

FOREIGNERS SPEAK ABOUT UKRAINIANS: INTERNET FORUMS REVIEW

Анотація. У статті надається огляд іноземних форумів, які репрезентують думки відомих блогерів щодо України, можливості подорожувати країною, проживати в країні та вести бізнес в Україні.

Ключові слова: огляд форумів, сприйняття України іноземцями, Інститут світової політики.

Abstract. The article highlights the results of the Internet forums review and the way Ukraine is perceived by foreigners.

Key words: internet forums about Ukraine, bloggers, journalists, associations and perceptions of Ukraine.

Introduction. Geographical and cultural proximity to Western Europe are two of the main reasons behind the accessibility of Ukraine. However, it is still important to observe the differences in culture if you want to be successful in the country. Cultural differences have always had a great significance in business. However, recent events have further underlined that cultural understanding has become increasingly important and that there is room for improvement for Western businesses.

Internet forums review. The Ukrainian Institute of World Policy held a survey in the end of 2015 among the residents of the eight largest European countries by population — Italy, Germany, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands and Poland. The survey involved 7136 people aged 16 to 54 years. The main research question was: «What do Europeans think about Ukraine?» [1, p. 5, p. 26].

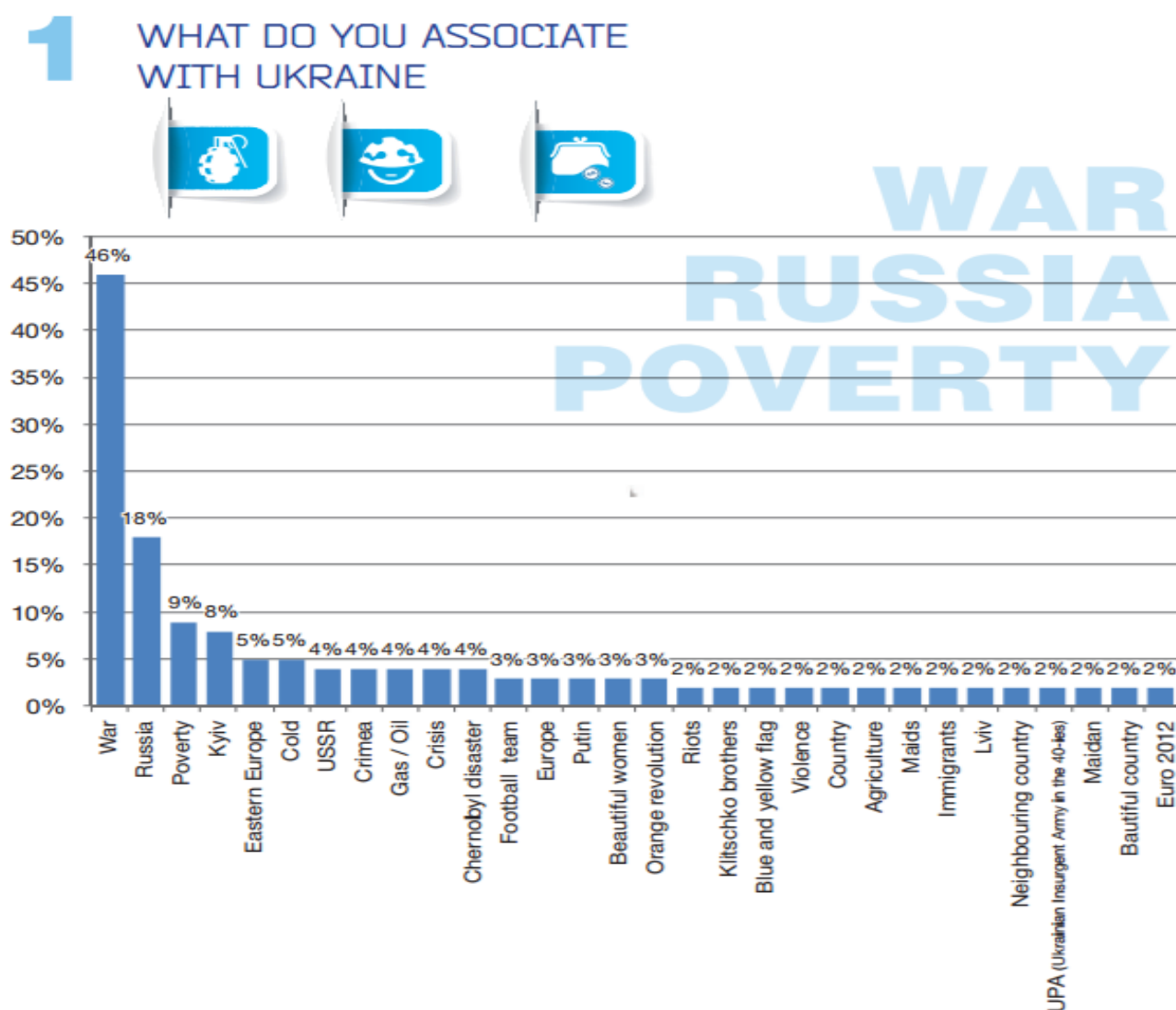
The respondents were given the task to give three words, which they associate with Ukraine. According to this, Ukraine is primarily associated with conflict/war; this point of view was expressed by 46% of the residents of six EU countries — Italy, Germany, France, Spain, the United Kingdom and Poland (this association has a large lead over the others). Interestingly, in general, this association is a leader not only among all the answers, but also as the first association with Ukraine.

Second place is occupied by linking Ukraine with Russia (18%). This association is obviously primarily related to Russia's aggression. On the other hand, it might be caused by perception of Ukraine as a state historically linked to Russia. These two figures occupy leading positions in all surveyed countries. The third major association is related to perception of Ukraine as a poor country, 9%. The first neutral association, Kyiv, is slightly behind with 8% [1, p. 7]. Overall, in small percentages (four or less) negative connotations are intertwined with positive ones. Among the negative ones it could be mentioned also such traditional associations as crisis (in general), the Chernobyl disaster, social instability, violence, maid, migrants, corruption, political issues, murders, sex tourism, anarchy, the Volyn massacre, famine, Communism, fear,

genocide, economic crisis, and associations related to the recent events: separatism, airplane crash (the Malaysian Airlines), annexation of the Crimea etc. [1, p. 8].

There are also many traditional ideas among the positive or neutral associations, like (Eastern) Europe, football team, the Orange Revolution, blue and yellow flag, Agriculture, Lviv, Maidan, beautiful country, UEFA EURO 2012, the Eurovision, independence, aspiration to join the EU, tourism, food, friends, blondes, the Black Sea, culture, the Cossacks, friendly people, economic development, Dnipro, songs etc. There are also associations that are difficult to be attributed as positive or negative; for instance, the beautiful women. This may indicate, on the one hand, the fact that Ukrainian women are actually beautiful; however, on the other hand, it might emphasize again that Ukrainians are, unfortunately, often associated with prostitution [1, p. 8]. Moreover, it was pleasant to find out that despite Russia's aggressive propaganda, association of Ukraine with fascism is virtually absent (only 23 respondents or 0.41% of the total number, mostly in Spain and Italy) [1, p. 8].

More detailed information on distribution of associations about Ukraine is shown beyond, on Picture 1.



Picture 1. Foreigners' associations about Ukraine [1, p. 20]

The results of the report conducted by the Institute of World Policy were based on the opinion survey of people who hardly visited Ukraine. In order to find out the attitude of foreigners to Ukraine and Ukrainians better, it is necessary to take into account the opinions of those people, who have the opportunities to visit Ukraine and to become better acquainted with its culture. Fortunately, in the era of innovation technologies there are also a lot of Internet platforms where everybody can express his or her impression on country, which he or she traveled.

It is worth admitting, that travellers while planning their trips rely on bloggers, who after visiting Ukrainian cities complaint that the Internet seems to be rife with outdated warnings about Ukraine [2]:

You'll get ripped off by taxi drivers in Kiev, for sure!

No one speaks English, so if you don't speak Ukrainian or Russian, good luck!

There are scammers everywhere!

Train travel is disorganized and crazy!

In Katie Matthews' published work «Is Ukraine Safe for Travel? First Impressions & Trip Planning Resources» she points out: «We didn't feel even slightly unsafe in Kiev in terms of property crime, everyday city crime, or the war in the east: it really did feel to us like a non-issue for us not in the big picture, ethical, moral and geopolitical terms, but in the everyday *Is Ukraine Safe to Travel terms*» [2]. In her another blog post «Closing Thoughts on Ukraine: It's Complicated» she describes a shock from the fact that that a modern European country would have to look to its citizens to fund its self-defense: «The tent in Lviv, the bracelet sellers in Kyiv? They were all raising money for Ukraine's military, trying to buy boots for troops fighting in Crimea and Donetsk» [3].

British citizen Lisette de Roche in her double vision blog «Democratic bureaucracy versus corruption» shares her impressions of Ukraine and stories of her life in Britain. She emphasizes that Ukrainians have one thing, which the United Kingdom lost. It is everyday freedom: «You are not supposed to make your own vodka in Ukraine but many people do, you are supposed to wear a helmet on a motorcycle but if you do not and injure your head you are unlikely to be prosecuted, if you want to park your car in central Kiev for a few hours in the evening and there is no official parking available; as long as you are not causing an obstruction your car won't be towed away and be levied with a big fine. If you need a lift to get from your village to town you can stand by the road and put your thumb out to ask for one. Most likely you will be successful and perfectly safe» [4].

In Quora internet forum American journalist George Eliason answering question «What do Americans think of Ukrainians?» describes citizens of Ukraine as good, honest and hardworking people, wonderful neighbors. To support the allegations of belonging Ukraine to collectivistic culture (on Hofstede's scale, Ukraine ranks a 25 on the Individualism dimension, suggesting a collectivistic society [5]), it is necessary to quote George Eliason. He writes: «Neighbors here help neighbors even when they don't personally like them. There is such a strong sense of community for the most part, it is outside the American experience. That includes funerals, which unlike in America is a community event» [6].

Conclusion. Having examined more than thirty blog posts, reviews and forum answers, it was very pleasure to realize that most of them are generally positive. The authors who spend some time in Ukraine do not associate this country with war, danger and total poverty anymore. Vice versa, they consider Ukraine as hospitable country with very open- and true-hearted nationals. Moreover, it is worth to emphasize, that Ukraine should provide the policy, which would conduct more powerful tourist flows in order to change the impression of foreigners about Ukraine. In other words, if Ukraine allows foreigners to learn more about its rich culture and its amazing citizens, the associations with Ukraine of those people who never were in this country will definitely change.

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GENDER ROLES IN UKRAINIAN BUSINESS

Abstract. *On the basis of gender studies the description of the differences in social status, gender roles and other aspects of men and women in Ukraine is given.*

Key words: *gender roles, masculine and feminine cultures, Masculinity versus Femininity Index, gender equality, androgyny.*

Анотація. *У статті йдеться про баланс маскулінності та фемінності в ментальності українців та його вплив на бізнес середовище України.*

Ключові слова: *гендерні ролі, маскулінність, фемінність, андрогинність, гендерна рівність.*