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**The Populist's Performed Social Movement:
Analysis of Volodymyr Zelensky's 2019 Presidential Campaign**
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my father and my partner, who both support me in every challenge I take upon.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

A performed social movement captivated the Ukrainian nation in 2019. The 2019 Ukrainian Presidential election marked a change in the form of campaign strategies of a presidential candidate. Ukrainian entertainer Volodymyr Zelensky made his political debut by running for President of Ukraine on a platform based on having no visible links to the political elites and essentially promised a new era in Ukrainian politics, absent of endemic corruption and an end to the War in Donbass. The style of Zelensky's campaign tactics of merging entertainment into politics transformed Zelensky into a media phenomenon. Zelensky won the second round of the presidential election with a landslide victory. Earning 73% of the vote, Zelensky overcame traditional national voting cleavages winning with the largest majority in contemporary Ukrainian history. The aim of this thesis was to analyze *how a politically inexperienced electoral candidate can construct a movement of electoral support which unites the people through social media campaigning*. Through an interpretive single case study of the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election, qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis drawn from 1753 social media posts from three social media platforms (*Facebook, Instagram, YouTube*) was conducted. Through analysis of selected postings, coding was generated which ultimately mapped the two dominant themes in Zelensky's social media discourse: *spectacle* and *social movement.* While academia may suggest that Zelensky's performed social movement would be labelled as a face in the new era of populism, findings suggest that Zelensky's campaign strategy created a new form of populism: *Spectacular Populism*.

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Introduction

After nearly three decades with two revolutions, corruption and cronyism continues to be endemic in Ukraine. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine attempted to reform into a democracy with a free market economy through privatization. The outcome of the transformation was rampant clientelism and the formation of an oligarchic class. The general reaction amongst Ukrainian society was disgust towards the political elite and calls for dismantling the remnants of the communist system. The deep dissatisfaction held amongst Ukrainian society towards their state in part led to the Orange Revolution in 2004 and Revolution of Dignity between 2013 - 2014. An outcome of the Revolution of Dignity was Petro Poroshenko as the fifth President of Ukraine. Poroshenko was elected with the expectation of breaking the oligarchs' hold over Ukraine. However, Poroshenko failed to fully meet this demand, leaving Ukrainian society prepared to restart power in the 2019 presidential election.

On New Year's Eve 2018, entertainer Volodymyr Zelensky ascended into the political arena announcing running for President of Ukraine in the 2019 presidential election. Zelensky fulfilled the presidential criteria demanded by much of Ukrainian society as he held no visible connections to the post-Soviet political elite. His lone association with politics was acting as President of Ukraine in the television series *Servant of the People.* With no credible political experience, team, or clear ideology, Zelensky marked the new year of 2019 by declaring his running for president in the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election. Ensued was an unprecedented political candidate and campaign.

2019 marked a change in campaigning tactics. Multiple techniques of Volodymyr Zelensky's presidential campaign were unpreceded. Traditional campaign methods were not conducted by Zelensky's campaign. Zelensky's political platform was paralleled to the plot and protagonist character from the television series *Servant of the People*. Social media was applied as the dominate platform of communication between Zelensky and voters. Zelensky completed his campaign tour in the format of a comedy tour with the Kvartal 95 troupe and debated in Kyiv's Olympic stadium. As such, Zelensky's campaign developed into a media phenomenon concentrated on social media. Through the uploading of daily posts and videos, Zelensky

interacted directly with voters through Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The end result of Zelensky's media campaign was winning with a landslide in the second round of the election with 73% of the vote. The political novice won with the largest majority in contemporary Ukrainian history.

Across mass media and academia, Zelensky's media phenomenon is overlooked. There continues to be widespread belief that Zelensky's campaign won the 2019 Ukrainian Presidential Election as a result of disappointment from lack of reform following the Revolution of Dignity. The common assumption is that Zelensky was elected due to the level of dissatisfaction of the previous governments' economic and political approaches (Nahaylo, 2019; Korosteleva, 2019; Minakov, 2019; Sasse, 2019), deep distrust of the political elite, and frustration from the ongoing War in Donbass (Rohozinska & Shpak, 2019). When Zelensky's media campaign is mentioned by journalists or academics, it is generally described broadly such as 'clever and novel' (Nahaylo, 2019) and 'dynamic' (Kurmanova & Chebanenko, 2019). The factors mentioned by journalists and academics which led to Zelensky's electoral win did contribute to Zelensky's campaign success. Though, there remains a lack of knowledge on the concrete ways in which Zelensky mobilized the masses through social media platforms. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to expand upon the topic of Zelensky's unmapped social media campaign strategy to answer *how a politically inexperienced electoral candidate can construct a movement of electoral support which unites the people through social media campaigning?* In particular, to elaborate upon the ways in which Zelensky's campaign mobilized votes through drawing in a variety of audiences by creating a spectacle.

To answer the research question, two sets of concepts along with qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis will be applied throughout this thesis. The primary concept of *social movement* and the secondary concepts of *performativity, spectacle, and populism* are applied to provide a theoretical foundation to the research question. Qualitative content analysis will be applied on campaign posts on three social media platforms (*Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)* to thematically assess how the posts produced situational meanings to viewers. Coding of social media postings will be conducted during qualitative content analysis to distinguish the main themes within Zelensky's campaign program. Discourse analysis will be utilised through the close study of written language through posts and spoken language by Zelensky to uncover

linguistic messages to help explain how Zelensky became a media phenomenon in Ukrainian society during the presidential election.

Conducting interviews was considered as a research method to answer the research question. Preliminary interviews with political professors and subject experts on Ukraine from Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University were conducted in Odessa, Ukraine in June 2019. The purpose of the interviews was to gain an understanding of the main voting factors in the 2019 presidential election and to gain insight on how influential social media campaigning was to their vote. Further interviews with subject experts were planned in Kyiv, Ukraine in April 2020 to provide more evidence to support answering the research question. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all planned interviews scheduled in 2020 were cancelled.

This paper makes three contributions to academia. First, this thesis will help fill the gap in existing literature on campaign styles in Ukraine, which has so far largely neglected to analyse the performance style of politics within Ukraine. Second, the analyses conducted in this thesis will provide deeper insight on the contemporary campaign tactics applied in populist communication style. Extending upon prior research on populism by investigating the campaign media strategy of Zelensky, this thesis will provide fuller understanding of the ways in which populism campaign tactics can be administered and performed through social media. On this basis, a new form of populism is developed to expose the process dynamics of Zelensky's campaign strategy. Third, this thesis will demonstrate the increased applicability of Guy Debord's *spectacle* in contemporary election campaign tactics.

This thesis has five sections. Chapter introduces Ukraine's political culture and history, leading to justification on the application of post-structuralism along with the concepts of *social movement, performativity, spectacle,* and *populism.* Chapter 2 outlines the data collection, design of research analysis, and the coding procedure. Chapter 3 analyzes Zelensky's campaign tactics with focus on overarching themes. Chapter 4 analyzes how Zelensky's campaign conducted populist communication to mobilize the masses, which is accompanied by introducing a new form of populism. The paper concludes by considering the broader implications of Zelensky's campaign style and discusses the contributions of the thesis and possible directions for future research.

1. Brief Historical Approach

1.1 Ukrainian Political Culture

Ukraine's declared independence from the Soviet Union was ensued by societal dominance of the oligarchs. On August 24, 1991 the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine was passed. Resulting, was Ukraine's attempt to transition into a democratic state with a market economy. However, following the declaration's passing, oligarchs emerged into Ukraine's economic and political scene. The rise of the oligarchs was connected to the processes of privatization of state-owned assets as the Ukrainian economy transitioned into a market economy. Consequently, former Communists became highly influential in Ukrainian politics, yet no longer affiliated themselves with Communist parties. Thereupon Ukraine transitioned into a corrupt oligarchic state of which the oligarchs stood behind the header of defenders of democracy (Mudde, 2000, p. 48). The established oligarchic system resulted in a political system of patronage and clientelism. Subsequently, social inequalities and corruption levels dramatically grew while the average life expectancy and standards of living declining (Protsenko, 2018). As Ukraine consolidated into an oligarchic state, Ukrainian society consolidated their absence of trust towards their state.

Ukrainian society's condemnation of their oligarchic state was demonstrated in two performative revolutions. Both revolutions called for the oligarchic state to fundamentally transform into an uncorrupt democratic state. In 2004, following the disputed electoral victory of Viktor Yanukovich, estimates of 500 000 to a million Ukrainians assembled in protest at Kyiv's Maidan Square. The protests were a novel performance of protest. By day, protestors formed human barricades around government buildings, and by night, protestors attended rock concerts and rested in Maidan Square's tent-city (International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, 2020; Lane, 2008). The protesters orchestrated an attempt to install a democratic pro-Western regime with European identification (Lane, 2008; White & Feklyunina, 2014). However, the revolution conquered support from only half of the country based in central Ukraine. Consequently, the threat of separatism emerged in Eastern Ukraine (Arel, 2005). No territories in Eastern Ukraine separated, but the ambition for independence continued into the following decade. In 2013,

Ukraine continued to be a divided society controlled by a composite of several oligarchic groups constantly fighting for power (Dubovyk, 2017, p. 47). Still, much of Ukrainian society yearned for transformation of Ukraine's oligarchic state into a democracy. So, when former President Viktor Yanukovych refused to sign an EU Association Agreement supported by much of Ukrainian society for closer economic relations with Russia instead, democratic movements rejuvenated. The movement initially demanded for Yanukovych to sign the EU trade agreement and to end to the endemically corrupt system of government, but later turned into a revolution for democratic reform. The revolution staged in Kyiv's Maidan Square became known as the the Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014). The staged protests in Kyiv's tent-city emerged into ethno-linguistic nationalism on the basis of language and region (Журавльов, 2015). As the protests drew in mass numbers, the violence escalated between protestors and police. The violent acts included torching of vehicles and hurling of stones and Molotov cocktails, which captured international media attention (Resende, Budrytė, & Buhari-Gulmez, 2019; Higgins & Kramer, 2014). The violence was not concentrated in Kyiv, as it expanded into Eastern Ukraine with calls for separation. Following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea (2014), conflict broke out in Ukraine's eastern Donbass region between Kremlin backed pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian government forces which became the War in Donbass (2014 – present). As such, both the Orange Revolution (2004) and the Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014) contained performative elements as the protests escalated and increasingly divided Ukrainian society.

Petro Poroshenko was elected President of Ukraine in 2014 from his perceived capability to fulfill the protested demands during the Revolution of Dignity. Poroshenko was expected by Ukrainian society to dismantle the over two-decade legacy of state cronyism and corruption as well as able to end the War in Donbass. Under Poroshenko's presidency, a number of reforms were passed to dismantle corruption, but they did not entirely break the oligarchs' hold over the country. Much of Ukrainian society were left disappointed in the slow pace and depth of reforms, in addition to the added discontent over internal displacement and economic hardships caused by the War in Donbass (Rohozinska & Shpak, 2019, p. 34). Ukrainian society perceived their country's slow recovery from Russian aggression since 2014 being a result of various failures by reformers and statesmen under President Petro Poroshenko (Umland, 2019). Consequently, by 2018 there was a crisis on both horizontal and vertical levels. Ninety-one

perfect of Ukrainians claimed corruption was widespread in government and only nine percent of Ukrainians held confidence towards their national government (Bikus, 2019.) The level of distrust towards the Ukrainian state reached the highest level since 1991 (Kuczyński, 2019). Resulting was preparedness across Ukrainian society to restart power by means of complete removal of the political elites.

The ideal candidate for the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election held no visible links to the political elites. Ukrainian entertainer Volodymyr Zelensky fulfilled this criterion. Zelensky emerged into the Ukrainian political scene tapping into the deep public desire for new political faces by means of entertainment. Zelensky's election platform was promoted through performances on social media and on stage. Zelensky's campaign essentially promised a new era in Ukrainian politics, absent of the endemic corrupt elite and an end to the War in Donbass. In the second round of the presidential election, Zelensky won by a landslide with 73% of the votes. Zelensky won with the largest majority in contemporary Ukrainian history by overcoming traditional national voting cleavages. Adding to the accomplishment, in a four-month period Zelensky's election support rose from 9.4% to 73% (European Coordination Council, 2019, p. 112). The politics of Ukraine had been reshuffled and the country witnessed a quiet revolution.

1.2 Application of Post-Structuralism & Concepts

Post-structuralism along with primary and secondary concepts will be applied throughout this thesis. Post-structuralism will be applied to consider to what degree Zelensky's application of language held in the representation of himself during the campaign. The primary concept of social movement will be utilized in the investigation of how Zelensky's campaign united the people. The secondary concepts of performativity, spectacle, and populism will be applied in the context of Zelensky's campaign posts across social media platforms (*Facebook, Instagram,* and *YouTube*). The posts include the form of images, videos, and texts which referenced Zelensky's ambitions as President of Ukraine. The concepts of performativity and spectacle will be applied in the research of Zelensky's performances with the Kvartal 95 performance troupe and in the lead-up to the stadium debate and the debate itself. The following section will provide further

elaboration on how post-structuralism and the concepts of performativity, spectacle, and populism will be applied in this thesis.

The philosophic approach of post-structuralism challenges the assumptions on instability found within societies by deconstructing language. Particularly, post-structuralism argues that meaning is not fixed. Thus, the post-structuralist approach rejects structuralism's view of language being, "a stable, unchangeable and totalizing structure" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 10). Adding to the argument, post-structuralism claims that whatever is in our reality is the effect of the representation of language (Thomassen, 2017). As such, post-structuralism assumes that the versatility of language constructs social experiences and reality (Lazarević, 2015; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thereby, through critical inquiry, poststructuralism questions assumptions on language to reveal how language itself helps constitute the representation of our reality.

Ukraine's deepened societal divisions are contributed to language rhetoric produced following the Orange Revolution (2004) and Revolution of Dignity (2013). In both cases, language was produced which enhanced regional divisions. Following the Orange Revolution, regional polarization accelerated, and political divisions intensified (Buckholz, 2019; Wolczuk, 2006). Retorted spoken and published language contained 'pro-Russia' and 'pro-Europe' labels. 'Pro-Russia' referred to supporters of Russian political orientation who were Russian speakers, particularly from the in eastern and southern Ukraine in the regions of Donbass and Crimea (Kuzio, 2019, p.490). Whereas 'pro-Europe' insinuated supporters of a pro-European foreign policy of whom were generally situated in central and western Ukraine and Ukrainian speakers. The linguistic divisions through the labels of 'pro-Europe' and 'pro-Russia' continued into 2013 during the Revolution of Dignity. Succeeding the second revolution were referendums on the status of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in addition to the breakout of hostilities and warfare in Eastern Ukraine. Consequently, language contributed to the construction of Ukraine's societal divisions on a 'pro-Europe' versus 'pro-Russia' dichotomy.

Unlike previous historical trajectory, language was a core component of uniting the masses in Zelensky's campaign. Zelensky's social media campaign was largely barren of clear statements on ideology and significant policy proposals (Rohozinska & Shpak, 2019, p. 33). In addition, Zelensky did not clearly articulate his political positions as his campaign lacked live

public exposure through the avoidance of interviews and public appearances. Thus, the common ideological labels applied in Ukrainian politics of 'pro-Europe' and 'pro-Russia' were absent from Zelensky's campaign. Rather the hashtag #letsdoittogether (let's do it together) was applied throughout the social media campaign. As language was a core component of Zelensky's campaign in uniting the masses, post-structuralist approach is applied in this thesis for theoretical analysis on how the performative function of language can transfer into a campaign image. By applying post-structuralist critique, this thesis will construct alternative viewpoints on how social media posts and performed language contributes to the audience's construction of an undefined campaign platform. Thus, through the application of post-structuralism, it will be highlighted in this thesis the persuasive development of language in the political sphere to explain how Zelensky was able to overcome traditional national voting cleavages. In addition, this thesis will expose how the lack of articulated ideology in Zelensky's campaign language helped construct the representation of Zelensky's persona.

The primary concept of this thesis is social movement. Social movement is defined in this thesis as a horizontal practice which collectively links actors who are mobilized to create radical transformation of the state (Laclau, 2014, p. 9). As outlined by R. Kelly Garrett (2006), three structures are present within social movements: mobilizing mechanisms enabling individuals to organize and engage in collective action; social movement organizations and/or informal configurations, conditions in the environment that allow social movement activity (Garrett, 2006; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014, p. 367). Since social movements generally focus on direct action, they often take the form of spectacular politics (Taggart, 2004, p. 278). Spectacular politics by means of social movements has been performed in Ukraine's contemporary history during the Orange Revolution (2004) and Revolution of Dignity (2013 – 2014). Thereby, this thesis will explore whether there was a continuation of spectacular politics conducted by means of a social movement by Zelensky's presidential campaign. As well, how social media was applied by Zelensky's campaign to unite the people in the social movement.

As social movements often feature populist mobilizations, populism is a secondary concept in this thesis. Since the early 2000s, populism in contemporary Europe has featured a number of events featuring populists mobilizing social movements. The social movements were not 'exclusively populist'; however, the forms of mobilization contained strong populist features

(Taggart, 2004, p. 270). As such, Paul Taggart (2004) has argued "only if we understand populism can we begin to fully comprehend… the nature of (some) European social movement mobilization" (p. 270). Therefore, this thesis will include the concept of populism to help explain how Zelensky mobilized the masses to vote for his election campaign. However, it should be considered that the definition of populism is exceptionally extensive, including being defined as a political ideology or as a style of political communication (Jakubowski, 2020). For nearly two decades, populism has predominately been conceptualized as an ideology. Much of this conceptualization can be attributed to Cas Mudde (2004) defining populism as an ideology, which later developed into the conceptualization of populism containing a "thin-centred" ideology. Many academics apply Mudde's (2004) definition of populism as a thin-centred ideology (Abts & Rummens, 2007; Stanley, 2008; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012; Canovan, 2002). Though, a new wave of populism has developed in the past decade, promoting the idea of populism as a style of communication from the new conditions created by changes in the forms of media (Jakubowski, 2020). As such, this thesis refers to populism as a communicative style in effort to reveal how Zelensky's campaign included populist communication through social media platforms to mobilize masses into a social movement.

Judith Butler's concept of performativity will be applied as a secondary concept for theoretical foundation. Zelensky's campaign was composed of repeated performances of himself as an entertainer. Zelensky performed in a national comedy tour with his entertainment production company Kvartal-95 during the first round of the campaign. Through the repetition of performances conducted in eight cities across Ukraine, it seems as though through recurrent performances Zelensky reinforced his performance image as his persona rather than being a politician. Since 1997, Zelensky has be known for his comedic performances as he is the co-creator of the Kvartal-95 cabaret with his entertainment production company Kvartal-95 being aired on television channel '1+1' since 2003. Therefore, Zelensky's popular image as an entertainer was preestablished prior to the campaign. As such, by conducting numerous comedy concerts, there was reiteration of Zelensky being outside of the political elite.

Zelensky's campaign contained a prevalent pattern of repeated character performances. Zelensky's character as protagonist Vasyl Petrovych Holoborodko from the television series *Servant of the People* made repetitive appearances through visuals across Zelensky's social

media campaign. Particularly reinforced in social media posts was Zelensky's persona paralleled to character Holoborodko regarding his ordinariness and pursuit to overcome institutional dilemmas. In addition, the third series of *Servant of the People* was released days before the first round of voting in the election. Through audiovisuals, the third series was linked to the campaign as the plot consisted of Holoborodko re-campaigning to be President of Ukraine amongst political rivals who looked similar to Zelensky's campaign rivals. The third series concluded with Holoborodko's pursuit to transform Ukraine into the promised land of economic miracles. As such, Zelensky's campaign conducted reinforced repetition of his performance image in the television series *Servant of the People*.

The lead-up to the stadium debate was a month-long performance. Zelensky's campaign organized a debate against opponent Petro Poroshenko held in performance format at Kyiv's Olympic stadium. The lead-up to the stadium debate contained a social media spectacle performed by Zelensky's campaign. As for the debate itself, Zelensky referenced to his character performances rather than his political platform. On stage, Zelensky repeated the discourse of himself being an ordinary man who planned to end the corrupt system of government as President of Ukraine. Zelensky reinforced the image already established by his character Holoborodko on *Servant of the People*. Furthermore, through performed language, Zelensky reinforced his ambition to bring a particular prosperous future for the Ukrainian nation.

Performativity will be applied as a theoretical foundation to analyze the ontological effects of Zelensky's performances on the perception of Ukraine's societal reality. According to performativity, a repetition of acts achieves effects over a duration of time. The effect of enforced repetition is the construction of reality. Social and cultural forces contribute to the construct of reality from their production of sustained illusions (Hey, 2006, p. 443). As such, due to Zelensky's repeated performances through social forces, by means of social media and the stadium debate, and cultural forces, through the means of television and comedy performances, performativity will be applied to analyse the effect of Zelensky's performance images on campaign audiences. Particularly analyzed will be Zelensky's performative language, since performativity argues that language has a performative function, due to its power to shape reality. Thereby, due to the concept of performativity's focus on the reiteration of performances and its effects on naturalized assumptions of what constitutes reality, performativity will be

applied in this thesis. Performativity will be applied in the analysis of the effect to which Zelensky's performance images had on the formation of his image in reality during the presidential campaign.

This thesis will incorporate Guy Debord's concept of the *spectacle* as a secondary concept. The *spectacle* will be included to understand how Zelensky's campaign postings on social media shaped Zelensky's campaign image. Debord's Marxist manifesto of *Society of the Spectacle* offers a means to examine the virtual personality created by Zelensky's performances and its extrapolation by audiences. Included in the manifesto are two concepts: *spectacle* and *spectators.* The *spectacle* is a representation of life through imagery which can be applied for different means such as a tool for pacification, an instrument to distract people from their tasks, and a means to occupy an individuals' social life (Best & Kellner, 2001; Best & Kellner, 1999). Ultimately, the complete *spectacle* is the case in which commodities attain total occupation of social life, blurring illusions with reality with visual imagery becoming 'reality' (Bunyard, 2011, p.17). As for *spectators*, it is the case of individuals partaking in the illusion of reality by becoming compliant consumers of commodities and mass media, viewing the world they are conditioned to see through the commodity. Fitting to Debord's manifesto (1977), Zelensky's campaign appeared to be saturated with daily imagery that became reduced to a spectacle of posts and videos uploaded onto social media with spectators partaking in the media-spectacle.

Zelensky campaign applied both the plot and protagonist character from television series *Servant of the People's* into his social media-spectacle. The popular television show *Servant of the People* encompassed the hopes and dreams held by much of Ukrainian society - a prosperous nation absent of systemic corruption. Zelensky's played character Holoborodko was a high school teacher elected President of Ukraine, and as president destroyed Ukraine's endemic corruption to transform Ukraine into a prosperous European country. The television series essentially broadcasted what Ukrainian society had been yearning for since post-independence. Thus, assessed will be the visual application of a *spectacle* through social media by means of references to the plot and character Vasyl Petrovych Holoborodko from the television series *Servant of the People* as to whether the series character was a building block to Zelensky's campaign image.

The means of application of Zelensky's social media campaign seems to increase the relevance of the concept of the *spectacle.* Zelensky's presidential campaign dominated across social media applications (*Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *YouTube*), closing the distances and experiences between voters. Due to the increasing use of screens by society, it produces an increase in image use and circulation (Dewdney & Ride, 2014). The *spectacle* has taken new stages since Debord's time of writing of the manifesto, including mobile phone and computers, increasing its presence from the television (Best & Kellner, 1999). Thereby, as Zelensky's campaign program promoted the television series' plot across media platforms, this thesis will demonstrate how the relevance of Debord's *spectacle* increased.

2. Design of Social Media Analysis

In terms of research design, this thesis conducts an interpretive single case study. The case study will interpret the performative elements of Zelensky's campaign communication and how the performative elements transformed Ukrainian society into a united social movement. Case research is conducted in order to derive a more contextualized interpretation of Volodymyr Zelensky's media phenomenon during the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election campaign. This phenomenon of interest will be studied by applying qualitative content analysis in order to provide a systematic description of the meaning of the data collected from postings on social media. Discourse analysis is also applied on the campaign language, both written and spoken, to understand the meaning of the produced campaign language. The sections below will go into detail on the selected data and the application of the analyses.

2.1 Data Overview

Three social media platforms were investigated for postings uploaded by Zelensky's campaign. The social media accounts of Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube were investigated and became the sources of data collection for this thesis. The data was collected from the official social media campaign accounts of Zelensky's campaign: Зе! Президент (*YouTube*); Команда Зеленського (*Facebook*); ZeTeam 2019 (*Instagram*). The unit of analysis and main data source were posts on the official social media accounts of Zelensky's campaign. The unit of analysis for YouTube were posted videos. As for Facebook and Instagram, the unit of analysis were posts that included either images, videos, or text. Figure 1. presented below illustrates the number of social media posts under analysis according to each online platform. The posts were gathered from the respective social media websites in the time period of the January 1, 2019 - April 21, 2019. Under analysis were 50 YouTube videos, 835 Facebook posts, and 598 Instagram posts. Thereby, a combined total of 1483 social media posts were under analysis to support answering the research question.
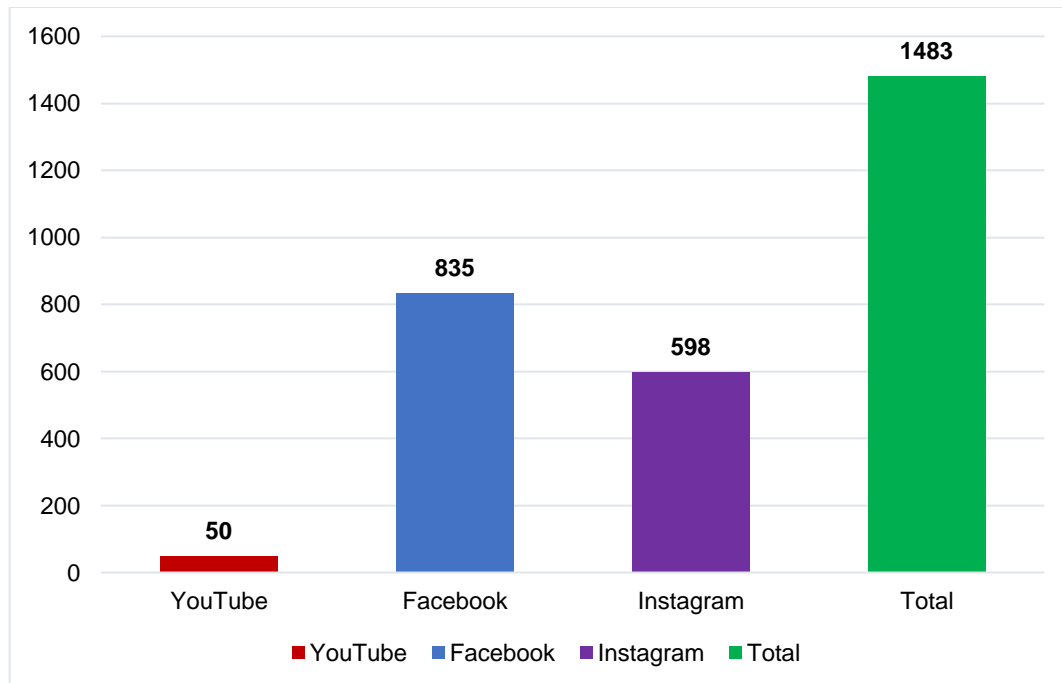
Figure 1. Number of Posts. This figure demonstrates the number of posted posts by Zelensky's Campaign on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram between January 1, 2019 – April 21, 2019.
Source: Authors own compilation.

Facebook and Instagram were chosen sources for the data sample. Due to the relatively large number of postings during both rounds of the presidential campaign, both social media platforms were chosen for their quantity of posts. In the first stage of empirical research, observed social media posts from the first round of the election campaign (January 1, 2019 - March 31, 2019) were concentrated on Zelensky's official campaign Facebook page (546 posts) and official campaign Instagram page (413 posts). In the second stage of empirical research, observed social media posts from the second round of the election (April 1 - April 21, 2018) were again concentrated on Zelensky's official campaign Facebook page (289 posts) and official campaign Instagram page (185 posts). Refer to Figure 2. for the illustration of the number of monthly posts analyzed for each social media platform under analysis.

YouTube was a selected data source due the video content and high number of audience views. In the first stage of empirical research, Zelensky's campaign posted 36 videos on its YouTube channel and in the second election round posted 14 videos. Compared to Facebook and Instagram, Zelensky's campaign applied YouTube to a much lesser degree with a total of 50

videos posted (see Figure 1.). However, in the primary stage of analysis, focal themes were identified regarding the production of popular narratives. The production of popular narratives continued to be identified in the secondary stage of analysis. In addition, YouTube videos views reached a much larger audience number ranging between 116 000 views to 3 200 000 views. In comparison to Facebook and Instagram, 100 000 views were the average number of videos views. Therefore, YouTube was a source of identifying performative elements in Zelensky's campaign.
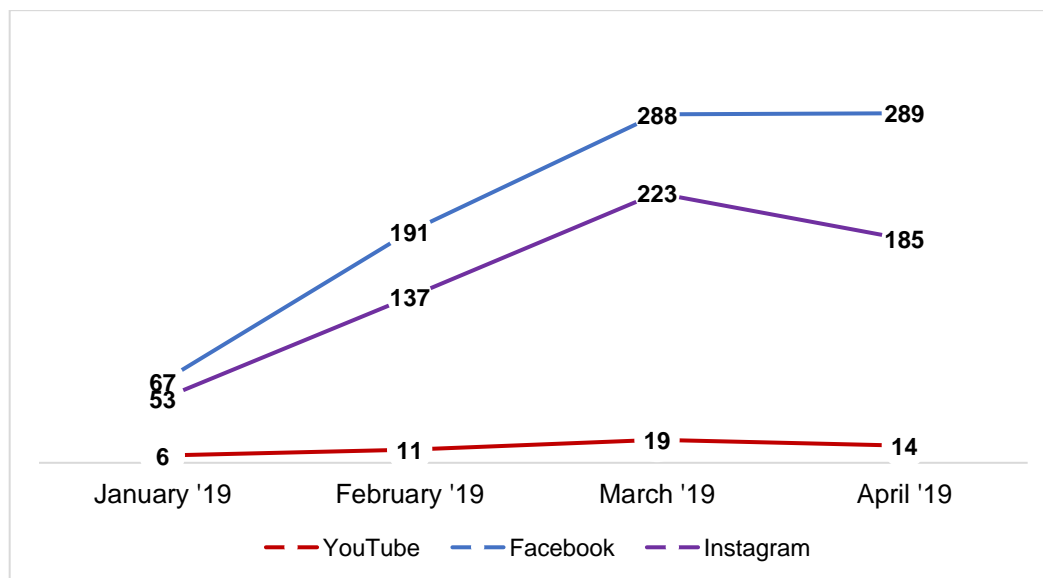
Figure 2. Monthly Posts. This figure demonstrates the number of posts uploaded on social media per month in 2019.
Source: Authors own compilation.

Figure 2. illustrates the number of monthly posts analyzed in the time period under analysis (January 1 - April 21, 2019). A large section of the data analyzed in this thesis was generated in the last two months of the campaign – March and April 2019. There was a significant rise in posts in March and April due to the first voting round being conducted on March 31, 2019 and the second voting round being conducted on April 21, 2019. Also illustrated is that Instagram and Facebook were much more applied in content number compared to YouTube.

Telegram and Twitter are not applied data sources in this thesis. Although, both social media platforms were considered as a data source for empirical research as they were both

mediums applied by Zelensky's social media campaign. However, upon completion of the first stage of empirical research, it was discovered that the majority of data on Telegram was located in private chat forums within the platform and was inaccessible to the researcher. As for Twitter, it was not an active source of posts in the campaign in comparison to Facebook and Instagram. As well, Twitter had significantly less campaign followers (circa 31 000) in comparison to YouTube (circa 699 000), Facebook (circa 713 000), and Instagram (circa 1 200 000). Therefore, Telegram and Twitter were eliminated as data sources in the second stage of empirical research.

Preliminary interviews with professors and subject experts were conducted as a data source. Nine interviews were conducted in semi-structured format June 2019 with academic experts from Odessa I. Mechnikov National University in Odessa, Ukraine. The purpose of the interviews was to provide the author a better understanding of Ukraine's contemporary history and topics of national interest and concern during the 2019 presidential election. Thereby, the interview questions were generalized covering multiple topics: political developments in Ukraine following Euromaidan; the election of Volodymyr Zelensky; contemporary domestics issues; Ukrainian foreign policy. The author applied the interviews as a means of a guiding tool for developing the research design to answer the research question. Additional interviews were planned in Kyiv with professors and subject experts in April 2020 to provide additional substance to answer the research question. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic all interviews in 2020 were cancelled.

2.2. Conducted Analyses

Qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis will be conducted in this thesis. Qualitative content analysis will be applied to systematically describe the meaning of qualitative data in the form of social media posts. This will be completed by assigning data categories within a coding frame through thematic analysis. Discourse analysis will be applied to add a more critical understanding of the meaning of language in the database. The following section will provide further detail on the procedure of analyzing data and the particular issues being analyzed.

Qualitative content analysis will be completed on audio and visual data. The content under analysis will be campaign images and videos on social media (*Facebook*, *Instagram*, *YouTube*) that were produced and posted by Zelensky's campaign. The focus of the analysis will be on visual elements, including colour, composition, size, and scale, to uncover the impact of the meaning conveyed by audio and visual posts. In addition, the analysis will be completed on audio and visual posts to better understand how the posts communicated ideas, content, and meanings to audiences. Thus, images and videos posted on social media will be analyzed in the thesis to gain knowledge on how these posts contributed to mobilizing the masses in support of Zelensky's campaign.

Qualitative content analysis on audio and visual data will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will be observation of visual images. Images will be closely observed for identifying reoccurring visual attributes and elements. Selected images from the campaign will be compared to reveal whether there were common patterns or portrayals. The second phase will be thematic analysis to identify the main themes found within the database. Thematic analysis will be applied in effort to describe and map recurrent themes found within social media postings in order to develop an understanding on the visual logic behind the data. Particularly analyzed will be the messages the images and videos conveyed in reference to the presidential campaign. There will be consideration of the observations found, leading to thesis statements made on the audio and visual data based on the evidence. Thus, through qualitative content analysis, this thesis will methodically and objectively assess variable features found within images and videos of Zelensky's campaign media posts and how it contributed to mobilizing the masses for electoral support.

Discourse analysis will be conducted to investigate Zelensky's campaign performances in regard to the language of text and dialogue. The objective of discourse analysis is to explain aspects of society through the close study of language and language use (Taylor, 2013, p.4). Discourse analysis assumes the principle that language provides evidence on a social phenomenon (Taylor, 2013, p. 3). In the context of this thesis, discourse analysis will be applied as a means to help explain how the application of language in Zelensky's campaign mobilized support across Ukrainian society. Discourse analysis will firstly be applied for the close reading

of text in postings (*Facebook and Instagram)* and text within images on social media (*Facebook and Instagram)* to formulate an argument about the messages conveyed within the text. Discourse analysis will be applied in this context as this form of analysis particularly helps to understand the meaning of text in social media due to the analysis stemming from the belief that text is neither neutral nor free (Azmi, Sylvia, & Mardhiah, 2018, p. 174-175). This thesis will not only analyze written text but also spoken language in videos (*YouTube, Facebook and Instagram*). Thus, written and spoken language will be disassembled to uncover campaign messages. As such, discourse analysis will be conducted to disassemble messages produced through campaign language in effort to reveal how it conveyed a particular impression on campaign audiences.

2.3 Coding

A qualitative coding scheme was conducted during qualitative content analysis. Coding was conducted in order to identify and determine prevalent themes expressed in Zelensky's campaign. The coding of data during qualitative content analysis was conducted in three stages. In the first stage of analysis, social media posts uploaded during the first round of the campaign (January 1, 2019 – March 31, 2019) were observed: Facebook 546 posts; Instagram 413 posts; YouTube 36 posts. In the second stage of analysis, social media posts were observed which were uploaded during the second round of the campaign (April 1, 2019 – April 21, 2019): Facebook 289 posts; Instagram 185 posts; YouTube 14 posts. Refer to Figure 2. to view the number of posts analyzed monthly. Through the close reading of selected posts, this analysis generated various codes that mapped dominating themes within Zelensky's media campaign. In the third stage of analysis, two over-arching focal themes were identified: *spectacle* and *social movement.*

There were multiple categories of grouping of the elementary codes. The initial categories of code grouping in the first stage of analysis were *anti-nationalist*, *political outsider*, *inclusive, progressive. Anti-nationalist* categorized data content which was critical of Ukrainianization and contradicted opponent Petro Poroshenko's campaign. *Political outsider* categorized data content that referred to ending Ukraine's oligarchic system, and atypical political attire worn, and language promoted by Zelensky. As for *inclusive*, it was the code given

to data which was inclusive to both 'pro-Europeans' and 'Russophones' and data that included 'They vs We' statements. *Progressive* code was provided to data which referred to Zelensky's willingness to end the War in Donbass and remove corruption, as well as promoted mobilizing voter's opinions and concerns over social media. In the second stage of analysis, the codes were re-organized into more meaningful categories: *engagement; transparent; reformist*. The code *participation* was labelled on content which mobilized voter engagement within the campaign and promoted voting. *Transparent* was the code for data which featured Zelensky's campaign, campaign team, and personal activities. *Reformis*t was the code for data which educated audiences on voting and preventing election fraud, featured Zelensky speaking directly to audiences via social media videos, promoted party membership for all demographics, and referred to Zelensky as being a political outsider. *Performance* was the applied code to data containing performances with Kvartal 95 and the stadium debate. Following completion of two stages of analysis, two main codes were produced in the third stage of analysis: *social movement; performance*. Table 1. outlines the categories of code groupings in each stage of analysis.

Table 1.	
	Categories of Code Grouping
First Stage	• Anti-Nationalist • Political Outsider • Inclusive • Progressive
Second Stage	• Engagement • Transparent • Reformist • Performance
Third Stage	• Spectacle • Social Movement

Table 1. Stages of Categorical Grouping of Codes
Source: Author's own compilation.
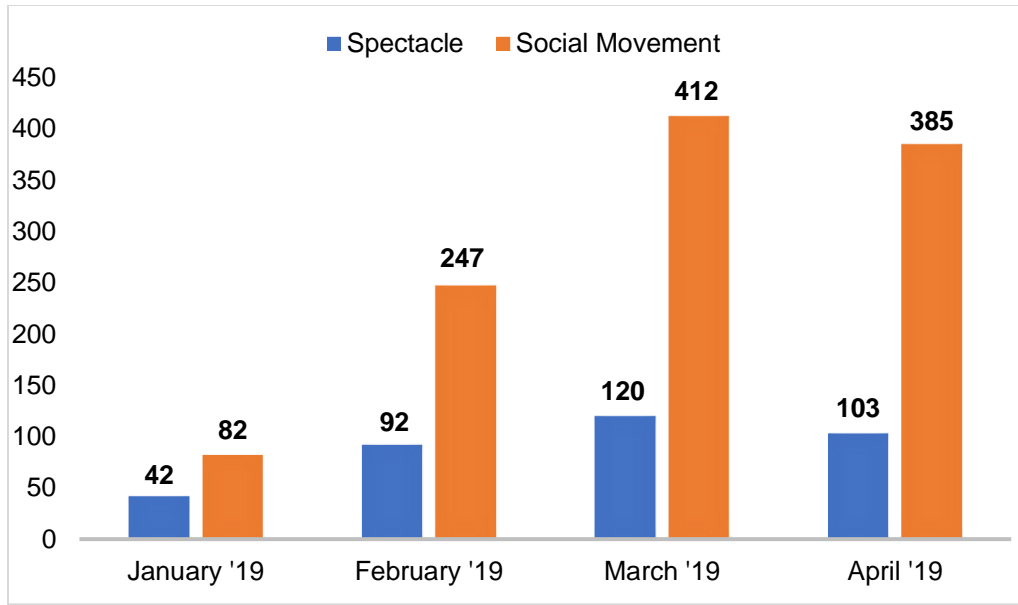
Figure 3. Monthly Spectacle and Social Movement Posts. This figure demonstrates the number of monthly posts in 2019 categorized as either *spectacle* or *social movement* uploaded on social media.
Source: Authors own compilation.
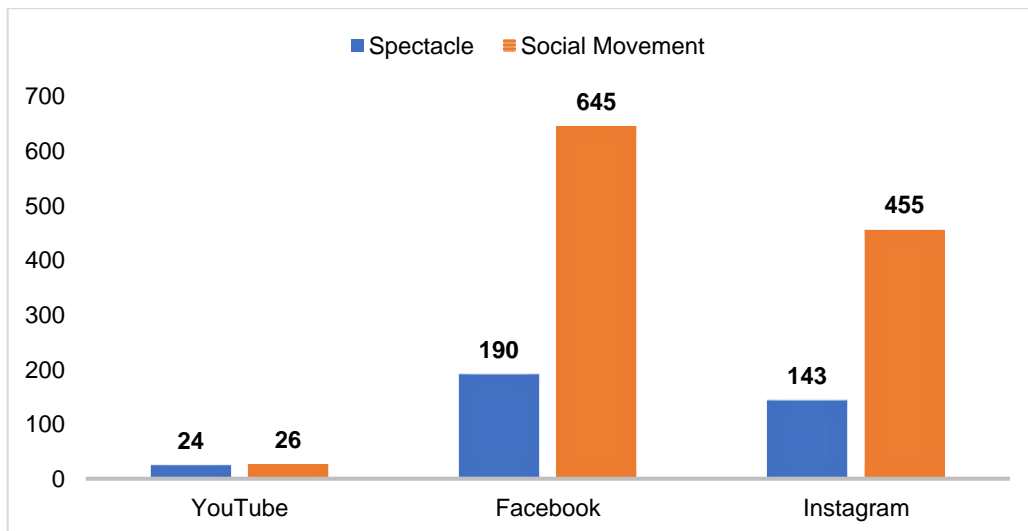
Figure 4. Post Themes on Social Media. This figure demonstrates the total number of social media posts uploaded by each social media platform during January 1, 2019 – April 21, 2019 that qualify for the coding categorization of *spectacle* or *social movement*.
Source: Authors own compilation.

The first main code produced in the third stage of analysis was *spectacle.* The *spectacle* in this thesis is defined as an artistic representation of life which is visually produced through imagery (Bunyard, 2011; Hartle, 2017). The *spectacle* can be formed through different productions including by the mass media and staged events (Hartle, 2017; Best & Kellner, 1999). As Zelensky's campaign was found upon qualitative content analysis to be primarily based on social media and secondly centered in live performances, the *spectacle* was found to be pervasive within the database. Particularly, the *spectacle* was identified during the analysis across social media platforms, as social media has become a naturalized space of work, politics, and entertainment (Elias, 2010, p. 822). Thereby, the increasing use of social media relates to the increase in spectacles through image use and circulation (Dewdney & Ride, 2014). As such, images in the database which were mass circulated in Zelensky's campaign were coded as *spectacle:* selfies videos and photos; Mr. Zelensky & Mrs. Zelensky voting. Likewise, data which promoted Zelensky's campaign through imagery were coded as *spectacle:* campaign slogans and merchandise; campaign cartoons. In addition, orchestrated special events that dramatized the election campaign were coded as *spectacle:* vlog series 'Ze! President is the Servant of the People;' posts related to the stadium debate; campaign commercials. Also coded as *spectacle* was data which referred to marketing particular personalities more than political platforms: references to the television series *Servant of the People;* Kvartal 95 performances; interviews. Table 2. illustrates the database examples coded as *spectacle.* In sum, the thematic code of *spectacle* was applied to data which were framed to produce a particular personality of Zelensky.

Table 2.	
Code	**List of Database Examples**
Spectacle	• Selfies videos and photos • Mr. Zelensky & Mrs. Zelensky voting • Campaign cartoons • Campaign slogans and merchandise • Vlog series 'Ze! President is the Servant of the People' • Content related to the stadium debate • Campaign commercials • References to television series *Servant of the People* • Kvartal 95 performances • Interviews

Table 2. Database Examples Coded as *Spectacle*
Source: Authors own compilation.

The second coded produced was *social movement* following qualitative content analysis of social media posts. In contemporary political events, social media has increasingly become a factor in promoting social movements, particularly in the organization and communication of the movement (Soares & Joia, 2015, p.1). The advantage of the application of social media in social movements is that it enables movements to spread rapidly and widely while bridging communication between actors and citizens (Soares & Joia, 2015, p.3). Consequently, social media has become a key driver escalating the process of expansion of social movements (Soares & Joia, 2015, p. 9). Following coding of data derived from social media, the theme *social movement* was identified. In this thesis, *social movement* is defined as an organized cause with a common goal of social change. The core of this theme in the campaign was the narration of Zelensky bringing in a new era of politics to Ukraine together with voters. Thus, social media posts which referred to changing the political system of Ukraine through voting was coded under the theme *social movement:* vlog series "don't f... up the elections"; voting information. Adding to this coding theme was the narration of Zelensky's team countering election fraud to further change the system, leaving posts referring to 'Ze Team's election monitoring' as a *social movement.* Other posts which referred to Zelensky's team activities and members, particularly in their efforts to provide transparency to change the political system was coded as a *social movement.* In addition, social media allows for an increase in the intensity of social connection in the creation of agenda setting within social movements (Soares & Joia, 2015, p. 6). Therefore,

social media posts which encouraged audience participation and input into the campaign was coded as *social movement:* social media campaign challenges; mobilizing audience input. As social media is a factor which escalates the evolution of social movements, social media posts referring to the expansion of 'Ze Team members and supporters' and increase in support of Zelensky's campaign by means of 'election polls' and 'election results' were coded as a *social movement.* Table 3. illustrates the database examples coded as *social movement.* Furthermore, social media posts which referred to the organization and communication of social change in Ukraine were coded as *social movement.*

Table 2.	
Code	**List of Database Examples**
Social Movement	• Vlog series "don't f... up the elections" • Voting information • Election monitoring • Transparency of 'Ze Team' members and activities • Internet campaign challenges • Mobilizing audience input • Expansion of 'Ze Team' members and supporters • Election results • Election polls

Table 3. Database Examples Coded as *Social Movement*
Source: Authors own compilation.

3. Analysis of the Social Media Campaign

3.1 Analysis of Posted Images

Through the application of qualitative content analysis, this section will analyze the images produced by Zelensky's campaign on social media. Particularly analyzed will be photos uploaded onto Zelensky's social media campaign accounts of Facebook, 'Команда Зеленьского,' and Instagram, 'Ze Team 2019.' Specifically, photos from Facebook (circa 540) and photos from Instagram (circa 350) will be visually analyzed, for a total of circa 890 images under analysis. The analysis will particularly focus on the composition of the images to ultimately evaluate how the images produced campaign messages to audiences.

3.1.1 Blurring Zelensky with Holoborodko

In the initial launching of Zelensky's social media campaign, Zelensky's presidential program was paralleled to character Holoborodko. There were repeated uploads of a still shot image of character Holoborodko acting as President of Ukraine across Instagram and Facebook. In the photo, Zelensky is featured as character Holoborodko walking dressed in a in a suit and tie while holding a briefcase. Upon analysis, the composition of the photo was found to be strategically put together. Zelensky is the largest image in the photo in addition to being in the focal point of view, with the background blurred and out of focus. Thus, when viewing the photo, the audience's attention is immediately directed to Zelensky as Holoborodko. In regard to value in terms of lighting, character Holoborodko is the most lit shape in the photo. Thus, the composition of the photo emphasized character Holoborodko as being an important personality in the context of the campaign.

A photo of Zelensky acting as Holoborodko was strategically circulated in the first month of the campaign. Through empirical research, it was found in the month of January the image was posted six times on Facebook and Instagram respectively. The still shot image became the cover photo of the official campaign Facebook page on January 1, 2019 following Zelensky's announcement of running for presidency on December 31, 2018. The image was the cover photo of the campaign Facebook page for nearly four weeks (December 31, 2018 – January 25, 2019).

On January 25, 2019, Zelensky's campaign released the presidential program on Facebook and Instagram featuring the same screen shot of Holoborodko acting as President of Ukraine at the top of the program. The empirical evidence shows how Zelensky's presidential campaign strategically circulated Zelensky's performance image from the television series *Servant of the People* in reference to the campaign program.

Zelensky's campaign directed spectators to connect Zelensky's campaign with his television character Holoborodko performing as the President of Ukraine. Upon analysis of data in terms of visual elements, the circulated photo of character Holoborodko was discovered to be paralleled to Zelensky's political persona. Thus, the television series *Servant of the People* was the initial principal in Zelensky's media-spectacle. Zelensky's campaign strategy corresponded to Debord's argument of the spectacle being mediated by images of which creates a social relationship between the spectator and the images (Debord, 1995). Therefore, the plot of the series of character Holoborodko's pursuit to bring stability to Ukraine by ousting the endemically corrupt government was visually connected to Zelensky's campaign. As such, Zelensky's campaign performed Debord's argument, "the world we see is not the real world but the world we are conditioned to see" (Debord, 2012). Thereby, Zelensky's campaign purposely framed to the audience through imagery of Zelensky being a presidential candidate in pursuit of progress and stability for Ukraine.

3.1.2 The Digital and Progressive Team

The increase in campaign membership was visualized through posts. In January 2019, Zelensky's campaign began recruiting 'Ze Team' members. A series of recurrent posts visualized the increase in number of registered party members and offices. The composition of the photos included the map of Ukraine as the focal point. The map was shaded green according to where 'Ze Team' offices were located. Thus, as the number of party members and offices increased, the map of Ukraine became greener. A pattern was found of the over twenty posts featuring the Ukrainian map becoming greener. The increased green shading of the map promoted the notion that Ukraine was growing united as 'Ze Team' expanded. The spectacle of the 'greening' of Ukraine presented Zelensky's campaign as something enormously positive, which according to Debord leads it to becoming valued and assumed important (Debord, 1992).

In addition, the posts were greatly visible in regard to the bold, blue lettering, of the number of 'Ze Team' members broadcasted. Spectators viewed the increase in team members, beginning from broadcasting 60 000 members on January 1, 2019 and ending at 500 401 members on January 26, 2019 (Команда Зеленського, 2019). Other shapes in the images included the top right of the photo reading "Hello Ukraine" in blue and green and the top left reading "Ze! Team" in green and yellow. The composition of the photos was found to be assembled to provide national connotations through the incorporation of the colours blue and yellow, the colours of the Ukrainian flag. As such, the recruitment posts were marketed to spectators through shapes and colours to promote the notion that Zelensky's campaign united the masses of Ukraine.

The social media campaign conducted a mass publication of selfies of Zelensky with 'Ze Team' representatives. Approximately twenty selfies of Zelensky with 'Ze Team' representatives were uploaded onto Facebook and Instagram. The composition of the photos was the same, Zelensky grinning beside a smiling young team member in centre focus of the frame. The photos were in amateur format, providing the impression to spectators that Zelensky took the selfie himself. In addition, Zelensky is repeatedly viewed dressed casually in simplistic colours such as grey and beige, which directed the spectator's focus on Zelensky and the 'Ze Team' member. Due to the photo composition being repeated, it produced a conveyed meaning to spectators. The emphasis of the photos was to convey progressiveness of Zelensky's team in terms of the number of young and female party members, transparency of party members, in addition to Zelensky appearing to acknowledge and work alongside his fellow team members. Furthermore, the 'raw' footage of 'Ze Team' selfie photos marketed the idea that Zelensky's campaign was structured to be forward-looking for Ukraine.

A spectacle of photos of 'Ze Team' supporters was broadcasted across social media platforms. Discovered through empirical investigation was a number of photos featuring 'Ze Team' supporters in Ukraine, Poland, and Canada. In the case of 'Ze Team' enthusiasts in Ukraine, posts featured supporters either holding 'Ze Team' stickers, or branding their car, cellphone, or store with 'Ze Team' stickers. In each photo, the brightly coloured campaign sticker stood in focus in contrast to the dimly lit background. There were additional posted photos featuring 'Ze Team' supporters across Ukraine's borders in Poland. The photos of 'Ze

Team' supporters in Poland all included brightly coloured campaign stickers spread across the table and posted on supporters' laptops. Also uploaded were 'Ze Team' supporters and representatives in Canada. The posts showcased the 'Ze Team' office with representatives in Toronto, Canada. The broadcasted 'Ze Team' supporters included the Canadian-Ukrainian biker club 'The Cossack's' sporting 'Ze Team' stickers on their biker club jackets. Through the analysis of photos, there was found emphasis on the expansion of 'Ze Team' support both nationally and internationally. Thus, through the showcasing of international support for 'Ze Team', Zelensky's campaign appeared to be a unifying group for Ukrainian society.

The premises and activities of 'Ze Team' members were publicized across social media. Social media campaign pages showcased a number of photos exhibiting the interior of the offices. The photos included repeated features: a desk with a laptop and chair, stickers and posters on the wall featuring Zelensky's campaign quotes and slogans, and 'Ze Team' members working at their desks. It was found during analysis that the colour green was repeatedly applied, as the walls, campaign stickers, and posters were coloured green along with the furniture being green. In addition, the offices were furnished in minimalistic manner but in an organized fashion. The presentation of the offices provided the impression of 'Ze Team' being an organized and non-extravagant party. As well, the photos of the offices appeared to be taken by an amateur, due to the lack of quality of lighting, which promoted the idea to spectators that the photos were factual of how Zelensky's campaign offices appeared. In addition, upon empirical investigation a number of the office photos featured the theme of technology. Such photos featured 'Ze Team' members working on laptops or cellphones. The notion of 'Ze Team' being digitalized was particularly advocated through imagery in the days preceding the first and second round of the election. A number of images featured 'Ze Team' members working to counter election fraud in bright focal view operating on their laptops or cellphones. Furthermore, upon analysis of photos featuring the 'Ze Team' offices and staff, Zelensky's campaign marketed itself as a political party that was transparent about its digital and progressive campaign activities.

3.1.3 The Green Movement

Following the analysis of 1159 photos, two repeated patterns were identified in the images. The first pattern was the repeated incorporation of the colours blue, yellow, and green. Green was the principal colour of Zelensky's social media campaign, which was found to be incorporated in the majority of social media posts. In addition, the colours blue and yellow were actively applied in social media images, which are the two colours of the Ukrainian flag. When the colours blue and yellow are combined together, it creates the colour green. The application of these three particular colours provided the implication that Ukraine, represented as the colours blue and yellow, blended together creates the colour green - 'Ze Team.' The second pattern identified was the notion of transparency in regard to 'Ze Team' activities through imagery. Numerous photos circulated across Zelensky's social media accounts which featured 'Ze Team' members and supporters, 'Ze Team' offices, and 'Ze Team' members working. Thereby, Zelensky's media campaign promoted the idea through images that Zelensky's program was progressive through its efforts to be transparent. Furthermore, the circulated campaign images framed Zelensky's green campaign as a united movement in creating national progress.

3.2 Analysis of Posted Videos

This section will analyze videos uploaded by Zelensky's campaign onto social media. The videos analyzed were uploaded onto Zelensky's social media campaign accounts of YouTube (50), Facebook (circa 295), and Instagram (circa 290). The videos under analysis were analyzed chronologically according to date of posting. Therefore, the videos analyzed from the first round of the election campaign (January 1 – March 31, 2019) were Zelensky's campaign produced vlog series "Ze! President is the Servant of the People", videos featuring Zelensky's performances with the Kvartal 95 comedy tour and posted video clips from season 1 -3 of the television series *Servant of the People*. Videos analyzed from the second round of the election campaign (April 1 – April 21, 2019) were videos promoting the stadium debate. As for the vlog series "don't f... up the elections", it was investigated throughout the analysis as it was produced and posted during both rounds of the campaign. Furthermore, the analysis of circa 635 videos will particularly focus on uncovering themes that were progressively repeated and circulated during the first and second round of the campaign.

3.2.1 The First Round's Opening Acts

Scenes from past seasons of the television series *Servant of the People* were featured on the official campaign Instagram and Facebook pages. Early into the campaign, Zelensky's campaign posted scenes from *Servant of the People* featuring Zelensky acting as President Holoborodko who was trying to bring change to the country. The video was posted in the first week of Zelensky's campaign on January 7, 2019. In the video clip, the scene features President Holoborodko stating to a fellow politician how he believes Ukrainians should live: lower taxes, quick business registration, universal health care benefits, greater purchasing power. In second video posted on January 23, 2019, Zelensky is again acting as President Holoborodko who is avidly trying to reform the country's infrastructure to be similar to its European neighbours but is prevented from endemic state corruption. The scene exposes how deficient Ukrainian roads are compared to neighbouring European states and the top-down corruption of Ukraine's Ministry of Infrastructure. As for the third video posted on February 16, 2019, it starred two oligarchs creating a corrupt scheme that would make the Ukrainian taxpayers pay for the holes in their budget. The video ends with the message "March 2019" in reference to the first round of voting on March 31, 2019. Upon analysis, it is discovered that Zelensky's campaign relied on assertions performed in the television scenes that held no basis if the performed statements were actually in fact part of Zelensky's presidential program (Flyverbom & Reinecke, 2017, p. 1635). Accordingly, the television scene-spectacle portrayed to spectators that Zelensky's campaign was parallel to Holoborodko's performed presidency of trying to battle endemic state corruption. Thereby, by posting scenes from *Servant of the People* it contributed to formulating Zelensky's undefined political orientation and ideology to correspond to the plot of the television series.

The third season of the television series *Servant of the People* was promoted and released proceeding the first round of voting. In the months preceding the third season premiere, official campaign social media accounts showcased the filming of the series featuring scenes of Zelensky acting as Holoborodko. The early released scenes were featured in Zelensky's vlog series "Ze! President is the Servant of the People" and across the campaign Facebook account exhibiting Zelensky repeatedly performing as Holoborodko. Found during observation was of the series trailer and episodes reinforcing the mirage of Zelensky's presidential ambitions being equivalent to character Holoborodko's. The plot of the third series featured Zelensky as Holoborodko

campaigning for President of Ukraine following a corruptive oligarch scheme which resulted in him losing his presidency and becoming incarcerated. The plot of the series was timely as scenes from the show featured many recognisable personalities from Ukrainian politics and premiered on March 27, 2019, days before the first-round of voting scheduled on March 31, 2019 (OSCE, 2019, p. 25). Found through empirical research was that the majority of YouTube videos published on Zelensky's campaign account following the third season's airing contained links to full episodes of the third series. Furthermore, the analysis discovered that a strategy of Zelensky's campaign was of reinforcing Zelensky's image of character Holoborodko and merging his character performance with his presidential program.

The vlog series "Ze! President is the Servant of the People" showcased how Zelensky was just an ordinary man trying to become president. The 13-episode vlog series was published in the first round of the campaign between January 25 – March 14, 2019. Full episodes of the series were uploaded onto YouTube and clips of scenes were posted onto Facebook and Instagram. Each episode opened with two circles, one coloured blue and other yellow, coming from opposite directions and joining together in centre screen. As the circles came together, they created the colour green which read ""Ze! President is the Servant of the People". Following the opening referencing Ukrainian unity being associated with Zelensky's campaign, spectators of the series watched scenes showcasing Zelensky's 'daily life': Zelensky's 41st birthday celebration; shopping in the Odessa market; having tea with party members; conducting campaign meetings; comedic performances with the Kvartal 95 troupe; multiple clips of his daily workouts in the gym. Spectators watched Zelensky repeatedly dressed casually in scenes sporting baseball caps, jeans, sneakers, and workout clothes while chatting with either party members in meetings or citizens in the streets. Zelensky's casual attire added to the visualization of Zelensky being an ordinary man trying to become president. Upon further interpretive investigation, it was found that there was particular emphasis on providing transparency of 'Ze Team' activities. Numerous scenes were filmed inside 'Ze Team' offices featuring Zelensky collaborating with 'Ze Team' members. As well, full scenes featured Zelensky conducting meetings with fellow team members and governmental bodies. Thus, it was found that through the exhibition of scenes of Zelensky's life in the vlog series, an impression was created for spectators that Zelensky was transparent about his personal and professional activities on his

journey towards presidency. The vlog series was intended to gravitate spectator's attention away from political orientations to be redirected through entertainment on Zelensky's 'life' on the campaign trail.

The Kvartal 95 comedy tour starring Zelensky was featured across the campaign's social media pages. Kvartal 95's national comedy tour was performed simultaneously during the first round of the election campaign. Scenes from the performances were featured in the vlog series "Ze! President is the Servant of the People" and on Facebook and Instagram, whereas the full Dnipro-Arena performance was accessible on YouTube. Following observation and interpretation of the videos, a repeated message was discovered in the performances - Ukraine was a divided society and needed to be re-united. This message was reinforced through the use of symbols in performances. A number of performances included child performers, symbolizing future, dressed in the symbolic colour of peace - white. In addition, Zelensky and Kvartal 95 performers repeatedly encouraged audiences to lift two fingers in the air to make the peace sign together. Each concert ended with a patriotic song accompanied with a slide show of images of united moments in Ukraine's national contemporary history. Such images included 'The Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine' and prideful moments in the Olympic Games. Following the analysis, it is understood that the Kvartal 95 performances created a spectacle to selectively bring into vision what the troupe wanted to show - Zelensky as the President of Ukraine would be the provider of peace and national unity.

Audience members attending the Kvartal 95 performances were featured in video clips. Mass numbers attended the Kvartal-95 concerts, ranging from hundreds filling the seats of local theatres to as large as 15,000 people occupying an arena (Carroll, 2019). Camera angles produced views in the "Ze! President is the Servant of the People" vlog series highlighting the large theatres and arenas being filled by audiences. It should be noted that the large number of audiences may have been partly due to the first afternoon performance being free, and the second night-time performance being a charged event (ODIHR, 2019, p. 17). While the camera focused in on audiences ranging in age from toddler to pensioner, social media spectators watched audiences either cheer along with Zelensky and the performers or saddened by performances that referred to national corruption and war. Also highlighted were audience members dressed in green with cellphones branded with "Ze Team" stickers in support of Zelensky's campaign.

Identified in the video clips of the performances was the notion that Zelensky brings people of all demographics together; thereby, he was a unifying factor of Ukrainian society.

The vlog series "don't f... up the elections" provided the practice aspects of voting. The series produced twenty episodes featuring Kvartal 95 performer Ruslan Hanumak as the host. The vlog series was published between January 31 – April 19, 2019 across the campaign accounts of YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. The majority of the videos were posted in the first round of the election (13 videos) compared to the second round (7 videos). The series was posted in the format of short motivational videos explaining the practical aspects of voting such as how to register, check yourself in the lists, possible voting obstacles, etc. (Burmahin, Dutsyk, Kuzmenko, & Lurkova, 2019, p. 45). It was greatly emphasized in the vlog the importance of voting and the negative implications of either not voting or voting with incomplete registration. The videos were discovered to target youth audiences due to the basic information provided on voting and the language and demeanour of the host Hanumak. Though, it should be noted that the videos did not provide information on how president's powers nor on how to make an informed choice when voting (Burmahin, Dutsyk, Kuzmenko, & Lurkova, 2019, p. 45). Therefore, the repeated message emphasized in the videos was that in order to change the present governmental system one must vote in the presidential elections. As such, the vlog series directed spectators' attention to the importance of voting to change the governmental system, reducing focus on Zelensky's abilities and plans as president.

3.2.2 The Second Round's Grand Finale

A series of video debate challenges conducted by Zelensky's campaign in the second round of election circulated across social media. The first video challenge was released on April 3, 2019 on the official Facebook and YouTube accounts of Zelensky's campaign, gaining 2.7 million views and 1.5 million views respectively. The video was found to be professionally constructed, which included a dramatic soundtrack and the camera focusing on Zelensky in nine different camera angles. The video concluded with Zelensky giving his opponent, incumbent President Poroshenko, '24 hours to decide' whether to accept the 'debate challenge' at Kyiv's Olympic Stadium (Euronews, 2019). Adding to the spectacle was the live video countdown clock featured on Zelensky's campaign Facebook page commencing at 24:00:00 on April 3

which gathered 403 500 views (Команда Зеленського, 2019). Poroshenko participated in the spectacle by accepting Zelensky's 'debate challenge' by posting a 'challenge acceptance' video on his personal Twitter account before the twenty-four hours ran out (Петро Порошенко, 2019). Zelensky further added to the media-spectacle by asking third-place contender and former Prime Minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko to host the stadium debate between Poroshenko and Zelensky. The video appeal uploaded on Zelensky's official campaign Facebook and YouTube accounts both received one million views (Зе! Президент, 2019; Команда Зеленського, 2019). In the video, Zelensky requested Tymoshenko to be 'the guarantor of honest rules,' providing her the same deadline as Poroshenko - '24 hours to decide' (Зе! Президент, 2019; Команда Зеленського, 2019). Tymoshenko declined to partake in the spectacle by rejecting the position to be the host of the stadium debate. The colorful social-media video exchange dominated media coverage of the presidential election. It was found that the videos distracted spectators from discussing the candidate's policy and rather redirected the spectators focus to the media-spectacle designed to subdue social criticisms (Rohozinska & Shpak, 2019, p. 39; Kersten & Abbott, 2012, p. 324). Thereby, interpreted from Zelensky's debate-challenge videos was Zelensky's campaign strategy of creating a media-spectacle to subdue discussion on his political platform and ideology by spectators.

The campaign media-spectacle in the leadup to the stadium debate included video live-streaming of Poroshenko and Zelensky taking blood tests. In Zelensky's video debate-challenge to Poroshenko, he created the debate condition of compulsory medical checks to ensure spectators that no alcoholics nor drug addicts would be present at the debate. Ensued was the live airing of Poroshenko and Zelensky's medical tests. Camera crews accompanied the presidential candidates into the medical room, allowing spectators to watch the presidential candidates having their blood drawn (Двадцять Чотири Канал, 2019; Телеканал ZIK, 2019). The procedure of the blood tests was fully captured on live video and broadcasted across multiple media platforms. Zelensky's media campaign created a bandwagon effect as the stadium debate turned into the most discussed topic amongst Ukrainian television channels (OSCE, 2019). Interpreted from the live-streaming of the blood tests was the intentional creation of a media-spectacle by Zelensky's campaign for the purpose of drawing in audience's attention to the entertainment surrounding the stadium debate rather than to political platforms.

The stadium debate was held in a spectacle format. Instead of participating in the studio of a public news broadcaster, Zelensky's campaign organized the debate in an unprecedented format at the Kyiv Olympic Stadium on Friday, April 19th. (CANADEM, 2019, p. 24; Burmahin, Dutsyk, Kuzmenko, & Lurkova, 2019, p. 20). The debate was live streamed in video format on Zelensky's campaign accounts of Facebook and YouTube which gained 498 900 and over one million spectators respectively, in addition to the estimated 22,000-person audience at the debate (Команда Зеленського, 2019; Зе! Президент, 2019; OSCE, 2019, p. 19). These figures do not account for the number of spectators from Ukrainian public media, as the debate was live streamed on most major Ukrainian television networks, as well as broadcasted on radio and online (CANADEM, 2019, p. 24). Visually observed was the debate itself formatted as a sports match with the event commencing with the flipping of a coin to determine who will start the debate. Zelensky's demeanour when speaking was interpreted as a performance, due to the multiple instances of himself showing peace signs to the crowd accompanied by passionate and rehearsed speeches. Thus, it is concluded following analyzation that the stadium debate was formatted by Zelensky's campaign to be an entertaining event rather than an informative political debate. As such, Zelensky used his entertainment career to benefit his political career by applying celebrity politics (Schultz, 2001). Thereby, the stadium debate was a spectacular performance with framed focus on the events surrounding the debate and the format of the debate rather than focusing on actual political discussions.

3.2.3 The Acted Program

The videos posted in Zelensky's social media campaign progressively filled in the gaps of Zelensky's undefined presidential program. Neither Zelensky's campaign nor Zelensky himself produced clear messages on his presidential program and its policies on key issues such as national defence, foreign policy, cooperation with international organizations including NATO and the IMF, nor on countering Russian aggression in Donbass (Burmahin, Dutsyk, Kuzmenko, & Lurkova, 2019, p. 46). Rather, through performativity the presidential program emphasized its plan on countering endemic state corruption and bringing change to Ukraine. As such, the videos in Zelensky's campaign progressively completed the presidential program through a produced spectacle. Essentially, Zelensky's campaign supplemented his lack of comprehensive political strategy with rehearsed performances.

3.3 Discourse Analysis on Campaign Language

This section will apply discourse analysis on the application of language by Zelensky's campaign. First, the analysis will be applied on spoken language during Zelensky's performance to uncover linguistic messages. The particular spoken language under analysis derives from Zelensky's performances with the Kvartal 95 troupe as well as from Zelensky's performance at the stadium debate. Second, the analysis will be conducted on campaign slogans and hashtags identified in postings on Instagram and Facebook. Ultimately, the analysis is applied in effort to dismantle the messages spoken during Zelensky's performances and written social media posts to uncover the impact his language use made on mobilizing support from spectators.

3.3.1 Spoken Language

The Kvartal 95 national comedy tour featured a number of spoken acts referencing Zelensky's campaign. The linguistic performances took the form of comedy skits, singing, and speeches. One particular comedy act performed at the Dnipro-Arena raised attention while conducting discourse analysis. The comedy skit showcased Zelensky requiring a 'body double' since Zelensky 'will be president' as stated by one Kvartal 95 performer. In the skit, Zelensky questioned the body double's response in the case of bribes. As Zelensky bribed the 'body double,' beginning from one million dollars and ending at twenty million dollars, the 'body double' succeeded the challenge by refusing every bribe (Зе! Президент, 2019). Thus, it was uncovered that a particular message was promoted and narrated in the comedy skit, which was that Zelensky would be an incorruptible President of Ukraine.

The lyrics of songs sung by Zelensky along with the Kvartal 95 troupe vocalized the narrative of Ukraine being a divided society. The song 'My girl' was performed with altered lyrics emphasising the great division within Ukraine exemplified by the current War in Donbass (Зе! Президент, 2019). The troupe also performed the song 'I love my Motherland', containing lyrics reinforcing the necessity for national unity. This message was emphasized through such lyrics as, "the country is divided again," "I simply want to live in a world with peace," "There are hopes of Maidan again," and "I have no government" (Зе! Президент, 2019). Another song performed emphasized the united pursuit to remove corrupt politicians and oligarchs: "We've

had enough, they're disgraces, we're the ones going places, just say no to their faces" (Zhegulev & Kohen, 2019). Also performed along with child performers was "Life is Beautiful", which narrated the possible post-election outcome of a bright future for Ukraine with Zelensky as President of Ukraine: "Year 2019, April 1, just imagine and believe that everything you wished for came true" (Zhegulev & Kohen, 2019). As for the performed song "The Country that our Children will be Proud of," the lyrics referred to a future Ukraine filled with national pride and peace (Зе! Президент, 2019). Upon executing discourse analysis, found was produced spectacles narrating Zelensky's presidential program. Zelensky applied his performance image to produce spectacles of himself through theatrical practices to narrate a particular organizational reality into existence (Alvesson, 2013). As such, Zelensky and Kvartal 95 performers narrated to the spectators through spectacle-performances of Zelensky being the future provider of peace and prosperity for the Ukrainian nation as President of Ukraine.

The stadium debate was filled with spoken narratives of how Zelensky would be as President of Ukraine. Identified through discourse analysis was the repeatedly spoken message by Zelensky that he as president would bring only enormous positivity to Ukrainian society. Though, details of the presidential program were absent from Zelensky's speeches, instead Zelensky made sweeping statements in reference to his program: "We will do everything we can to end the war (Ruptly, 2019)." So, Zelensky created a debate-spectacle which united the audience in their national wishes as Zelensky performed to be the man who would break Ukraine's corrupt governmental system. Through speech, Zelensky also presented himself as an opponent to corruption: "I'm not a politician, I'm just a person, a simple person, who came here to break the system - to destroy the system (Ruptly, 2019)." Further emphasizing the massive corruption within the state, Zelensky described his opponent Poroshenko as, "Two Poroshenko's - the first is the expert in front of the cameras and the second is a corrupt politician behind the cameras" (Ruptly, 2019). The rhetoric of Zelensky's affirmative pursuit to end systemic corruption continued as the debate progressed by claiming the following to Poroshenko: "I am not your opponent; I am your sentence" (Ruptly, 2019). Performing as the 'true representative of the people,' Zelensky asked Poroshenko questions created by the spectators which were submitted via social media posts. The majority of the questions he applied at the debate were claimed to be 'from the people,' as he asserted repeatedly each time before reading his list of

questions to Poroshenko. The aforementioned remark cemented the message of Zelensky being a man of the people - for the people. As shown in the included quotes, Zelensky linguistically crafted himself as embodying alacrity. Debord described the spectacle as the institution of 'enormous positivity' in which 'everything that appears is good' (Debord, 1994, p. 15). Thus, Zelensky's language had a performative function to portray himself as an ordinary man who as president would break the corrupt governmental system.

The format of the stadium debate being spectacularized pacified criticism of Zelensky's presidential platform. Spectacular events, such as the stadium debate, are designed to subdue social criticisms by redirecting the spectator's attention to the spectacle (Kersten & Abbott, 2012). As such, the structure of both Zelensky's debate performance and the debate itself provided limited opportunity for the deconstruction of his presidential program and subdued the ability to think critically on Zelensky's presidential program. In addition, the format of the event offered limited opportunity for spectators to compare the presidential platforms of the candidates and familiarize themselves with Zelensky's programmes (OSCE, 2019, p. 5-6). Also, since the debate took place 36 hours before the second-round election day on April 21st, it did not allow for sufficient time for a fulsome and meaningful discussion on the issues and positions raised by the candidates (CANADEM, 2019, p. 10). Consequently, the spectacular debate subdued criticism on Zelensky's undefined platform and instead mobilized spectators into Zelensky's media spectacle.

3.3.2 Posted Language

The name of the television series *Servant of the People* was the source of Zelensky's campaign slogan "Ze! President is the Servant of the People." The initial application of the slogan was on the first day of Zelensky's campaign on January 1, 2019. The slogan was included in the centre of the photo in which Zelensky is featured acting as character Holoborodko dressed in a suit and walking with a briefcase as described in section 3.1.1. The slogan was later branded across multiple photos which feature Zelensky posted on social media. Upon analysis, 'Ze! President' is found to refer to Zelensky as President of Ukraine and the title of 'Servant of the People' is derived from the television series in which Zelensky acted as the protagonist hero Holoborodko.

The slogan "Ze! President is the Servant of the People" was also applied as the title of one of the campaign vlog series. The thirteen-episode vlog series featured across social media (*YouTube, Facebook,* and *Instagram*) was intended to be transparent on Zelensky's journey to presidency while Zelensky remained uncorrupt:

> "You will see everything: Who we are, how we prepare our election program, how we assemble a team and even how we look for money. And most importantly - how to become president and still remain human!" (Зе! Президент, 2019)

After applying discourse analysis on the application of the slogan "Ze! President is the Servant of the People" to photos and the vlog series, it was found that the language reference attached the theme of the television series *Servant of the People* to Zelensky's campaign program. The particular theme was of an ordinary man becoming president and eradicating state corruption. Thus, Zelensky's campaign referenced the cultivated media image of the protagonist hero of the television series to Zelensky's presidential personality. Thereby, the slogan narrated to the spectators how Zelensky as President of Ukraine would be an ordinary man fighting against state corruption.

The main hashtag of Zelensky's campaign was #Letsdoittogether (Let's do it together). The hashtag was used throughout the campaign with its first application on January 7, 2019 (Команда Зеленського, 2019). The hashtag #Letsdoittogether accompanied the majority of social media posts on Instagram and Facebook with reference to building the campaign including the presidential program, campaign billboards, and deciding who to assign the positions of Prime Minister of Ukraine and Head of the Security Service. The first case of Zelensky's application of the hashtag was on January 8, 2019 in the video captioned, "Our Program. Step 1. Let's do it Together!" in which he asked upon the audience to build the presidential program with him. The post received 5 000 comments with viewers providing their input on the presidential program. Upon the release of the presidential program on January 25, 2019, Zelensky's campaign again appealed to the audience, receiving 13 000 comments from spectators:

> "Comment, offer your ideas! This is important, because together we will be able to achieve the main goal - to build the Ukraine of our dreams! #Letsdoittogether!" (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

The phrase of 'building the Ukraine of our dreams' accompanied by the hashtag #Letsdoittogether was frequently posted across social media. Particularly it was posted in reference to encouraging voting during:

"March 31 make the right choice! Create a dream country for the next generations. Create a country that you will be proud of and in which you want to live! Let's do it together!" (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

"April 21 is a decisive choice! On this day, be sure to come to your polling station and cast your vote to build a dream country for the next 5 years! 🐣 #Letsdoittogether" (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

As demonstrated in the above posts, Zelensky's campaign encouraged through direct language and hashtags for people to vote in both rounds of the election. The found underlying reference of 'building a dream country' refers to ending the corrupt governmental system through the removal of corrupt political elites and oligarchs.

The hashtag #Letsdoittogether was also applied as means to crowdsource questions from spectators to bring to the stadium debate. Prior to the stadium debate in the second round of the election, Zelensky called upon spectators to provide him questions to ask Poroshenko at the debate on April 19, 2019. Facebook and YouTube were the applied media platforms for crowdsourcing questions for Zelensky. Though, Zelensky's YouTube vlog series "Ze! President is the Servant of the People" and "don't f... up the elections" also contained links to the official website of Zelensky's campaign where spectators could post questions for Zelensky to ask Poroshenko at the debate. An example of one of many posts encouraging audience to provide questions is the following:

"What question would you like to ask Poroshenko? Write in comments! #Letsdoittogether!" (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

The above post received 14 000 comments from spectators. Zelensky's informal communication style on equal terms of the audience contributed to the active involvement of audience communication through the comment section (Burmahin, Dutsyk, Kuzmenko, & Lurkova, 2019, p. 20 - 21).

The discourse of promoting spectators' advocacy was promoted throughout the campaign. In an interview between Mikhail Fedorov, the main digital strategist of Zelensky's presidential campaign, and the internet television station Hromadske, Fedorov claimed that each stage of the campaign was maximally tuned to engage spectators (Кутєпов, 2019). As such, online competitions were created and advertised on Facebook and Instagram:

"Zelensky's team supports the world record of selfies! Join! #Letsdoittogether!"
(Ze Team 2019, 2019)

A number of online competitions followed such as 'The Best Fake', 'Become an Election observer', 'World Record of Selfies' due in part to the explosion of a mediatized selfie culture. People embrace spectacular self-production in the selfie culture (Flyverbom & Reinecke, 2017). Therefore, according to digital strategist Fedorov, the online campaign competitions led to a great increase in audience numbers according to digital strategist Fedorov (Кутєпов, 2019).

3.3.3 The True Servant of the People

A discovered tactic of Zelensky's campaign was building his political position around his television personality. Following completion of discourse analysis on spoken and posted language, discovered was a circulated and all-encompassing message. This message being that Zelensky was an ordinary man who was trying to eradicate Ukraine's troubles of corruption and war. Though, this message is framed from his character personality from the television series *Servant of the People* and not based on his undefined political ideology. As such, Zelensky's campaign vocabulary, applied through an acted humble demeanour, presented himself as an average and uncorrupt man. As for the published posts they referred to directly to the television series *Servant of the People* (Ze! Is the Servant of the People). As well, the posts refereed to themes from his character personality (building a dreamed Ukraine). Therefore, the language of Zelensky's campaign aligned his political position to his character personality's actions in the television series *Servant of the People.*

A strategy of Zelensky's campaign was building communication with audience through social media. Zelensky's campaign encouraged the audience to become active participants within the spectacle stage of social media. By soliciting for spectators' input through social media in

engaging ways, spectators were succumbed to the notion that through participation in Zelensky's campaign they could create change within the system. Thereby, the campaign strategy of creating an interactive spectacle through posted language within Zelensky's campaign further integrated the spectator into the spectacle. In the context of Zelensky's campaign, Zelensky's social media posts called upon the audience for their opinion and feedback regarding the direction of his campaign. By listening to the 'people' rather than the 'experts' it created the illusion to spectators of their possession of agency within the spectacle due to the reason that individuals develop a sense of involvement in the process of making political decisions when communicating with politicians through social networks (Konstantynivska, 2019). Thus, discovered was Zelensky's campaign tactic of promoting the spectator's creativity and emotions while leading them to believe they have agency within his campaign (Arvidsson, 2005). Thereby, Zelensky's campaign increased the pervasiveness of the spectacle by means of linguistically promoting participation from the spectators.

3.4 Reoccurring Themes

In this section, it will be elaborated the recurrent themes found within Zelensky's social media campaign and how they were mapped. Particularly described are the two recurrent themes identified and mapped: *spectacle* and *social movement.* The two themes were found to be promoted simultaneously through images, videos, and language throughout the election. Thus, the following section will elaborate the ways in which Zelensky's campaign can be categorized under the themes of *spectacle* and *social movement* in order to make the justified claim that Zelensky's campaign was a *spectacular social movement.*

The theme of *spectacle* was identified following the application of qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis of postings uploaded onto social media platforms (*YouTube, Facebook, Instagram*). It was uncovered that Zelensky's campaign conducted a performative style of politics though *spectacles*. The first *spectacle* uncovered was paralleling the plot of the television series *Servant of the People* to his presidential campaign platform. It was further paralleled with the promotion and release of the series third season. As well, found was the mass circulation of selfie formatted photos and videos. A number of photos and videos released by

Zelensky's media campaign were taken by Zelensky himself in 'selfie style'. Selfie format allowed for him to speak directly to the camera and in turn provided the impression that he was speaking directly to the spectators. In addition, the 'selfie format' in photos and videos provided 'native' footage of Zelensky's campaign activities, formulating the performance of Zelensky looking and speaking directly to the people as he was a 'man of the people.' Adding to the findings was Zelensky's filmed performances in the vlog series "Ze! President in the Servant of the People" which featured selected scenes of Zelensky's activities during the campaign. Adding to the theme of *spectacle* was Zelensky's acts during the Kvartal 95 comedy tour and the stadium debate, which through singing, acting and speeches brought into vision a particular rehearsed view of Zelensky. As such, Zelensky's campaign conducted numerous *spectacles* formatted in non-traditional campaign methods.

The discovered theme of *social movement* was also identified following the application of qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis on social media posts. It was identified the repeated application of the colours green, yellow, and blue. The colours blue and yellow, the same colours of the Ukrainian flag, were visualized blended together in campaign YouTube videos to create the colour green - the official colour of Zelensky's campaign. This repeated visualized imagery provided the impression to spectators that Zelensky's campaign unites the masses of Ukrainian society. In addition, found was the continual uploading of images and videos 'Ze Team's' office activities, promoting the notion of party transparency, which was novel to Ukraine's political arena. Adding to the novelty was the publicizing of the international expansion of 'Ze Team' support, creating the impression that 'Ze Team' was a large movement for social change. Adding to the notion of change, was the vlog series "don't f... up the elections" which encouraged spectators to vote by means of educational videos. Adding to the theme of *social movement* were spoken utterances during the Kvartal 95 comedy tour and stadium debate that promoted the perception that Zelensky would bring an end to corruption and the War in Donbas found after discourse analysis. This discourse was further advocated through the applications of slogans and hashtags which promoted social change through united efforts.

4. Zelensky & Populism

4.1 The Populist and the Spectacle

Social media platforms, the dominant element of Zelensky's media campaign, has an ever-increasing presence in contemporary politics. As social media has grown in prominence in mass media, so has its prominence in its application in the political sphere due to its ability to provide increased communication between people (Stratton, 2018, p. 21). As such, social media is found to be a capable tool for mobilizing citizens for political activeness during electoral campaigns (Jakubowski, 2020). Through social media, users are integrated into the spectacle through more engaging ways through such means as soliciting viewers opinions and online competitions (Best & Kellner, 1999). The social media platforms applied in Zelensky's media campaign, are found to be particular locations for political mobilization.

The engaging ability of social media has provided a new territory for populist activities. This has led to an increasing number of papers in the past decade on the relationship between social media and populism (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016; Dittrich, 2017; Khosravinik, 2017; Schumann, Boer, Hanke, & Liu, 2019). Jakub Jakubowski (2020) found that since the internet has developed into an interactive medium with limited control over content, social media platforms have become an excellent channel for the spreading of populist messages (p. 123). Also uncovered is that social media provides populists that ability to apply diverse communication techniques to express their particular interests (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Jakubowski, 2020). Thus, social media has been found to significantly enhance the dissemination of populist messages (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016). In addition, Moffitt and Tormey (2013) add that populist communication style contains repertoires of performance to create political relations. As such, performances are incorporated into populist communication due to the strong perlocutionary effects of performances as outlined by Judith Butler's performativity. Therefore, populist performance style is manifested in multiple means including social media, as is allows for the establishment of relations between political actors and citizens (Jakubowski, 2020). Thus, this next section will investigate how Zelensky's communicative style on social media platforms disseminated populist messages to mobilize campaign support.

4.1.1 Shared Elements

Populist's performative style shares common elements with Guy Debord's *spectacle.* According to Meghan Sutherland (2012), certain techno-economic relations which produce the spectacle contain shared aesthetic elements which produce populist rhetoric (Sutherland, 2012). The conditions and characteristics which are present in both the spectacle and populism are: the existence and emphasis of 'the people'; emphasis on the production of social unity that is predicated on societal separation; the presence of a spectacle. In the subsequent section, the elements of populist's performative style and the spectacle will be outlined in effort to determine how Zelensky's *spectacular social movement* incorporated populist stylistic traits of communication in its spectacle.

Both populist communication and Debord's *spectacle* depend on 'the people' for existence. In the case of populism, 'the society' and 'the people' do not exist as a a coherent formation. Thus, populism comes into existence as 'the people' form together into an internal frontier against the institutional system (Laclau, 2005, p. 73-74; 94-99). As the people form their demands, a charismatic leader arises as the 'true representative' of 'the people' who is purposed to fulfill the demands of 'the people'. In the case of the *spectacle*, the concept was produced to describe commodity's totalizing dominance on the social system that was predicated on submission and conformity of 'the people' (Debord, 1995, p. 26). The mechanism in which 'the people' are interpellated into such subjects is 'the spectacle' (Teurlings, 2013, p. 515). Furthermore, the two concepts require 'the people' for existence. Expanding into the case of Zelensky's campaign, the audiences of his social media and performance campaign became 'the people' through spectatorship. Zelensky mobilized 'the people' as those who wanted to 'break the corrupt system' in order to 'build the Ukraine of their dreams' that was absent of oligarchs and corruption. As such, 'the people' described as 'spectators' in Chapter 3 were a crucial component in Zelensky's campaign communication.

Social unity is emphasized both in populist communication and within the *spectacle.* Debord described capitalist society as predicated on separation with the *spectacle* being the producer of social unity within the society (Sutherland, 2012, p.336). In order to create social unity, the spectacle is an institution of an 'enormous positivity' in which 'everything that appears

is good and whatever is good will appear' in the *spectacle* (Debord, 1994, p. 15). Consequently, the spectators become a part of the *spectacle* which, "consists in the reunification of separate aspects at the level of the image" (Jappe & Nicholson-Smith, 1999, p. 6-7). Whereas, the rhetoric of populist actors is emphasizing their ability to unite the existing differences within the society. The base of populist formation is the emotional investment made by 'the people' under the prospect of social unity (Sutherland, 2012, p. 331). In regard to Zelensky's campaign, he emphasized his ability to bring social unity through the consistently applied campaign hashtag #letsdoittogether. Moreover, Zelensky portrayed himself as a charismatic leader through social media postings and live performances who could unite Ukrainian society to overthrow the corruptive oligarchs and political elites and ultimately provide a better future for the nation.

The *spectacle* itself is an element of populist communication. According to Ernesto Laclau (2005), the spectacle in populism is formed as a result of a charismatic figure articulating the politics of 'the people' to the audience by means of a performance. Thus, the figure essentially creates a spectacle of himself by means of an entertainment spectacle or through performances in the form of political rallies (Sutherland, 2012, p. 342-343). The figure draws in audiences to spectacles on account of their broadly affective visual appeals, generally in the form of live performances or through an online presence on social media platforms (Sutherland, 2012, p. 333). In regard to Zelensky's campaign, the *spectacle* was a crucial stylistic element and communication tactic of the campaign.

4.1.2 Performed Populism

Populists apply social media to mobilize the masses for support. It has been found that populism manifests itself in a fragmented form on social media following theoretical discussions and empirical analysis (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016, p. 1109-1110). Accordingly, populist actors apply social media as it provides them the freedom to articulate and spread their messages as the platform serves as a direct linkage to the people (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016, p. 1109-1110). In addition, the medium of social media allows for short acerbic messages that are more personal and sensationalistic (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016, p. 1113). As a result, social media is a convenient instrument to spread populist's style of communication through the five common elements of populism: emphasizing the sovereignty of

the people, advocating for the people, attacking the elite, ostracizing others, and invoking the 'heartland' (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016, p. 1109). In regard to Zelensky's campaign, it will be analyzed which of the five elements of populism were manifested in his social media campaign through the application of post-structuralism and discourse analysis. Post-structuralism will be applied in effort to analyze how the application of Zelensky's language through postings and performances created a particular image of himself. Thereby, through the utilization of post-structuralism, it will be highlighted how Zelensky's campaign language constructed a particular image through populist rhetoric. Whereas discourse analysis will be applied to analyze the language in postings and spoken language to help explain how Zelensky's media phenomenon mobilized spectators through the application of populist linguistic elements. Specifically analyzed will be the linguistic elements of the campaign accessible through the official social media campaign accounts: social media posts, presidential program, and performed speech from the stadium debate. Ultimately, the subsequent section will determine how Zelensky conducted a populist stylistic campaign through his social media campaign tactics.

Populist rhetoric generally contains claims by the populist agent on restoring the sovereignty of 'the people.' According to populist accusations, the elites deprive 'the people' of their right to practice sovereignty; thus, the populist agent claims to be one of the only actors in society capable of restoring the sovereignty of 'the people.' Sovereignty is restored by populist actors under the claim of, "replacing the elite and all other representative and intermediary institutions (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016, p. 1111). In the case of Zelensky's campaign, he advocated for sovereignty of his spectators by means of structuring his social media campaign to encompass participation and direct engagement. In the following post, Zelensky emphasized for direct communication between himself and his audience:

> "It's really important for us to know your opinion. More than that, during the week Vladimir will personally review every point of view."
> (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

In the latter post, Zelensky appealed to his spectators in manner which advocated for the audience's agency while placing the audiences' needs to be of optimal importance to his campaign. Therefore, the text illustrates Zelensky's perceived concentration on the popular grievances of Ukrainian society. As such, Zelensky linguistically appeared to be a 'man of the

people,' which was accentuated during the stadium debate. Prior to the debate, Zelensky appealed directly to the audience via social media for questions to ask Poroshenko at the stadium debate. Zelensky's apparent usage of 'the people's' questions at the debate portrayed his as a direct representative of his spectators:

> "I have a question for you Mr. Poroshenko. It is from the people of Ukraine which they asked me to ask you on the Internet." (Ruptly, 2019)

Through direct appeal to the spectators by bypassing intermediary channels through social media platforms, Zelensky was capable of mobilizing voters' individual engagement. Thus, Zelensky's campaign through the language of posts and speeches promoted a sense of direct representation, which is one of the features of populist leadership (Kudelia, 2019).

In addition, Zelensky advocated for 'the people's' sovereignty in his presidential program by promoting direct democracy. Through postings on social media platforms, Zelensky asked spectators directly for 'Ze Team' representatives in order to orchestrate direct democratic methods. In the subsequent post, Zelensky encourages the practice of direct democracy through online communication:

> No more nepotism and sideline appointments for office. Democracy in Ukraine must become a reality with you. Offer worthy and authoritative professionals who can help Ze! team build a 'Dream Country.' Fill out the questionnaire on http://clc.to/zedream_team/ and tag the best in the comments. With your recommendations, we will find professional and experienced people.
> (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

As well as backing direct communication with audiences, written in Zelensky's presidential program, which was circulated across his social media pages (*Facebook* and *Instagram*) was his advocacy for direct democracy. The first bill to be passed with Zelensky as president proclaimed to increase the application of referendums. Essentially, Zelensky demanded more power for 'the people' by explicitly promoting the implementation direct-democratic elements:

"My first bill: 'On democracy.' In it, we will together establish a mechanism by which only the People of Ukraine will form the main tasks for the government through referendums and other forms of direct democracy." (Ze! Команда, 2019)

Zelensky's embracement of instruments for direct rule created the illusion through language of exercising popular sovereignty by which Ukrainians could "set the main tasks for the authorities" (Kudelia, 2019). This bill exemplifies how Zelensky emphasized for sovereignty of the people through concrete forms.

A common characteristic of populist actors is performing the act of advocacy. Generally, populist actors perform the act of advocacy through emphasis of being the 'true representative of the people.' 'The people' are usually a homogeneous group described as, "inherently pure, good, and paramount" (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016, p. 1111). The target audience of Zelensky's campaign was the Ukrainian people who did not identify with corrupt oligarchs nor with the political elites. Occasionally, populist actors apply a rhetorical expression to replace 'the people.' For Zelensky, his metaphor was the hashtag #letsdoittogether which became the official hashtag of Zelensky's campaign as incorporated in the following two posts:

We are already over 490 000! Imagine, 490 000 people who have the same goal, similar views, healthy ambition. People who are ready to conquer mountains. People who are sure that to change the country it can only be done together. This is unreal cool! Don't stand away, join Ze! Team…. Join me! Let's do it together
(Команда Зеленського, 2019)

You are conscious that your most important mission on March 31 is to come and cast a vote for a worthy one! Everyone understands that the system prepares falsification, we have to break the system - every vote is important! Only together we can build a dream country! Let's do it together (Ze Team 2019, 2019)

In the first post, the hashtag was applied as a means to recruit the audience for the mission of changing Ukraine 'together' through 'Ze Team' membership. As for the second post, it was applied to encourage the audience to vote in the first round of the election in order to change the country 'together.' In both posts, the hashtag was applied as means to create the impression

through language that Zelensky stands 'together' with the entire country and all its inhabitants to remove the endemically corrupt system of governance. Thereby, the hashtag can be regarded as a personal action frame and leaves it to the spectator to decide if he or she can identify with Zelensky's participatory campaign (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016).

As the spectators decided whether they could identify with Zelensky's position on 'togetherness', Zelensky strived to maintain close relations to the Ukrainian people. For Zelensky's case, he downplayed his elitism and presented himself as a 'ordinary guy' who campaigns on behalf of 'the people.' Showcasing Zelensky's 'ordinariness' was the campaign vlog series "Ze! President is the Servant of the People," which showcased Zelensky's daily life:

> For twenty-eight years in a row, we have elected politicians we do not know at all. The people have the right to know whom they elect as President of Ukraine! So, I decided to show you our election program live and openly. You will see everything: Who we are, how we prepare our election program, how we assemble the team and even how we look for money. And most importantly - how to become a president while remaining a man! (Зе! Президент, 2019)

The above was the description of the first episode of the vlog series titled 'How to Become a President and Remain a Good Man.' Through script, the campaign attempted to construct a profile of Zelensky in which the audience could identify with and relate to, and ultimately view Zelensky as a 'true representative' of the Ukrainian people. Due to the act of advocacy usually performed by populist actors through emphasis that they are a 'true representative' of the people, Zelensky further accentuated his identification with the people and humbleness in two quotes voiced at the stadium debate:

> "I could never imagine me, an ordinary guy from Krivoy Rog, would be running for the highest office…" (Ruptly, 2019)

> "The president has to be a person, a person from the Ukrainian people." (Ruptly, 2019)

Superficially, Zelensky's performed speech created the impression of being an ordinary Ukrainian citizen, despite his celebrity status and fortunes. In effort to build a close relationship amongst the people, Zelensky reinforced an image in which his spectators could relate and identify with. As such, the basis Zelensky's campaign program was composed of the Ukrainian people's needs and demands. An element of populist performance is placing the people's needs and demands above everything else in the campaign; therefore, Zelensky's presidential program comprised of posts which claimed through language of reversing the social inequalities which arose from Ukraine's transition from a communist economic system to a market economy (Kuzio, 2019, p. 486):

> "My goal is to build a state that provides its citizens with quality services. This requires minimizing the number of state functions. Less Man in the life of Man, more Man in the life of the State!" (Ze! Команда, 2019)

The above program extract, titled 'Man has the Highest Value,' demonstrates the versatility and thin nature of Zelensky's program. Thus, the program provided Zelensky the ability through text to remodel his representativeness as the program could be framed and manipulated to adhere to the peoples demands.

Populist rhetoric calls for the removal of the amoral elite in replacement for a moral elite. Populists consider society as being, "separated into two homogenous groups and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite'" (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). Populists present themselves as the 'true representative' of the 'pure people.' Accompanied, is the discourse of populist actors attacking the elite commonly under the accusation of the elite being the source of society's corruption (Moffitt & Tormey, 2013, p. 391). In Zelensky's campaign discourse, he targeted the political and oligarchic elites as the source of Ukraine's systemic corruption. Thereby, by focusing on Ukrainian society's popular grievance of systemic corruption, Zelensky portrayed himself as the main fighter against state corruption:

> "While all our politicians are having breakfast in Davos, we are starting to clean the country together, let's start with the snow! 😉 Join, record a video and tag!"
> (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

The post linguistically constructed a division between the political 'elites' and 'the people.' The 'elites' being the politicians attending the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and 'the people' being the people in Ukraine. Visually emphasizing his efforts to 'clear away corruption' from Ukrainian society, Zelensky's post was accompanied by a video featuring Zelensky along with his colleagues shovelling snow in order to 'clear a pathway.' In addition, the action of Zelensky shoveling snow provided two connotations. The first being that Zelensky is an 'ordinary man' completing manual labour. The second being that Zelensky is a man committed to clearing a new path for the country by removing the country's corruption with 'the people'- together.

The elite are commonly accused by populists of betraying the people, and political opponent and incumbent President Petro Poroshenko became the verbally accused in Zelensky's campaign. Zelensky's campaign predominately criticized his opponent for further corrupting Ukraine under his presidency. In this manner, Zelensky linguistically framed Poroshenko as being a member of the 'corrupt elite' as was written in the following two posts:

> "During the five years of Petro Poroshenko's presidency, Ukraine has managed to rise only a few positions in the ranking of corruption, remaining one of the most corrupt countries in the world." (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

> There is a demand for radical change in society. And most of the changes that the government has initiated even over the last five years are imitations ⊛ The political elite have remained virtually unchanged for 27 years…They have broken away from people and don't want to hear them. Corruption is the same, politics as well. Time to say goodbye to the old system and build your dream country. Together we can reach our goal! Vote for Ze! 🤝 (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

Zelensky's above posts performed a linguistic attack on Poroshenko, which was executed in a manner usually applied by populists, which encompasses targeting the political elites of the population. Following populist practices, Zelensky called upon 'breaking the system' of the endemically corrupt government of Ukraine. A common populist tactic is voicing to kick out the 'oppressing' political establishment (Friedman, 2017). This rhetoric is often accompanied by

placing emphasis on bringing 'awareness' to the people of their oppression with the populist actor being the provider of emancipation (Mudde, 2004).

In addition to attacking Poroshenko through script under claims of corruption, Zelensky criticized Poroshenko through verbal mockery. Zelensky exploited the frustration of the Ukrainian public by criticizing the political elites through humour in the lead-up to the stadium debate (Korosteleva, 2019). This entailed challenging Petro Poroshenko and Yulia Tymoshenko to attend the stadium debates in addition to 'compulsory' drug tests. Through mockery speech, Zelensky indirectly asserted that Poroshenko was unfit to continuing being the President of Ukraine:

> "The candidates will have to undergo compulsory medical checks and prove to the people that there are no alcoholics or drug addicts among them. The country needs a healthy president." (Euronews, 2019)

As the stadium debate enfolded, Zelensky continued the linguistic rhetoric of Poroshenko being corrupt. Specifically, Zelensky demonised his predecessor as corrupt and greedy, blaming Poroshenko for the ongoing War in Donbass and allowing for oligarchs to profit from the war (Hosa & Wilson, 2019). Thus, at the stadium debate, Zelensky capitalised on public discontent over unpopular reforms and frustration at the continuation of war with pro-Russian separatists blaming the political elite Poroshenko (Kuzio, 2019, p. 498):

> "There are two Poroshenko's – the first is the expert in front of the cameras and the second is a corrupt politician behind the cameras." (Ruptly, 2019)

> "I'm a result Mr. Poroshenko of your mistakes and your failed promises."
> (Ruptly, 2019)

The ostracizing of particular societal groups is a common characteristic of populist discourse. The ostracized groups by the populist actor are not regarded as part of the elite, but rather as either prejudicially favoured by the elites or as conspiring with the elites against 'the people' (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2016, p. 1111). However, in Zelensky's case ostracization of any particular groups was absent, apart from the political elites and the oligarchs:

Volodymyr Zelensky unites the country! Why is it so easy? For we do not divide people on left and right. We do not divide people into Ukrainian or Russian speaking, or into one or another. We are simply all together: we all think one language - the language of equality! (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

In addition, generally when societies are experiencing a crisis, the society is vulnerable to populist resentments which invoke targeting particular societal groups. However, despite Ukraine's ongoing war in Eastern Ukrainian fought between the Ukrainian armed forces and pro-Russian separatists, Zelensky refrained from targeting groups and escalating ethno-linguistic tensions and identity cleavages. Rather, Zelensky uniquely applied the theme of commonality and unity.

Invoking the 'heartland' is another key element of populist rhetoric. The term 'heartland' according to Paul Taggart is the "idealized conception of the community" (Taggart, 2004, p. 274). Accordingly, this 'place' derives from the populists' perception of the country's past and what has been lost in the present. Thereby, the populist actor constructs the 'heartland' based on his or her own imagination and emotions (Taggart, 2004). In the context of Zelensky's campaign, it focused on building the 'Ukraine of our dreams,' which was a repeated phrase posted throughout both rounds of the election campaign:

"Join us, let's create the Ukraine of our dreams together!" (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

Numerous posts across Zelensky's Facebook and Instagram pages contained the above phrase. The phrase was applied in the context of reforming the country by means of removing state corruption and raising Ukrainian living standards. However, unlike mainstream populism, the imagined future of Ukraine by Zelensky's campaign was not derived from Ukraine's history, but was rather derived through comparisons to the living standards in neighbouring European countries:

"If you dream of European quality roads, convenient environmental transport, affordable flights - fill out the questionnaire: https://ze2019.com/infra and help us build our 'Dream Country.' " (Команда Зеленського, 2019)

As read in the former post, Zelensky's campaign emphasized throughout the election its pursuit was to build a 'dream Ukraine.' However, this 'imagined Ukraine' was not derived from Ukraine's history but rather from present aspirations. Thereby, Zelensky's campaign cannot be considered as containing the populist claim of invoking a heartland.

By means of application of post-structuralism and discourse analysis, it was assessed which five common elements of populism were present in Zelensky's campaign. Upon qualitative interpretive analysis, it was determined that three out of the five elements of populist performances were manifested in Zelensky's campaign: sovereignty of the people; advocating for the people; attacking the elites. The two elements not present in Zelensky's campaign was the ostracization of others and invoking of the heartland. The absence of ostracization of others can be explained by Zelensky's campaign tactic to gain electoral support in the country's East and West, which have increasing become polarized following the Orange Revolution (2004) and Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014). Thereby, Zelensky's campaign avoided suppressing groups, particularly common ostracizing rhetoric of 'pro-Russia' versus 'pro-West' found in Ukraine. The groups that were ostracized in the campaign, political elites and oligarchs, were regarded across demographic groups as the sources of the Ukraine's economic burdens. Thus, the lack of popular populist style of communication of group ostracization in Zelensky's campaign allowed his campaign to appeal to diverse groups. As for Zelensky's communicated heartland, it was unique to the heartlands commonly advocated by populists. Zelensky's 'imagined Ukraine' was not based on a 'past Ukraine' filled with nostalgia based on either Soviet or Russophile views of history. Rather, the 'heartland' of Zelensky campaign was a future Ukraine based on contemporary aspirations that are not polarizing within society, instead of being based on Ukraine's history which was a potential divider of society. Furthermore, Zelensky's campaign contained only some basis of elements found with populist communication style. Thereby, it cannot be claimed that Zelensky's campaign completely fulfilled populist communication styles. Thus, Zelensky's campaign practiced a hybrid version of populist communication.

4.2 Zelensky Populism

This section will take upon the challenge of characterizing Zelensky's form of populism in the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election campaign. First, this section will reflect upon the categorization of Zelensky's campaign as 'populism 2.0'. Second, this thesis will analyze the original attributes of Zelensky's campaign. The section will end by delivering a novel categorization of the form of populism of which Zelensky administered in his presidential campaign.

4.2.1 Populism 2.0

Following the election of Volodymyr Zelensky as President of Ukraine, multiple populist labels were produced by academics and journalists to describe Zelensky's media phenomenon. The most commonly applied label to describe Zelensky's form of populism was 'populism 2.0.' Paulo Gerbaudo describes 'populism 2.0' as an interactive and participatory form of populism where in which populist actors appeal to varied groups via social media platforms to address and promote the subject of opposition to economic and political elites (Gerbaudo, 2015, p. 69). Thereby, the common man is no longer the ideal target subjects of populists, but rather generic social media audiences, resulting in social media platforms to be a tool for enhancing 'populism 2.0'. Due to Zelensky's campaign style predominately being centered on social media platforms, his campaign was commonly categorized by academics and journalists as 'populism 2.0.' Particularly, philosopher Volodymyr Yermolenko (2019) described Zelensky's merging of politics with entertainment and conducting a political campaign with marketing as a symptom of 'populism 2.0'. Whereas Professor Andrew Wilson and Joanna Hosa Andrew Wilson and Joanna Hosa (2019) labelled Zelensky as conducting 'populism 2.0' for staging his campaign through online platforms as well as through comedy tours with the Kvartal 95 performance troupe. As for journalist Yuri Zoria (2019), he claimed that Zelensky's massive implementation of social media and marketing strategies, in addition to the 'long-time' airing of the television series *Servant of the People,* provided justification to refer to Zelensky's campaign as 'populism 2.0'. However, categorizing Zelensky's campaign as 'populism 2.0' only partly explains Zelensky's campaign in terms of social media. This populist label fails to take into account the lack of political ideology

of Zelensky's social media campaign. Thereby, 'populism 2.0' does not completely describe the campaign style and tactics conducted in Zelensky's campaign.

4.2.2 Originality

Commonly, populist actors frame themselves as 'anti-establishment' and the 'true representative' of the people. Zelensky administered such framing be referring to his acted character in television series *Servant of the People*. Zelensky's television character Vasyl Petrovych Holodborodko, an ordinary high school teacher who becomes President of Ukraine and removes the corrupt political system to transform Ukraine into a prosperous and proud nation, was applied as Zelensky's campaign image. However, it should be noted that Zelensky was not the first politician to leverage their media image from television to construct their political image. For example, in the recent case of the American President Donald Trump, he transferred his image as a decisive boss from the television series *The Apprentice* to the image of a strong presidential leader (Heritage, 2016). Whereas the late American President Ronald Reagan applied his popular image of being an actor as an argument for himself being a 'citizen politician' and a representative of the people who support him at the ballot box which was previously the box office (Brownell, 2016), Though, unique to populist campaigns was Zelensky's political platform and political persona both being derived from the plot of a television series. Thereby, exclusive to Zelensky's campaign was his application of life imitating art by means of transforming his television character into a campaign image.

Just as populist actors advocate for the people, Zelensky did so by means of comedic performances. Throughout the election campaign, Zelensky rejected to administer traditional mechanisms of communicating his electoral program to voters. Zelensky had refused to communicate with the media, participate on television channels apart from making one exception, and have debates with his opponents apart from his organized stadium debate. Instead, Zelensky's campaign incorporated Kvartal-95 performances in effort to avoid conducting a traditional political campaign (Carroll, 2019). Though, it is common for populists to conduct performances in their campaigns through interviews, new segments, and rallies. However, original to Zelensky's campaign was his campaign comedy tour with Kvartal 95 performers in attempt to portray Zelensky as a 'man of the people' by continuing his image as an entertainer. In

addition, communicating with voters through the unique structure of a comedy tour, Zelensky further distanced himself from the political elites. Moreover, Zelensky's application of the comedy tour was an original populist tactic to separate himself from the political establishment while exhibiting his presidential platform.

Zelensky portrayed himself as a 'true representative' of the people by means of selfie photos and videos. Through the uploading of 'native' footage which appear to be taken and filmed by Zelensky himself, Zelensky's campaign produced the impression that Zelensky was speaking 'directly' to social media spectators. Unique to populist tactics was the daily postings of selfie photos and videos onto social media platforms (*Facebook* and *Instagram*) of Zelensky's campaign activities. As such, Zelensky's campaign had distinguished campaign tactics compared to popular populist style through its marketing of Zelensky's campaign messages through both selfie photos and videos.

A general element found across populist ideological platforms is exploitation of particular societal groups. However, Zelensky's campaign lacked an ideological platform, or any defined statements and significant policy proposals (Rohozinska & Shpak, 2019). Throughout the campaign, Zelensky was short of clearly articulated positions through his performance campaign strategy, which provided himself avoidance of interviews and public appearances. Thus, Zelensky served as a 'blank page' of which voters could draw their own candidate' as described by Ukrainian writer Oksana Zabuzhko (Kuczyński, 2019). Resulting was the ability of Zelensky's campaign to appeal to diverse groups with voters determining Zelensky as they seemed fit, likely drawing his profile from the character of Holoborodko from *Servant of the People* (Rohozinska & Shpak, 2019). Zelensky's suppression of an ideological platform was an original strategy in which Zelensky created a novel form of populism.

4.2.3 Spectacular Populism

Upon qualitative content analysis, this thesis concludes that Zelensky orchestrated a new form of populism - *Spectacular Populism.* Zelensky's campaign was based upon a series of online performances on social media (*YouTube, Facebook, Instagram*) and live performances conducted during the Kvartal 95 comedy tour and at the stadium debate. These performances

created the impression to spectators of a social movement directed by Zelensky's presidential campaign. Thereby, as Zelensky's campaign became entrenched within Ukrainian society, the image of which he portrayed of himself in the campaign became the perceived reality of who he would be as President of Ukraine. Under the form of *Spectacular Populism,* some elements of traditional populism are still present: emphasizing the sovereignty of the people, advocating for the people, attacking the elites. However, the ostracization of others and invoking a heartland are not consistent elements. Rather, unique to *Spectacular Populism* is the element of unity in the masses not based on ideological orientations. Accompanying this form of populism is the populist actor's application of performances to establish their political persona. The following section will provide further elaboration on the differentiation of *Spectacular Populism* from populist factors generally found in Ukraine and Europe itself.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine experienced economic, political, and military crises which Ukrainian populists have used to mobilize votes. Fitting to Taggart's (2004) claim, crises lead populists into popularity in Ukraine. However, Zelensky rose into Ukrainian politics in 2019, five years after the Ukrainian crisis (2013 - 2014): Revolution of Dignity (2013 – 2014); Annexation of Crimea (2014); War in Donbass (2014). According to Taras Kuzio (2019), populists in Ukraine have five additional common factors: against control by international financial organizations; radical rhetoric against the corrupt elites and the 'liberal establishment'; anti-democratic and authoritarian; unsupportive of reforms; draw on different ideologies to mobilize electoral support. Conversely, Zelensky campaign did not adopt these common factors practiced by Ukrainian populists. Ukrainian populists, such as Yulia Tymoshenko and Oleh Lyashko, often criticize the International Monetary Fund for imposing heavy demands on the government in return for financial assistance (Kuzio, 2019, p. 492). Whereas rhetoric against international organizations, or foreign powers in general, was unincluded in Zelensky's campaign. Long leading populist Tymoshenko continuously applies radical rhetoric against 'corrupt' authorities and oligarchs (Kuzio, 2019, p. 492). Zelensky's campaign did include language against the corrupt elites; however, it was not directed to the 'liberal establishment', nor was the language radicalized. Authoritarian populist parties have arisen in Ukraine's political arena, including The Party of Regions which sought to monopolize power. Though, Zelensky's campaign emphasized democratic procedures, particularly voting

and countering election fraud. Ukrainian populists provide weak support to reforms, with Vox Ukraine ranking Tymoshenko at 38 per cent on their Index of Support for Reform, and the two populist parties All-Ukrainian Union "Fatherland" and Radical Party do not support judicial, pension or healthcare reforms (Kuzio, 2019, p. 495). Differing from Ukrainian populists, Zelensky supported reforms through referendums during his campaign. As for political ideology, Ukraine's populists are labelled under the ideology of either 'pro-Western' or 'pro-Russian'. Though, Zelensky's campaign was against these polarizing labels and was generally very limited in ideology. Thus, Zelensky's campaign practiced a form of populism novel to Ukrainian politics.

Populists in Europe have gained prominence since the 1990s after the end of the Cold War. Indeed, populists have been present in Europe since the Enlightenment with calls for radical forms of direct democracy and continued its presence into some of the ideas of the French Revolution, carrying into the turn of the 19th century and into the 20th century (Verbeek & Zaslove, 2019, p. 3). Though, the intensification of the European integration process and advent of globalization in the 1990s harnessed an increased generation of populists with ideological orientations as European citizens grew uncertain of the capacities of their governments. Particularly, extremist right-wing populists grew across Europe which often included sentiments of hostility to immigration and anti-Islamic xenophobia. Those sentiments have been widespread across Europe, including amongst post-communist politicians as exemplified by Andrej Babiš in the Czech Republic, Paweł Kukiz in Poland, Viktor Orban in Hungary, and Mart Helme in Estonia. Populist right-wings nationalists produce nostalgia for a more ethnically homogenous nation (Kuzio, 2019, p. 489). Though, in the case of Zelensky's campaign, there were no calls for a homogenous nation based on a romanticized past Ukraine. On the contrary, Zelensky's campaign promoted uniting across all groups, regardless of language, ethnicity, and language, for a future Ukraine unforeseen. As for left-wing populists in Europe, they are generally anti-globalisation, advocating for a system that lies between capitalism and socialism. Left-wing parties in Europe includes SYRIZA in Greece and Direction – Social Democracy in neighbouring Slovakia. Anti-globalisation sentiments were non-existent within Zelensky's campaign, as the campaign did not include statements related to international institutions and the idea of globalization was promoted in positive notion through audio-visualization of 'Ze Team'

being 'global'. Populists in Europe, both left and right, hold ideological orientations and are dividers of society. Zelensky is unique to European populism as he held an extremely limited ideological orientations and was inclusive.

Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis was to analyse Zelensky's campaign strategies through social media. The campaign strategies applied through social media were converted into a political resource by means of direct communication with social media users and mobilizing the masses. The main research question was *how a politically inexperienced electoral candidate can construct a movement of electoral support which unites the people through social media campaigning*? As the historical political background of Ukraine suggested through two performative revolutions, Ukrainian society was prepared to restart power by means of complete reshuffling of the political elites. Zelensky was presumed to have been elected president as a result of Ukrainians' desire to eradicate the political elites to be replaced by someone with no known political connections.

The results of the qualitative content analysis on 1483 media uploads on three social media platforms (*YouTube, Facebook, Instagram*) that were uploaded during the time period of January 1, 2019 – April 21, 2019 indicated that Zelensky's campaign transferred entrainment into politics by conducting a *performed social movement.* Overall, a large majority of the postings and videos were found to fall under the categorization of a *social movement* (76% of postings) rather than *performance* (24% of postings). In doing so, Zelensky's campaign created a new form of populism which is absent of clear political ideology and is all inclusive while merging politics into entertainment – *spectacular populism.* Zelensky held new campaign tactics as his political persona was heavily based on his screen performances all the while having a very limited ideology. As such, through Zelensky's performative communication, which included traditional elements of populist communication style and incorporated new elements such as being inclusive, a new form of populism emerged. Further research should be conducted on the elements of *spectacular populism* and its potential pervasiveness in future campaign tactics.

Found in the study was the increased prevalence of the *spectacle* in campaigns. Through the application of social media platforms, comedy tours, and a stadium debate in Zelensky's campaign, it was revealed that a spectacle was created. As such, Zelensky's campaign itself was the topic of the spectacle. Therefore, Debord's concept of the *spectacle* has increased in

relevance due to the increased consumption of consumer products that support social media platforms within contemporary campaign tactics.

This thesis is not without limitations. First, the thesis did not include the 2019 Ukrainian parliamentary election campaign of Zelensky's political party Servant of the People, which could have further validated the uniqueness of Zelensky's campaign tactics. Second, the social media posts were translated by a non-native Russian and Ukrainian speaker.

At the time of writing, Zelensky's approval rating has continued to deteriorate since his electoral win. Between September 2019 – July 2020, Zelensky's approval ratings having significantly declined. Following two performative revolutions and the media phenomenon performed by Zelensky in the 2019 presidential campaign, Zelensky and his party continue using the same communication tactics. In other words, it seems the spectacular populism has moved beyond political campaigns, which could act as a steppingstone for further research into the correlation of using performative tactics for social change while governing and decreasing approval ratings.

It would be contributing to research how Zelensky's social media strategy, creating a new form of populism, is adopted by other political candidates. The campaign reached across international mass media and received wide-spread coverage in both social and traditional media. In the political sphere, it also received widespread attention. Therefore, Zelensky's campaign became not only a national media phenomenon but also international. Thus, Zelensky's campaign tactics could be adopted by other political candidates. So, it should be researched whether contemporary politicians are adopting increased performance style of campaigning. In addition, many citizens are growing in discontent towards their government following insufficient handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, while increasing their use of social media platforms during quarantine. Thus, societies should be aware of the elements of a *spectacular populist.*

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Appendix A: YouTube Videos

Зе! Президент. (2019, January 26). Як стати Президентом і залишитися порядною людиною! Retrieved June 17, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxQTi4IIWPQ

Зе! Президент. (2019, January 26). Як українців розводять на виборах? | Зе Президент Слуга Народу # 2. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7C5Py-sBj4&t=484s

Зе! Президент. (2019, January 28). Сумна правда про нашу освіту та Чат-рулетка з Зе! | Зе Президент Слуга Народу # 3. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFQex2DY2VM

Зе! Президент. (2019, January 31). Як голосувати переселенцям? НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ! Зе Президент Слуга Народу. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy9unVwXymg&t=1s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 4). Ти в списках? НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ! Зе Президент Слуга Народу. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A25RRbUh4Ws&t=10s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 7). Я - клоун | Зе Президент Слуга Народу # 4. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9gxhKGjHBc&t=190s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 8). Як голосувати в Польщі? НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ! Зе Президент Слуга Народу. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXnTbikHPuI&t=4s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 9). Чому молодь їде з України? | Зе Президент Слуга Народу # 5. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPn_FX3Sg7c&t=538s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 14). 1000$ за ваш голос? НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ! Зе Президент Слуга Народа. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvs8QnN58Fg&t=2s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 14). Что ждет Украину в будущем? | Зе Президент Слуга Народа # 6. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6s6JKZ6Rro&t=411s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 21). Тарифы за коммуналку: Платить нельзя уменьшить | Зе Президент Слуга Народа # 7. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DArbRPlsbeY&t=44s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 22). Как голосовать не по месту прописки? НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ! Зе Президент Слуга Народа. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSVHGn_MZ5w

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 23). Выборы по интернету. Утопия или ближайшее будущее? | Зе Президент Слуга Народа # 8. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBBlZ4XKwsI&t=1099s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 26). Евробляхи vs Укрдороги | Зе Президент Слуга Народа # 9. Retrieved July 16, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HudrzlH4aw&t=157s

Зе! Президент. (2019, February 28). Я иду! Ты со мной? P.S. В наблюдатели. НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ! Зе Президент Слуга Народа. Retrieved July 16, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WiJs32AUUI&t=100s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 3). Украинский суд – продажный и прожадный | Зе Президент Слуга Народа # 10. Retrieved July 16, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UC0_CjybrXA&t=677s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 5). Студентам пох? НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ! Зе Президент Слуга Народа Retrieved July 16, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZMwymUHIIU&t=4s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 7). Боты, провокация, отмена концерта | Зе Президент Слуга Народа # 11. Retrieved June 08, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9bXv4_wskk

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 11). Камеры в кабинете Президента. Государство в смартфоне | Зе Президент Слуга Народа # 12. Retrieved June 08, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XD6kzSBclL0&t=71s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 13). Пошел на выборы - забрали в армию. Правда или Фейк? | НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ. Retrieved June 08, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW7LbUxQ9bs&t=5s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 14). Зарплата учителя. Технические кандидаты."Ты готов?" | Зе Президент Слуга Народа # 13. Retrieved June 08, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5PTGXvp2pY&t=750s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 18). Твой первый раз | НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ. Retrieved June 08, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qg8SvsjGHks&t=11s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 20). CHALLENGE от Жеки КОШЕВОГО: Становись наблюдателем! | НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ. Retrieved June 08, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iF9pFz5PAyU&t=2s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 25). Влом идти голосовать | НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ. Retrieved June 08, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj1-KueouxM&t=17s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 26). Зеленський і Квартал 95 на Дніпро-арені! Концерт. Наживо. Retrieved June 8, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIRsxUniJNU&t=5347s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 28). Обращение к фальсификаторам | НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ! Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DZAIte6sIY

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 29). Итоги перед выборами 2019 | НЕПРОЕВЫБОРЫ. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZu4MWLufyA&t=1s

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 31). Зеленський проголосував! | Вибори 2019. День виборів. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJ8L-WeVRWo

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 31). Штаб Зе про порушення на дільницях | Вибори 2019. День виборів. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36rKgb7pEfI

Зе! Президент. (2019, March 31). Спіймали фальсифікаторів | Вибори 2019 | Спец.випуск від спостерігача Ханумака. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqMR4ORlEpw&t=1s

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 3). Володимир Зеленський іде на дебати! Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hqP701LQt8

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 4). Звернення до Ю. Тимошенко щодо дебатів. Retrieved May 27, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eT_KO5VJJI

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 4). Як голосувала Україна | Вибори 2019. Retrieved May 27, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrQoX191wW4&t=245s

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 6). Як знищити фальсифікації | НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1iC6b8x754&t=8s

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 7). «Чорні» політтехнології, або як народжуються фейки | НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wugjTlfimwE&t=2s

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 10). ТЕРМІНОВО! Змініть місце голосування повторно | НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwHvFsyQH-M&t=1s

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 10). Українці запитують Порошенко | НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNBQ4vBOWrQ

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 16). Львів'яни запитують Порошенка | НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ.
    Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vr7AkyEbDPY

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 17). Одесити питають Порошенка | НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ.
    Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6_n0SH8Uk&t=5s

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 19). Запоріжці питають Порошенка | НЕПРОЄВИБОРИ FINAL.
    Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hZMlGwgwsU&t=1s

Зе! Президент. (2019, April 19). Головні Дебати Країни: Зеленський – Порошенко.
    Retrieved June 10, 2020, from
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZF6mmnJPoQ&t=1593s

Appendix B: Facebook Posts

Команда Зеленського. (2018, December 30) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Profile Picture]
        Retrieved from
        https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.404926550265586/40538246021999
        5/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 1) Команда Зеленського. [Facebook Cover Photo]
        Retrieved from
        https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/40577713684719
        4/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 1) Стань моєю командою! [Facebook Update]
        Retrieved from
        https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 1) Дякуємо за підтримку. [Facebook Mobile Upload]
        Retrieved From
        https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/40671578008666
        3/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 2) Нас більше 200 000. Спасибі вам! [Facebook
        Timeline Photo] Retrieved from
        https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/40738178668672
        9/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 4) Зе!команда: хто ми? [Facebook Timeline Photo]
        Retrieved from
        https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/40839234658567
        3/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 5) Друзі! [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from
        https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/40893035986520
        5/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 7) Як повинен жити українець.[Facebook Update]
        Retrieved from
        https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 7) Всім привіт! [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved
        from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 8) Вітаємо офіційних представників! [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/410723913019183/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 8). Наша Програма [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 9) Карта України заповнюється. [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/410723913019183/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 11) Офшори! [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/412343426190565/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 13) 600 ботів, 50 ошуканих українців та один народний депутат відреагували на черговий брудний фейк.[Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/413431702748404/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 22) Чи можливо забезпечити прозорість на Виборах–2019? Відповідь Зе!команди — «Так!» .[Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/418292108929030/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 22) Новина за новиною: нас уже понад 490 000! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 23) Ми просто мусимо познайомити вас із контакт-центром нашої Зе!команди! [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/418868148871426/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 24)Запускаємо #LOPATACHALLENGE! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 25) Команда Зеленського. [Facebook Cover Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/420498718708369/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 25) Презентуємо довгоочікувану її! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 26) До Зе!команди долучилось уже понад півмільйона людей! [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/420798285345079/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 27) Щодня ми отримуємо багато різних відгуків щодо всіх напрямів роботи. [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 29) Карта України… Заповнена! [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/422899505134957/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, January 29) Команда Володимира Зеленського приєдналася до антикорупційного порядку денного, запропонованого представниками громадськості, з якими ми зустрічалися вчора. https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/ [Facebook Update] https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 5) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/427038511387723/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 12) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Cover Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/431513837606857/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 13) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/432202687537972/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 13) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/433329897425251/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 16) Челендж #яклоун у Facebook триває. [Facebook Mobile Photo] Retrieved From https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/434174880674086/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 16) Жарт чи не жарт? [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 13) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/435610037197237/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 20) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/436266747131566/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 22) Цей пост призначений для людей, які вже пропонували нам фінансову допомогу.[Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved From https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/437397690351805/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 22) Вітайте, представник ЗеКоманди у Херсонській області та АР Крим — Юрій Соболевський [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved From https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/437652540326320/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 23) Знати потреби суспільства і захищати права громадян — головне завдання голови держави! [Facebook Update] Retrieved From https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 24) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/438519960239578/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 25) Більше ніякого кумівства та кулуарних призначень на посади [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, February 26) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/439732523451655/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 2) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Cover Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/441886253236282/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 3) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/442397169851857/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 7) У суспільстві є запит на докорінні зміни. А більшість змін, які ініціювала влада навіть за останні п'ять років, — це імітація [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 2) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Cover Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/445809286177312/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 5) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/443684956389745/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 10) Ваша підтримка — безцінна! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 10) До створення нашої програми вже долучилися тисячі українців [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 11) Всі, хто має спільноти чи канали на підтримку Зе! в Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Viber та Twitter, має знати принципи і правила, яких дотримується Зе!команда [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 15) Про Володимира Зеленського пише Блумберг. [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 16) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/449643379127236/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 18) So Hot News. [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 19) Нещодавно відбулась ще одна кайфова зустріч Команда Зеленського Канада [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 19) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/451192272305680/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 20) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/451709182253989/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 20) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Cover Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/446996822725225/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 22) Дякуємо вам, Кременчук, ви неймовірні! [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/452937988797775/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 20) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Timeline Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.407367150021526/455734888518085/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 27) Канада вражає! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 29) Історична кількість бруду та найчорніша фейкова кампанія за усі президентськи перегони. [Facebook Timeline] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 30) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Profile Picture] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.404926550265586/457220188369555/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 30) Закликаємо 31 березня взяти на дільницю свою ручку, так ви можете запобігти фальсифікаціям! [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/457365331688374/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 30) Якщо 31 березня на виборчій дільниці ви випадково бачите порушення — фіксуйте його! [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/457332975024943/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 31) Вже годину працюють дільниці для голосування! [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/457723398319234/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 31) 31 березня зроби правильний вибір! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 31) З початку голосування пройшло близько 3 годин![Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/457864684971772/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, March 31) Прямо зі штабу! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 1) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Profile Picture] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.404926550265586/458762018215372/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 1) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Cover Photo] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/457246345033606/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 1) Володимир Зеленський об'єднує країну! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 3) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Cover Photo]
Retrieved from
https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/46064896136001
1/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 3) Володимир Зеленський іде на дебати! [Facebook
Update] Retrieved from
https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 4) Звернення до Ю. Тимошенко щодо дебатів [Facebook
Update] Retrieved from
https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/videos/313575065970365/

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 8) Яке питання ви б хотіли поставити Порошенку?
Пишіть у коментарі! [Facebook Update] Retrieved from
https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 8) Головні дебати країни.[Facebook Update] Retrieved
from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 9) Ми можемо забезпечити чесні вибори без
фальсифікацій! [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from
https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/46477148761442
5/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 14) Команда Зеленського Вже більше 228 тисяч осіб
скористались тимчасовою зміною місця голосування! [Facebook Update] Retrieved
from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 16) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Cover Photo]
Retrieved from
https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.405382243553350/46915227050968
0/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 16) 21 квітня — вирішальний вибір! [Facebook Mobile
Upload] Retrieved from
https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/46905107051980
0/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 16) Сьогодні відбулася приємна зустріч учасників
Автопробігу «Прапор Єдності».[Facebook Timeline] Retrieved from
https://www.facebook.com/pg/ze2019official/posts/?ref=page_internal

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 19) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Profile Picture] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.404926550265586/471750920249815/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 19) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/471719490252958/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 20) Ми маємо об'єднатися! [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/472078203550420/?type=3&theater

Команда Зеленського. (2019, April 21) Команда Зеленського [Facebook Mobile Upload] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ze2019official/photos/a.406716066753301/472741510150756/?type=3&theater

Appendix C: Instagram Posts

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 1) [Instagram Video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BsF6j5lgpSC/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 3) [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BsKys_yAaMo/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 5) [Instagram Video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BsQB6o6COiw/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 7) [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BsVl-yIAK5g/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 8) Залишайте свої варіанти під постом! [Instagram Video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BsX7xgQAG0V/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 8) Вітаємо офіційних представників! [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BsYvXfagORu/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 9) Карта України заповнюється. [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/Bsak8UFAM6_/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 9) Цікаво розроблена стратегія, високі технології, ближче до людей! [Instagram Video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs0Pz90gYbV/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 21) З перших вуст: перший серйозний Зе!з'їзд Слуги Народ [Instagram Video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs5KdPmgwQF/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського] (2019, January 31) Ми просто мусимо познайомити вас із контакт-центром нашої Зе!команди. [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs-IWu7gqd4/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського]. (2019, January 23) про дороги, і не про дороги [Instagram Video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs_FBL3Apu1/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського]. (2019, January 24) Запускаємо #LOPATACHALLENGE! [Instagram Video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BtA8X6FgS8B/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського]. (2019, January 25) Сьогодні Володимир Зеленський та Зе!команда презентували передвиборчу програму кандидата на пост Президента України. [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BtEPJwXgGSq/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського]. (2019, January 25) Як стати Президентом і залишитися людиною! [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BtEmvHkAtsT/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського]. (2019, January 25) Ситуація незмінна [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BvbOo3qg2YG/

Ze Team 2019 [@ Команда Зеленського]. (2019, January 25) До Зе!команди долучилось уже понад півмільйона людей! [Instagram Photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BtF9JGVACts/

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Appendix D: Interview Forms

University *of* Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form

(Tentative) Title of Project: Defying Post-Soviet History: The Direction of Ukraine's Political Discourse Post-Euromaidan

Name of Researcher: Enya Hamel

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement/Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I acknowledge that participants will be identified by name in any publications arising from the research.

I agree to take part in this research study.

I do not agree to take part in this research study.

Name of Participant .... Signature ....

Date ....

Name of Researcher ....Signature ....

Date ....

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement

(Tentative Title) Defying Post-Soviet History: The Direction of Ukraine's Political Discourse Post-Euromaidan

Ms. Enya Hamel:

You are being invited to take part in a research study on the direction of Ukraine's political discourse. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact myself if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.
Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?
To identity the formation of the political discourse of Ukraine and in which direction appears to develop following the post-Euromaidan and the 2019 Ukraine presidential elections.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been selected for the research study due to your expertise in fields related to the theme of the dissertation topic.

Do I have to take part?
No, participation in the research project is completely voluntary and participant is free to withdraw at any time, without providing any reason.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Participant will be provided confidentiality upon request. Subject will be referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from the research if requested. Participant consent is required to be named in the research study.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
There will be a written summary of results to all if requested. Results will be made available to peers and colleagues in the form of a master's dissertation.

Who has reviewed the study?
Dr. Heiko Pääbo and Dr. Andrey Makarychev of Tartu University, Dr. hab Jacek Kołodziej of Jagiellonian University and Dr. Ammon Cheskin of Glasgow University have all reviewed the study.

Contact for Further Information:
Head Supervisor Dr. hab Jacek Kołodziej: uwkolodz@cyf-kr.edu.pl
Co Supervisor Dr. Andrey Makarychev: andrey.makarychev@ut.ee

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the College of Social Science Ethics of the University of Glasgow Officer Dr. Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk