor, Ukrainian food, traditional clothes, architecture, the Eurovision Song Contest. Some connotations are exclusively common for a particular country based on its bilateral relations with Ukraine or historical sentiments — for Poland, it is the migration of Ukrainians. At the same time, for Japan, it is the sympathy towards Ukrainians because of the Chernobyl disaster. Obviously, these narratives are not static but rather volatile depending on the presence of Ukraine in media as well as the national or global agenda. However, there is only one fixed association that is highly engrossed in the Ukrainian image - corruption. What was common for every participating country was the role of media in shaping the opinions about Ukraine — it is primarily political news or Russian propaganda (for example, in the context of Hungary or Japan) that has the most influence. There is also an ambiguity in the way people perceive Ukraine. The duality of the perception rests on two dominant, opposing narratives — most respondents admire Ukrainian human potential and the will for freedom and democracy; however, these positive views are often in the shade of the level of corruption.

Considering the review of the evolution of the Ukrainian brand image, the following conclusion should be drawn. Despite all the attempts to reshape a distorted Ukrainian image, the attempts turned out, to a large extent, futile.

### **2.3. Nation branding in practice: examining examples from other countries**

The level of interest in the images and reputations of places continues to grow extensively within scholarly and governmental communities. While national officials strive to find the best nation-branding techniques to strengthen international standing and reputation, scholars have been researching the effectiveness of these strategies as well as the application of digital diplomacy channels to the practice. The overview of some of the most interesting examples of nation branding from other countries will offer us practical evidence of the effectiveness of applying digital diplomacy.

In 2009, China's Ministry of Commerce launched paid government advertising in order to rebrand a selected aspect of China's identity regarding its exports. The campaign's title, "Made with China, made with the World," was expected to render favorable changes in the distorted perceptions of the international public — the stereotype about problematic Chinese-made products (the low price/low-quality image associated with products). Kineta Hung (2015) believes that the main problem that stands behind these negative connotations is the country-of-origin effect, which causes even Chinese high-quality brands to be 20 percent below in the markets of developed economies. Consequently, negative country images cause adverse consumer product evaluation. Brand recognition is highly vulnerable when it comes to stereotypes that are linked with the country of brand's origin. It was against this background that China's government decided to work on the national image. Kineta Hung offers an illustrative two-country study on a paid advertising campaign aimed at changing the "Made-in-China" stereotype in the US, and UK. Trying to assess through an online survey whether the campaign managed to influence foreign public opinion positively, they examine five aspects: (1) the viewer's reflective thoughts; (2) openness to cultural diversity; (3) consumer ethnocentrism; (4) the positive and negative emotional responses to the ad; (e) and the viewer's purchase intent of Chinese-made products (Hung, 2015). The research came to the following conclusion: given that the majority of respondents from the US and the UK were open to reconsidering their ideas after

watching the ads, the campaign can be recognized as successful. The research suggests that the effectiveness of the campaign was achieved as it did not contain any explicit governmental efforts directed at changing people's negative preconceptions. It is especially relevant in the case of China and its authoritarian regime, which faces a difficulty when it comes to its international communication with the public - people need to be sure that the information they get is free from bias and comes from a credible source.

The growth of communication technologies has moved diplomacy to cyberspace. Now countries and their officials operate extensively on social media. For example, Natarajan (2014) stated that cyberspace in India is seen as a medium through which to interact with younger audiences. He also mentioned that India presents itself online through the ideas of a "new India," and furthering India's soft power profile. Digital diplomacy scholar Dr. Ilan Manor has explicitly been interested in researching nation branding through digital diplomacy channels. In 2020 he published an overview of Russia's selfie diplomacy. Manor is the one to coin the term selfie diplomacy, which means diplomats' use of social media to create a national self-portrait (Manor, 2019). In his older studies, Manor mentioned that in terms of studying Russia's digital diplomacy, scholars are mainly focusing on the unofficial spread of Russia's fake news (Manor, 2021). In contrast, his main objective is to explore the official digital diplomacy of Russia's Embassies on Twitter. The research has shown the prevailing role of nostalgia in Russia's Selfie Diplomacy during 2020-2021, specifically in messages about Covid 19 vaccine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Manor, 2022). As for the first policy area, the Russian government has registered a separate Twitter account for the Sputnik vaccine, which has three core messages to share with the international public: (1) the vaccine's efficacy; (2) the adoption of the vaccine by more than 70 countries; (3) and Russia's willingness to rescue Europe with the vaccine. In order to solidify the events in Crimea, they also relied heavily on nostalgic sentiments and historical narratives. Russia's governmental pages often refer to WW2 and Russia's historic role in defeating Nazism as the way to justify their current political decisions. Just like in 2014, they

keep tweeting throwbacks to the past in 2023, and by doing that, they hope to solidify the modern-time fight against “Ukrainian Nazis” (Manor, 2021). Manor (2022) concludes that national Selfies are not really an act of self-expression but self-mutilation.

Another great study on selfie diplomacy focuses on the image that the US government is trying to build online in 2013 (Manor, Segev, 2015). Considering the crisis of the brand “America” following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and military invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the manner in which the US was perceived altered. The author believes that in striving to regain the US’s standing in the world, the US government has been promoting the American image on social media like Facebook and Twitter. The study has revealed for main themes that were actively promoted on the official pages of the US’s government. Firstly, it’s the mending of relations with the Arab and Muslim world. Secondly, regaining the reputation of the world’s moral leader. Then, they promote the idea of military might. And finally, economic leadership of the US. Manor observed how the current themes on the US’s governmental pages correspond with the main distortions of the US image that other scholars indicated back in 2009. There was a need to fix the consequence of the military invasion in Iraq and Afghanistan, America’s economic recession, and supposed violations of the international law under the Geneva Conventions with the accusations of torture and abusive treatment of detainees in the Guantanamo detention camp. Thus, the US was supposed to reshape its image as follows: “regaining its position as a moral leader, by acting as a responsible economic superpower that is part of the solution to the global economic recession and by decreasing its reliance on military strength.” (Manor, 2019). The authors believe that most of these topics are clearly reflected in the contemporary messaging on Twitter accounts of the US officials. The conclusion to this study states that the application of digital diplomacy strategies to nation-branding grants an opportunity to engage and listen to your international audience through comments and criticism, and thus further improve nation-branding campaigns in case of their low effectiveness. What is also essential for nation-branding campaigns to work is consistent

narration. Viewing this, Manor returned to the State Department's Facebook page in 2016 and in 2017 to discover if they successfully managed a consistent and coherent the America's selfie in a long-time perspective. The 2016 selfie turned out quite like the image promoted by the US government in 2013, portraying the country as a climate-oriented superpower guided by values and committed to diplomacy and building relations with the Muslim world. (Manor, 2019) On the other hand, the promoted image is considerably different from the presidency of Donald Trump. The new image could best be described by this quote: "Thus, America is not a moral compass, but a fortress of solitude looking to secure its own borders and interests by its own means." (Manor, 2019) The new selfie is built on the ideals of a financial superpower that leads alone.

The last example that I would like to offer is the nation-branding strategy of Poland on Twitter and Facebook. Back in 2016, Polish diplomats said that the primary objective of their online presence was to promote the Polska brand, which deals with Polish achievements in science, culture, or economics (Manor, 2016). Eventually, the extent of the Polish digital diplomacy channels has increased to 150 Twitter accounts, 74 Facebook pages, 38 YouTube channels, and an account on the Chinese social media platform Weibo (Manor, 2019). Polish embassies and the Polish MFA saw SNS as a reliable platform to manage Poland's historic image, in particular Poland's image regarding World War II. They would monitor articles on other accounts that used the inappropriate expression "Polish death camps" to either "Nazi death camps" or "Nazi camps in occupied Poland." Hence nation-branding strategy does not necessarily has to do with the overall image of a country. It can also be applied to mend a particular distorted aspect, as in the case of Poland.

The overview leads us to the following conclusions. First, brand recognition is highly vulnerable when it comes to stereotypes that are linked with the country of brand's origin. Thus, many countries, including China, have launched paid government advertising in order to manage the image. However, government branding campaigns usually have only short-term effects, thus, there is a need to turn to a more consistent strategy of nation branding. Second, social media offer platform for performing a long-

term management of nation brand image. For example, the case with the US demonstrates how the same narratives are used in posts that foster a stable, coherent nation image; moreover, the Polish example shows that SNS also help to mend the distorted historic image. Finally, the Russian case explains why Ukraine needs to promote its nation brand online. Russian government has been quite active in the recent years in terms of applying social media for the spread of propaganda. Thus, while Ukrainian are fighting from the trenches, they should also stand up for themselves on the information battlefield.

## CHAPTER III. QUALITATIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF UKRAINE'S IMAGE ON TWITTER ACCOUNTS OF DIPLOMATS

### 3.1. Key Issues of Sample Design, Procedure and Methodology

#### *Methodology*

The paper explores Ukraine's image on Twitter accounts of diplomats. Ukraine's nation branding was chosen as the object of the study for several reasons. First, Ukrainian diplomats have been somewhat active in employing Twitter in their communication with other diplomats and the international public after the full-scale Russian invasion. Take the accounts of The Foreign Minister of Ukraine, the MFA of Ukraine or the President of Ukraine on Twitter, who post updates daily. Moreover, the language distribution of the tweets proves their usefulness in terms of engagement with the foreign audience. Zelenskyy tends to duplicate every tweet in a foreign language with a Ukrainian-language variant of the same message (it implies that the page is targeted at both foreign and domestic public). All of the posts on the MFA and Kuleba's accounts are in English. This makes their pages a reliable platform for the promotion and management of the Ukraine's brand for the foreign audience. Second, Ukraine's example can add to the existing studies of nation branding online, as it would extend the research of digital nation branding to the studies of countries that are facing war. This leads us to our last point — given the crisis of war, it is fair to assume that Ukraine is eager to work on its international standing. A stable, positive international image resists Russian propaganda as well as enhances international support for Ukraine.

For the purpose of the study, the qualitative thematic analysis was employed. It seeks to identify repeated and shared patterns in a data set. Thus, it is expected to both describe and interpret data (Kiger, Varpio, 2020). The principles of the qualitative thematic analysis are also applicable to other methods like discourse analysis (Kiger, Varpio, 2020). In the abundance of various guides that describe different ways to

apply thematic analysis, we lean towards the method of Braun and Clarke (2006). Regarding their method, the research will consist of six steps:

- (1) Familiarizing with the data.
- (2) Generating initial codes.
- (3) Searching for themes.
- (4) Reviewing themes.
- (5) Defining and naming themes.
- (6) Producing the report/manuscript.

### *Research Sample*

The sample will include pages on Twitter of the following diplomatic representatives and organisations of Ukraine: (1) Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba; (2) MFA of Ukraine (3) President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy. These pages were selected for the research because of their extensive use of SNS - this will provide us with sufficient data for content analysis.

### *Research Procedure*

Instead of researching one specific time interval, we chose four-time periods (each lasting one week) to analyse all the content that was published during this time on the aforementioned official Twitter channels (for the list of SNS accounts with links, see Appendix 1). This approach was chosen to see if the brand that is being promoted is also consistent, meaning that throughout all periods, the same narratives are shared. The first interval spanned from 24 February to 2 March 2022, the second interval - from 1 to 7 April 2022, the third one - 9 to 15 November 2022, and the last one - from 25 to 31 March 2023. Notably, we chose these particular time intervals as all of them were defined by some major news or events of the ongoing war. The first time period is characterised by the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of

Ukraine. During the period from 1 to 7 April the first photo and video evidence of the Bucha and Irpin massacre emerged after Russian forces withdrew from the city. On November 11 2022 the majority of Ukrainian news sources were all speaking loud about the liberation of Kherson. During the last period there was a discussion in Ukrainian media sources about the boycotting of Russian representatives on sports events. Overall, a total of 694 tweets were analyzed. Eventually, four main themes were identified in the whole abundance of messages. These topics are constantly recurring on the analyzed Twitter accounts, thus, we claim that they have contributed to forming the international image of Ukraine. The next chapter describes the main findings of the research, outlining in details the indicated themes.

### **3.2. Research findings.**

Ukrainian diplomats regularly employ Twitter in their practice, constantly sharing narratives that form the international image of Ukraine. In a total of 694 tweets, four prevailing themes were indicated. Notably, the themes appeared in the tweets of all accounts, showing the extraordinary tandem among the MFA, Kuleba and Zelenskyy. This also might provide a very consistent image of Ukraine for the international audience of our diplomats. The detailed description of the main themes promoted on the analyzed accounts is provided below.

#### *1. Ukraine stands for law and justice*

One of the promoted messages is the conformity of Ukraine to international law and calling on other countries to uphold the same values. Of all tweets analyzed, 7% dealt with this notion. A prime example is seen in tweets that stress the fair fight, following the international norms, that Ukraine has been holding in its defensive war since the full-scale invasion. In response to spreading Russian propaganda about the Ukrainian “dirty bomb,” Foreign Minister Kuleba wrote, “Ukraine doesn’t have nuclear weapons, doesn’t conduct any work to create/acquire them. We are a responsible member of the NPT” (for the list of mentioned tweets with links, see Appendix 2).<sup>1</sup>

Thus, he emphasized that Ukraine is a lawful country. Also, following the news about the discrimination on the border of Ukraine with the people who were fleeing the country (OHCHR, 2022), the MFA rejected, “In Ukraine, there is no discrimination based on race, skin color or nationality, including when it comes to the crossing of the state border by foreign citizens. The first come first served approach applies to all nationalities”.<sup>2</sup> It is also observed that Ukraine regularly reminds the world that it is a peaceful country that only defends itself and strives to finish this war as soon as possible. An example is the Minister’s message as of February 25th, which states, “Ukraine defends its land in a just and defensive war. Unlike Russia, we don’t target kindergartens and civilians.”<sup>3</sup> Another important narrative is seen in the same message — Ukrainian officials often contrast on Russian example in order to stress the difference of values. While Ukraine is an obedient member of the international community, Russia is frequently described as thoroughly contradicting. Ukraine, being a defender of international law, identifies Russia as the lawbreaker, “ (...) Today’s Russian attacks on a kindergarten and an orphanage are war crimes and violations of the Rome Statute,”<sup>4</sup> “Russia is waging war in violation of international humanitarian law. Kills civilians, destroys civilian infrastructure (...),”<sup>5</sup> “Russian soldier = war criminal.”<sup>6</sup>

Ukraine’s support for moral values can also be demonstrated by the following narratives — Ukraine’s officials describe Ukraine as “the good” and Russia as “the bad.” Many of such tweets give the impression that Ukraine is trying to be a sample for following in terms of international moral values. For example, the following tweets have amply been shared on the analyzed accounts, “The truth is on our side. You have chosen the right side of history,”<sup>7</sup> “ (...) The only moral choice any government can make now is to support Ukraine by all means,”<sup>8</sup> “ By this concrete step, you will demonstrate that you stand by Ukraine and categorically reject the most blatant act of aggression in Europe since WWII.”<sup>9</sup> To prove that in this war, Ukraine is fighting for gracious values, they condemn those who have not realized it yet, as in the tweet of the Foreign Minister from the February 25th, “To some European leaders who are still

hesitant: each year at commemorative events you say ‘Never again’. The time to prove it is now. Russia is waging a horrific war of aggression in Europe. Here is your ‘never again’ test: BAN RUSSIA FROM SWIFT and kick it out of everywhere.”<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the lawful aspirations of Ukraine were also expressed through its call for justice for Ukrainian people who suffer from acts of violence, “The main word today is justice, for our state and our people who suffered losses due to Russian aggression.”<sup>11</sup> The Ukrainian officials have long discussed that considering the atrocities in Ukraine committed by Russian soldiers and government, Russian participation in the UN bodies is unacceptable. It has been abundantly mentioned in all of the analyzed accounts that the aggressor country must be deprived of the right to vote in the UN Security Council and be a member of the UN Human Rights Council. Following the Bucha massacre, Foreign Minister Kuleba stressed in his talk with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that “(...) Ukraine will use all available UN mechanisms to collect evidence and hold Russian war criminals to account. No place for Russia on the UN Human Rights Council.”<sup>12</sup>

## 2. *International friendship and solidarity with Ukraine against Putin*

The most visible idea shared is the call of Ukraine for the whole world to unite against Putin. Tweets dealing with international friendship and solidarity accounted for 41% of all tweets analyzed. For the promotion of the overall idea, two narratives were spread: (1) the whole civilized world supports Ukraine; (2) the victory of Ukraine is for the international good, and, thus, the world shall fight together. The first idea is expressed through daily reports of Foreign Minister Kuleba and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy about diplomatic talks with their international partners. In most such messages, they express appreciation for support as well as practical financial, military, or humanitarian help that the partners kindly provided. In this way, they emphasize that by offering help, international friends prove their sympathy to the Ukrainian people. For example, on February 26th, 2022, Kuleba wrote that remembering the help of Ukraine

in the early 1990s during the Homeland War, Croatia now works on decisions to repay Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> The unity of the world in this fight is also oftentimes stressed by the mentioning of an anti-Putin coalition or anti-war coalition.

In the tweets of Ukrainian officials, Ukraine is also seen as a unifier of the world in the fight against Putin. Rather than pleading for help, they persuade to support Ukraine for the security of their partners. Russian aggression is seen as a global threat. Such ideas are depicted in the following narratives: “This is a declaration of war against the whole of Europe,”<sup>14</sup> “Strengthening Ukraine is the best investment in shared security,”<sup>15</sup> “Our joint security is at stake now,”<sup>16</sup> “It’s not us, Ukrainians, who need it. It’s the peace in Europe, the world order that needs more actions.”<sup>17</sup> In these messages, the need of the whole world to stop Putin also means a joint responsibility to contribute to the victory. Thus, together with the words of gratitude for the provided aid, they try to remind the world to keep contributing constantly for their own security. For instance, in the tweet condemning Russia’s war against Ukraine by the International Grains Council, the devastating impact of this aggression on world food security was stressed.<sup>18</sup> Also, shortly after the full-scale invasion, on March 1st the, Foreign Minister Kuleba introduced a list of necessary actions to be provided by the international community:

*“The world must act immediately. Future of Europe & the world is at stake. To do list:*

- 1. Devastating sanctions on Russia NOW, including SWIFT*
- 2. Fully isolate Russia by all means, in all formats*
- 3. Weapons, equipment for Ukraine*
- 4. Financial assistance*
- 5. Humanitarian assistance”<sup>19</sup>*

Every success on the battlefield is described as commonly achieved through the courageous fight of Ukrainians and international support.

Other mentions of the joint need for victory are seen in historical narratives. Ukrainian officials oftentimes refer to past events in order to make the world realize the whole seriousness of the situation. Thus, the current situation is compared to the events of WW II, while Putin is described as a new Hitler.<sup>20</sup> By such references, they probably explain that only through cooperation can this war be stopped from turning into another global disaster. For example, in the aftermath of the invasion, the MFA of Ukraine tweeted the following messages, “Putin is plunging Europe into its darkest time since 1939. Any government hoping to sit this out is naïve. Don’t repeat mistakes of the past. Hit Russia with severe sanctions now. Help Ukraine with military and financial support. Together we can #StopRussianAggression,”<sup>21</sup> “ (...) We are determined to defeat Russia the same way as we defeated the previous monster in Europe 80 years ago. And I am sure that we shall by prevail.”<sup>22</sup>

### 3. *Ukraine is a shield of Europe and democratic values.*

This narrative is very much an addition to the previous one - in both cases, we talk about the influence that the war has on the whole world. However, if before it was mainly about the shared responsibility to counter the aggressor, here we talk about the heroic contribution of Ukraine and its people to the security of Europe. It is 6% of the analysed tweets that dealt with this theme. Ukraine has long believed that its future lies within the European family, and in 2019 the President initiated changes in the country's Constitution that officially recognized state's strategic trajectory for gaining membership in the European Union and NATO. In 2013, with the events of the Revolution of Dignity (Euromaidan), Ukrainian people showed that they share European values and are ready to fight for them. Following these ideas, it was indicated that throughout the analyzed periods, Ukraine's officials have been referring to Ukraine as a defender of Europe, European values, and Ukraine's European future. In the first days of the invasion, the MFA of Ukraine tweeted, “Russian aggression against Ukraine began with Crimea 8 years ago. We now face a full-scale war waged by □□ (Russia) on

land, sea, and air. □□'s (Ukraine's) brave armed forces defend not just our own country, but all of freedom-loving, democratic Europe,"<sup>23</sup> "Please, [#StayWithUkraine](#), stay tuned for updates on official sources and channels in English and support Ukraine in its fight for freedom and democracy in Europe."<sup>24</sup> In one of his tweets, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called this war a declaration of war against the whole of Europe. Some tweets also encourage Europe to accelerate the acceptance of Ukraine to the EU: "The best decision the EU can make now is to accept Ukraine as a new full-fledged member of the European Union without delay. Historic times require big and historic decisions which can change the flow of events. This step is exactly such a decision."<sup>25</sup>

#### 4. *People's war for dignity, freedom, Homeland and European future*

The final theme identified in our analysis dealt with the courage and heroism of the whole Ukrainian nation in the fight for freedom and the Homeland. It accounted for 18 % of the overall sample of tweets. The officials call this war a people's war — with this idea, they mean that every Ukrainian is ready to resist Russian aggression.

One of the components of this theme includes tweets that depict stories of ordinary Ukrainians during the war. Such messages are viral on the MFA's page. For example, on February 27th, they devoted a separate tweet to a boy named Sasha, who was found dead after the heavy artillery fire on the boat he was fleeing on with his grandmother.<sup>26</sup> A photo of a boy next to the grave of his mother, killed by invaders, was also posted by the MFA.<sup>27</sup>

The theme is also demonstrated by tweets that describe attributes and values that unite all of Ukrainians and that Ukrainians are fighting for. This is evident in the tweet of President Zelenskyy on the liberation of Kherson, "Ours. Our. Kherson".<sup>28</sup> Using the word "ours", he shows that it is a victory for the whole of Ukraine. During the same period, Zelenskyy also shared several characteristics that describe every Ukrainian, "Independence, dignity, freedom, Homeland, sacred duty, indomitability. Important words for every Ukrainian! Very soon we will hear new ones – victory, peace, justice, revival!"<sup>29</sup> Officials also refer to the Ukrainian language, which distinguishes them from

any other nation, and most importantly, from Russia, “Today, Ukrainians are using the letter “İ”, which does not appear in the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, as an expression of defiance. It has reportedly become a symbol of resistance in Mariupol, which is now temporarily occupied by Russian troops.”<sup>30</sup>

Finally, the main theme was also expressed through the reminders that it is the whole nation of Ukrainians that Putin is waging war against. In the aftermath of the horrible Bucha massacre, the Foreign Minister wrote, “Bucha massacre proves that Russian hatred towards Ukrainians is beyond anything Europe has seen since WWI,” as well as “Bucha massacre was deliberate. Russians aim to eliminate as many Ukrainians as they can.”<sup>31</sup> At the very beginning of the invasion, the MFA also tweeted, “The aim of this attack is to put pressure on Ukrainian citizens. Not only on the authorities, but on all Ukrainians.”<sup>32</sup>

Some hashtags appeared repeatedly on the analyzed pages. These hashtags served as the keywords that indicate trending topics. The MFA has been very eager to use hashtags in their tweets throughout the analyzed period, on the other hand, such activity is less noticeable on the accounts of the Minister and the President (although, they also sometimes used hashtags). Some of the most popular hashtags are: #RussiaIsATerroristState #ArmUkraineNow #GloryToUkraine #StandForFreedom #StandForJustice #standwithukraine #eu #strongertogether. Interestingly, these hashtags might reflect the main indicated themes that promote Ukraine’s brand. Hashtags like #StandForFreedom #StandForJustice #RussiaIsATerroristState show the values that Ukrainians are fighting for, while the main messages of #standwithukraine #strongertogether #eu reflect the ideas of solidarity and friendship. At the same time, the well-known phrase #GloryToUkraine emphasises the heroic fight of Ukrainian people that deserves respect and admiration.

## CONCLUSIONS

It was only in the late 2010s that Ukrainian officials realized the potential of a nation brand to enhance a country's international standing through a promotion campaign, "Ukraine NOW." Nevertheless, the campaign resulted in little improvements to the Ukrainian brand (IPSOS, 2020). The country still has an ambiguous perception in foreign countries, which revolves around the associations with corruption, war, and oligarchs (Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism," 2021). I humbly assume that the campaign offered little to no results because it sent a positive message, however, it did not take care of the context for interpreting this message by the foreign audience (Anholt, 2015). Thus, the message about Ukraine as an innovative country was unlikely to foster the nation brand as long as it came from the environment associated with corruption and oligarchs. Simon Anholt (2015), the "father" of nation branding, believes that the problem of context can be resolved through a consistent, coordinated strategy, which shows where the country stands today. Moreover, this standing has to be coupled with symbolic actions. This paper claims that social networking services (SNS) like Twitter can be the very tools for this task. Ukraine is a good example of how to utilize such platforms and the new media environment to project its self-portrait on the social media accounts of its diplomatic representatives. Through the qualitative thematic analysis of 694 tweets published by (1) Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba; (2) MFA of Ukraine, (3) President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy during four time intervals, we answer two questions: (1) How do Ukrainian diplomats use Twitter to project Ukraine's brand image?; (2) How can digital diplomacy further nation-branding practice?

Ukrainian diplomats regularly employ Twitter in their practice, constantly sharing narratives that form the international image of Ukraine. Our analysis indicated four of such recurring themes on the analyzed accounts. The first theme focuses on Ukraine as a responsible member of the international community, it deals with Ukraine's conformity to world peace and international law. To some extent, Ukrainian

officials try to show Ukraine as a fierce defender of international law whose morals have to be followed by others. Given that Ukraine's brand was previously distorted, this new narrative might help to alert the image of Ukraine as a lawless and corrupt country, building institutional reputation. It also opposes the old image by presenting Ukraine as a sample for following in terms of adhering to law rather than breaking it. The second theme identified was the importance of international friendship and solidarity in fighting against Putin. First, Ukrainian officials are eager to demonstrate that the whole civilized world supports Ukraine, meaning that these countries support the values of values of Human Rights, dignity, fairness, empathy and adherence to international law. In times of war, proving that the truth is on your side is vital. It builds on the image of Ukraine as a friendly and reliable member of the global community. Diplomats also strive to convince the world that Russian aggression is not simply Ukraine's national problem but a global threat. Thus, this narrative is spread to encourage international partners to keep on helping Ukrainians in this war. Another theme included tweets that showed Ukraine as a defender of Europe and democratic values. For many years Ukrainian people have been trying to be seen as a European country. Consequently, in today's nation branding online, diplomats continuously remind us that Ukraine defends the eastern border of the EU.<sup>33</sup> The final theme concerns Ukrainian people fighting for dignity, freedom, homeland, and the European future. It only enhances the existing positive associations with the Ukrainian people.

This study's findings demonstrate how social networking services like Twitter can further nation branding activities using the example of Ukraine. Although twiplomacy does not have nation branding as its original task, it does open new doors to perform nation branding. By using digital diplomacy to promote nation brand, diplomats are able to constantly work on the image of the country through the coordination among national officials of the promoted narratives online. The prevailing ideas that were indicated in the course of the analysis appeared throughout all analyzed time intervals on all accounts, meaning that Ukrainian diplomats have been building a solid image of Ukraine on Twitter for over a year. The MFA, Kuleba and

Zelenskyy showed a striking coordination of issues and values, which could definitely strengthen international standing of Ukraine through a consistent strategy. Ukrainian officials used digital diplomacy channels to portray Ukraine as a friendly European country that fights for gracious values and defends international law. As such, many of these narratives oppose the long-rooted negative associations that have been deforming the international perception of Ukraine. In the social media of its diplomats, Ukraine is no longer a lawless country but a country trying to gain the role of a fierce defender of international norms. They stress that Ukraine is a friendly European state, and its people are willing to fight for the values of its partners from the EU. All these themes that appeared in tweets, also form the bases for shaping a value based foreign policy for Ukraine under extraordinary circumstances of war. Moreover, social media allow diplomats to engage with a large audience and, thus, evaluate the effectiveness of internet campaigns. As it is beyond the scope of the paper, it might be a task for further studies to evaluate if social media applications to Ukraine's nation branding have actually led to desired effects. It would be of enormous value to see if such online strategies are capable of countering propaganda, challenging simplistic and stereotypical views, as well as facilitating the acceptance of the actual national identity. However, the perception of such messages can be a barrier to nation branding on the social media accounts of diplomats. It is crucial to examine in further research to what extent target groups feel prejudices towards tweets of government officials. There is a need to know if people see such tweets merely as propaganda. Scholars believe that in the aspiration to reach broader foreign publics, it is beneficial to include civil actors such as NGOs (Hung, 2015). Because they have credibility and expertise, it might be better to engage with the publics through NGOs rather than through government campaigns that have mark of foreign governments. Thus, further studies could pay more attention to the role of NGOs in building the image of Ukraine. What is also necessary is to explore the effectiveness of nation branding through digital channels compared to more traditional means (television, radio, advertisement, etc.)

## REFERENCES

1. Hocking, B. (2020). *Communication and Diplomacy: Change and Continuity*.
2. T. Balzac, F. Charillon, F. Ramel (Eds.) *Global Diplomacy. An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. (pp. 79-97). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
3. Supervisory Board of the Ukrainian Institute (2020, June 20). *Ukrainian institute strategy*. Ukrainian Institute. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/strategy-ui-en-web-2.pdf>
4. Natarajan, K. (2014). Digital Public Diplomacy and a Strategic Narrative for India. *Strategic Analysis*, 38(1), 91–106. doi:10.1080/09700161.2014.863478
5. Puybureau, B., Takam Talom, R. (2015). Sub-State Diplomacies: Regions, Parliaments, and Local Authorities. *In* Golan, Guy J., Yang, Sung-un., Kinsey, Dennis F. (Eds.) *International public relations and public diplomacy: communication and engagement*. (pp.167-183). New York, United States of America: Peter Lang Publishing.
6. McNutt, K. (2014) ‘Public Engagement in the Web 2.0 Era: Social Collaborative Technologies in a Public Sector Context’, *Canadian Public Administration*, vol. 57, no. 1.
7. Anholt, S. (1996) Making a brand travel. *J Brand Manag* 3, 357–364. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.1996.17>
8. The Good Country Index. (2022) The Good Country Index. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://index.goodcountry.org>
9. Sotiriu, S. (2015). Digital diplomayc. Between promises and reality. In C. Bjola, M. Holmes, (Eds.) *Digital Diplomacy. Theory and practice*. London and New York: Routledge
10. Hung, K. (2015). *Repairing the “Made-in-China” Image in the U.S. and U.K.: Effects of Government-supported Advertising*. In Golan, Guy J., Yang, Sung-un., Kinsey, Dennis F. (Eds.) *International public relations and public diplomacy: communication and engagement*. (pp.209-229). New York, United States of America: Peter Lang Publishing.

11. Bjola, C., Jiang, L. (2015). Social media and public diplomacy: a comparative analysis of the digital diplomatic strategies of the EU, US and Japan in China. In C. Bjola, M. Holmes, (Eds.) **Digital Diplomacy**. Theory and practice. London and New York: Routledge
12. Anholt, S. (2015). *Public Diplomacy and Competitive Identity: Where's the Link?*. In Golan, Guy J., Yang, Sung-un., Kinsey, Dennis F. (Eds.) *International public relations and public diplomacy: communication and engagement*. (pp.189-209). New York, United States of America: Peter Lang Publishing.
13. Yang, A. (2015). *Soft Power, NGOs and Virtual Communication Networks: New Strategies and Directions for Public Diplomacy*. In Golan, Guy J., Yang, Sung-un., Kinsey, Dennis F. (Eds.) *International public relations and public diplomacy: communication and engagement*. (pp.297-315). New York, United States of America: Peter Lang Publishing.
14. Інститут світової політики. (2015). Що думають українці про Україну? <https://glavcom.ua/media/o-00332306-a-00031988.pdf>
15. Vickers, R. (2004). The new public diplomacy: Britain and Canada compared. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 6, 151–168.
16. IPSOS (2020, October 27). Germany retains top “Nation Brand” ranking, the UK emerges ahead of Canada to round out the top three. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://www.ipsos.com/en/nation-brand-index-2020>
17. Cull, N. J. (2020). Public diplomacy before Gullion. In N. Snow & P. M. Taylor (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy* (pp. 13–19). New York: Routledge.
18. Golan, G. J. (2013). Introduction: An integrated approach to public diplomacy. *American Behavioral Science*, 57(9), 1251–1255, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213487711>
19. Kaefer, F. (2020). Country Branding: A Practitioner Perspective. In N. Snow & P. M. Taylor (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy* (pp. 13–19). New York: Routledge.
20. Aronczyk, M. (2013). *Branding the Nation. The Global Business of National Identity*. Oxford University Press.

21. Szondi, G. (2008). Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences. Netherlands Institute of International Relations: Clingendael/. Available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication253744488\\_Public\\_Diplomacy\\_and\\_Nation\\_Branding\\_Conceptual\\_Similarities\\_and\\_Differences](https://www.researchgate.net/publication253744488_Public_Diplomacy_and_Nation_Branding_Conceptual_Similarities_and_Differences)
22. banda.agency (n.d.). *Ukraine NOW Новий брендинг України*. <https://banda.agency/ukrainenow/>
23. Manor, I. (2016). Are We There Yet: Have mfas Realized the Potential of Digital Diplomacy?, *Brill Research Perspectives in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*, 1(2), 1-110. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/24056006-12340002>
24. Porter, M. (1990). *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*. New York: The Free Press
25. Kampf, R., Manor, I., & Segev, E. (2015). Digital Diplomacy 2.0? A Cross-national Comparison of Public Engagement in Facebook and Twitter, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 10(4), 331-362. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191X-12341318>
26. Pamment, J. (2012). *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century: A Comparative Study of Policy and Practice* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203096734>
27. Seib, P. (2012). *Real-time diplomacy: Politics and power in the social media era*. Palgrave Macmillan.
28. Duncombe, C. (2019). The Politics of Twitter: Emotions and the Power of Social Media. *International Political Sociology*, 13(4), 409-429. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olz013>
29. Manor, I., Segev, I. (2015). America's selfie: how the US portrays itself on its social media accounts. In C. Bjola, M. Holmes, (Eds.) *Digital Diplomacy. Theory and practice*. London and New York: Routledge
30. Manor, I. (2021). Russia's Digital Diplomacy: The good, the bad and the satirical - *RUSSLAND-ANALYSEN*

31. Se Jung Park & Yon Soo Lim (2014) Information networks and social media use in public diplomacy: a comparative analysis of South Korea and Japan, *Asian Journal of Communication*, 24:1, 79-98, DOI: 10.1080/01292986.2013.851724
32. (n.d.). *TWIPLOMACY 2022 World Leader Power Ranking*. Twiplomacy. <https://www.twiplomacy.com/world-leader-executive-summary>
33. Garrity, K. (2022, March 10). *Ukrainian officials and allies rail against Elon Musk tweet*. Politico. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/10/03/ukrainian-officials-and-allies-rail-against-elon-musk-tweet-00060085>
34. OHCHR (2022, March 03). Ukraine: UN experts concerned by reports of discrimination against people of African descent at border. OHCHR. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/ukraine-un-experts-concerned-reports-discrimination-against-people-african>
35. Wendt, A. (1994). Collective Identity Formation and the International State. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88(No. 2), 384-396. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944711>
36. Weldes, J. (1996). *Constructing National Interests*. *European Journal of International Relations*, 2(3), 275–318. doi:10.1177/1354066196002003001
37. Sandre, A. (2013) *Twitter for Diplomats*. Geneva: DiploFoundation and Istituto Diplomatico.
38. Anholt. S. (1998). Nation-brands of the twenty-first century. *Journal of Brand Management* 5(6), 395–406.
39. Anholt, S. (2011). Beyond the Nation Brand: The Role of Image and Identity in International Relations. *The Journal of Public Diplomacy*: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 1. Available at: <https://surface.syr.edu/exchange/vol2/iss1/1>
40. Anholt, S. (2005). Nation brand as context and reputation. *Place Brand Public Diplomacy*, 1, 224–228. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990023>
41. Gudjonsson, H. (2005). “Nation Branding.” *Place Branding*, 1(3): 283–298.
42. Fan, Y. (2010). “Branding the Nation: Towards a Better Understanding.” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6(2): 97–103.

43. Kunczik, M. (2001). *Globalization: News media, images of nations and the flow of international capital with special reference to the role of rating agencies*. Paper presented at the IAMCR conference, Singapore.
44. Manor, I. (2022). The Selfie as Perpetual Nostalgia: Analyzing Russia's Selfie Diplomacy in 2020. Working Paper. Ben Gurion University of the Negev.
45. Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism". (September - December 2020). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. United States of America [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ssha\\_povnyj-zvit\\_fin\\_eng-0503.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ssha_povnyj-zvit_fin_eng-0503.pdf)
46. Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism". (September - December 2020). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. United States of America [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ssha\\_povnyj-zvit\\_fin\\_eng-0503.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ssha_povnyj-zvit_fin_eng-0503.pdf)
47. Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism". (September - December 2020). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. Turkey [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/turechchyna\\_povnyj-zvit\\_eng-0503.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/turechchyna_povnyj-zvit_eng-0503.pdf)
48. Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism". (September - December 2020). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. Japan [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/yaponiya\\_povnyj-zvit\\_\\_eng-0503.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/yaponiya_povnyj-zvit__eng-0503.pdf)
49. InMind research company. (July-December 2020). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. Hungary [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/hungary\\_research\\_eng\\_2505.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/hungary_research_eng_2505.pdf)
50. European research agency ERA. (July-December 2020). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. Poland [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/poland\\_research\\_eng\\_2805.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/poland_research_eng_2805.pdf)
51. InMind research company. (July-December 2020). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. Germany [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/germany\\_research-report\\_eng.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/germany_research-report_eng.pdf)

52. InMind research company. (July-December 2020). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. France [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/france\\_research-report\\_engpdf.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/france_research-report_engpdf.pdf)
53. Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”. (June - December 2021). Perception of Ukraine Abroad. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland [Analytical report]. Ukrainian Institute. [https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2021\\_1.38\\_analytical-report\\_perception-of-ukraine\\_the-united-kingdom\\_eng.pdf](https://ui.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2021_1.38_analytical-report_perception-of-ukraine_the-united-kingdom_eng.pdf)
54. Kiger, M. E., Varpio, L.. (2020): Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131, Medical Teacher, DOI: 10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030
55. Braun V, Clarke V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qual Res Psychol. 3(2):77

- 
- Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba?s=20&t=4iu2826atisuHzmcqUZBBA>
  - MFA of Ukraine [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Ukraine?s=20&t=4iu2826atisuHzmcqUZBBA](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine?s=20&t=4iu2826atisuHzmcqUZBBA)
  - President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy <https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?s=20&t=4iu2826atisuHzmcqUZBBA>

## Appendix 1. SNS accounts

- 
17. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497558840606400516?s=20>
  18. [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Ukraine/status/1499002506084507648?s=20](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1499002506084507648?s=20)
  19. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497266398929854466?s=20>
  20. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497186665156255754?s=20>
  21. [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Ukraine/status/1498550505211113474?s=20](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1498550505211113474?s=20)
  22. [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Ukraine/status/1510883769384849411?s=20](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1510883769384849411?s=20)
  23. <https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1499072011729096705?s=20>
  24. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1496912970080829443?s=20>
  25. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1496833857009729547?s=20>
  26. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497214612223057922?s=20>
  27. <https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1641901678659076097?s=20>
  28. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1511083595787554832?s=20>
  29. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497500695938969601?s=20>
  30. <https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1496862540957114370?s=20>
  31. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1590965204267012097?s=20>
  32. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1496962347826507806?s=20>
  33. [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Ukraine/status/1497979249709494275?s=20](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1497979249709494275?s=20)
1. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497558840606400516?s=20>
  2. [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Ukraine/status/1499002506084507648?s=20](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1499002506084507648?s=20)
  3. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497266398929854466?s=20>
  4. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497186665156255754?s=20>
  5. [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Ukraine/status/1498550505211113474?s=20](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1498550505211113474?s=20)
  6. [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Ukraine/status/1510883769384849411?s=20](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1510883769384849411?s=20)
  7. <https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1499072011729096705?s=20>
  8. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1496912970080829443?s=20>
  9. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1496833857009729547?s=20>
  10. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497214612223057922?s=20>
  11. <https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1641901678659076097?s=20>
  12. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1511083595787554832?s=20>
  13. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1497500695938969601?s=20>
  14. <https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1496862540957114370?s=20>
  15. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1590965204267012097?s=20>
  16. <https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1496962347826507806?s=20>

## Appendix 2. Mentioned tweets

## АНОТАЦІЯ/ANNOTATION

Кваліфікаційної роботи

Тема: Національний брендинг у твіттері українських дипломатів: проектування іміджу України через канали цифрової дипломатії/Nation branding on Twitter accounts of Ukrainian diplomats: projecting Ukraine's image through digital diplomacy channels

Студентка: Ємець Ольга Вадимівна

Рік навчання, факультет: ФСНСТ - 4

Науковий керівник: PhD., старший викладач, Мрідула Гош

Захищена “ \_\_\_\_ ” \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_ р.

**Короткий зміст роботи.** У роботі визначали зв'язок між цифровою дипломатією в соціальних мережах та національним брендингом за допомогою прикладу використання твітеру українськими дипломатами для проектування іміджу України. У результаті тематичного аналізу стає помітно, що використання каналів цифрової дипломатії для промоції національного бренду дозволяє дипломатам постійно просувати узгоджений та послідовний імідж за допомогою координації між дипломатами. Так, у всі періоди та на усіх стрінках виявили чотири основні теми, які презентували Україну як дружню європейську державу, яка захищає міжнародне право та бореться за благородні цінності справедливості, гідності та прав людини.

***Ключові слова.** Цифрова дипломатія, національний брендинг, твітер у дипломатії, канали цифрової дипломатії, українська дипломатія, національний бренд, національний імідж.*

**Short summary.** The paper aimed to determine the relationship between digital diplomacy on social media and nation branding through the study of how Ukraine utilizes this new media environment to project its self-portrait on Twitter accounts of its diplomatic representatives. Through the qualitative thematic analysis it was concluded that by using digital diplomacy to promote nation brand, diplomats are able to constantly work on the consistent image of the country through the coordination

among national officials of the promoted narratives online. Thus, throughout all of the analyzed periods all of the analyzed accounts shared four main themes that portrayed Ukraine as a friendly European country that defends international law and fights for gracious values like Human Rights, dignity, fairness, and empathy.

**Keywords.** *Digital diplomacy, nation branding, twiplomacy, digital diplomacy channels, Ukrainian diplomacy, nation brand, national image.*