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Performing Identity in Political Campaigning:
The Case of Zelensky's 2019 Election Campaign

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Abstract:

This thesis explores the concept of identity performance in political campaigning, using Volodymyr Zelensky's 2019 presidential campaign in Ukraine as a case study. Zelensky's unique transition from a comedian and actor to a political leader highlights the intersection of media, politics, and identity. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative content analysis of social media posts with qualitative narrative analysis to examine how Zelensky's campaign crafted and communicated his political identity. The findings reveal that Zelensky's use of social media, particularly Facebook, allowed him to bypass traditional media channels and engage directly with voters, presenting a dynamic and relatable persona. His campaign emphasized themes of anti-corruption, transparency, and unity, resonating with a broad spectrum of Ukrainian voters. The research contributes to the broader discourse on political communication and identity construction, offering insights into the evolving dynamics of political campaigns in the digital age.

Keywords:

Political Identity, Campaigning, Social Media, Volodymyr Zelensky, 2019 Presidential Election in Ukraine, Political Communication, Identity Performance, Digital Media.

Abstrakt:

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht das Konzept der Identitätsperformance im politischen Wahlkampf am Beispiel von Wolodymyr Selenskyjs Präsidentschaftswahlkampf 2019 in der Ukraine. Selenskyjs einzigartiger Übergang vom Komiker und Schauspieler zum politischen Führer beleuchtet die Schnittstelle von Medien, Politik und Identität. Die Studie verwendet einen Mixed-Methods-Ansatz, der die quantitative Inhaltsanalyse von Social-Media-Posts mit der qualitativen Narrationsanalyse kombiniert, um zu untersuchen, wie Selenskyjs Kampagne seine politische Identität gestaltete und kommunizierte. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Selenskyjs Nutzung von sozialen Medien, insbesondere Facebook, es ihm ermöglichte, traditionelle Medienkanäle zu umgehen und direkt mit den Wählern zu interagieren, indem er eine dynamische und nachvollziehbare Persönlichkeit präsentierte. Seine Kampagne betonte Themen wie Korruptionsbekämpfung, Transparenz und Einheit, die bei einem breiten Spektrum ukrainischer Wähler Anklang fanden. Die Forschung trägt zur breiteren Diskussion über politische Kommunikation und Identitätskonstruktion bei und bietet Einblicke in die sich entwickelnde Dynamik politischer Kampagnen im digitalen Zeitalter.

Schlüsselwörter:

Politische Identität, Wahlkampf, Soziale Medien, Wolodymyr Selenskyj, Präsidentschaftswahl 2019 in der Ukraine, Politische Kommunikation, Identitätsperformance, Digitale Medien.

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Pledge

On my honor as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

— Viktor Kharyton

Introduction

Understanding identity construction and political performance is a pivotal and timely subject of inquiry, considering its profound influence on political landscapes and decision-making processes. In the context of contemporary Ukraine, where political transitions have played a pivotal role in shaping its national identity and political environment, the study of identity politics is of particular significance. The 2019 presidential elections, marked by Volodymyr Zelensky's win, provide a compelling case study to explore how political narratives employed during his presidential campaign reflect the ability of political actors to identify, target, interact, and engage with contemporary Ukrainian identities, perform these identities, and ultimately win elections. Exploring the dynamics of narrative-driven campaigning in the context of identity politics and identity performance can shed light on the evolving political landscape in Ukraine, offering valuable insights for political and cultural scientists, international and public affairs scholars and professionals, and policymakers alike. This research aims to integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture the multifaceted nature of Ukrainian voter identity formation and the key narratives deployed by Zelensky during his relatively short and exceptionally efficient run in the 2019 presidential race in Ukraine. The mixed methods approach, tailored to address the depth of the research questions and the intricacies of the chosen research topic, is deemed the most suitable. This constructivist thesis will contribute to previous research and provide a solid base for the future practical application of findings in political campaigning, allowing a comprehensive examination of ongoing inquiries into identity politics, the performance of identity, and national identity construction.

Volodymyr Zelensky's victory presents a unique intersection of political and performative elements, as his background as an actor and celebrity played a significant role in his campaign. Zelensky's adept use of social media platforms to craft a relatable and dynamic persona showcased his ability to engage directly with voters, bypassing traditional media channels. This approach was not only a strategic fit for his candidacy but also highlighted his intent to present himself as an atypical political figure who performs his role in innovative ways. Derived from these observations, the primary research question guiding this thesis is the extent to which Zelensky's identity performance contributed to his victory in the 2019 presidential elections in Ukraine. The study delves into the performances of Zelensky's 2019

presidential election campaign, exploring why these performances engaged and resonated with contemporary Ukrainian voters. Several preliminary hypotheses are developed concerning this research topic, positing that Zelensky (1) applied populist techniques in his campaign performances while not necessarily promoting populist ideology, and that (2) his performances showed significant dynamics, continuously shaping throughout the first and second rounds of elections. Furthermore, (3) Zelensky's performances positioned him as a cross-cultural figure, targeting and engaging with Ukrainian voters' collective and civic identity rather than their ethnic identity.

This thesis is structured to provide a comprehensive analysis of these aspects, beginning with a literature review that contextualizes the research within existing theoretical frameworks related to political campaigns, social media, and identity performance. The subsequent chapters detail the conceptualization, operationalization, and methodology employed in the study, followed by an examination of the political construction of Ukrainian identity and the background of Zelensky's election campaign. The core analysis focuses on the discursive trends in Zelensky's performance, integrating quantitative and qualitative findings to offer a nuanced understanding of his campaign strategies. The final discussion and conclusions synthesize the research findings, highlighting the implications for modern political communication and suggesting avenues for future research. All in all, this thesis aims to provide valuable insights into how identity performance and narrative-driven campaigning can influence electoral outcomes, using Zelensky's 2019 presidential campaign as a case study. Through the integration of quantitative data analysis and qualitative narrative exploration, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics of political communication in the digital age.

Chapter 1. Literature Review

The objective of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview and analyze the existing research and theoretical frameworks related to political campaigns in the digital age, with a particular focus on the role of social media and identity performance. This review aims to contextualize and support this thesis by exploring the evolution of digital campaigning, the construction of political identities, and the populist performance on social media. By examining these areas, the review will highlight significant findings and pinpoint gaps in the current literature that warrant further investigation. The following chapter is structured to cover several key areas that are crucial for understanding the dynamics of modern political campaigns. Firstly, it delves into the transformation from traditional to digital campaigning, highlighting how the advent of social media has reshaped the landscape of political communication. Secondly, the review examines identity construction in political campaigns, focusing on how political figures craft and perform their identities in the public sphere and via various media platforms. Thirdly, it explores the rise of populism and populist performance on social media. It discusses how populist leaders use social media and other digital platforms to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and communicate directly with the electorate. By exploring the evolution of digital campaigning, identity construction, and populist performance on social media, the review will lay the groundwork for the subsequent analysis of Zelensky's identity performance.

Social Media and the Evolution of Digital Campaigning

The transformation from traditional to digital campaigning marks a significant evolution in how political messages are crafted and disseminated. Traditionally, political campaigning relied heavily on door-to-door canvassing, rallies, and broadcast media, which are resource-intensive and limited in scope and personalization (Kavanagh 1995; Newman 1999). The advent of digital platforms introduced a shift towards what Chadwick (2017) describes as a “hybrid media system,” where old and new media coexist and interact in complex ways to influence public perception and voter behavior. In turn, this imminently results in new mediation tactics of and interactions between the publics — the “ever-evolving relationships based upon adaptation and interdependence and simultaneous concentrations and

diffusions of power” (Chadwick 2017, 4-5). Already in the late mid-2000s – early 2010s, digital strategies in Western democracies have significantly diversified the tools available for campaigning. This can be seen from the parties’ growing digital presence budgets and more sophisticated digital media tactics that are now “strongly integrated with both interpersonal and mediated channels of political communication” in voters’ daily lives (Vaccari 2013, 189). Kreiss (2016) expands on this by highlighting the role of data and technology-intensive campaigning strategies that enable micro-targeting and personalization at an unprecedented scale. Such approaches match Howard's (2006) earlier observations of the “managed citizens.” He focuses on the digital “hypermedia campaign” tools that are used to shape, guide, and manage political opinions and behaviors effectively (Howard 2006, 170). Among many digital tools referred by the abovementioned scholars, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram take an outstanding role due to their mass adoption and extended participatory nature.

The contemporary use of social media platforms and their integration into daily life have transformed the dynamics of political engagement by enabling direct and real-time interaction between politicians and voters. Digital interaction leads to the creation of the so-called “authenticity contracts,” which, in turn, contribute to the image of authentic politicians (Enli 2015). This potential for enhanced engagement was noted early on. Stromer-Galley (2004) underlines that the interactivity offered by online digital platforms — both as product and process — engages users in a more dynamic way than traditional media could. This interactivity facilitates a deeper personal connection with the electorate, allowing for more effective mobilization of supporters and dissemination of campaign messages. Zooming on the interactivity of digital platforms, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) introduce the concept of “connective action,” where social media empower individuals to share, modify, and drive political messages, creating organic and often powerful campaign dynamics that can influence public opinion and electoral outcomes. The study focuses on the “easy-to-personalize action themes” and frames, which substitute the collective identity as the main driver of collective action (Bennett and Segerberg 2012, 743). In a more recent study, Lilleker and Koc-Michalska (2017) further argue that the motivations for political participation have evolved with social media’s ability to provide a platform for active engagement rather than passive consumption, thus serving as a powerful mobilization tool. Their findings indicate that online political

participation is only the tip of the iceberg. Digital campaigning efforts do not result solely in the spread of key messages in online networks, “they can also encourage the belief that any supportive action can simultaneously have a positive impact within the real world” (Lilleker and Koc-Michalska 2017, 35).

A range of international case studies underscores the pivotal role of social media in electoral successes and failures. For instance, Obama’s 2008 and 2012 campaigns are often cited as benchmarks in the use of social media for political campaigning, where techniques such as data analytics and social networking were used to mobilize voters, particularly young people (Nielsen 2012; Gibson and McAllister 2015). Another notable example is the Brexit referendum, where social media was used aggressively — including supervised and unsupervised automation (bots and trolls) — to shape public opinion and mobilize voter turnout on both sides of the campaign (Bastos and Mercea 2018). In contrast, many scholars also provide a critical perspective on the use of social media in campaigns, highlighting the risks associated with misinformation, echo chambers, and the potential for foreign interference. Khosravini (2017) notes how echo chambers are the primary way of social media functioning due to the integral mechanisms of content promotion of these platforms. The spread of foreign propaganda is noted as a recent and powerful trend in foreign influence efforts, especially during inflection points such as elections (Martin, Shapiro, and Nedashkovskaya 2019). Dissemination of manipulative content, particularly fake news on social media, is another disturbing campaigning practice of the post-truth era (Yerlikaya and Aslan 2020). These examples provide a nuanced understanding of how social media can be both a tool for greater democratic engagement and a vector for complex challenges — including the construction of candidates’ identities during electoral campaigns (Rogers and Niederer 2020).

Identity Construction and Identity Performance in Political Campaigns

The construction of identity in politics can be understood through several theoretical lenses. Identity theory and social identity theory offer foundational insights into how individuals form and maintain their identities within social contexts. Goffman’s seminal work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), introduces the concept of identity as a performance, where individuals manage impressions in social interactions, akin to actors on a stage presenting themselves in ways that are likely to be accepted by others, thus considering

identity as something “performed” or “enacted” through interaction with the public. This performance-based view underscores the dynamic and situational nature of identity construction. Stets and Burke (2000) differentiate identity theory and social identity theory, noting that identity theory focuses on the roles individuals occupy, while social identity theory emphasizes group membership and the emotional significance attached to it. Bankert, Huddy, and Rosema (2017) extend this understanding to political partisanship, describing it as a form of social identity that deeply influences political behavior and attitudes.

Hall’s (1997, 2019) contributions explore how identities are culturally constructed through representation. The scholar argues that identities are not fixed but “fashioned, stylized, produced and performed” through cultural practices and media representations (Hall 1997, 14). This view aligns with Castells’ (2010) analysis, which examines how identities are formed in the network society, emphasizing the role of global media in shaping and disseminating cultural identities. Thus, modern identities are formed and transformed under globalizing pressures, reflecting a complex layering of national, ethnic, and global identities. The scholarly works focusing on transcultural communication and deep mediatization further discuss the fluidity of identities in the context of globalization and digital media. These perspectives highlight the hybrid nature of identities that emerge from the intersection of multiple cultural influences and media environments, signifying the critical role that media plays in both the crafting and dissemination of political identities (García Canclini and Chiappari 2008; Hepp 2019; 2015).

The rise of digital media has transformed how political identities are constructed and communicated. Hepp (2019) discusses deep mediatization, where media pervades all aspects of social life, making it a crucial site for identity formation. Social media platforms enable direct interaction between political figures and the public, allowing for more personalized and immediate forms of communication. The interactive nature of social media allows for personalized communication strategies that engage voters on a more intimate level, mobilizing voters via increased social pressures and direct emotional appeals (Panagopoulos 2010). Such personalized emotional messages that evoke emotions such as pride and shame are shown to be effective in encouraging political engagement. In support of this, Alexander (2010) discusses how political actors perform “power dramas” on media stages to shape voter perceptions. His analysis of Obama’s presidential campaign illustrates how political success

relies on the effective performance of identity that resonates with diverse audiences. In turn, the media does not simply report these performances but also re-styles them, thus influencing how political identities are perceived and understood by the electorate (Corner and Pels 2003). Social media further allow candidates for more control over the reporting and styling of their performances.

Additionally, Marshall (2020) points out that the concept of the “celebrity persona” in media significantly influences how political figures craft their public identities to gain and maintain public attention. This work examines the intersection of celebrity culture and politics, arguing that political figures increasingly adopt celebrity personas to engage with the public. This phenomenon is also facilitated by social media platforms when platforms like Twitter enable politicians to present curated and personalized versions of themselves to their followers (Marwick and Boyd 2011).

As mentioned above, the increased control over performance reporting is shaping the public perceptions of the candidates’ identities. The interactive nature of social media platforms maximizes the personalization of the campaign strategies, allowing for communication techniques and performances that significantly impact voter perceptions and engagement. All of these, make Goffman's (1959) concept of the presentation of self particularly relevant in the context of social media, where politicians can manage impressions in a more controlled and direct way than ever before (Marwick and Boyd 2011). Furthermore, the research on identity performance in the context of social media aligns with the Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) “connective action” concept introduced in the previous section. The reviewed research findings from both political communication experts and the identity theory pioneers allow for a clear conclusion — the performative content and personalization of political messaging on social media platforms enable a more direct and individualized form of political engagement, creating a space where political identities can be both constructed and contested by the candidates and their followers. The rise of digital media and the increasing importance of personalized communication strategies highlight the evolving landscape of political campaigning, where direct and interactive engagement with voters plays a pivotal role.

Populist Performance and Social Media Campaigning

The reviewed literature strongly argues that the identity of political candidates is not a given but is actively constructed, performed, and reshaped through various forms of media. This dynamic interplay between media and identity not only defines the public persona of political figures but also influences how they are perceived by voters, potentially affecting the outcomes of elections. This aligns with Moffitt's (2016) analysis of populist strategies, where emotional appeals and personalized performances are central to gaining and maintaining public support. Populist performative tactics in social media and the digital spaces beyond present many significant examples that can help understand these processes and how they are crucial for comprehending the broader dynamics of contemporary political campaigning. One such vivid example examines how populist politicians use personal social media pages to perform a particular political style that appeals directly to the general public, often bypassing traditional political elites (Moffitt 2016). To continue the exploration of populism, one should first circle back to the basic definitions and only then dive into the “how” — how do populist leaders craft their identities through performances that appeal to the “common people” while positioning themselves against the elite? Populism is often defined as “a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups” (Oxford English Dictionary). Müller (2016) characterizes populism as a moralistic imagination of politics rather than a specific ideology, stressing that there is no “particular theory of populism” (2). This perspective echoes Mudde (2007), who identifies the populist radical right as partaking in a kind of politics that “pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous ‘others’,” who are together depicted as depriving the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity, and voice. De la Torre (2018) expands this framework, offering a comprehensive global analysis of how populism is manifested in various political contexts, including mediated online spaces. Importantly, all three populism experts point out the polarizing nature of the populist discourse and strategy — this is yet to be challenged by those who believe it is merely a communication style, a performative tactic, that can be used in many ways (Doroshenko 2022; Jagers and Walgrave 2007).

Social media platforms provide populist politicians with unparalleled tools to communicate directly with the electorate, effectively bypassing traditional media gatekeepers.

Engesser et al. (2017) highlight how social media allows for the spread of a fragmented populist ideology, enabling leaders to craft messages that resonate on a personal level with diverse groups of followers. In support of these findings, Waisbord and Amado (2017) detail how Latin American presidents use Twitter to foster a direct connection with the public, emphasizing simplicity and emotional appeal over complex policy discussions. This method is part of a broader “media populism” trend where populist leaders worldwide exploit the near immediacy of publishing and quick content reach to enhance their appeal and mobilize supporters, as discussed by Bos and Brants (2014) in their study on the multiple elections that took place over the course of almost 20 years in the Netherlands.

The effectiveness of such populist strategies on social media can be observed in both the spread of populist messages and the alignment of followers’ ideologies with populist leaders. Stanyer, Salgado, and Strömbäck (2016) provide cross-national findings that show how populist communicators leverage media platforms to effectively influence public opinion. They note that the media environment surrounding populist messaging and performances can both support and undermine these communication efforts: “A hostile media environment can undermine populist parties’ successes just as a supportive media climate can help populist parties get their message across” (Stanyer, Salgado, and Strömbäck 2016, 358). It then comes as no surprise that right-wing populists usually find great success online, in the safe space of targeted audiences and algorithmic echo chambers, where they create narratives that resonate deeply with voter concerns about national identity and sovereignty (Krämer 2017). Furthermore, Ernst et al. (2019) find that populists prefer using social media over traditional media formats like talk shows, as social media platforms allow for more targeted and frequent interactions with the public. All in all, populist social media performances have a steady track record of not only successfully increasing ideological alignment among supporters, but also enhancing the audiences’ political participation and issue consistency. The reviewed studies collectively illustrate the pivotal role of social media in modern populist movements, highlighting its capacity to amplify populist messages and fundamentally alter political communication dynamics. The direct channel established between populist leaders and their followers via social media platforms challenges traditional political campaigning and media reporting, suggesting a shift towards more personalized and direct forms of political engagement.

Critical Gaps and Research Opportunity

The literature review on identity theory and political campaigns encompasses several critical themes and theoretical frameworks, bringing together the concepts of identity construction and performance, social media, and political ideology. While the literature on identity theory and political communication separately provides robust frameworks for understanding identity performance or election campaigning, there are notable gaps in the current literature, particularly concerning Zelensky's complex identity performance on social media.

First, most studies have previously focused on polarizing populist politics in Western Europe and the use of Twitter and WhatsApp. In contrast, most of Zelensky's effort was aimed at facilitating engagement via Facebook, the most popular social media at the time of his campaign run in 2019. Second, theories of performative identity, social identity, and the role of media in shaping political identities are crucial for analyzing how Zelensky crafted and communicated his political persona, but there was no unifying mechanism presented to assess the alignment of performative identity tactics with campaigning efforts and results of the elections. To address these gaps, this research will develop a comprehensive understanding of identity construction and performance in the context of a deep mixed-methods analysis of Zelensky's campaign, contributing to the broader discourse on political communication in digital spaces. The next chapters will outline the research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze Zelensky's social media performance. The analysis chapters will provide detailed examinations of case studies, engagement metrics, and content analysis. Finally, the integrated findings chapter will synthesize the results, offering insights into the implications of evolving digital media landscapes for political identity performances in the post-truth era. This comprehensive approach aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of modern political communication and its impact on democratic processes.

Chapter 2. Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Methodology

The primary method of criticizing social media performance is the assessment of engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments. These are the critical indicators of how users interact with content and can reflect the impact of a campaign. Boulianne (2015) analyzes the correlation between social media use and various forms of civic and political participation, suggesting that even simple statistics such as number of followers, group subscriptions, and engagement metrics can serve as proxies for public interest and mobilization potential. Further along the quantitative methodology, Neuendorf (2016) provides a comprehensive guide to performing content analysis, emphasizing measuring “all variables as they naturally or normally occur” to further uncover patterns in communication content (chap. 2). Jungherr (2016) further focuses on Twitter to demonstrate how other quantitative features such as the timing of publications, volume of content, and traceable interactions can be used to understand political messaging and its reception during election campaigns. Marking the quantitatively shift from simpler statistics to characteristics is sentiment analysis. Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013) enhance this discussion by incorporating sentiment analysis to gauge the emotional tone of social media posts, providing insights into how sentiments spread across networks and influence the behavior of the target audiences.

Complementing the quantitative findings, qualitative studies and discourse analysis tend to provide deeper insights into the context and implications of social media interactions. As such, scholars employ narrative analysis to explore how stories unfold on social media during significant events, illustrating how digital platforms serve as stages for political discourse (Papacharissi and De Fatima Oliveira 2012). Highfield and Leaver (2016) explore more nuanced forms of engagement on visual platforms like Instagram, discussing how visual content can drive engagement differently than textual content. Their research illustrates the importance of conducting deeper content analysis in social media research by systematically examining the visual components of social media posts and deriving both quantitative and qualitative insights. Furthermore, Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) encourage scholars to conduct critical discourse analysis (CDA), which combines “text linguistics, stylistics, social semiotics, social cognition, rhetoric, and, more recently, conversation analysis,” to identify political discourses at the “intersection of language and social structures” (450).

Considering the complexity of the social media performance analysis, the integration of various methodological approaches often yields more robust findings. Karpf (2012) discusses the challenges and opportunities of conducting mixed-methods social science research in the rapidly changing landscape of Internet technologies, citing the isolation and limited design of “even the most sophisticated quantitative methods” and supporting the idea of methodological pluralism (645). The mixed-methods methodologies provide a toolkit for researchers aiming to study social media’s multifaceted roles in politics and society. Ranging from the quantitative indicators of metrics, content and sentiment analyses to the deeper insights of qualitative discourse analysis, these approaches reflect the dynamic and layered nature of social media interactions. Combining these methods can lead to a more nuanced understanding of Zelensky’s identity performances on the social media stage. The next sections of this chapter will describe and advocate for the methodological choices of this research in detail, starting with the conceptualization of the key terms.

Conceptualization of Identity Performance in Political Campaigning

To effectively analyze Zelensky’s identity performance on social media, it is essential to conceptualize and operationalize the key terms: (1) identity construction and (2) identity performance. I conceptualize *identity construction* as the process by which individuals create and develop their social identities through various means, including personal experiences, social interactions, and media representations. This concept is grounded in identity theory, which understands identities as phenomena constructed through (re)presentation, mediation, or performance (Goffman 1959; Hall 1997; Hepp 2019). In the context of political campaigns, identity construction involves crafting a public persona that aligns with the values and expectations of the target electorate via demonstrated *identity performance* — the enactment of identity through behaviors, expressions, and interactions. The performance-based approach of this thesis underscores the dynamic and situational nature of identity construction, suggesting that political candidates actively perform their identities to resonate with voters, in line with Alexander’s (2010) political “power dramas.”

As noted by both identity theory and political communication experts, performing identity on social media involves using digital platforms to craft, present, and manage one’s public persona, enabling politicians to present curated and personalized versions of themselves

to their followers, thus managing impressions in a more controlled and direct way (Marwick and Boyd 2011). This performative content and personalization of political messaging create a space where political identities can be both constructed and contested. In the context of Zelensky's 2019 presidential campaign, these concepts are operationalized through the analysis of Zelensky's official Facebook publications for the whole period of his campaign, examining how he constructed and performed his identity to engage and mobilize voters. The integration of multimedia content, interactive features, and strategic use of hashtags are key elements of his identity performance on social media, which will be taken into consideration in addition to the more evident engagement metrics and textual components of the publications.

Research Methodology

This research is guided by the objectives of examining how Zelensky utilized social media, particularly Facebook, to craft and communicate his political identity, and assessing the impact of these performances on voter engagement and perceptions. The approach combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research questions and hypotheses. The primary data for this research is collected from Zelensky's official Facebook page, focusing on posts made from the official launch of his campaign in December 2018 to his victory in April 2019 (*see Appendix 1*). Facebook is chosen as the representative platform, among several more contextual reasons explained in Chapters 3 and 4, due to its widespread use in Ukraine — the most popular social media platform in Ukraine at the time of the elections — and its significant role in Zelensky's campaign strategy ("Most Used Social Media Ukraine 2019," n.d.; Doroshenko 2022). The data collected includes posts, videos, images, live streams, and engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and views. Data scraping tools were employed to systematically extract this information, ensuring a robust dataset for analysis. Additionally, data triangulation is employed to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings — by integrating data from various sources, including posts, engagement metrics, and comment content, the research provides a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of Zelensky's social media performance. Cross-validation of quantitative and qualitative findings further strengthens the robustness of the conclusions drawn.

Quantitative content analysis is conducted to identify patterns and trends in Zelensky's social media activity. This involves calculating the frequency of posts and engagement metrics

to determine the level of interaction each post generated. Statistical analysis is used to compare the engagement metrics across different types of posts (e.g., text, image, video) to identify which formats were most effective in engaging the audience. Sentiment analysis is conducted using natural language processing tools to evaluate the tone and emotional appeal of the posts, further illuminating how Zelensky's content resonated with the electorate. Additionally, keyword analysis through text mining techniques identifies the key themes and frequently used terms in Zelensky's posts, providing insights into the focus of his messaging. Qualitative content analysis complements the quantitative approach by offering a deeper understanding of the narratives and strategies employed in Zelensky's social media posts. Thematic analysis is used to code and categorize the content into various themes such as anti-corruption, national pride, and unity. This analysis helps to elucidate the overarching messages Zelensky aimed to convey and how these themes align with his identity construction as the "people's candidate." The role of multimedia and interactive features in Zelensky's identity performance is also critically examined. The use of videos, images, and live streams is analyzed to understand how these formats contributed to the performative aspects of his campaign. The interactive nature of social media, such as live Q&A sessions and comment interactions, is also explored to assess how these elements facilitated direct engagement with voters and enhanced the authenticity of Zelensky's public image. To analyze identity construction in the final stage of the analysis, this research applies theoretical frameworks from identity theory, social identity theory, and performative identity. In this context, Zelensky's social media posts are viewed as performances aimed at shaping his public persona.

In summary, this methodology combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyze Zelensky's identity construction and performance on social media. By examining the frequency and engagement of posts, thematic content, and the performative use of multimedia, the research aims to provide a detailed understanding of how social media strategies contributed to Zelensky's electoral success and the broader implications for political communication in the digital age. Before diving into the statistics and identified discourses, one should be introduced to the background of the political construction of Ukrainian identity and provide a brief overview of Zelensky's path to politics. The next two chapters will focus particularly on that.

Chapter 3. The Political Construction of Ukrainian Identity

This chapter delves into the intricate processes through which Ukrainian national identity has been shaped and contested, particularly in the context of political transitions and electoral campaigns. By examining the role of the Ukrainian media environment, historical political developments, and previous presidential campaigns, we can understand the complex interplay of factors that have influenced contemporary Ukrainian identity. The Ukrainian media landscape has been a battleground for competing narratives, significantly impacting public sentiment and political behavior, especially during critical periods like the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan protests (Yekelchuk 2020). Previous presidential campaigns have also followed suit, reflecting the evolving nature of political communication and identity dynamics in Ukraine. This chapter sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how these dynamics influenced Volodymyr Zelensky's 2019 presidential campaign, providing essential context for understanding his political identity performance.

Ukrainian Media Environment

The Ukrainian media landscape has played a critical role in shaping national identity, especially in the context of political transitions and electoral campaigns. The media serves not only as a tool of simple information exchange but also as a for a “where strategic messaging can influence voting decisions” through both personal and policy narratives,” that reflect and influence public sentiment (Crow and Wolton 2020, 662). This dynamic is particularly evident in the ways media outlets have navigated the complex socio-political landscape of Ukraine, marked by its post-Soviet transformation, geopolitical tensions, and internal divisions (Birch 2000; Way 2005). One prominent example is the role of television during the Orange Revolution in 2004. At that time, television channels like *1+1* and *Inter*, controlled by oligarchs with ties to political elites, were used to broadcast biased coverage favoring the incumbent government. However, independent outlets such as *Channel 5* emerged as crucial platforms for the opposition, broadcasting live coverage of protests and providing a counter-narrative that galvanized public support for Viktor Yushchenko (Aslund and McFaul 2006). This period highlighted the media's potential to both support and challenge the political status quo. The Euromaidan protests of 2013-2014 further demonstrated the media's influence. This

time, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter played a pivotal role in organizing and sustaining the protests. These platforms enabled activists to bypass traditional media channels, which were often censored or controlled by the government, and disseminate information globally (Onuch 2014). The widespread use of social media during Euromaidan exemplified how new media technologies could foster a sense of solidarity and collective identity among protesters.

In more recent years, the media environment has continued to evolve. The annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine have led to an intensified information war between Ukraine and Russia. Russian media outlets have been accused of spreading disinformation and propaganda to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty and national identity (Yekelchuk 2020). In response, Ukraine has taken measures to strengthen its information security, including banning Russian social networks and news channels, and promoting Ukrainian language media content to foster national unity (Nygren et al. 2018). These examples illustrate how the Ukrainian media environment has been a site of contestation and change, reflecting broader societal and political transformations. The media's role in shaping national identity is multifaceted, involving both the promotion of unity and the exacerbation of divisions.

Historical Context of Ukraine's Political Landscape

Ukraine's political landscape has been profoundly shaped by its history, particularly its experience of Soviet rule and subsequent independence. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 was undoubtedly a cornerstone moment. It led to the emergence of a sovereign Ukrainian state that had to navigate the challenges of nation-building, democratization, and economic transition. Key features of Ukrainian identity that have emerged from this historical context include a strong sense of sovereignty, resilience, and a desire for democratic governance (Laba 1995; Shulman 1999). On the other hand, the legacy of Soviet rule left Ukraine with deep regional, linguistic, and cultural divides (Kulyk 2011). The eastern and southern regions, with their significant Russian-speaking populations, often felt a closer affinity to Russia, while the western and central regions leaned towards Europe and emphasized Ukrainian language and culture (Laitin 1998). This dichotomy has been a persistent feature of Ukrainian identity, influencing political allegiances and electoral behavior.

The history of contention also strongly influenced the contemporary Ukrainian identity. The Orange Revolution of 2004 was a defining moment that underscored these identity dynamics. The mass protests against electoral fraud and the subsequent victory of Viktor Yushchenko highlighted a popular demand for democratic reforms and European integration. Yushchenko's campaign emphasized national sovereignty, the Ukrainian language, and the importance of breaking free from Russia's influence. This period marked the consolidation of a civic national identity that prioritized democratic values and human rights (Aslund and McFaul 2006; Way 2005). The Euromaidan protests of 2013-2014 further solidified this civic identity. The protests were sparked by then-President Yanukovich's decision to suspend the signing of an association agreement with the European Union, favoring closer ties with Russia instead (Kuzio 2016). The movement quickly grew into a broader struggle for democracy, the rule of law, and resistance against corruption. The diverse composition of the protesters, including students, civil society activists, and ordinary citizens from various regions, reflected a collective identity centered on civic values and national dignity (Onuch 2014; Kuzio 2016). The annexation of Crimea has further complicated the identity landscape.

These events have intensified nationalist sentiments and the delineation between "us" and "them" (Kuzio 2016; Yekelchuk 2020). Ukrainian identity has increasingly been defined in opposition to Russian aggression, emphasizing sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the distinctiveness of Ukrainian culture and language (Laitin 1998; Kulyk 2011). This period has seen the rise of a more cohesive national identity, characterized by a sense of resilience and resistance against external threats. Up to 2019, exactly the abovementioned Ukraine's political dynamics and historical events have played a crucial role in shaping a national identity that is both resilient and deeply divided along regional and linguistic lines. These dynamics continued to influence political behavior and electoral outcomes in Ukraine during the 2019 presidential elections.

Previous Ukrainian Presidential Campaigns

The study of previous Ukrainian presidential campaigns provides valuable insights into the evolving nature of political communication and identity performance in the country. The campaigns of the past two decades have been characterized by intense competition, populist rhetoric, and strategic mobilization of identity narratives. The 1994 presidential election, which

saw Leonid Kuchma defeat the incumbent Leonid Kravchuk, highlighted the regional divisions within Ukraine (Motyl 1995). Kuchma, who received strong support from the eastern and southern regions, campaigned on a platform of closer economic ties with Russia and the protection of Russian language rights. This election underscored the significance of regional identity in Ukrainian politics, with voters aligning themselves based on linguistic and cultural affiliations (Birch 2000; 2011). The 2004 presidential election, a key focus in Aslund and McFaul's (2006) analysis, revealed the high stakes of political competition in Ukraine. The 2004 race saw Viktor Yushchenko running against Viktor Yanukovych, with the latter benefiting from the support of the outgoing President Kuchma and significant resources from Russian backers. The election was marred by widespread allegations of fraud, leading to the Orange Revolution (Way 2005; Birch 2011). The mass protests and subsequent re-run of the election resulted in Yushchenko's victory, symbolizing a triumph for democratic values and Western-oriented policies. This period also highlighted the role of civil society and grassroots mobilization in challenging authoritarian practices and promoting democratic governance (Khodunov 2022).

The 2010 presidential election saw Yanukovych's return to power, defeating Yulia Tymoshenko in a closely contested race (Copsey and Shapovalova 2010). This election was marked by a shift in political rhetoric, with Yanukovych adopting a more moderate stance compared to his 2004 campaign. He emphasized economic stability and pragmatic relations with both Russia and the West. Despite this, his presidency was characterized by increasing authoritarianism and corruption, culminating in the Euromaidan protests and his eventual ousting in 2014 (Yekelchik 2020). Thus the 2014 presidential election, held in the aftermath of Yanukovych's removal and amidst the annexation of Crimea, was a critical juncture for Ukraine. Petro Poroshenko's campaign focused on national unity, sovereignty, and resistance against Russian aggression. His victory reflected a more cohesive Ukrainian identity, centered on resilience and a pro-European orientation (Onuch 2014). Poroshenko's emphasis on anti-corruption and economic reforms resonated with a populace weary of political instability and external threats. The unfulfilled promises of Poroshenko's campaign would fuel Zelensky's narratives, as seen further in Chapter 6.

All in all, previous campaigns illustrate the significant role of identity politics in shaping electoral outcomes in Ukraine. Candidates have strategically mobilized identity

narratives to resonate with different segments of the electorate, reflecting the complex and evolving nature of Ukrainian national identity. The interplay between regional, linguistic, and civic identities continues to be a defining feature of Ukraine's political landscape. This chapter illustrates that understanding Zelensky's campaign requires a broader context of Ukraine's political and social environment leading up to the 2019 elections. The country was grappling with the ongoing conflict in the Donbas region, economic instability, and a pervasive sense of political disillusionment. These factors created a fertile ground for a candidate who could promise significant change and present a credible alternative to the entrenched political elites (Doroshenko 2022). Volodymyr Zelensky's 2019 presidential campaign represents a novel approach to political identity performance in Ukraine. Leveraging his background in entertainment, Zelensky utilized a narrative-driven strategy that resonated with a broad spectrum of Ukrainian voters. His campaign was characterized by its emphasis on anti-corruption, transparency, and a break from traditional political elites. Zelensky's use of social media and other digital platforms allowed him to craft a relatable and dynamic persona, engaging directly with voters and bypassing traditional media channels. This strategy, as discussed by Yanchenko and Zulianello (2023), was particularly effective in mobilizing younger voters and those disillusioned with the existing political establishment. The next chapter further explores Zelensky's journey to politics in detail.

Chapter 4. Case Study Background: Zelensky's Election Campaign

The 2019 presidential election in Ukraine marked a transformative period in the nation's political landscape, with Volodymyr Zelensky's unexpected victory signifying a profound shift driven by widespread public dissatisfaction with the traditional political elite (Mashtaler 2021). This chapter delves into the background of Zelensky's remarkable journey from a comedian and actor to the President of Ukraine, highlighting his innovative use of social media and strategic messaging during the 2019 presidential election. As Zelensky crafted a relatable and dynamic political persona, his campaign's adept use of platforms like Facebook allowed him to bypass traditional media, directly connect with voters, and mobilize a broad base of support (Drach 2020). This chapter sets the stage for a detailed analysis of Zelensky's identity performance and campaign strategies, which will be further explored in the subsequent chapters.

Zelensky's Journey to Politics

Volodymyr Zelensky's entry into politics is as unconventional as it is remarkable. His journey from a comedian and actor to the President of Ukraine reflects a significant shift in the Ukrainian political landscape, driven by public disillusionment with traditional politics and a desire for fresh leadership. Zelensky was born on January 25, 1978, in Kryvyi Rih, a major city in central Ukraine. He graduated from the Kryvyi Rih Economic Institute with a degree in law but found his true calling in entertainment (Rudenko 2022). Zelensky's rise to fame began with his work in comedy, particularly with the creation of the comedy troupe *Kvartal 95* in 1997. *Kvartal 95* became immensely popular in Ukraine and other post-Soviet states, known for its sharp political satire and humor that resonated with ordinary people. The pivotal moment in Zelensky's entertainment career was his starring role in the television series "Servant of the People," which premiered in 2015 (Rudenko 2022; Yanchenko and Zulianello 2023). In this series, Zelensky played Vasyl Holoborodko, a humble schoolteacher becoming a President of Ukraine overnight, as a viral video of him delivering a tirade against corruption goes viral. The show's popularity soared, and its themes of anti-corruption and ordinary people taking power struck a chord with the Ukrainian public (Doroshenko 2022).

Zelensky's transition from entertainment to politics was officially announced on December 31, 2018, during a prime-time slot of the national New Year's Eve television broadcast. This announcement was made both at the "Zelensky-friendly" TV channels instead of an official presidential address and through a video posted on social media, bypassing traditional media channels and immediately engaging a younger, more digitally connected electorate. His campaign was built on the themes portrayed in "Servant of the People," emphasizing transparency, anti-corruption, and a government that serves the people (Drach 2020; Yanchenko and Zulianello 2023). One of the key strategies of Zelensky's campaign was his extensive use of social media. Zelensky and his team used platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to communicate directly with voters, share campaign messages, and respond to public concerns. This approach not only allowed him to control his narrative but also made him appear more accessible and relatable. For instance, his Facebook page was frequently updated with videos and posts that showcased his personality and humor, helping to humanize him and differentiate him from traditional politicians (Zakharchenko et al. 2019). Moreover, Zelensky's campaign utilized data analytics to identify and target specific voter segments. His team employed sophisticated marketing techniques to tailor messages to different demographics, enhancing the campaign's overall effectiveness. This modern approach to campaigning was a stark contrast to the more traditional methods used by his competitors and highlighted Zelensky's innovative and adaptive strategies (Tkachenko et al. 2020; Chaisty and Whitefield 2022).

The 2019 Presidential Elections: Overview and Competition

The 2019 Ukrainian presidential election was a critical juncture for the country, characterized by widespread public dissatisfaction with the status quo. Incumbent President Petro Poroshenko, who came to power in the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests and the ousting of Viktor Yanukovich, faced significant criticism for his handling of domestic issues. Despite some successes in strengthening Ukraine's international position and military capabilities, Poroshenko struggled with pervasive corruption and a stagnant economy. His approval ratings were low, and there was a strong desire among the electorate for new leadership (Yekelchik 2020). Poroshenko's campaign strategy centered on national security, the ongoing conflict with Russia, religion and his achievements in securing international

support (Iwański 2018; Shestopalets 2020). He positioned himself as a defender of Ukrainian sovereignty and a bulwark against Russian aggression. However, his inability to effectively tackle domestic issues like corruption and economic hardship weakened his campaign. Poroshenko's slogan, "Army, Language, Faith," aimed to appeal to nationalist sentiments but failed to resonate with a broader audience tired of traditional political rhetoric (Petro 2019).

Yulia Tymoshenko, another major contender, ran on a platform of economic reform and anti-corruption. Tymoshenko, a seasoned politician with significant populist appeal, emphasized social justice and promised substantial increases in social spending. Despite her efforts, she struggled to gain traction in a political landscape increasingly dominated by the desire for a new political order. Tymoshenko's campaign lacked the innovative approach that characterized Zelensky's, which further hindered her ability to connect with the electorate (Demydova 2020). In turn, Zelensky's campaign capitalized on the widespread dissatisfaction with the existing political elite. His lack of political experience was framed as a positive attribute, suggesting that he would bring a fresh perspective and new energy to the presidency. His anti-corruption message resonated with voters who were tired of the pervasive corruption that had plagued Ukrainian politics for decades. Zelensky's emphasis on unity and the need to overcome regional and linguistic divides positioned him as a candidate for all Ukrainians, appealing to a broad cross-section of the electorate (Doroshenko 2022; Drach 2020).

Key Features of the Campaign

One of the most significant events of Zelensky's campaign was the debate with incumbent President Petro Poroshenko at the Olympic Stadium in Kyiv. This debate was a major public spectacle, drawing significant attention both domestically and internationally. The choice of venue itself, a large sports stadium, was unconventional and symbolized a departure from traditional political events, reflecting Zelensky's innovative approach. The debate highlighted Zelensky's strengths as a performer and underscored his ability to engage with the public in a dynamic and accessible manner (Nyquist et al. 2020). Zelensky's campaign was also characterized by its extensive and strategic use of social media, particularly Facebook, which was one of the most widely used social media platforms in Ukraine in 2019. As was mentioned in Chapter 4, after the ban on Russian social networks like Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki, a significant portion of the Ukrainian population, especially the older

demographic, transitioned to Facebook (Zakharchenko et al. 2019). This shift increased the platform's relevance for political communications and campaigning. Facebook's extensive reach across various demographic groups in Ukraine made it an ideal platform for Zelensky to engage with a broad audience. The platform was used by half of the adult population, offering an effective medium for reaching voters across different age groups and regions. Facebook provided multifaceted communication tools — such as written posts, live videos, and interactive features — which were crucial for Zelensky's campaign, allowing him to bypass traditional media outlets and communicate directly with voters. His Facebook page was not only a tool for disseminating campaign messages but also a platform for interaction with the electorate. Zelensky frequently posted videos and messages that addressed current events, responded to critics, and outlined his vision for Ukraine. This approach fostered a sense of immediacy and personal connection with his supporters (Drach 2020; Tkachenko et al. 2020). Moreover, Zelensky's campaign utilized Facebook to mobilize volunteers and organize events. His team created a grassroots movement that leveraged the power of social media to engage and activate supporters across the country. This bottom-up approach contrasted sharply with the top-down strategies of his competitors and highlighted the innovative and adaptive nature of his campaign. The use of social media analytics allowed his team to tailor their messages and outreach efforts to different demographics, maximizing their impact and efficiency (Chaisty and Whitefield 2022).

Another key aspect of Zelensky's social media strategy was the creation of engaging and shareable content. His team produced a series of short videos and posts that were designed to go viral, reaching a wide audience and generating significant online engagement. This content often featured Zelensky himself, showcasing his charisma and humor, and reinforcing his image as a relatable and down-to-earth candidate. The virality of this content helped to amplify his message and build a broad base of support (Doroshenko 2022). The innovative use of Facebook and other social media platforms was not just a tactic but a reflection of Zelensky's broader campaign strategy, which emphasized transparency, accessibility, and direct engagement with the public. This approach was particularly effective in reaching younger voters, who were more likely to use social media and were generally more disillusioned with traditional politics. By leveraging the power of digital media, Zelensky was able to build a

broad and diverse coalition of supporters, which was crucial to his electoral success (Drach 2020; Tkachenko et al. 2020; Yanchenko and Zulianello 2023).

In conclusion, Volodymyr Zelensky's campaign for the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election was marked by its innovative use of social media, strategic messaging, and emphasis on transparency and direct engagement with voters. His journey from comedian to president reflects a significant shift in Ukrainian politics, driven by public desire for change and new leadership. By leveraging his media savvy and addressing the public's dissatisfaction with the status quo, Zelensky's election campaign was a masterclass in modern political communication and strategy. By capitalizing on widespread public dissatisfaction and employing innovative campaign tactics, he achieved a landslide victory. This chapter has provided the necessary background to understand the detailed analysis of Zelensky's identity performance and campaign strategies that will be conducted in the subsequent chapters. Moreover, Zelensky's Facebook activities are particularly emphasized in this thesis due to the platform's widespread usage, its capabilities that align with modern electoral strategies, and its proven impact on voter engagement and behavior in Ukraine's unique political context. This focus allows for a detailed analysis of how Zelensky effectively used digital media to craft and disseminate his political identity, resonating with a diverse electorate and ultimately contributing to his electoral success. This analysis will be further conducted in Chapters 5 and 6.

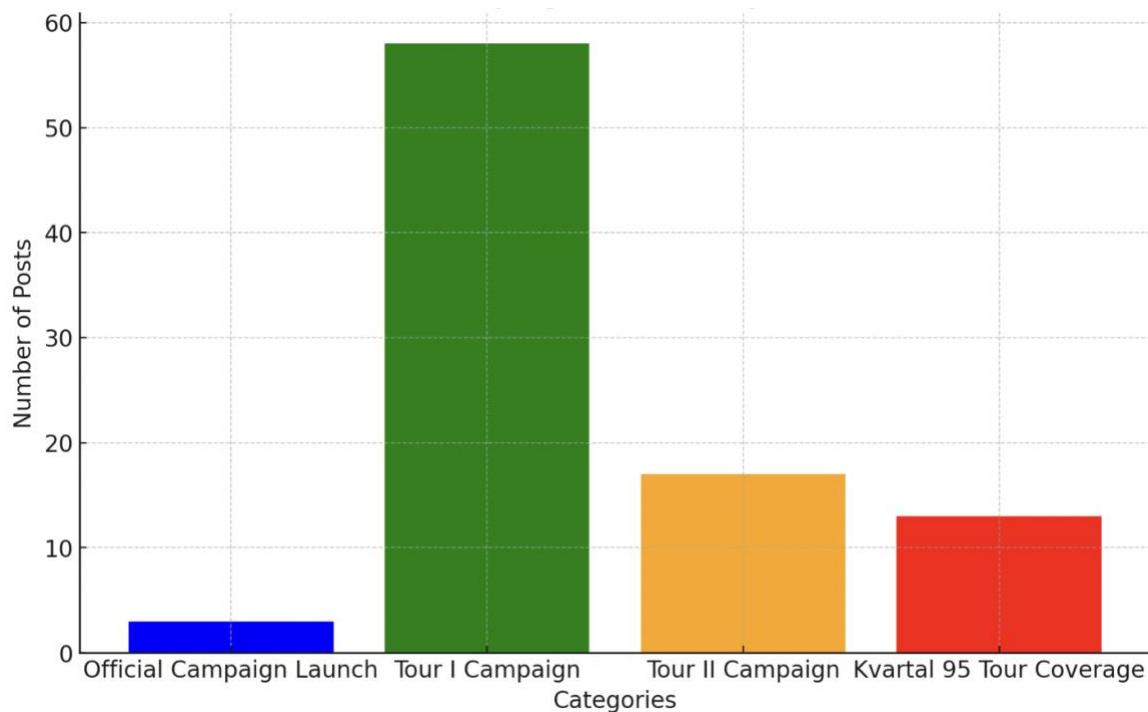
Chapter 5. Discursive Trends in Zelensky's Performance

In the modern political landscape, the strategic use of social media has become an essential component of electoral campaigns — thus an indispensable element of political identity performance. This chapter presents a detailed quantitative analysis of Volodymyr Zelensky's Facebook performance during his 2019 presidential campaign, offering insights into the digital strategies employed to engage and mobilize voters. The analysis period spans from the official campaign announcement to the victory in the second round of elections, capturing the entirety of Zelensky's campaign efforts and providing a comprehensive dataset for examination. This quantitative part of this thesis, as a result, aims to provide a nuanced understanding of which were the discursive trends, tactics, and patterns of Zelensky's Facebook campaign when utilizing various digital strategies to engage voters and shape his political identity. The findings highlight the importance of personalized communication, multimedia engagement, and strategic use of social media tools in modern political campaigning. This analysis not only contributes to the broader understanding of digital political communication but also sets the stage for further qualitative inquiry into the performative patterns and narrative strategies employed in Zelensky's campaign, as explored in subsequent chapters.

Descriptive Statistics

To conduct the quantitative analysis of Zelensky's Facebook performance, the candidate's official page was scrapped for the time period ranging exactly between the official campaign announcement on December 31, 2018, and the day of Zelensky's win in the second round of elections on April 21, 2019. The scrapped data was arranged into a database structure according to the types of data input that require further examination in the context of this thesis' research objectives. The final dataset (*see Appendix 1*) contains 81 entries, with each entry representing a Facebook post (or a series of publications in the case of *Kvartal 95* tours coverage) for the period of Zelensky's campaign run. After arranging the database accordingly and validating the accuracy of the scrapped content, the quantitative part of the analysis was conducted, starting with the descriptive statistics as the first step in assessing the discursive trends and patterns in Zelensky's identity performance. Already at the stage of basic descriptive

statistics, one can understand the volume, frequency, and types of posts, including counts of posts over time, average reactions, shares, and comments.



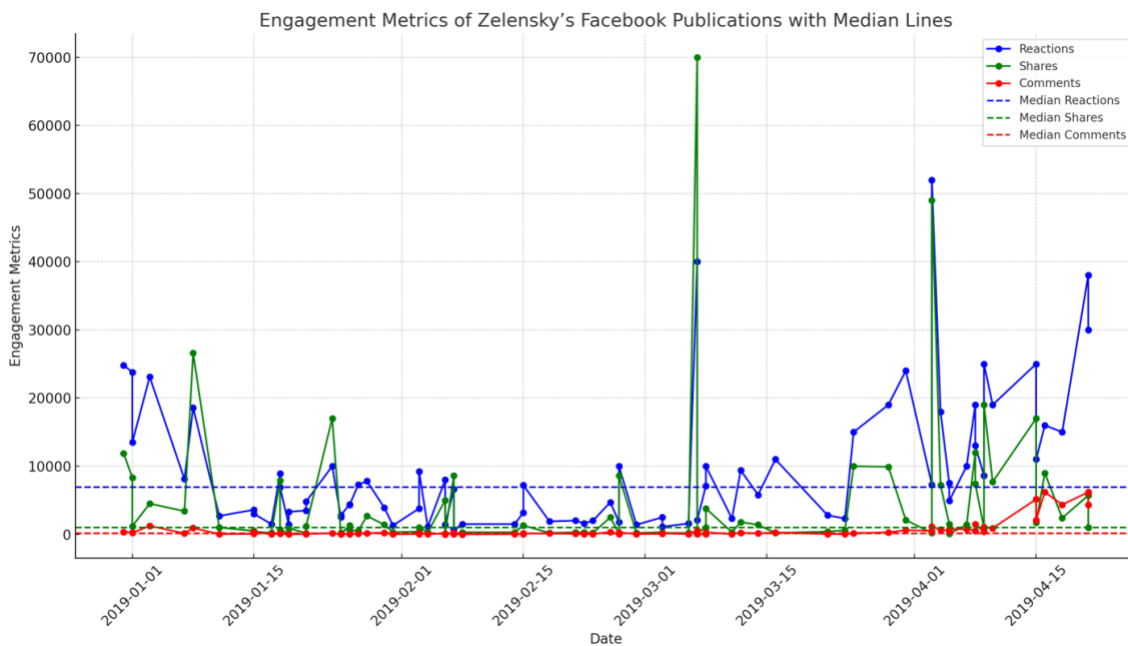
Graph 1. Distribution of Zelensky's Facebook publications and the campaigning stages.

The distribution of Zelensky's publications throughout the different campaign stages (see *Graph 1*) shows that the bulk of the posts were made during the first tour of the elections. However, as the critical inquiry continues in Chapter 6, it will further become evident that despite the lower volume of publications, Zelensky's performance during the second tour was more intensive, concrete, and, at times, even aggressive, in particular towards the incumbent President Poroshenko and his allies. None of the 13 publications reporting on the national tour of Zelensky's show *Kvartal* had any political messaging included, while, of course, adding to the overall number of publications during the observed period. Curiously, none of these publications had direct political messaging included, but they do provide an important indicator of Zelensky's performance at the end of the day. As all of the *Kvartal 95* publications took place within the time frame of the first tour of elections, it makes it clear that both Zelensky and his team were dedicated exclusively to heavier campaigning and stronger presence during the second and final stage of elections. Further statistical inquiry into the engagement metrics

and sentiment analysis indicates the variety of his social media tactics and diverse use of social media tools.

Engagement Metrics and Sentiment Analysis

The engagement metrics of Zelensky's Facebook publications during his 2019 presidential campaign reveal a carefully crafted strategy aimed at maximizing reach and interaction. Throughout the campaign, Zelensky maintained an average posting frequency of 1.38 posts per day, with some days featuring several publications and some days having no posts at all. This consistent activity indicates a well-planned social media strategy designed to keep the audience engaged and informed, combined with a more agile approach — many ad hoc, situational publications clearly stand out from the general content plan.



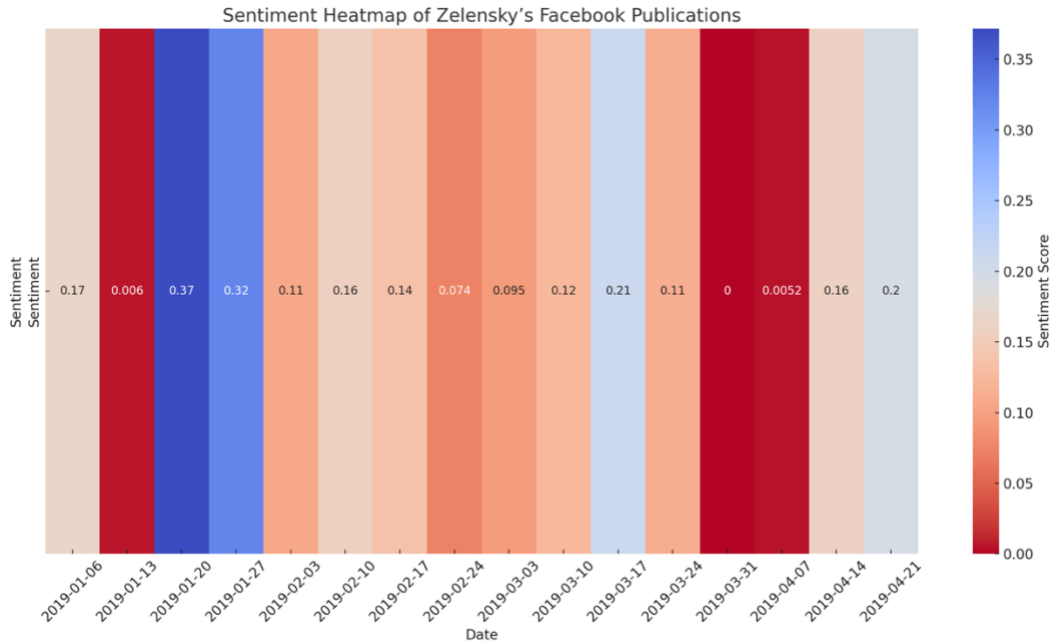
Graph 2. Engagement metrics of Zelensky's Facebook campaign.

These engagement metrics (*see Graph 2*) provide a comprehensive profile of Zelensky's Facebook activities. On average, posts received 8.23 thousand reactions, with reactions ranging from as low as 700 for more topically narrow posts to as high as 52 thousand for a provocative video challenging Poroshenko to a debate. Shares averaged 4.11 thousand per post, with a range from just 20 shares to a maximum of 70 thousand shares for a video

addressing a fake news campaign launched against Zelensky's candidacy. Comments averaged 518.81 per post, ranging from as few as 10 to more than six thousand, indicating varied levels of user interaction. This variability suggests that certain posts were particularly resonant or provocative, leading to greater engagement. This aligns with the broader understanding of social media dynamics, where emotional and topical relevance significantly drives user interaction (Castells 2010; Marwick and Boyd 2011).

Further, analysis of media usage within Zelensky's posts highlights a diverse application of social media tools. Videos emerged as the most prevalent form of content, encompassing various types such as vlogs, self-recorded and scripted videos, and live streams. The use of videos is particularly effective in capturing the audience's attention and conveying messages in a compelling manner (Enli 2015). If no video format was used, creative visuals, including posters and photographs, were frequently employed to enhance the aesthetic appeal of posts. The text-only publications were extremely rare, accounting for only a couple of ad-hoc instances throughout the whole campaign period. Importantly, hashtags were strategically used to increase visibility and engagement on specific themes, aiding in the categorization and discoverability of content (Rho and Mazmanian 2019). The comprehensive engagement profile, illustrated in the accompanying graph, displays how Zelensky's Facebook activities were designed to maximize interaction by employing a mix of media tools and regular, yet not too frequent postings. For comparison, the key opponent Poroshenko averaged at higher volumes and media presence across the most used social media channels (Drach 2020; Tkachenko et al. 2020). The high variability in shares and comments further suggests that certain posts were particularly impactful, resonating deeply with the audience and provoking significant engagement. This data underscores the effectiveness of Zelensky's media strategy in fostering a highly interactive online presence, contributing to his overall campaign success.

The sentiment analysis of Zelensky's Facebook posts, visualized through a heatmap (*see Graph 3*), provides additional insights into the emotional tone and its evolution throughout the campaign. The sentiment scores, derived from the Text Blob polarity score, range from -1 to 1, with higher scores indicating positive sentiment and lower scores indicating negative sentiment. The heatmap reveals how the sentiment of Zelensky's posts fluctuated over time, reflecting the campaign's dynamic nature.



Graph 3. The sentiment heatmap of Zelensky's Facebook campaign.

During the official campaign launch, the sentiment was predominantly positive, suggesting an optimistic tone aimed at introducing the campaign on a hopeful note. This aligns with Alexander's (2010) concept of political actors performing "power dramas" to shape voter perceptions. As the campaign progressed into Tour I, the sentiment remained moderately positive but became more subjective, reflecting a more personal and engaging style. This phase likely aimed at building a strong emotional connection with the electorate through interactive content and personalized messages. In contrast, Tour II saw a slightly less positive sentiment but a reduction in subjectivity, indicating a more straightforward or factual communication style. This shift corresponds with Hall's (1997) discussion of how identities are "fashioned, stylized, produced and performed" through media representations. The latter stages of the campaign involved addressing critical issues and responding to opponents more directly, which may explain the heightened engagement and more controversial or compelling content observed during this period. When further cross-referencing the campaign phases, the engagement metrics, and the heatmap, one can see the more aggressive performances during the second tour of the campaign contributing to a significant increase in comments. This suggests that the content during this phase was particularly engaging, possibly due to its provocative nature or the urgency conveyed as the election date approached. Bennett and

Segeberberg's (2012) concept of "connective action," where social media empowers individuals to drive political messages, is also evident in the way Zelensky's posts facilitated increased interaction and engagement.

Overall, the sentiment analysis reveals that the tone of Zelensky's campaign was generally positive, with variations corresponding to different phases and strategic shifts. This strategic use of tone, combined with a diverse media strategy and interactive elements, highlights the evolving landscape of political performances in the digital age. The hashtags were also used to increase visibility and engagement on specific themes role of social media in shaping and disseminating political identities, as discussed by Castells (2010) and Marwick and Boyd (2011). The findings underscore the importance of personalized communication strategies and the role of social media in shaping and disseminating political identities. In conclusion, Zelensky's Facebook campaign effectively utilized a mix of media formats and interactive features to engage voters and shape his political identity. The engagement metrics and sentiment analysis provide a nuanced understanding of how these strategies influenced voter perceptions and engagement, contributing to the overall success of the campaign. This analysis supports the broader argument that social media played a pivotal role in Zelensky's 2019 election run, offering both opportunities and challenges for his identity construction and performance. The next section of the quantitative analysis will further extract the central themes and narratives to conclude the identification of discursive patterns in Zelensky's performances.

Themes, Topics, Narratives

The generated word cloud image (*see Figure 1*) serves as a visual representation of the most frequently used words and phrases from Zelensky's Facebook publications. This visualization provides insights into the central themes and narratives that were prominent in his campaign's social media strategy.



Figure 1. Ze! Facebook Word Cloud.

The most conspicuous collocations, such as “Ze!team,” and “Ze!President,” highlight a strong focus on personal branding and the activities of Zelensky’s campaign team. The repeated use of “president” emphasizes the campaign’s goal of positioning Zelensky as a leader, aiming to reinforce his presidential image. This positioning, however, differs across the election tours (stages) — as will be pointed out in Chapter 6. These findings strongly support the concept of constructing a political identity through strategic communication, as discussed by Chadwick (2017) and Castells (2010), where emotional engagement and performative tactics in a hybrid media system play pivotal roles in shaping public perception. Terms like “servant” and “law” suggest significant discussions around governance and legal reforms, which were often heavily linked to Zelensky’s popular television show “Servant of the People” in which he played a president, thereby blurring the lines between his on-screen persona and real-life political ambitions. This narrative strategy effectively leverages his existing public image to build credibility and trust, a tactic supported by Goffman’s (1959) theory of identity performance, which underscores the dynamic and situational nature of identity construction.

The frequent appearance of words such as “vlog,” “comments,” and “write” indicates an interactive and multimedia approach to the campaign, utilizing videos and encouraging audience interaction. This approach is reinforced by terms like “watch,” “subscribe,” and “live,” pointing to an emphasis on live streaming and video content. These elements are effective in engaging a digital audience and fostering a sense of immediacy and connection via responsive, dialogue-like social media performance. Enli’s (2015) concept of “authenticity contracts” is yet again relevant here —this language and multimedia tools encourage interaction and showcase authenticity, contributing to the image of an authentic and approachable candidate. In the electoral context, the prevalence of keywords such as “vote” and “elections” reflects efforts to mobilize support and participation in electoral processes. These terms underline the thematic focus on political challenges and campaign issues, as highlighted by Bennett and Segerberg (2012), who discuss how social media can empower individuals to share and drive political messages, creating powerful campaign dynamics.

A special emphasis in Zelensky’s performance is dedicated to themes of community and inclusion. Words like “everyone,” “team,” and “community” suggest a strong message of inclusivity and collective effort, likely aimed at building a broad coalition of support across different segments of society. The most frequent mentions are of the words “Ukraine” and “people” — this further underscores a focus on national identity and the populace in Zelensky’s performative tactics. These messages aim to bypass the filters of the traditional elite and equate the campaign narratives with existing public perceptions. Overall, the analyzed data indicates that Zelensky’s Facebook performance was strategically focused on personal branding, interactive and multimedia engagement, electoral mobilization, and community-building themes. The prominence of certain words suggests that these were the key messages and topics communicated to the audience (*see Table 1*), likely reflecting both the campaign’s core messages and the responses or interests of the followers.

Theme	Description
Political Transparency and Integrity	• Discusses ethics of electoral processes • Promotes clean governance • Influences political behavior and attitudes = Promoting political partisanship as a social identity
Civic Engagement and Grassroot Mobilization	• Encourages participation in the campaign • Calls for involvement in the election process • Mobilizes masses via appealing to individual supporters = Fostering a sense of ownership among the electorate
Practical Governance and Policymaking	• Discusses specific policy issues • Concerns with concrete national issues • Stresses on particular areas for improvement and potential measures = Spearheading people-driven policy development
Personal and Relatable Stories from Daily Life	• Adopts a casual or humorous tone • Positions as approachable and personable candidate • Contrasts with traditional political figures = Being a candidate who is also 'a person'
Campaign Insights and Behind-the-Scenes	• Provides insights into the campaign's workings or behind-the-scenes • Fosters a sense of inclusion and transparency • Spreading the feeling of connectedness and illustrates joint action = Proving there is nothing to hide
An Outsider and a Political Underdog	• Emphasizes an outsider status • Appeals directly to the general public • Promises to 'do things differently' = Populist messaging

Table 1. Overarching Themes in Zelensky's Facebook Publications

Zelensky's social media posts frequently addressed themes of political transparency and integrity, discussing the legality and ethics of electoral processes, such as not selling votes and the implications of doing so. This resonates with voters who value clean governance and aligns with Bankert, Huddy, and Rosema (2017) exploration of political partisanship as a social identity that deeply influences political behavior and attitudes. Zelensky also invested significant effort into encouraging participation in his campaign and citizens' involvement in the election process, suggesting a theme of civic engagement and grassroots mobilization. His calls to join his team and become active participants in safeguarding the elections, discussed in more detail in the next chapter, reflect a strategy aimed at mobilizing supporters and fostering a sense of ownership among the electorate, consistent with Panagopoulos's (2010)

findings on the mobilizing effects of personal pride, direct involvement and publicizing voting behavior. From encouraging participation to discussions about specific policy issues, such as supporting small business owners, investing in strategic infrastructure, revising electricity and heating bills, or even customs policy in Ukraine — the keyword analysis further points to a theme of practical governance and policymaking. These posts likely appealed to voters concerned with concrete national issues and contributed to the overarching political discourse mediated by Zelensky and his team in hybrid spaces and outlets, including Facebook (Hepp 2019).

The keywords also draw attention to Zelensky's use of vlogs and direct communication through social media posts. The personalization and direct ownership of such formats allowed Zelensky to adopt a casual or humorous tone while sharing personal and relatable stories from the daily life of a candidate, who is also simply “a person.” This approach positioned him as an approachable and personable candidate, contrasting with traditional political figures. This aligns with both populist and identity studies outlining how social media allows politicians to perform a supportive media climate (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Stanyer, Salgado, and Strömbäck 2016). Additionally, such posts often provided insights into the campaign's workings or behind-the-scenes looks and contributed to a sense of inclusion and transparency, making supporters feel a direct part of a campaign, a part of a bigger joint action. This two-fold strategy does not only spread the feeling of connectedness, but it also positions Zelensky as a person who has nothing to hide. Using social media as a medium for timely and seemingly unfiltered delivery of bulks of personal information enabled Zelensky to share and modify his political messages mixed with his daily performances, creating organic and powerful campaign dynamics (Chadwick 2017; Tkachenko et al. 2020). Lastly, populist messaging tactics were evident in the use of hashtags like #яклоун [I'm a clown] or #lopatachallenge [shovel challenge], emphasizing the acceptance and even pride of his outsider status and appealing directly to the general public as a political underdog. This aligns with Moffitt's (2016) analysis of populist strategies, where emotional appeals and personalized performances are central to gaining and maintaining public support, reinforcing an image of a relatable candidate, enhancing the populist appeal, and resonating with voters' desires for transparency and genuine engagement. This approach not only humanized Zelensky but also solidified his position as a

responsive and relatable figure, capable of bridging the gap between the political elite and the everyday experiences of his supporters.

The analysis of Zelensky's Facebook campaign reveals an intensive strategic use of personal branding and interactive engagement to resonate with a wide audience. The sentiment analysis shows a deliberate use of tone, with a more positive and engaging approach during the launch and early stages, transitioning to a more measured, even at times aggressive, tone as the campaign progressed. Engagement metrics indicate that while the initial launch was effective in generating visibility, the latter stages of the campaign fostered deeper engagement, as evidenced by the high volume of comments during Tour II. This progression likely reflects a growing interest and investment in the campaign's narrative over time, highlighting the evolving landscape of political campaigning in the digital age. The integration of multimedia tools and personalized communication strategies underscores the critical role of social media in shaping and disseminating political identities, offering valuable insights into modern political communication. All in all, the quantitative analysis indicates strong performative patterns of Zelensky's Facebook campaign used to directly communicate with voters through themes that resonated widely. The progression, which can be seen in everything from engagement metrics to sentiment analysis to the thematic dynamics, reflects both growing public interest and heavier investment of Zelensky and his team in the campaign's narrative and performances over time.

Chapter 6. Exploring Zelensky's Performative Patterns

This chapter delves into the qualitative analysis of Volodymyr Zelensky's performative patterns during his 2019 presidential campaign. By examining key examples from his campaign activities, this part explores how Zelensky strategically constructed his political identity and engaged with voters through various forms of media and communication. This exploration integrates qualitative findings both regarding the use of various communicative tools and the process of crafting the messages of Zelensky's campaign to provide a comprehensive understanding of his performative tactics — how does he perform and what is done differently?

Patterns in Zelensky's Multimedia Toolbox

One of the central techniques in Zelensky's campaign was the extensive use of multimedia engagement. His frequent utilization of videos, including vlogs, scripted and self-recorded videos, and live streams, was instrumental in portraying him as approachable and relatable. These formats encouraged viewer engagement and shareability, effectively conveying his campaign messages in a manner that resonated with a broad audience (Drach 2020; Doroshenko 2022). The use of multimedia allowed Zelensky to create a dynamic and interactive online presence, fostering a sense of immediacy and personal connection with his followers. Zelensky's vlogs covered a wide range of topics, from his daily activities to in-depth discussions on policy issues. By presenting himself in an informal, unpolished manner, he was able to break down the barriers typically seen in political communication. For instance, a vlog might show Zelensky in his campaign office discussing future reforms, talking to people in the streets or squatting in front of the media for an informal interview (*see Appendix I*). This approach not only humanized him but also provided a platform for him to directly address voter concerns and demonstrate his commitment to addressing their issues. In addition to vlogs, Zelensky frequently utilized self-recorded informal videos in a so-called “talking head format” and live streams to interact with his audience in real-time or in the comments under the uploaded recordings. This real-time engagement allowed for immediate feedback and created a sense of community among his followers (Lalancette and Raynauld 2019). By responding to comments and questions, Zelensky demonstrated his accessibility and willingness to engage

with the public, further enhancing his image as a candidate who was truly in touch with the people.

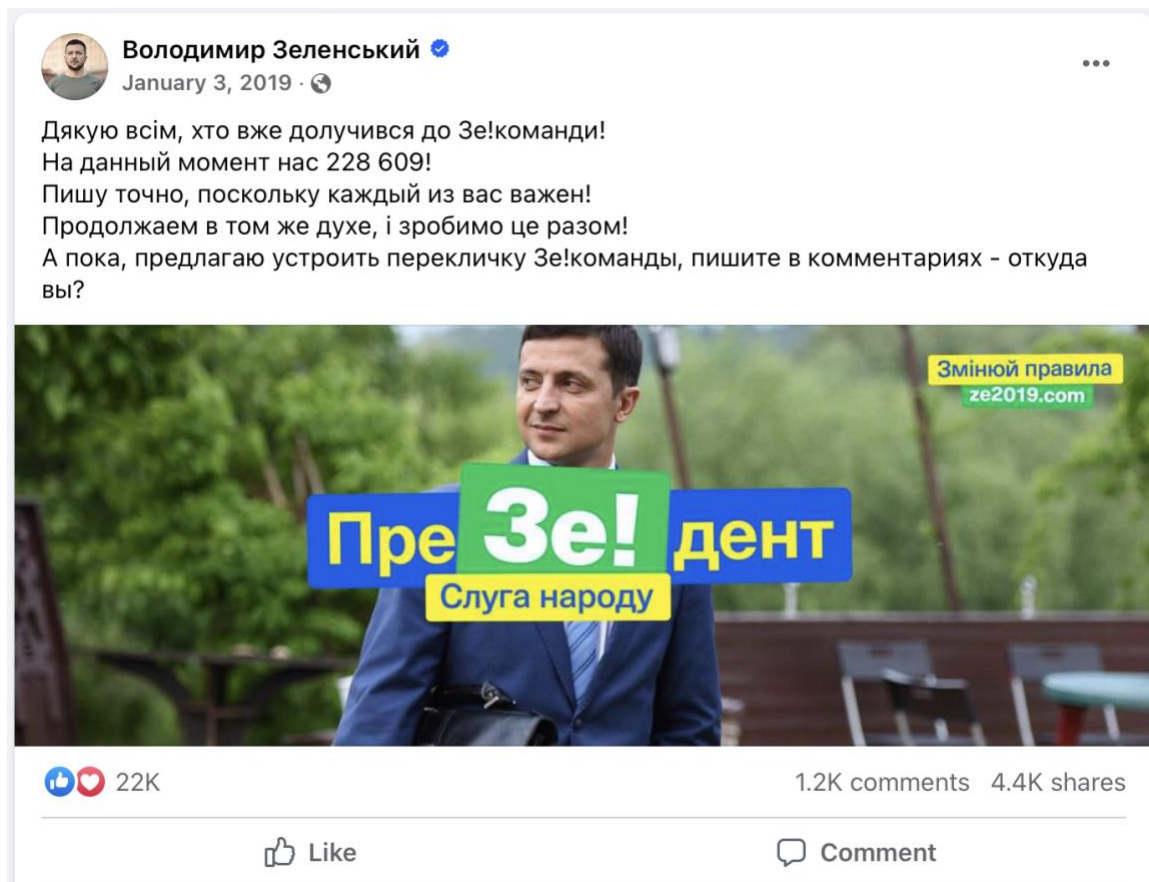


Image 1. Zelensky's use of Facebook multimedia on January 3, 2019 (see Appendix 1).

The campaign also made substantial use of creative visuals, such as photographs, edited images, and posters, which accompanied Zelensky's Facebook publications to attract attention and reinforce the textual content, or sometimes almost entirely substitute it. These visuals enhanced the overall impact of the posts, making them more engaging and visually appealing. This approach aligns with the findings of Chadwick (2017), who emphasizes the importance of visual communication in the hybrid media system, where images and videos play a crucial role in shaping public perception. For example, Zelensky's posts often featured professionally edited images with bold captions that succinctly conveyed key campaign messages. These images were designed to be easily shareable, increasing the likelihood of viral spread across social media platforms. Posters with powerful imagery and slogans were used to highlight

campaign events or important policy announcements, ensuring that the visual elements were consistent with the campaign's overall branding strategy (*see Image 1*). In addition to static images, Zelensky's campaign utilized short video addresses to maintain audience interest. These dynamic videos allow for complex information being conveyed efficiently, emotionally and in an easily digestible format. For instance, a one-minute video from March 7, 2019, talks about a wave of fake criminal proceedings against Zelensky and *Kvartal 95* and acknowledges the "normal people" in law enforcement dealing with the unlawful precedent (*see Appendix 1*). This format makes it easier for voters to understand and engage with the content.

Hashtags were another critical part of Zelensky's multimedia toolbox, serving to categorize content, increase discoverability, and engage with broader conversations on social media (Davis and Taras 2022). Campaign hashtags like #зробимоцеразом [let's do it together] established a central narrative, positioning Zelensky as a unifying figure in contemporary Ukrainian politics. The key campaign hashtag, #зробимоцеразом, was used to promote the idea of collective action and unity. Posts with this hashtag often highlighted collaborative initiatives, breaking news or calls for major changes, reinforcing the message that Zelensky's campaign was a movement for all Ukrainians. This strategic use of hashtags helped create a cohesive and recognizable brand for the campaign, facilitating broader engagement and participation. Hashtags also highlighted the candidate's stance on specific issues and mobilized support around these themes. A prominent example, hashtag #ЗЕФЕЙК [#ZEFAKE] was particularly effective in addressing the issue of fake news, which was a significant concern during the campaign (*see Appendix 1*). Moreover, by encouraging supporters to use this hashtag and even create their own fake stories, Zelensky's team was able to crowdsource examples of fake news and misinformation, turning the identification and debunking of false information into a collective effort (Yanchenko and Zulianello 2023). This not only raised awareness about the prevalence of fake news but also positioned Zelensky as a proactive leader in the fight against misinformation. It also ridiculed the efforts of the competing candidates to destabilize his image.

Patterns in Zelensky's Campaign Stages

The campaign kickoff was marked by positive messaging aimed at inspiring hope and change. One of the first posts included a New Year's greeting combined with a soft launch

announcement of his candidacy on social media channels. This dual-purpose message served both as a festive greeting and a subtle introduction to his campaign theme of national unity. The New Year's address on December 31, 2018, was particularly significant, as it was broadcast during the usual slot for the incumbent president's greeting, effectively stealing the spotlight from Poroshenko and setting a hopeful, optimistic tone for the campaign, yet already with an underdog aftertaste (Drach 2020; Yanchenko and Zulianello 2023; Petro 2019). Zelensky's address focused on themes of hope, renewal, and the potential for positive change in Ukraine (*see Appendix I*). By delivering this message during a widely watched time slot, he was able to reach a large audience and make a strong initial impression. The address was characterized by its informal tone and inclusive language (both Ukrainian and Russian were used in the mix), with Zelensky speaking directly to viewers as if having a personal conversation. This approach was in stark contrast to the more formal and distant style of traditional political addresses, further emphasizing Zelensky's position as a different kind of candidate (Rudenko 2022). The tone, underlining themes and moods of his performances continued to switch throughout the stages of his campaign (*see Figure 2*).



Figure 2. Dynamic of Zelensky's Campaign Performance.

During the first tour of the campaign, Zelensky's team emphasized high engagement through direct appeals and interactive content. Facebook posts frequently called for voter participation and feedback, making the electorate feel like an active part of the campaign process. For instance, a post from 1 January 2019 featured a video where Zelensky invited followers to join his team, discussing the importance of each vote and opinion (*see Appendix I*). Throughout this phase and subsequent period after, Zelensky's posts included polls and

questions designed to solicit feedback from his followers. These interactive elements not only increased engagement but also provided valuable insights into voter priorities and concerns. By actively involving his audience in the campaign process, Zelensky was able to build a sense of ownership and investment among his supporters, aligning with findings both from populist and identity studies on performance and “supportive media climates” (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Stanyer, Salgado, and Strömbäck 2016). Additionally, the campaign utilized user-generated content to enhance engagement. Supporters were encouraged to share their own stories and experiences related to the campaign themes, often using designated hashtags to categorize their posts. This user-generated content was then featured on Zelensky’s official social media pages, creating a sense of community and amplifying the voices of ordinary citizens (*see Image 2*). This strategy not only increased the volume of campaign-related content but also reinforced the narrative that Zelensky’s campaign was a grassroots movement driven by the people (Drach 2020; Doroshenko 2022).

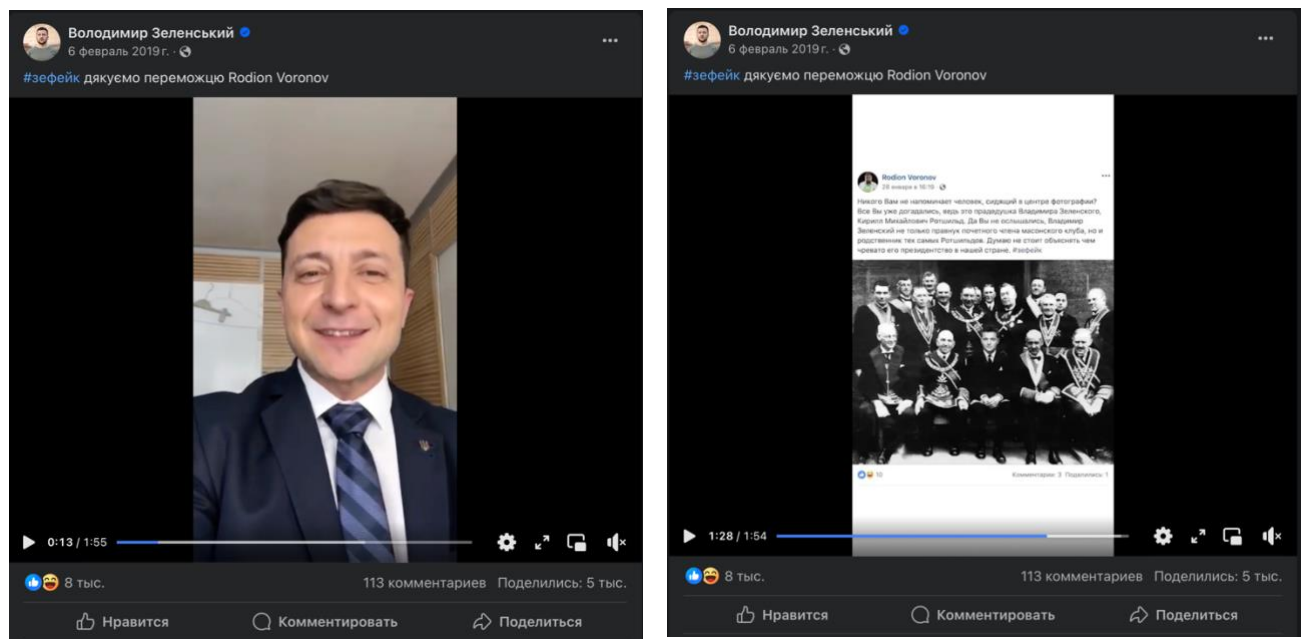


Image 2. Zelensky’s use of user-generated content on March 6, 2019 (see Appendix 1).

In the second tour of the campaign, the tone shifted to more aggressive and direct attacks on political opponents, particularly the incumbent President Poroshenko. This phase aimed to crystallize Zelensky’s stance as a reformist alternative to the status quo. The most

significant post from this phase included a video challenging Poroshenko to a debate at a stadium, a bold move that garnered widespread attention and reinforced Zelensky's image as a transparent and confrontational candidate (Nyquist et al. 2020; Demydova 2020). The stadium debate challenge was a turning point in the campaign, demonstrating Zelensky's willingness to engage directly with his opponents and highlight the contrasts between their visions for Ukraine. By choosing a public and accessible venue like a stadium, Zelensky underscored his commitment to openness and transparency. This move also leveraged the spectacle of the event, drawing significant media coverage and public interest (Rudenko 2022). During this phase, Zelensky's posts often featured strong, assertive language aimed at critiquing the incumbent government's failures and presenting his solutions. This confrontational approach resonated with voters who were frustrated with the status quo and looking for a candidate who would aggressively pursue reform. The use of provocative scripted campaign videos, which are discussed in more detail later in this chapter, further amplified their effect, ensuring that Zelensky's messages were both memorable and widely shared.

Patterns of Zelensky's Identities

Zelensky leveraged his background as a comedian and entertainer to appear more relatable and down-to-earth, contrasting with traditional politicians. This strategy helped forge a connection with a broad demographic, particularly the youth and those disenchanted with conventional politics. By consistently portraying himself as an ordinary citizen, and using casual language and humor, Zelensky distanced himself from the often-disconnected political elite (Nyquist et al. 2020). This "everyman" appeal, seen already in the qualitative indicators of Chapter 5, was further reinforced through posts about everyday issues, such as the cost of living and bureaucratic hurdles, using plain language and personal anecdotes that many voters found relatable. For example, Zelensky frequently talked about activities like grocery shopping, children education, or commuting, using these everyday experiences to discuss broader political issues (*see Appendix I*). By framing policy discussions in the context of his own life, he made them more accessible and relatable to the average voter. This approach also emphasized his understanding of the daily struggles faced by ordinary Ukrainians, reinforcing his image as a candidate who genuinely cared about improving their lives (Mashtaler 2021). Humor played a significant role in Zelensky's relatability. His background in comedy allowed

him to use humor effectively to disarm critics, engage supporters, and make complex issues more approachable. Posts often included humorous anecdotes or light-hearted takes on serious topics, which not only entertained but also educated his audience. An example of such would be Zelensky commenting on an issue brought up on a call with his mom or talking about something that was noticed on a way from his daughter's school, like in a post from March 8, 2019 (see *Appendix 1*). This use of humor helped to humanize Zelensky and made his campaign more engaging and memorable. It also allowed him to navigate the often-harsh landscape of political discourse with a unique and refreshing approach that resonated with a broad audience (Gerlofs 2022).

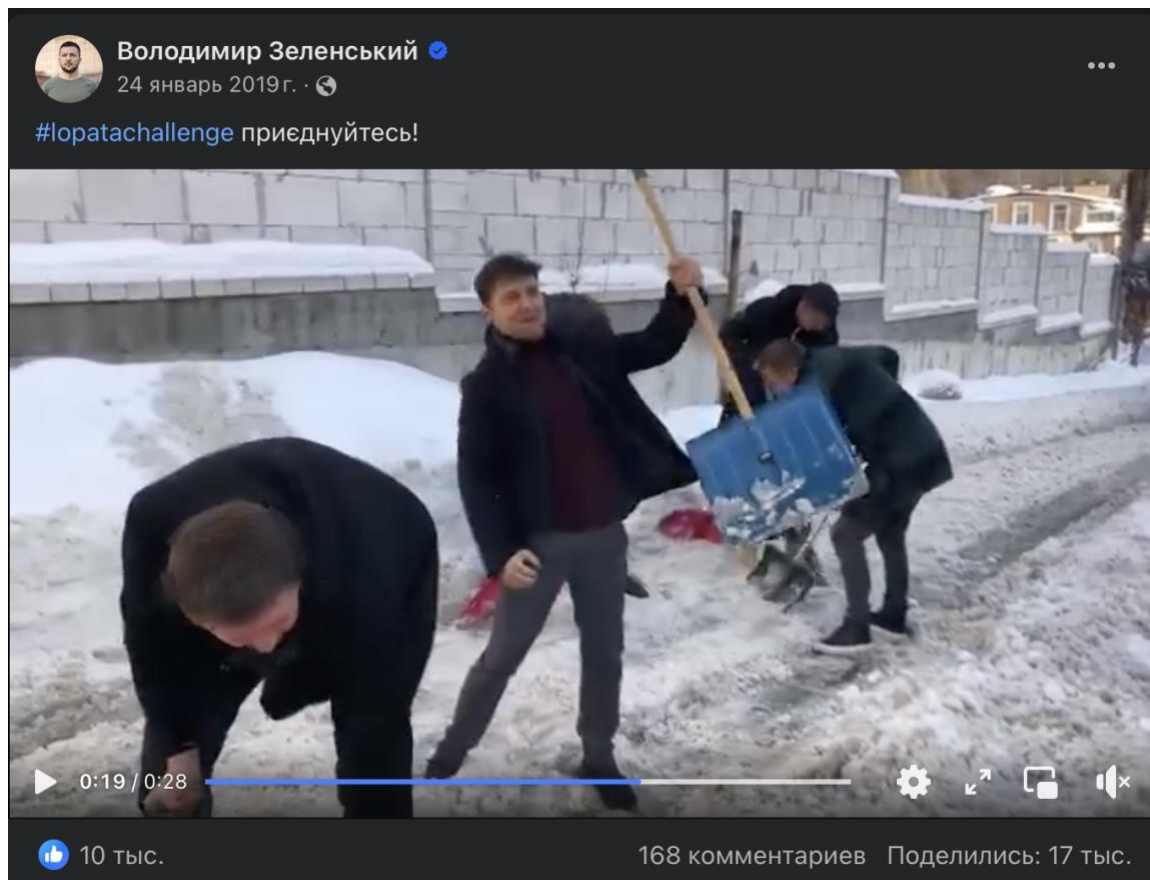


Image 3. Zelensky's use of #challenges on January 24, 2019 (see Appendix 1).

At the same time, Zelensky's campaign frequently employed populist themes, portraying him as an outsider who champions the common people against corrupt elites. This narrative, also prominently visible through qualitative insight in Chapter 5, was particularly

appealing in the context of Ukraine's political climate at the time. By framing his candidacy as a direct challenge to the corrupt elites, Zelensky's campaign resonated with voters who felt betrayed by traditional politicians — classic populist-style performance (Mudde 2007). Social media challenges like #ZEFAKE and #lopatachallenge highlighted alleged lies and manipulations in elite-controlled media as well as corruption and lack of action, fostering solidarity with disillusioned voters. In particular, the #ZEFAKE challenge invited supporters to create and share the most absurd fake news stories they could imagine, highlighting the ridiculousness of actual fake news circulating about Zelensky (*see Appendix 1*). This not only engaged followers in a fun and interactive way but also brought attention to the serious issue of misinformation. By involving his audience in the creation of content, Zelensky empowered his supporters and underscored his commitment to transparency and truth. The #lopatachallenge (*lopata* means shovel) was another tactic where Zelensky encouraged people to take pictures and videos of themselves as they were shoveling the snow in the streets of Kyiv (*see Image 3*). This challenge resonated with many voters who saw it as a metaphor for the collective effort required to overcome the country's challenges, taking matters into their own hands instead of waiting upon political elites to decide and act (*see Appendix 1*). Such initiatives effectively turned campaign slogans into action-oriented movements, reinforcing Zelensky's image as a leader who inspires and mobilizes the masses.

Despite populist-style of communication, inclusivity and unity were the central themes in Zelensky's campaign, emphasized through the frequent use of collective pronouns and calls for unity, as also illustrated in Chapter 5. This approach helped bridge regional and linguistic divides within Ukraine, promoting a message of national unity and cooperation. Zelensky's posts often featured bilingual content, switching seamlessly between Ukrainian and Russian. This linguistic inclusivity was a deliberate strategy to appeal to a wide audience, acknowledging the country's diverse linguistic landscape. By doing so, Zelensky was able to reach a broader demographic and demonstrate his commitment to representing all Ukrainians, regardless of their linguistic background (Kulyk 2011; Tkachenko et al. 2020; Chaisty and Whitefield 2022). In addition to featuring inclusive language and bilingual content, Zelensky's posts often call for direct involvement, promoting civic responsibility as a part of Ukrainian identity and fostering a sense of ownership among the electorate. Zelensky positioned himself as a unifier, capable of representing the diverse interests of the Ukrainian populace. The

narrative of inclusivity and unity was crucial in building a broad coalition of support (Mashtaler 2021).

Last but not least, Zelensky's dual identity as both a president and a showman — a mix of policymaker and underdog identities featured in Chapter— was a recurring theme in his campaign. By embracing both roles, he appealed to a wide audience, leveraging his entertainment background to engage voters while presenting himself as a serious political contender. This duality is discussed in identity theory, where multiple facets of a persona can be strategically utilized to resonate with different voter groups (Hall 1997; 2019). Throughout the campaign, Zelensky frequently referenced his career in entertainment, using it as a tool to connect with voters on a personal level, as well as simultaneously utilizing the clips, recordings and live shows as his campaigning assets (*see Appendix I*). This strategy was evident in his use of humor, storytelling, and relatable anecdotes in campaign speeches and social media posts. By acknowledging his public identity as a comedian and television star, Zelensky was able to present himself as a multifaceted individual who could bring a fresh perspective to politics. This approach resonated particularly well with younger voters and those disillusioned with the traditional political elite (Demydova 2020; Lalancette and Raynauld 2019; Nyquist et al. 2020). Even Zelensky's "Servant of the People" party benefited from the duality of Zelensky as a comedian and the face of the show and the symbolic meaning of the slogan. This messaging capitalized on his outsider status and his entertainment background, positioning him as a relatable figure who understood the frustrations of the average citizen. His ability to blend the roles of a showman and a politician allowed him to stand out in a crowded field and attract a diverse base of support.

Analyzing the Key Examples of Zelensky's Performances

Zelensky's campaign utilized social media challenges to engage the public creatively and humorously. Challenges like #ZEFAKE and #ZeClown involved the audience in the campaign by encouraging them to create content and share their stories. These participatory campaigns usually increase engagement and allow candidates like Zelensky to control the narrative, turning potential criticisms into strengths (Moffitt, 2016). By embracing and mocking his critics' accusations, Zelensky demonstrated resilience and a sense of humor, which appealed to many voters. The #ZeClown challenge, for instance, embraced the

derogatory label of “clown” that critics had used against Zelensky due to his background in entertainment. By encouraging supporters to share their own clown stories and even use social media filters to turn themselves into clowns, Zelensky defused the negative connotation and turned it into a badge of honor (see *Appendix 1*). This clever use of humor and self-deprecation not only neutralized a potential vulnerability but also galvanized his base by creating a shared experience of defiance and solidarity. Another creative initiative was the collaborative design of campaign billboards and slogans. Zelensky’s team invited the public to submit their ideas for campaign visuals and catchphrases, effectively crowdsourcing campaign materials on multiple occasions in January and February 2019 (see *Appendix 1*). This approach not only produced a diverse array of campaign content but also gave supporters a sense of ownership and involvement in the campaign. The winning designs and slogans were prominently featured in the campaign, further reinforcing the narrative that Zelensky’s movement was driven by the people (Tkachenko et al. 2020; Doroshenko 2022).

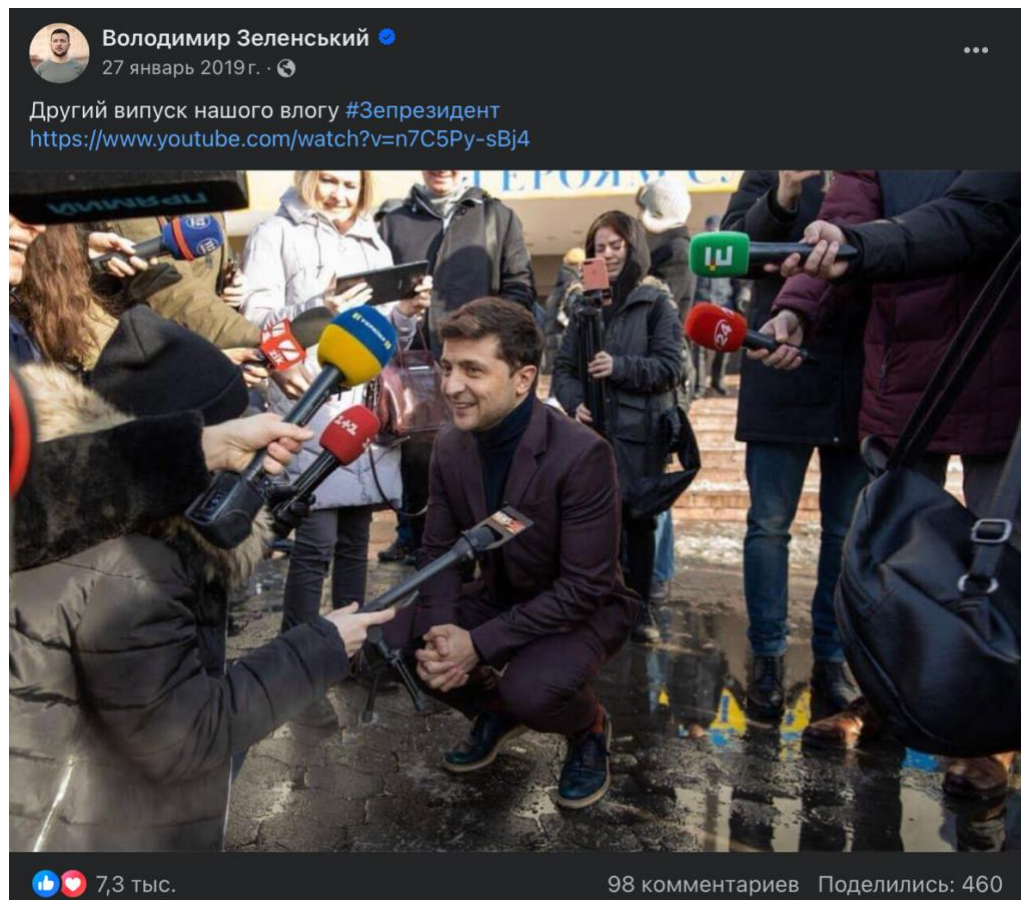


Image 4. Zelensky’s use of personal vlog on January 27, 2019 (see Appendix 1).

Beyond participatory social media activities, maintaining a vlog throughout the campaign allowed Zelensky to speak directly to his audience, bypassing traditional media filters (*see Image 4*). This direct form of “mediated authenticity” fostered a sense of intimacy and authenticity, reinforcing his image as a transparent and approachable candidate (Enli 2015). The vlog covered a range of topics, from policy issues to personal anecdotes, providing insights into his thoughts and campaign strategies. Zelensky’s vlogs often included behind-the-scenes footage of campaign events, offering viewers a glimpse into the daily operations and challenges of running for president (*see Appendix 1*). This transparency helped build trust and allowed supporters to feel more connected to the campaign. For example, in a vlog posted on March 7, 2019, Zelensky shared his reflections on campaigning, candidly discussing the emotional and physical toll it was taking on him and his loved ones (*see Appendix 1*). Such moments of vulnerability and honesty strengthened his relatability and authenticity. The vlogs also served as a platform for Zelensky to explain his policies in greater detail, addressing complex issues in a conversational and accessible manner (Welch 2021). This approach allowed him to educate voters on his vision and plans for the country, fostering a more informed electorate. By using a personal and direct communication style, Zelensky was able to break down barriers and create a more engaged and supportive voter base.

The #neproevybory campaign was crucial in mobilizing young voters and addressing voting skepticism. Targeting students, internal migrants, Ukrainians abroad and other niches of usually skeptical voters, Zelensky’s campaign broadened its reach and addressed disenfranchisement issues (*see Image 5*). This initiative highlighted the importance of inclusivity and active participation in democratic processes, aligning with research on voter mobilization and digital campaigns (Petrovic Lotina and Aiolfi 2023). Zelensky’s campaign used the hashtag #непроєвибори [#neproevybory] — a slangy wordplay which translates to “don’t screw up the elections” — to encourage voter turnout among young people and first-time voters. Posts with this hashtag mostly included humorous videos by Zelensky’s team about the importance of voting and how every vote could make a difference. By addressing common reasons for voter apathy, such as distrust in the electoral process and the belief that individual votes don’t matter, Zelensky’s campaign aimed to inspire greater civic engagement (Petrovic Lotina and Aiolfi 2023). The #neproevybory campaign also often featured testimonials from people in the streets of different Ukrainian cities and even Zelensky’s friends,

who shared their reasons for voting (or not voting), creating a sense of community and shared responsibility (see *Appendix 1*).

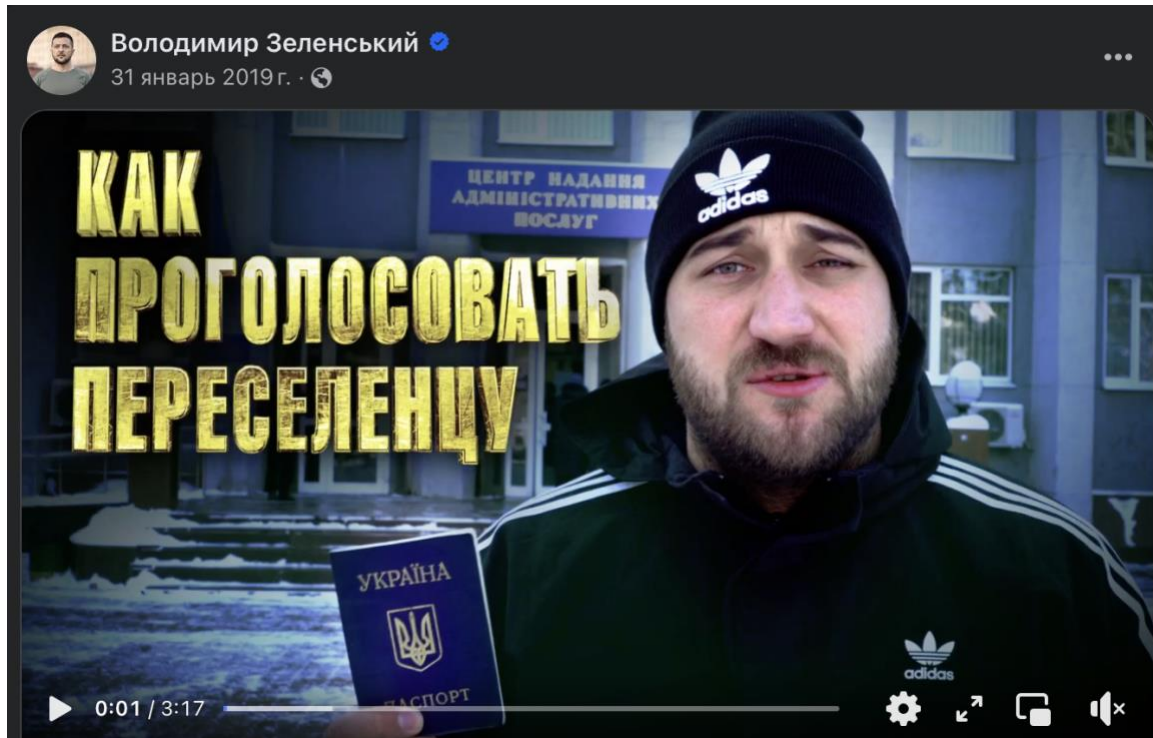


Image 5. Zelensky's #neprovybory campaign from January 31, 2019 (see Appendix 1).

In addition to clear campaign messages, Zelensky's campaign skillfully blurred the lines between his roles as a politician and entertainer. Posting cutouts from his show "Servant of the People" that resonated with national pain points and sharing sentimental moments from *Kvartal 95* national tours, he reinforced his connection with the public (see *Image 6*). This strategy exemplified the concept of "performative politics," where entertainment and political messaging intersect to influence public perception (Alexander 2010; Gerlofs 2022). The show "Servant of the People," in which Zelensky played a schoolteacher who becomes president, was a significant part of his public persona. By posting clips from the show that highlighted themes of anti-corruption and honest governance, Zelensky was able to draw parallels between his fictional character and his real-life candidacy (see *Appendix 1*). This clever use of media helped reinforce his message of change and reform, leveraging the popularity of the show to boost his political credibility (Ryabinska 2022). Additionally, the *Kvartal 95* tours, which were

live comedy shows performed across Ukraine, provided a platform for Zelensky to connect with voters in a more informal setting. During these tours, Zelensky always incorporated political satire and commentary into his performances, addressing current events and political issues in a humorous and relatable way (Ryabinska 2022). By blending entertainment with political messaging, Zelensky was able to reach a wide audience and maintain a strong connection with the public.



Image 6. Zelensky's Kvartal 95 post from March 29, 2019 (see Appendix 1).

As already mentioned in several chapters of this thesis, the high-profile debates with Poroshenko were a significant aspect of Zelensky's campaign. His performance in these debates, characterized by direct and sometimes confrontational rhetoric, showcased his ability to handle pressure and present his ideas effectively. The debates were a defining moment in the campaign, as they often are in the election races worldwide, providing Zelensky with the opportunity to demonstrate his competence and challenge the incumbent president directly (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Demydova 2020). In these debates, Zelensky used clear and assertive language to highlight the failures of the current administration and present his vision

for the future. His ability to remain composed under pressure and articulate his policies convincingly won him the support of undecided voters and solidified his position as a serious contender (Onuch and Hale 2022). The stadium debate, in particular, was a spectacle that drew significant media attention and public interest as soon as Poroshenko was called out on April 10, 2019 (*see Appendix 1*). By staging the debate in a large, open venue, Zelensky emphasized his commitment to transparency and accessibility. The event was widely covered by national and international media, amplifying its impact and reaching a broader audience. Zelensky's performance in the debate, marked by his direct challenges to Poroshenko and his clear policy proposals, further strengthened his appeal to voters looking for change (Petrovic Lotina and Aiolfi 2023).

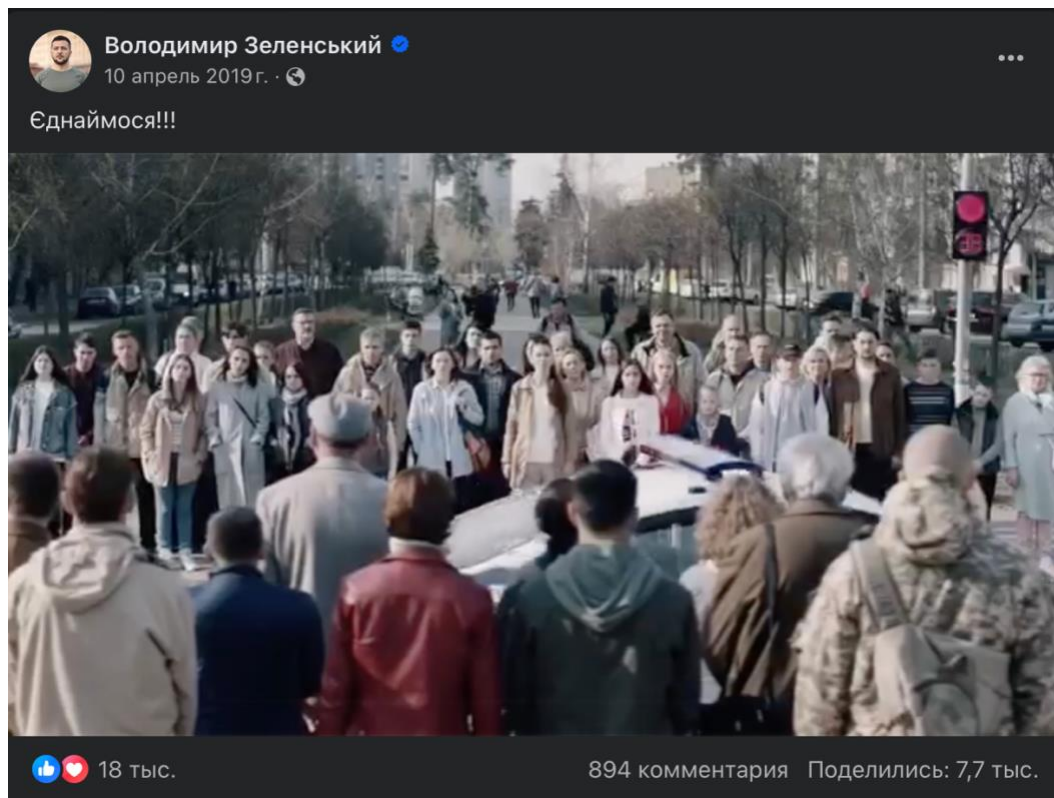


Image 7. Zelensky's "Let's unite!" post from April 10, 2019 (see Appendix 1).

The "Let's Unite!" campaign video from April 10, 2019, was a powerful storytelling tool that highlighted Zelensky's critique of the political elite and his promise to change the status quo (*see Image 7*). In the video, a crowd is shown staying on the opposite sides of the

road. The pedestrian traffic light is red as a luxurious motorcade used by government officials passes by — a symbol of national divide and all everyday struggles of ordinary Ukrainians (see *Appendix 1*). The imagery of the red light served as a metaphor for the stalled progress and corruption that Zelensky vowed to address. As Zelensky narrates in the background about the dividing nature and complete inefficiency of the incumbent “old guard” politicians, the video then cuts to the green light and the divided crowd merges despite the crossroads. Emerging from the crowd of people now hugging each other, Zelensky encourages “so different and yet so similar” people to stop waiting for change and “unite to move forward” (00:20 – 00:45). The video’s relatable content and emotional appeal made it highly effective in conveying his message and resonating with a wide audience.

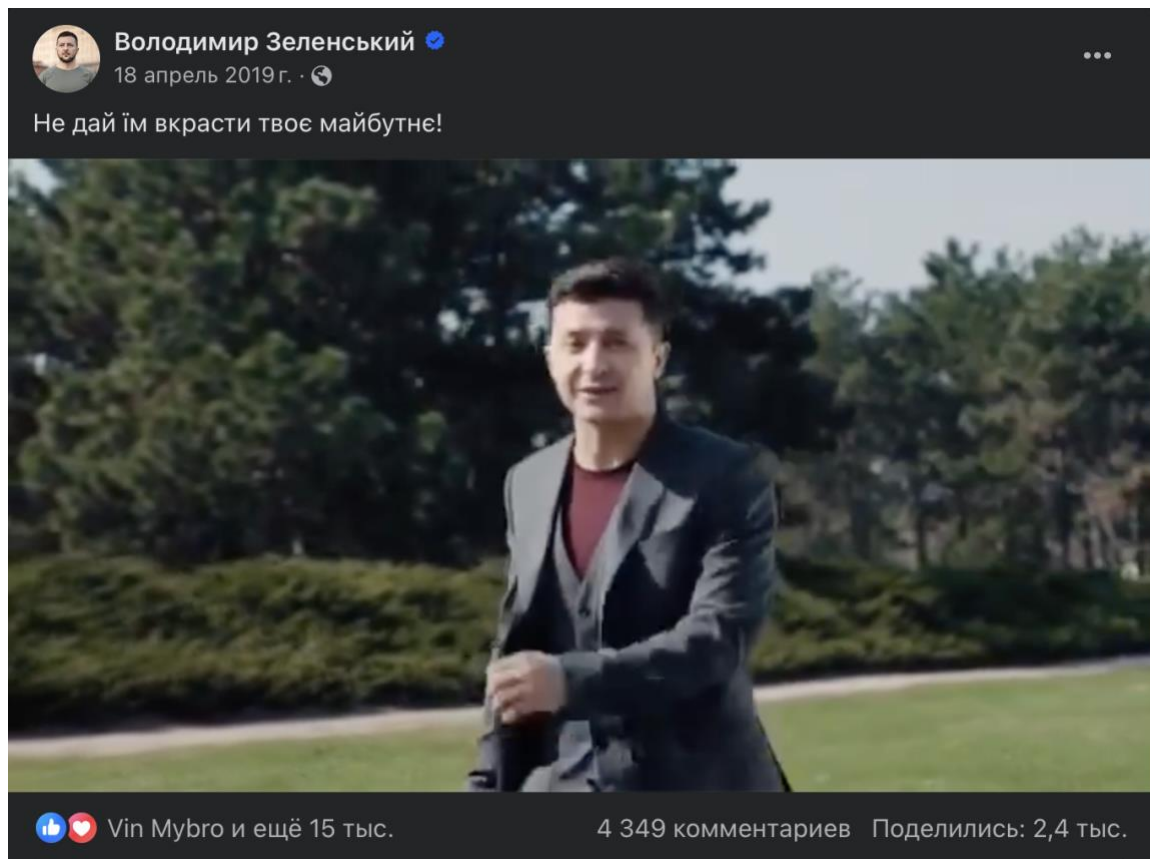


Image 8. “Don’t let them steal your future!” post from April 18, 2019 (see Appendix 1).

The final campaign video, “Don’t let them steal your future!”, encapsulated the urgency and high stakes of the election. By appealing to voters’ emotions and framing the election as a

pivotal moment for Ukraine's future (just three days before the final votes are cast), Zelensky's campaign mobilized support and reinforced the core message of his campaign — the end of the old era of Ukrainian politics. In this video, Zelensky addressed the viewers directly, urging them to vote and take an active role in shaping the future of their country (*see Image 8*). The video featured Zelensky walking forward as he says right into the camera: "They have stolen almost everything from you. Don't let them steal your vote too" (00:00 – 00:10). By highlighting the potential for positive change and the importance of each individual's vote, the video created a sense of urgency and inspired viewers to participate in the democratic process. The emotional tone of the video was reinforced by a stirring musical score, making it both memorable and impactful. This final message was designed to leave a lasting impression on voters, motivating them to support Zelensky's vision for a better, new Ukraine (Onuch and Hale 2022).

All in all, Zelensky's performative patterns during his 2019 presidential campaign illustrate a sophisticated use of media and communication strategies to construct a compelling political identity. By blending elements of personal storytelling, humor, direct engagement, and emotional appeals, Zelensky was able to resonate deeply with a broad spectrum of voters. This qualitative analysis highlights the innovative and multifaceted nature of his campaign. It underscores the importance of personalized and performative tactics in contemporary political campaigns, offering valuable insights into the evolving landscape of political communication and identity construction. Zelensky's campaign performance effectively utilized social media to craft a persona that resonated deeply with a wide spectrum of Ukrainian voters. By combining strategic narrative shifts with a consistent portrayal of his identity as the "people's candidate," his campaign not only engaged but also mobilized the electorate in unprecedented ways. The use of direct, relatable communication underscored by strategic content formats like video blogs played a pivotal role in this dynamic interaction. This approach not only redefined electoral campaigning in Ukraine but also highlighted the power of social media performances in modern political discourse. Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of Zelensky's performative patterns and their impact on voter engagement and mobilization. The last chapter will now revisit and cross-reference the quantitative and qualitative findings from Chapters 5 and 6 respectively to draw conclusions and suggest further research and discussion elements.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings from Volodymyr Zelensky's 2019 presidential campaign provides a nuanced understanding of how his strategic use of social media and narrative-driven approaches synergized to create a compelling political identity that resonated with voters. By examining both the numerical engagement metrics and the narrative elements, we can see how Zelensky's campaign effectively bridged the gap between data-driven tactics and emotionally engaging content, thus crafting a multifaceted and robust campaign strategy. Zelensky's campaign was characterized by a consistent and strategic use of social media, particularly Facebook, to maintain voter interest and engagement throughout the election period.

The quantitative data reveals high levels of interaction with his posts. These metrics indicate not just widespread visibility but also active engagement from the electorate. This engagement was not accidental but rather the result of a deliberate strategy that combined frequent and consistent posting with a flexible approach that allowed for ad-hoc responses to current events and issues. The content of Zelensky's posts, primarily videos and creative visuals, played a critical role in capturing and retaining voter attention. Videos, including vlogs, self-recorded clips, and live streams, were particularly effective in conveying his messages dynamically and engagingly. This multimedia approach was complemented by visually appealing posters and photographs that enhanced the overall impact of his posts. The sentiment analysis of these posts further underscores the effectiveness of this strategy, showing a predominantly positive tone during the campaign's launch phase, which helped set a hopeful and optimistic mood among voters. Zelensky's adept use of interactive features on social media, such as responding to comments and conducting live Q&A sessions, fostered a sense of immediacy and personal connection with his followers. This direct engagement not only built trust and rapport with voters but also reinforced his image as an accessible and relatable candidate, distinct from the traditional political elite. The narrative strategies employed by Zelensky further amplified this effect. His emphasis on themes of political transparency, civic engagement, and practical governance resonated deeply with voters who were disillusioned with the status quo and hungry for genuine change. The narrative construction of Zelensky's political persona was meticulously crafted to align with the emotional and practical concerns of the electorate. By sharing personal and relatable stories from his daily life, Zelensky

humanized himself and created a stark contrast with traditional politicians. This approach was further strengthened by providing behind-the-scenes insights into his campaign, which fostered a sense of inclusion and transparency among his supporters. These narrative elements were not merely superficial but were strategically designed to build a broad coalition of support across different segments of society.

Zelensky's campaign also strategically positioned him as an outsider and a political underdog, appealing directly to the general public's desire for a new kind of leadership. This populist messaging was evident in the use of specific hashtags and slogans that emphasized his commitment to doing things differently and his connection to the everyday experiences of ordinary Ukrainians. The careful balancing of these messages with the practical aspects of governance and policymaking ensured that his campaign was not just about rhetoric but also about concrete solutions to the country's pressing issues. In essence, the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings from Zelensky's campaign illustrates how modern political campaigns can effectively leverage social media to craft and disseminate a resonant political identity. The high engagement metrics and positive sentiment analysis reflect the success of his multimedia and interactive strategies, while the narrative-driven approach ensured that his messages were emotionally compelling and practically relevant. This holistic strategy not only helped Zelensky connect with a diverse electorate but also set a new standard for political campaigning in the digital age, demonstrating the powerful interplay between data-driven tactics and narrative-driven engagement.

Building on these integrated findings, we can speculate about the role of Zelensky's communication strategies during his presidency, particularly in the context of crisis communication since the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022 (Sánchez-Castillo, Galán-Cubillo, and Drylie-Carey 2023). The principles and tactics that contributed to his electoral success likely continued to shape his approach to presidential communication, especially during periods of intense national and international scrutiny. Zelensky's use of social media, characterized by frequent, engaging, and emotionally resonant content, seems to have been instrumental in his crisis communication strategy (Clark and Mcquade 2024). During the war, Zelensky's ability to maintain direct and personal communication with both the Ukrainian public and the international community has been crucial. The same elements of transparency, relatability, and immediacy that defined his

campaign are evident in his wartime addresses. Videos recorded in seemingly impromptu settings, often from undisclosed locations or war-torn areas, resonate deeply, providing a stark contrast to the often-scripted nature of political communication (Sánchez-Castillo, Galán-Cubillo, and Drylie-Carey 2023). This approach not only humanizes him but also underscores his commitment to stand with his people in times of peril. Furthermore, Zelensky's strategic use of interactive features, such as live broadcasts and direct addresses, has allowed him to maintain a dialogue with both his domestic audience and international stakeholders. This engagement fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose, essential for maintaining public morale and garnering global support (Zachara-Szymańska 2023). The positive sentiment and high engagement metrics observed during his campaign likely translate into increased solidarity and support, reinforcing the effectiveness of his communication strategy.

However, if future analyses build upon the methodology and findings above, the potential drawbacks and limitations of this thesis must be considered. One significant limitation is the narrow focus on Facebook, which, despite its widespread use, is just one of many platforms through which political communication occurs. A more comprehensive study would include other social media platforms, traditional media, and direct public interactions. Future research could also build on this foundation by exploring the long-term effectiveness of Zelensky's communication strategies across different media and contexts. Comparative studies of other political leaders' communication strategies during crises could provide deeper insights into the specific elements that contribute to successful crisis management. Additionally, examining the impact of Zelensky's communication on different demographic groups within Ukraine could offer a more nuanced understanding of how various segments of the population perceive and respond to his messages. All in all, while Zelensky's communication strategies during his presidential campaign and subsequent crisis management showcase the power of integrated, multimedia, and narrative-driven approaches, there is ample room for further research. This research can serve as a foundation for broader studies on political communication, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of leadership, media, and public engagement in the digital age. Understanding these dynamics more comprehensively can help refine strategies for effective political communication, particularly in times of crisis, thereby enhancing the resilience and unity of societies facing profound challenges.

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Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019)

Period Code	Date	Platform	Post Copy	Attached Items / links / visuals	Social Media Tools Used	Reactions (k)	Shares (k)	Comments	Link (Source)
Official Campaign Launch	December 31, 2018	Facebook	З Новим Роком! Ваш Слуга Народу! *** Happy New Year! Your Servant of the People!)	Copy of Zelensky's televised New Year's address.	scripted campaign video	24.8	11.9	338	https://fb.watch/ria2uTqI_vq/
Official Campaign Launch	January 1, 2019	Facebook	Стань мою командою! Чекаю на тебе на www.ze2019.com Зробимо це разом! *** Become my team! I am waiting for you at www.ze2019.com Let's do it together!	video address tl;dr "I am running. Are you with me?"	scripted campaign video hashtags: #ПрезидентСлугаНароду #СлугаНародуПрезидент #Березень2019 #ЗеКоманда #ЗеПрезидент #ЗробимоЦеРазом #Яїду #Зеленский	23.8	8.3	305	https://fb.watch/ria8cFt1-ml/
Official Campaign Launch	January 1, 2019	Facebook	Зе!!!! Бєгинин! *** Ze!!!! Beginning!	self-recorded video // 'talking head' format tl;dr the campaign website is down due to a hackers' attack, but it will be up soon	video + hashtags #НовыйСлугаНарода #ЗробимоЦеРазом	13.5	1.2	192	https://fb.watch/riaPiBP_r/
Tour I Campaigning	January 3, 2019	Facebook	Дякую всім, хто вже долучився до ЗеКоманди! На даний момент нас 228 609! Пишу точно, поскольку каждый из вас важен! Продолжаем в том же духе, і зробимо це разом! А пока, предлагаю устроить переключку ЗеКоманды, пишете в комментариях - откуда вы? *** I am thankful to everyone who joined Ze!Team! At the moment, we are 228 609! Writing an exact number because each of you matters! We're continuing in the same spirit, and we will do it together! For now, I propose to do a head count of Ze!Team, write in the comments - where are you from?	"preZEdent" visual	visual // poster	23.1	4.5	1,242	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyy.official/posts/pfbid0Amor1Y48PMFXp1MxHQig3NXx1vCyNzs4CtCgnr7nSwVTSqZFu5jcS5tgFd81dL
Tour I Campaigning	January 7, 2019	Facebook	Как должен жить украинец. Мысли от Президента - Слуги Народа. *** How a Ukrainian should live. Thoughts of the President - Servant of the People.	a cut-out from the 'Servant of the People' show, starring Zelensky as a President of Ukraine tl;dr the governmental policies should not be benefiting the state - they should be benefiting the Ukrainian citizens	video + hashtags #ПрезидентСлугаНароду #Березень2019 #ЗеКоманда #ЗеПрезидент #ЗробимоЦеРазом #Зеленский	8.1	3.4	143	https://fb.watch/rihY8HyWqg/
Tour I Campaigning	January 8, 2019	Facebook	Наша програма. Крок 1. Зробимо це разом! *** Our program. Step 1. Let's do it together! repost from Ze!Team FB page.	self-recorded video // 'talking head' format tl;dr party program + engagement comment by Zelensky: "Свои ответы оставляйте в комментариях под этим видео или тут: http://bit.ly/5-problems "	video + hashtags #зробимоцеразом #ze2019	18.6	26.6	940	https://fb.watch/rjicISWf6luj/
Tour I Campaigning	January 11, 2019	Facebook	Привіт, ЗеКоманда, наші друзі! І наші вороги! З достовірних джерел нам стало відомо про підготовку провокацій. Найближчим часом в різних містах України плануються незаконні мітинги, які, нібито, проводить партія СЛУГА НАРОДУ і ЗеКоманда. За планом чорних політехнологів, в мітингах братимуть участь тітушки, яким демонстративно платитимуть гроші. І все це будуть фіксувати знімальні камери і журналісти деяких ЗМІ заради чергової інформаційної атаки, мета якої — дискредитація нашого руху. Ми звертаємося до членів ЗеКоманди і наших симпатиків — не піддавайтеся на провокації, не ходіть на фейкові мітинги, не вірте брехні і розповсюдьте цю інформацію всіма доступними вам каналами комунікації. Ми поки не проводимо ніяких масових заходів — мітингів, з'їздів, зборів. Якщо ж вони будуть, ми повідомимо про це додатково на наших офіційних ресурсах — на сайті ze2019.com і офіційних сторінках у соціальних мережах. Ми звертаємося до наших ворогів! Ви, як і раніше, принижуйте народ України і вважаєте людей дурнями? Ви, як і раніше, наймаєте тітушок для вирішення своїх брудних завдань? Ваші технології безнадійно застаріли, їм місце на заваличій історії. Поруч із вашими замовниками-роботодавцями. Однією ногою ви вже там. Представники СЛУГА НАРОДУ написали заяву в поліцію за фактом запланованих провокацій і проведення фейкових мітингів. Перший раз ми просимо максимальний репост! *** Hello, Ze!team, our friends! And our enemies!	"official address" visual	visual // poster + hashtags #зробимоцеразом #президентслуганароду #березень2019	2.7	1	26	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyy.official/posts/pfbid0nNB6v4ZhwK3oXO2PF8b8OPJwGwrc4m6rPSF8HYtnLhwJ6DEUPrXoZTdnToal
Tour I Campaigning	January 15, 2019	Facebook	Доброе утро! Все! Праздники позади! Оливье забываем. Вспоминаем о спорте! #физкультприветвгл #zekubiki *** Good morning! Everyone! The holidays are over! Forget the "olivier salad". We're thinking about sports!	self-recorded video // 1-minute morning exercise video	video + hashtags #физкультприветвгл #zekubiki	3.6	0.5	79	https://fb.watch/rjicOkYHCrd/

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

		repost from ZelTeam FB page: Пам'ятаєте нашу з вами розмову про Топ-5 проблем України? В опитуванні взяли участь понад 120 000 українців. Ми проаналізували ваші відповіді та ВЖЕ використовуємо їх для актуалізації нашої програми. Незабаром покажемо вам результат. А поки що представляємо рейтинг визначених вами проблем, які ми обов'язково вирішимо. *** Do you remember our conversation about the Top 5 problems of Ukraine? More than 120,000 Ukrainians took part in the survey. We have analyzed your answers and are ALREADY using them to update our program. We will show you the results soon. In the meantime, here is a rating of the problems you identified that we will definitely solve.	"Top problems that worry everyone" visual — top-10 survey answers in a graph	visual // poster + hashtags #зробимоцеразом	3	0.4	358	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid0ZcONJZW67OrwN5y69mxQar1aMxeKfnyFPmmbnWMSoVknwDBHqME5QBJdX6BL
		repost from ZelTeam FB page: Владимир Зеленский та Владимир Фльонц (Volodymyr Flonts) об'єдналися для захисту голосів за допомогою системи e-Vybory.org. Деталі у відео! *** Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Volodymyr Flonts have teamed up to protect votes using the e-Vybory.org system. Watch the video for details!	live stream tl:dr digital elections	live stream	1.5	0.2	4	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid0K6Qdih8BESbAtTiGw6G7LYGNZAA6ipNKBPDhbE7nDMsIX4f165u4tIglIDZC3yGpL
		Мы работаем и живём в Украине!!! *** We work and live in Ukraine!!!	self-recorded video // 'talking head' format tl:dr neither Zelensky nor his family or colleagues no longer work in / with Russia + Zelensky is under investigation there for helping Ukrainian army. All profits from his activity go back to Ukraine and will only do so.	video	8.9	7.9	157	https://fb.watch/r1c1ib2y_x/
		n/a	live stream tl:dr Zelensky is at the set of the 'Servant of the People' show, where he greets the winners of the contest for the best translation of the show's title song	video	6.9	0.7	86	https://fb.watch/r1c1ib2y_x/
		repost from ZelTeam FB page: ЗМІ нав'язливо розповсюджують думку про те, що молодь ігнорує вибори, має слабку громадянську позицію та абсолютно не цікавиться політикою країни! Щоооо!? Ми заперечуємо цей домисел! Зеккоманда — один із пруфів того, що молодь у курсі подій, їй не байдуже та вона готова брати на себе відповідальність! Агов, молоді, креативні, амбітні! Приєднуйтеся! Це наш шанс довести, що ми перші з тих, хто цікавиться майбутнім своєї країни! *** The media obsessively spread the idea that young people ignore elections, have a weak civic position and are not interested in the country's politics at all! What? We deny this speculation! Zel team is one of the proofs that young people are aware of the events, they care and are ready to take responsibility! Hey, young, creative, ambitious people! Join us! This is our chance to prove that we are the first ones who are interested in the future of our country!	"Youth goes to elections" visual	visual // poster + hashtags #зробимоцеразом	1.4	0.12	7	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid0LhtlowFrDXuT2slgGZr2eIs5s4dXyYdd7Tj7hsmj6rdsFKynnNGE13GSghpWvrl
		repost from Studio 'Kvartal 95' FB page: В нашей стране очень много проблем, но есть одна, которая близка каждому... *** There are so many problems in our country, but there is one that is dear to everyone... Выход есть всегда - это выход на две... пока правда с помощью))) *** There is always a way out - it's a way out on two [hands].... while with help, to be honest)))))	a cut-out from the 'Servant of the People' show, starring Zelensky as a President of Ukraine tl:dr the humorous scene rotates around the corruption chain surrounding the road infrastructure in Kyiv, in which even the last person, a simple road worker, steals the most.		3.3	0.9	18	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid0JsQ1DIY3xKTPVPYmirprbldmNe4t11dEBhH4WFE62hzDTMrdpXc39hNv7Pcs6Jbl
		Зелснет Слуги Народа! Ланч. Пицца. Бургеры и хорошее настроение! *** Zelconvention of the Servant of the People! Lunch. Pizza. Burgers and good cheer!	self-recorded video // 1-minute morning exercise video	video + hashtags #zekubiki #доброеутро	3.5	0.17	26	https://fb.watch/r1d5llCQgk/
		Зелснет Слуги Народа! Ланч. Пицца. Бургеры и хорошее настроение! *** Zelconvention of the Servant of the People! Lunch. Pizza. Burgers and good cheer!	self-recorded video // 'stand up' format tl:dr the first major "serious" get-together of the party Servant of the People	#Зеккоманда #Зробимоцеразом	4.8	1.2	68	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid0fEQmsNEstqNjHo9bUsATn7QEnDuoazwglJhFaPykbnlksDBCEsP21S7ms9v1RdYVWML
		#lopatachallenge приєднуйтеся! *** #lopatachallenge join us!	self-recorded video // 'stand up' format tl:dr Zelensky cleans the street from the snow with a shovel. He explains that the politicians are too busy eating breakfasts on tropic islands — we don't need them, we will clean our country from snow ourselves. Join the challenge and clean the snow.	video + hashtags #lopatachallenge	10	17	168	https://fb.watch/r1d8-DBYcl/

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

				live stream					
Tour I Campaigning	January 25, 2019	Facebook	live stream // repost from ZelTeam FB page	tl:dr Zelensky submits his official candidacy on his birthday, calling it a "double birthday - as a human and as a politician." The live stream includes the committee that accepts his candidacy and an interview with the media outside of the building.		2.5	0.2	12	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyy.official/posts/pfbid0ZSECoHW2eF3e168sVnG1B6a9mewc5NoZQOHoaRrUuaCcYvRu9minhZIVCNTUL
Tour I Campaigning	January 25, 2019	Facebook	Спасибо, Запорожье! Спасибо, ЗеКоманда, что нас уже 497 820! Я искренне тронут! У нас все получится! *** Thank you, Zaporozhye! Thank you, ZelTeam, that we are already 497,820! I am sincerely touched! We'll make it!	n/a	n/a	2.8	0.02	33	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyy.official/posts/pfbid0Xxk7ipYqMgV1EMnuJAlawrEIAqumjfrpnojIfgNjtw3UQB8DYzQzACkpskvZ3vGI
Tour I Campaigning	January 26, 2019	Facebook	Дякую! *** Thank you!	tl:dr Zelensky thanks the audience for the birthday wishes and says he felt "like a child yesterday and can't believe he is now 41" y.o.	video	4.4	1.3	50	https://fb.watch/rDpbFYBI_4/
Tour I Campaigning	January 26, 2019	Facebook	#Зе!Президент! VLOG! Підписуйтесь на наш канал [link] *** #Ze! President! VLOG! Subscribe to our channel [link]	"self-recorded video // 'talking head' format" tl:dr Zelensky highlights the new format - vlog ZelPresident - in which people can "look behind the curtains" of Ukrainian politics and ZelTeam, and Zelensky talks about "becoming a politician and remaining a human." + link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH1ShRMibHI&feature=share	video + hashtags + link #Зе!Президент	4.3	0.6	35	https://fb.watch/rIdnG0ZVfo/
Tour I Campaigning	January 27, 2019	Facebook	Другий випуск нашого влогу #Зепрезидент [link] *** Another episode of our vlog #Zepresident	photo of Zelensky squatted talking to media	visual + hashtags + link #Зепрезидент	7.3	0.5	98	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyy.official/posts/pfbid0umy14uufSjrHBQGHMk7bNpklP8sWymc1Qngdpxhb7n4l/2v8vsvYHyc4KpGzI
Tour I Campaigning	January 28, 2019	Facebook	#ЗЕФЕЙК *** #ZEFAKE	tl:dr Zelensky lists and ridicules the most popular fake news about him and launches a challenge for the most ridiculous fake about him.	video + hashtags #ЗЕФЕЙК	7.8	2.7	180	https://fb.watch/rIdudr1Nhd/
Tour I Campaigning	January 30, 2019	Facebook	Плануємо нашу рекламну кампанію на лютий. Хочемо, щоб лютий був не таким лютим, адже скоро весна)) Допоможіть обрати колір та запропонуйте свої слогани для нашої кампанії, щоб вони додали оптимізму усім нам. Залишайте свої варіанти в коментарях із хештегом #зеборди *** We are planning our advertising campaign for February. We want February to be not so fierce, because spring is coming soon)) Help us choose the color and suggest your slogans for our campaign to make us all feel better. Leave your options in the comments with the hashtag #ze[boards]	"self-recorded video // 'stand up' format" tl:dr "let's enjoy the spring campaign together" - Zelensky invites his followers to vote for the best campaign billboard ad (colors and slogans). He says it is a common practice in his team, as usual people also contributed to his election program and campaign promises.	video + hashtags #зеборди	3.9	1.4	245	https://fb.watch/rIdedC8DNp/
Tour I Campaigning	January 31, 2019	Facebook	Непроєвибори #1, відео-інструкція для найлінівіших — як проголосувати переселенцю з Донецької, Луганської областей та Криму. Запустили серію корисних роликів, підписуйся на канал, щоб не прогавити нові: [link] *** [Neproevybyry] #1, a video guide for the laziest - how to vote for an IDP from Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimea. We have launched a series of useful videos, subscribe to the channel so you don't miss new ones: [link]	Neproevybyry blog link: https://youtu.be/xy9unVwXymg	You Tube video	1.3	0.3	10	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyy.official/posts/pfbid0Z9CO7HP7dVMz6HekXSe6SCd4dT4iwSf9ZKn9ZrQj78rcov58zwI2eu7VHGBCPkyz1I
Tour I Campaigning	February 3, 2019	Facebook	Подъем!!!!!! *** Wake up!!!!!!	tl:dr Zelensky on the morning run on the seaside in Odesa - "Sea in winter. What a beautiful country we have. Wake up - it is time to exercise!"	video	3.8	0.4	44	https://fb.watch/rIdrlz7eFnG/
Tour I Campaigning	February 3, 2019	Facebook	Знайомтесь! Олександр Андросов - представник ЗеКоманди в Одесі. Людина, яка чудово знає: Що турбує Одесу? Де найбільші проблеми? Коли це зміниться? *** Let's get acquainted! Oleksandr Androsov is a representative of the ZeTeam in Odesa. A man who knows everything: What is troubling Odesa? Where are the most painful problems? When will it change?	selfie with the ZeTeam representative in Odesa	selfie + hashtags #зекоманда #одеса	9.2	1	169	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyy.official/posts/pfbid0Z7SPx1s12YwZyzcM3UkCkT9NsbZD2UklcuRvJ8QaHzOgI_rO8qzn6aEG18KaWYeI

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

Tour I Campaigning	February 4, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: Вас.. Нема.. В списку виборців.. О ні, що ж робити? Головне — дізнайся чи є ти в списках виборців і #Непровибори 2! Все інше — у відео! Переходи на сайт: drv.gov.ua *** You're.. Not.. On the voter list.. Oh no, what can you do? The main thing is to find out if you are on the voter list and #[Neproevybori] 2! Everything else is in the video! Go to the website: drv.gov.ua	scripted video "Neproevybori"	video + hashtags #Непровибори #явсписках	1.1	0.3	41	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid0365wy8MqnPgddmkAud6IQZs1aMpTYH2zjhgD7JohDyuhcHddUzH7VNI3awJESuhL	
Tour I Campaigning	February 6, 2019	Facebook	#зефейк дякуємо переможцю Rodion Voronov *** #zefake We thank the winner Rodion Voronov	"self-recorded video // 'talking head' format	tl;dr Zelensky announces the winner of the #zefake challenge, while mentioning some recent fake news from Ukrainian media in the mix, "thanking" those media for participation in the challenge.	video + hashtags #ЗЕФЕЙК	8	5	113	https://fb.watch/rldQPvk092/
Tour I Campaigning	February 6, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: Воу, пам'ятаєте кіпіш з питанням про варіанти бордів? Говоримо відкрито: ми справді приємно здивовані відгуками, але більше тим — що їх дуже багато! Ми вивантажили всі коментарі до публікацій, перечитали з Володимиром Зеленським, визначили переможця з найкайфовішим варіантом та запросили Олену Приймак на зйомки фільму "Слуга Народу — 3". Деталі — у відео! *** Wow, do you remember the fuss about the board options? Let's be honest: we are really pleasantly surprised by the responses, but more so by the fact that there are so many of them! We downloaded all the comments to the posts, re-read them with Volodymyr Zelenskyy, determined the winner with the most exciting option, and invited Olena Pryimak to the shooting of the movie Servant of the People 3. Details are in the video!	"self-recorded video // stand up' format	tl;dr Zelensky greets the winner of the outdoor billboard ad contest, who came up with the best slogan "все буде Зе(либсь)" - "all is going to be Zelbest", at the set of the movie Servant of the People.	video	1.4	0.1	2	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid02yK62e581wvXbnXeNB0EnJkr55qVtXVNUa7/4HwssnbzjgQsyMXuz5ozj1k2HBL
Tour I Campaigning	February 7, 2019	Facebook	#яклоун Вони мають нас за клоунів. Нас 40 мільйонів. Розкажи свою історію. *** #[I'm a clown] They take us for clowns. There are 40 million of us. Tell your story.	"self-recorded video // 'talking head' format	tl;dr Zelensky says he is proud to be a clown and encourages others, using the Instagram mask of a clown ZelTeam has created, tell about why they're clowns too... for positive or negative reasons (e.g., too small pension).	video + hashtags #яклоун	6.6	8.6	218	https://fb.watch/rldQ-ESFBL/
Tour I Campaigning	February 7, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: instructions for the #яклоун challenge participation	video instructions for the #яклоун challenge participation	video + hashtags #яклоун	0.7	0.1	10	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid02ulkykFbB9dC2yqT4qjTnH2urImpoZehEI9felrnfS2V2X9NzUEnPEHMHbhhLb9iU	
Tour I Campaigning Kvartal 95 February tour coverage	February 8, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: #Непровибори навіть закордоном 🤔 Проголосувати, якщо ти не вдома — реально можна! Як саме? Дивіться у новому випуску #Непровибори #3 — як голосувати в Польщі? *** #[Neproevybori] even abroad 🤔 You can actually vote if you are not at home! How exactly? Watch in the new issue of #[Neproevybori] #3 - how to vote in Poland?	scripted video "Neproevybori"	video + hashtags #Непровибори	1.5	0.3	3	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid033y2eV6aUrMb4tIC13eh1hVYk8FGcNMwslAxxFdN5n1sqM6naAaEu74xmVU	
6 publications from the Kvartal 95 concerts in Western Ukraine										
Tour I Campaigning	February 14, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: Непровибори #4 Продаси свій голос за \$1000? У цьому випуску ви дізнаєтеся, чи готові люди продати свій голос на виборах і за скільки? Нагадуємо про те, що покупка і продаж голосу є порушенням закону України і тягне за собою кримінальну відповідальність. Закликаємо вас не продавати свої голоси! Новий випуск Непровибори #4. *** [Neproevybori] #4 Would you sell your vote for \$1000? In this issue, you will find out whether people are ready to sell their votes in the elections and for how much. We remind you that buying and selling a vote is a violation of Ukrainian law and entails criminal liability. We urge you not to sell your votes! New issue of [Neproevybori] #4.	scripted video "Neproevybori"	video + hashtags #Непровибори	1.5	0.3	29	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid033y2eV6aUrMb4tIC13eh1hVYk8FGcNMwslAxxFdN5n1sqVQaH6z0z31d7S7K0EL	

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

				a cut-out from the 'Servant of the People' show, starring Zelensky as a President of Ukraine					
Tour I Campaigning	February 15, 2019	Facebook	Пока у кого-то "плюс", у народа "минус". *** While someone has a plus, the people have a minus.	the scene from a movie shows a politician negotiating with an oligarch a corruption schemem in energy sector, avoiding sancions on Russian coal industry, calling it Amsterdam Plus (reference to Poroshenko's initiative Rotterdam Plus). The "evil counterparts" in the movie agree that Ukrainian people are the ones paying the bill... "my religion is business" concludes the corrupt politician.	video + hashtags #снуранарода3 #схоро	3.2	1.3	59	https://fb.watch/r1ejaDy01U/
Tour I Campaigning	February 15, 2019	Facebook	Наша полит. реклама на автобусе! Как смогли))) *** Our political advertising on the bus! As best we could)))	photo of Zelensky leaning agaionst the neutrally painted tour bus, posing as a poster of himself	visual // poster + hashtags #3еКоманда #зробимоцеразом	7.2	1.3	127	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/nfbid0VcEkMYnKsrtb8HzXWH54ADKJ16w43GNnqYcRbFFe1wPNX3G4HGockDcdUJJaABJ
Tour I Campaigning	February 18, 2019	Facebook	Как бы вы подписали это фото??? Пишите в комментариях... *** How would you caption this photo??? Write in the comments....	a phot from the set of the 'Servant of the People' show, starring Zelensky as a President of Ukraine, with Zelensky in the middle of a big table, staying still and calm, while everybody around is wildly arguing with one another	photo + hashtags #снуранарода3 #схоро	1.9	0.2	128	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/nfbid02TA9ZUJDaoARcLh1o5YHKuIGSPj58Y5aTcz4raAG7RvVwec29GoRtdrEIJ5wnvU
Tour I Campaigning	February 21, 2019	Facebook	vlog // repost from Ze!Team FB page: Новий болючий випуск VLOG! Тарифи за комуналку: Платити неможливо зменшити Зе Президент Слуга Народу # 7 Обговорюємо проблему, яка щомісяця надходить українцям у поштові скриньки, — платіжки за комунальні послуги. Чому в Україні такі тарифи? Чи можна їх зменшити і як це зробити? Пишіть у коментарях — скільки в цьому місяці вам доведеться сплатити за комуналку? *** New painful issue of VLOG! Tariffs for utility services: Payments cannot be reduced Ze President Servant of the People #7 We discuss the problem that Ukrainians receive in their mailboxes every month - utility bills. Why are there such tariffs in Ukraine? Is it possible to reduce them and how to do it? Write in the comments - how much will you have to pay for utilities this month?	vlog	vlog	2	0.3	80	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/nfbid0XC82MhYSy6sZTuxaEaPPNGSDeTvN7JxaG3ZVWt6cLDLqP2webF8Rc149IDYdL
Tour I Campaigning	February 22, 2019	Facebook	repost from Ze!Team FB page: Працюєш у Києві, а прописаний у Новоград-Волинському? Вчишся в Харкові, а прописаний у Конотопі? Живеш у Львові, а прописаний у Самборі? Щоб проголосувати — не обов'язково їхати туди, де ти зареєстрований. Подивись це відео, щоб полегшити собі життя 31 березня 2019 року. *** Do you work in Kyiv but have a residence permit in Novohrad-Volynskiy? Do you study in Kharkiv but have a residence permit in Konotop? Do you live in Lviv but are registered in Sambir? You don't have to go to the place where you are registered to vote. Watch this video to make your life easier on March 31, 2019.	video instructions for elections participation	video	1.6	0.3	50	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/nfbid0c71b1erh7TgmGdtZe6SDvuyg46dLnRQDeN2bTMclNFDh3ZQ8SRp2qCzASkdl
Tour I Campaigning	February 23, 2019	Facebook	vlog // repost from Ze!Team FB page: Ми у Львові. Новий випуск влогу Зе Президент Слуга Народу. У цьому влозі гуляємо Львовом та шукаємо відповіді на такі питання: • Чи можливі онлайн-вибори в Україні? • Як розвивається ІТ-сектор і чи можемо ми збудувати свою «Силіконову долину»?! • Чого ми потребуємо, щоб стати країною ЄС? • Яка різниця між коханням та любов'ю? Дивись просто зараз! *** We are in Lviv. A new episode of the vlog Ze President Servant of the People. In this vlog, we walk around Lviv and look for answers to the following questions: - Are online elections possible in Ukraine? - How is the IT sector developing and can we build our own "Silicon Valley"? - What do we need to become an EU country? - What's the difference between "being in love" and "loving"? Watch it right now!	vlog	vlog	2	0.2	64	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/nfbid0VG39T9yMFaMy7L6EaX1H2MOnU87usmMuEY1FRG1uw1Zia2nIus6iYUxvF8LApFL

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

Tour I Campaigning	February 25, 2019	Facebook	Збираємо Команду мрії! Зробимо це разом! *** Gathering the Dream Team! Let's do it together!	"self-recorded video // 'talking head' format tl;dr other Presidents have put "their own people" or relatives on the top positions in the Ukrainian government. Zelensky's call for people's nominations for the Prime Minister, Head of Prosecutor's Office, Security Services of Ukraine, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and Defence Minister.	video + hashtags #спробимоцеразом	4.7	2.5	322	https://fb.watch/rF2dNEIw2/
Tour I Campaigning	February 26, 2019	Facebook	vlog // repost from ZelTeam FB page: Продовжуємо мандрівку Україною в новому влозі Зєлпрезидент Слуга Народу. Говоримо про: • Що робити з євробляхами і скільки має коштувати розмитнення авто в Україні? • Більш ніж 500 тисяч людей у Зє!команді. Як ми плануємо усіх залучити до нашої кампанії? • Як стати спостерігачем та захистити вибори? • Чим кожен може допомогти Зє!команді? • Скільки людей допомагає розробити програму «Країна мрій» та хто ці люди? • Кандидат у Президенти чи людина? Ну мо дивитися! *** We continue our journey through Ukraine in a new vlog by ZelPresident Servant of the People. We are talking about: - What to do with European cars and how much should customs clearance cost in Ukraine? - More than 500 thousand people in the Ze! team. How do we plan to involve everyone in our campaign? - How to become an observer and protect the elections? - How can everyone help the Ze! team? - How many people are helping to develop the "Land of Dreams" program and who are these people? - A presidential candidate or a person?	vlog	vlog	1.8	0.1	17	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid02W848S2eqnW6WyxpxN3NzNhtfresetAtnF8viTRWVHYQagDlqWShPP15gzwll
Tour I Campaigning	February 26, 2019	Facebook	#НЕДОБРИЙРАНОК *** #NOTGOODMORNING	"self-recorded video // 'talking head' format tl;dr Zelensky talks about his frustration after watching a recent investigation into the corruption and theft in Ukrainian defence industry "people, who came to power on blood, make money on blood" "contrabanda with Russia is allowed, second hand parts in exchange for our soldiers' lives is allowed, candy is allowed, Maruv is not allowed." using Poroshenko's slogan against him: "Steal everything from the army. Artificially divide people over the language. Thus there is no faith in you." "There are a lot of candidates. We will elect someone but you!"	video + hashtags #НЕДОБРИЙРАНОК	10	8.6	284	https://fb.watch/rF63uflK9n/
Tour I Campaigning	February 28, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: Як не допустити фальсифікацій на виборах президента? Стань спостерігачем! Що має робити спостерігач? Усе просто: він повинен вести спостереження за ходом голосування, підрахунком голосів, іншою діяльністю учасників виборів у період голосування та обов'язково фіксувати порушення. Усе максимально просто: • Перейди за посиланням https://ze2019.com/control . • Заповни анкету. • Отримай на електронну пошту листа із заявою. Наша мета — зібрати найбільшу команду спостерігачів в Україні! Приєднуйся! *** How to prevent fraud in the presidential election? Become an observer! What should an observer do? It's simple: they must observe the voting process, vote counting, and other activities of election participants during the voting period and be sure to record violations. Everything is as simple as possible: - Go to https://ze2019.com/control . - Fill out the form. - Receive an application letter by e-mail. Our goal is to gather the largest team of observers in Ukraine! Join us!	video instructions for elections monitoring (observer) participation	video + link https://ze2019.com/control .	1.4	0.2	49	https://www.facebook.com/zelensky.official/posts/pfbid02z7TU4HYn5toYwcfzrrrBOTDnWhn1tmmSjBUxSfOu8vyn7qkSLkv5GD9AHbd49d

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

Tour I Campaigning	March 3, 2019	Facebook	vlog // repost from ZelTeam FB page: Закон один для всіх? 10 випуск влогу ZelПрезидент Слуга Народу про наболіле — Український суд. Зустрілися з експертами та обговорили такі питання: 👤 Як і чому провалилася судової реформи? 👤 Хто повинен обирати нових суддів і як правильно це зробити? 👤 Скільки повинен заробляти суддя, щоб не виникало бажання брати хабар? 👤 Чи можливо втілити в життя «Порядок денний реформи правосуддя» pravosuddia2019.org.ua/ 👤 Що може зробити майбутній Президент? Дивіться влог та пишть у коментарях про свій досвід звертання до українського суду. *** Is the law one for all? Episode 10 of the vlog ZelPresident Servant of the People about the Ukrainian court. We met with experts and discussed the following issues: 👤 How and why did the judicial reform fail? 👤 Who should elect new judges and how to do it right? 👤 How much should a judge earn so that he or she does not want to take a bribe? 👤 Whether it is possible to implement the "Justice Reform Agenda" pravosuddia2019.org.ua/ 👤 What can the future President do?	vlog	vlog	2.5	0.3	66	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyv.official/posts/nfbid0C4czxHacpxNZy9hYUkz2h1Rm3C7Z3RIdtSb1euTwinaMnBkwPGxramdPRxPL
Tour I Campaigning	March 3, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: #Непроєвибори #7 — «Студентам пох?» 🗳️ За статистикою, в Україні 1,5 мільйона студентів і з них йде на вибори лише... 1/10 частина! Ну що, молодий електорат, може, увімкнемо голову? І такі підійдемо свою студентську 🗳️ та підемо 31 березня на вибори. Щоб після універу гідно увійти в доросле життя і подякувати самому собі, а не потонути в корупційному політичному сьогодні! Реально крутий варіант, правда? А все ж так просто — йдеш і голосуєш! *** #[Neproevybory] #7 - "Do students not care?" 🗳️ According to statistics, there are 1.5 million students in Ukraine, and only... 1/10th of them! So, young voters, maybe we should turn on our heads? And let's raise our student 🗳️ and go to the polls on March 31. So that after graduation we can enter adulthood with dignity and thank ourselves, and not drown in the corrupt political present! A really cool option, right? And yet it's so simple - go and vote!	scripted video "Neproevybory"	video + hashtags #Непроєвибори	1.1	0.2	164	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyv.official/posts/nfbid02nPr81MY4ELKYYvYpEHNM7avaLH7dm3vvdB8NRh7C3yWcKtHW1Mn3z7focL
Tour I Campaigning	March 6, 2019	Facebook	vlog // repost from ZelTeam FB page: Як розкривається оборонно-промисловий комплекс України та чи можемо ми це зупинити? Дивіться у СПЕЦВИПУСКУ #2 — Зе Президент Слуга Народу: • Що є причиною багатомільйонних крадіжок? • Які реформи треба впровадити? • Що таке відкритий оборонний бюджет? • Чи можливо побудувати «успішний державний бізнес»? • Чого не вистачає Україні для розвитку промисловості? Вмикайте новий випуск влогу та діліться своїми враженнями у коментарях. *** How is Ukraine's defense industry being stolen and can we stop it? Find out in SPECIAL ISSUE #2 - Ze President is a Servant of the People: - What are the reasons for the multimillion-dollar thefts? - What reforms should be implemented? - What is an open defense budget? - Is it possible to build a "successful state business"? - What does Ukraine lack for industrial development? Watch the new episode of the vlog and share your impressions in the comments.	vlog	vlog	1.6	0.2	33	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyv.official/posts/nfbid02BRTpPEPwOwLW4tLaqM7hv4FPtScswKnl8U6t1KwTtQNCvauBHTLWwYvCSL
Tour I Campaigning	March 7, 2019	Facebook	self-recorded video // 'talking head' format tl;dr Zelensky talks about a wave of fake criminal proceedings against him and Kvaral 95 and acknowledges that there "normal people" in law enforcement who will deal wit this according to law. He avoids exact names of the people who act against him, calling them "shit-throwers" and "fakers"	video		40	70	591	https://fb.watch/rFvF8NswbU/

tl;dr Zelensky talks about a wave of fake criminal proceedings against him and Kvaral 95 and acknowledges that there "normal people" in law enforcement who will deal with this according to law. He avoids exact names of the people who act against him, calling them "shit-throwers" and "fakers"

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

			vlog // repost from ZelTeam FB page: Чи можна стати Президентом та залишитися людиною? Можна! У новому випуску влогу Зе Президент Слуга Народу #11: • Чи повторяться львівські провокації у Рівному? • Як діджитал відділ запобігає атакам ботів? • Де тренується ZelПрезидент? • Як завершилася перша частина нашої мандрівки Україною? Всі випуски життєвого Zelвлогу можна знайти на нашому Youtube-каналі. Підписуйтесь, все прозоро *** Is it possible to become President and still be human? Yes, you can! In the new issue of the vlog Ze President Servant of the People #11: • Чи will Lviv provocations be repeated in Rivne? • Як digital department prevents bot attacks? • Де is Zel President training? • Як is the first part of our trip to Ukraine over? All episodes of the real-life Zelvlog can be found on our YouTube channel. Subscribe, everything is transparent	vlog	vlog	2.1	0.2	22	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyv.official/posts/pfbid036zdGrAP4BSRhV4sdqdtA9Wt6lrgMKoy1fUDP7x1fIG7v6XrH1ow8TEFGcFsa3CL
Tour I Campaigning	March 7, 2019	Facebook		self-recorded video // "talking head" format					
Tour I Campaigning	March 8, 2019	Facebook	Зе квіти всім! *** Ze flowers for all!)	tl;dr Zelensky congratulates all women with the International Women's Day. Calls on everybody to congratulate women. Mentions that he will call his mom.	video	7.1	1	56	https://fb.watch/trEisBzAcDL/
Tour I Campaigning	March 8, 2019	Facebook	Новий Президент — скоро! *** New President — soon!	tl;dr behind the scenes voices are shouting at Zelensky their concerns about his candidacy, asking if he is ready — he looks at the camera and confidently says "Yes, I am ready!"	video	10	3.8	292	https://fb.watch/trEkZY...71L
Tour I Campaigning	March 11, 2019	Facebook	vlog // repost from ZelTeam FB page: Камери у кожному кабінеті чиновників та вибори онлайн, цікаво? Зібрали кращих фахівців у новому випуску влогу Зе Президент Слуга Народу та обговорили такі цікаві речі: • Інновації, розвиток IT сектору в Україні • Міністерство інновацій — чи потрібно таке в Україні • Держава у смартфоні, чи можливо за 10 хвилин зареєструвати бізнес • Чи треба встановлювати камери у кабінетах? Дивіться влог та пишіть у коментарях, що думаєш з приводу камер. *** Cameras in every office of officials and online elections, interesting? We gathered the best experts in the new issue of the vlog Ze President Servant of the People and discussed such interesting things: - Innovations, development of the IT sector in Ukraine - Ministry of Innovation - is it necessary in Ukraine? - The state in a smartphone, is it possible to register a business in 10 minutes - Should we install cameras in our offices? Watch the vlog and write in the comments what you think about cameras.	vlog	vlog	2.3	0.3	37	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyv.official/posts/pfbid0B9lceR51gw9R9n75ehSPKfYA98Ba3qc48IacFtho3jphWUW6hoalVBCbdfsDrgTL
Tour I Campaigning	March 12, 2019	Facebook	И кто бы мог когда-то из нас подумать , что наши моральные ценности , выраженные художественным языком в фильме, станут настолько близкими и острыми для людей. То , о чем мы всегда спорили за бокалом вина, то о чем мы мечтали, представляя страну , в которой так хочется жить , а не ходить и переводить воздух, мы обратили в бордовские Файлы, а затем в кино . Пусть не в реальности , пусть хотя бы на экране, мы немного поживем , поплачем, посмеёмся , уткнём носом, а некоторых даже размажем....ну чесались творческие руки и думы не давали уснуть. И мысли , не потуги, а реальные мысли материализовались !!! Реальные хотели нашли отклик у думающих, верящих и не до конца разочарованных . Есть шанс! Блин... заслуживаем... а вдруг... ну а затем все , как после аварии, только вспышки воспоминаний, потому что было ярко.) Решил! Новый год. Заявил. Уверен. Нужно. Есть шанс. На свалку этих прикормленных. Они нас пропустили.) не заметили. Не думали. Так мы - подводная лодка, а говорят у нас флота нет! Думали очередная шуточка, клоун же!!! Самоуверенны слишком, а значит глупцы. Глупцы? Просто раньше не знал, а значит шансы растут. Ведро помоев. Не готов . Семья не готова! Ещё ведро, так это же не Я! Не оправдываясь - слабость. Ещё ведро - уже не так и пахнет! Ещё ведро - я Вас запомню. Не нужно- это слабость, а для них - деньги! Согласен , вас я даже не вспомню. Еще ведро- неплохо, весело. Еще ведро - что - то сегодня слабо. Нет ведр ... как -то мне не по себе! Ой что -то ещё доносится , тихонько, как лай из соседнего села «борщ из чебушки...»)!!!!) креативно!!! ну это по-лучше чем «скишский борщ и вчерашний»... ржу не могу. А значит - готов!!! Мы - новое блюдо! Свежее! Из ингредиентов важна лишь порядочность, а там людей опытных добавим по вкусу и точно обойдёмся без «потрохов»! Я благодарен всем , кто создавал «Слугу» и был рядом... вы сделали очень многое... Лёша forever! Квартал forever! Україна forever! *** Finished filming "The Servant" at midnight tonight..... congratulations to all of you. And who would have ever thought that our moral values, expressed in artistic language in the movie, would become so close and sharp for people. What we always argued about over a glass of wine, what we dreamed about, imagining a country where we would like to live, not to walk and waste the air, we turned into Word files, and then into a movie. Let not in reality, let at least on the screen, we will live a little, weep, laugh, bump our noses, and will even smear some.... itchy were the creative hands and the thoughts did not let us sleep. And the thoughts, not our struggles, but real thoughts materialized !!!! Real desires have found an echo among those who think, believe and are not completely disappointed. There's a chance! Damn it... We deserve... and what if... Well, and then everything, as after the accident, only flashes of memories, long read	long read	long read	9.4	1.8	245	https://www.facebook.com/zelenkyv.official/posts/pfbid034QMS7Hs4z9W5hsa5kXTVnqCizrchlEK7BPWYmzj12nHs3U9d8896aHhEisGucML

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

Tour I Campaigning	March 14, 2019	Facebook	Все працює))) *** Everything works)))	self-recorded video // 'talking head' format tl;dr contrary to the media reports, Zelensky's YouTube channel is fully functioning and works "for the good of our country" - Let's do it together!	video	5.8	1.4	128	https://fb.watch/rrEoNNR-as/
Tour I Campaigning	March 16, 2019	Facebook	Старий добрий сквош) добрий ранок. Після кварталов. Проспан! *** Good old squash) good morning. After the "kvartals." Woke up late!	photo of Zelensky playing squash	photo	11	0.2	284	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/pfbid028FvZ1Yy2SD975nEZrVqAL8kCRmw8kXUmlJh8C7n2Xn1HvA18nD78TlMSXQnREwL
Tour I Campaigning	March 22, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: Інтерв'ю Володимира Зеленського з представниками світових ЗМІ: New York Times, Washington Post, Bloomberg, Der Spiegel, The Economist, Le Figaro, Atlantic Council та Kyiv Post. Обговорили найгостріші теми: • Війна на Донбасі; • Вплив олігархів на владу в Україні; • Президентство та «Слугу Народу». Дивіться прямо зараз — дуже цікаво! *** Volodymyr Zelensky's interviews with representatives of the global media: The New York Times, Washington Post, Bloomberg, Der Spiegel, The Economist, Le Figaro, Atlantic Council, and Kyiv Post. They discussed the most pressing issues: - The war in Donbas; - The influence of oligarchs on the government in Ukraine; - The presidency and the Servant of the People. Watch it right now - it's very interesting!	video compilation of Zelensky's interviews for the foreign media	video	2.8	0.4	46	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/pfbid0418WFEIwiiEYAKCh12y2graknEBUnBJEWIh779NjMxxyAEh0est1VB11rCX5vIL
<i>4 publications from the Kvarstal 95 concerts in Southern regions of Ukraine</i>									
Tour I Campaigning	March 24, 2019	Facebook	repost from ZelTeam FB page: А вам ліньки іти на вибори? Дивіться новий випуск Непроєвибори та відправляйте його друзям та знайомим, яким лінь. *** Are you too lazy to go to the elections? Watch the new episode of [Neproevybyory] and send it to your friends and acquaintances who is too lazy.	scripted video "Neproevybyory"	video + hashtags #Непроєвибори	2.3	0.6	23	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/pfbid0G3iAK2wmtFvyS7sie4dyFURhJBiennV8aNNhOY18U27ny378h0est1VB11rCX5vIL
Tour I Campaigning	March 25, 2019	Facebook	31 МАРТА СКОРО! #зробимоцеразом *** 31 of MARCH is SOON! #letsdoittogether	tl;dr Zelensky calls on citizens to not forget about the upcoming elections, in a humorous sketch reminding people to bring their passport, pen and motivation.	video + hashtags #зробимоцеразом	15	10	182	https://fb.watch/rrEzalqdyw/
<i>3 publications from the Kvarstal 95 concerts in Central regions of Ukraine</i>									
Tour I Campaigning	March 29, 2019	Facebook	31.03.2019 #зробимоцеразом *** 31.03.2019 #letsdoittogether	campaign video tl;dr a music video from a live Kvarstal 95 show, a song, preformed by a children's choir, encouraging people to take responsibility and shape the country for their kids	video + hashtags #зробимоцеразом	19	9.9	291	https://fb.watch/sxvwmTgc_D/
Tour I Campaigning	March 31, 2019	Facebook	Дякую всім за підтримку!!!!!! *** Thank you everybody for your support!!!!!!	self-recorded video // 'stand up' format tl;dr Zelensky thanks all the people who are supporting him during the election day, saying that there is still a long and serious fight ahead	video	24	2.1	615	https://fb.watch/rrED1YnKH/

Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

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Appendix 1. Database of Zelensky's Facebook Publications (December 31, 2018 — April 21, 2019) cont.

				self-recorded video // 'talking head' format						
Tour II Campaigning	April 9, 2019	Facebook	Дякую всім, хто боронить Україну - як на фронті, так і в тилу. Я вас не підведу! *** I thank everyone who defends Ukraine - both at the front and in homeland. I will not let you down!	tl;dr a compilation of Zelensky and two key Kvarial 95 actors and producers extending their gratitude to the defenders of Ukraine, listing each individual unit or brigade. Zelensky promises to bring everyone back. video	25	19	1,078	https://fb.watch/rEUn9NORE/		
Tour II Campaigning	April 10, 2019	Facebook	Єднаймося!!! *** Let's unite!	campaign video tl;dr a presidential motorcade splits a crowd in two on a cross-road. Zelensky narrates about the importance of unity and erasing cultural and national stereotypes. A part of united action for him is making a choice together — elections on April 21st. As he says it, the motorcade passes, traffic light turns green and people of all ages, genders and professions finally hug each other, among whom is Zelensky himself. video	19	7.7	897	https://fb.watch/sxUVMDePLT/		
Tour II Campaigning	April 15, 2019	Facebook	Президент і Шоумен. *** President and Showman.	self-recorded video // 'talking head' format tl;dr Zelensky calls out Poroshenko on his extensive TV appearances, while several urgent cases need Presidential attention, including imprisoned Ukrainian marines in Russia. "A showman can become a president. But a president that turns into a showman - it's a pity" video	25	17	5,143	https://fb.watch/rEFXkSh-/		
Tour II Campaigning	April 15, 2019	Facebook	Нотр-Дам - це цілий всесвіт. Цілий пласт світової культури, створений багатьма поколіннями. Просто безмежно жаль, що ми його втрачаємо. Мої співчуття президенту Макрону, всім французам, всім людям, які цінують світову культурну спадщину. Шок і біль для всіх нас. La cathédrale de Notre-Dame de Paris est un véritable monde emblématique! Un joyau unique de la couche culturelle mondiale bâtis par plusieurs générations. C'est avec beaucoup de tristesse au cœur que nous la voyons envahie par les flammes. Mon soutien au Président de la République, monsieur Emmanuel Macron, à tous les français et à tous qui respectent le patrimoine mondial. Nous sommes choqués de ce fait, douleur pour nous tous. *** Notre Dame is a whole universe. A whole layer of world culture created by many generations. It's just an infinite pity that we are losing it. My condolences to President Macron, to all the French, to all people who value the world's cultural heritage. Shock and pain for all of us.	n/a	n/a	11	1.7	2,095	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/pfbid0dvBjh2C5u3wKK4123ShkgAXEnj73n2PwAnIf4x7s25zi8Mu3gGu8yxi727z9L	
Tour II Campaigning	April 16, 2019	Facebook	Дебати з приводу дебатів! Вже відкрита можливість зареєструватися на найголовнішу подію країни! Доступні безкоштовні квитки у фан-зону в центрі стадіону: https://debaty2019.org.ua/ Бронюйте негайно! Отримуйте електронний квиток на пошту. На одну людину можна зареєструвати лише 2 безкоштовні квитки. Не дамо нас розділити!!! *** Debates about debates! The opportunity to register for the most important event in the country is now open! Free tickets to the fan zone in the center of the stadium are available: https://debaty2019.org.ua/ Book yours now! Receive an electronic ticket by email. Only 2 free tickets can be registered per person. Don't let us be divided!!!	self-recorded video // 'stand up' format tl;dr Zelensky himself on the stadium as the debate stage is being set. He shows how Poroshenko's team is unloading a second stage and explains that "the current President once again wants to divide people into his and our followers... our followers are all citizens of Ukraine. Free access to the debate. We stand by our demand." video + link https://debaty2019.org.ua/	16	9	6,206	https://fb.watch/rEF_gduM5/		
Tour II Campaigning	April 18, 2019	Facebook	Не дай їм вкрати твоє майбутнє! *** Don't let them steal your future!	campaign video tl;dr End of an old era. Don't let them steal your vote — don't let them steal your future. video	15	2.4	4,351	https://fb.watch/rEF-1lx9N/		
Tour II Campaigning	April 21, 2019	Facebook	#мизробилицеразом Дякую!!!! *** #wedidittogether Thanks!!!!	self-recorded video // 'stand up' format tl;dr Zelensky concludes the almost four-month campaign run with a clear win by the end of the elections day: "Thank you for your support. We've done a very important task. We've united our nation. We've united Ukraine. We did it together," refers Zelensky to his campaign slogan #let'sdoittogether video + hashtags #мизробилицеразом	38	5.7	6,185	https://fb.watch/rEF1cZJ5FH/		
Tour II Campaigning	April 21, 2019	Facebook	Дякую Президенту Франції Емманюелю Макрону за привітання! Mes remerciements les plus sincères au président de la république Française Emmanuel Macron, pour les félicitations et le soutien! *** My sincerest thanks to the president of the French republic Emmanuel Macron, for the congratulations and support!	photo of Zelensky receiving a call from Macron visual // poster	30	1	4,302	https://www.facebook.com/zelenskyy.official/posts/pfbid0vZ1yDwlp8Tmbd2sZ6ldY6dHYXGjEXzN9MSLXRBU1D19AU11WqANCCjREhT1cXwNL		