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Modern Donbas image by Russian and Ukrainian media

Bachelor's Thesis

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Olomouc 2022

Abstract

The mass media have become an integral part of human life. According to social constructivism, social reality is being constantly reconstructed in process of social interaction and communication. Consequently the media image of a certain issue can not only construct the wishful reality but be a part of the internal and external policy of a state. The bachelor's thesis provides the analysis of the media image of the Ukrainian Donbas region created by Russian and Ukrainian media during the period 2010-2014. The period was chosen deliberately with the aim to search for possible roots of the war conflict that started in 2014. The thesis provides the analysis of Donbas media image and media "reality" constructed by two opposite parties during four years before the start of the war, which might a useful basis for further research.

Key words: media image, media reality, Donbas, Internet media Lenta.ru, Internet media Censor.net

Abstrakt

Masmédia se stala nedílnou součástí lidského života. Podle sociálního konstruktivismu je sociální realita nepřetržitě rekonstruována v procesu sociální interakce a komunikace. Mediální obraz konkrétního problému tedy nejenom konstruuje chtěnou realitu, ale je i součástí vnitřní a vnější politiky státu. Bakalářská práce přináší analýzu mediálního obrazu ukrajinského Donbasu vytvářeného ruskými a ukrajinskými médii v období 2010-2014. Toto období bylo vybráno záměrně s cílem zkoumání možných kořenů válečného konfliktu, který vypukl v roce 2014. Práce analyzuje mediální obraz Donbasu a mediální "realitu", kterou tvořily dvě opoziční strany konfliktu ve čtyřech letech předcházejících válce. Tato analýza může posloužit jako východisko pro další výzkumy.

Klíčová slova: mediální obraz, mediální realita, Donbas, internetové médium Lenta.ru, internetové médium Censor.net

I declare in lieu of oath that I wrote this thesis myself. All information derived from the work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

Olomouc, 2022

.....

Signature

I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Mgr. Lenka Dušková, Ph.D., my supervisor. I highly appreciate all the time, pieces of advice, sincere guidance and support I received.

I wish to thank my family for all the support, belief and patience received both during my studies and writing this thesis. I also would like to express thankfulness to all close to my heart people, who support and help me during these turbulent times.

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLMOUCI

Přírodovědecká fakulta

Akademický rok: 2020/2021

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: **Mariia SHESTAKOVA**
Osobní číslo: **R190000**
Studijní program: **B0588A330001 Mezinárodní rozvojová a environmentální studia**
Studijní obor: **Mezinárodní rozvojová a environmentální studia**
Téma práce: **Mediační obraz Donbasu v ruských a ukrajinských médiích**
Zadávací katedra: **Katedra rozvojových a environmentálních studií**

Zásady pro vypracování

The mass media have become an integral part of human life. According to social constructivism social reality is being constantly reconstructed in process of social interaction and communication. Consequently the media image of a certain issue can not only construct the wishful reality but be a part of the internal and external policy of a state. The bachelor's thesis is aimed at the analyses of Ukrainian Donbas media image where a hybrid war has been taking place since 2014.

Rozsah pracovní zprávy: **10 – 15 tisíc slov**
Rozsah grafických prací: **dle potřeby**
Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

Szostek, J. (2018) ‘Nothing Is True? The Credibility of News and Conflicting Narratives during 'Information War'” in Ukraine’. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 23(1), pp. 116–135. doi: 10.1177/1940161217743258.
WOOD, E. A., W. E. POMERANZ, E. W. MERRY a M. TRUDOLJUBOV. *Roots of Russia's war in Ukraine*. Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, [2016], xv, 147 s. ISBN 978-0-231-70453-3.
VAN HERPEN, M.H. (2015). *Putin's Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN 1442253614.
RIMPILAINEN, E. (2020) *Victims, Villains, or Geopolitical Tools? Representations of Donbas Displacement in Ukrainian and Russian Government Media* [online]. 29 Jan 2020, pp. 481-504 [cit. 2021-5-8]. Dostupné z: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2019.1672622>
NIŠIĆ, V. a D. PLAVŠIĆ (2014). *The Role of Media in the Construction of Social Reality* [online]. 2014. 4/2014. Naučno udruženje Sociološki diskurs, 9 s. [cit. 2021-5-11]. DOI: 10.7251/SOCEN1407073N. Dostupné z: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=604886>

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Lenka Dušková, PhD.**
Katedra rozvojových a environmentálních studií

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **27. dubna 2021**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **22. dubna 2022**

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Introduction

The thesis is aimed to research the media image of Ukrainian region Donbas in certain Russian and Ukrainian media before the hybrid war started in 2014. Due to the outbreak of a full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war on the 24th of February, 2022 the work can be considered as highly relevant. Mass media has been used as a tool not only for communication with population, but also as a source of certain perspectives and propaganda. It is commonly known that man-made media reality and media images can influence social and political processes in societies and to give “necessary” opinions to the masses. The main objective of the thesis is to describe the media image of and for Donbas created artificially by opinion-maker publishing houses from the perspective of two opposite parties of the conflict. The researched period was chosen purposely to analyse the media agenda several years before 2014 that might be the key bases for understanding how and in what way the region had been taken and considered by Ukraine and Russia, and what media reality had been created for their population. The practical value of the work is the description of Donbas media image itself both in selected Russian and Ukrainian media with following analysis of dynamic of the frequency of occurrence different controversial issues such as references to USSR or mention of Stepan Bandera that might be the basis for following researches. For example, the researches about media propaganda and the role of media in the preparation of the war from the Russian side or the social policy of Ukraine in Donbas from the Ukrainian perspective.

The work consists of theoretical part, where the author describes the importance of mass media and their influence on political and social processes; brief introduction to the regional context of Donbas that might give an overview and basic understanding of the specificities and characteristics of the region; and the description of the research methodology. The practical part of the work consists of the analysis and description of the results of the process of the media items coding. Moreover, possible hypothesis that might explain regularities between different artificially created media images and political processes are written together with the results of the analysis.

The structure of the work has its own logic. The work begins with the description of media influence on social and political processes and the description of Donbas region, because for the author it is important to give an overview of researched question that also enables to highlight the importance and the relevance of the research. After that the reader can find the description of the methodology and all changes that were conducted in it. And at the end the research analysis and its results are described.

As the author works with Russian and Ukrainian languages that have Cyrillic alphabet and specific rules of transliteration, it is important to clarify some controversial issues about writing the word “Donbas”. The toponym “Donbas” can be written in two different ways as “Donbas” and “Donbas”, depending from the language it is transliterated from (Ukrainian or Russian). The author emphasizes the transliteration from Ukrainian language as Ukrainian territories are mentioned, that means that mainly version “Donbas” will be written in the following text.

Mass media and their influence on social processes

This chapter is aimed to describe how media might influence social processes. It might explain why the long-term examination of man-made media “reality” that have been made for years is important for the evaluation of the following different social processes that have occurred, and their consequences. The author writes media “reality” with quotation mark deliberately for several reasons. Firstly, to emphasize that not everything that is written in media is true. Secondly, to remind that any media news is written with a certain aim by a group of people with personal opinions and the human factor can never be neglected. Thirdly, even if we consider media to be fair and objective, they can represent only a part of the surrounding world, not all opinions and events can be included.

The issue of mass media and social perspectives is widely examined by Jiráček and Köppllová (2015) in their book “Mass media”¹ and by Denis McQuail (2007) in his book “Mass Communication Theory”².

Mass media is considered to be a social institute that influence, strengthen or somehow modify social relationships. The accessibility to information by any average person in short periods of time (in case of television and the Internet almost immediately) is the reason why mass media play significant social, cultural and political role. Mass media by themselves decide what is important for their users and which information and in what way to share. (Jiráček and Köppllová, 2015) Furthermore, as media are widespread and attractive to masses, they are also a source of education that can influence and change the behavior of people and even international relations among countries. (McQuail, 2007)

Mass media have certain social functions. Among them are: information function (explains and comments on different events, helps to understand the importance and the context of issues, describes social norms), continuity function (supports cultural traditions and norms but is also opened to new ideas), entertainment function (not only a way to spend free time, but is also used for reducing social tensions), gaining function (agitation for important aims in different spheres from politics to environmental problems). Media can be considered both as an integral part of the whole society and as an organizer of everyday life of ordinary people (from personal free time or family relations to specific social interactions in different levels). (Jiráček and Köppllová, 2015) Moreover media can be a source of power due to their possible influence; environment or arena for political processes, and a source of interpretation of a social reality and social norms. (McQuail, 2007)

In the cultural sphere mass media are the main source of representation of social reality. Everyday social life itself is dramatically influenced by what is presented by mass media on a daily basis and the way it is presented. Important to mention, that media have changed significantly over past decades first of all by their amount. More types of media, more words, more pictures, more news, more information, more opinions are now available due to technological innovations and increasing welfare of usual people. (McQuail, 2007) It is obvious, that mass media have become an important party which partly creates social images, moods and opinions. Mass media can be considered as a system of shared values. Everything that they give us: images, views, opinions, knowledge, conceptions makes a unit that is often called „ideology“. This ideology is a simplified image of the society and the man-made construction of the world. The theory of social construction of reality emphasizes that human „reality“ is something that makes sense for people during their own experience with interaction with social environment and communication with others. Something that has a value for a person and that is considered to be true

¹ Original name of the book in Czech is “Masová média”.

² The book was read in Czech translation “Úvod do teorie masové komunikace”

for him/her. That means that person's „reality“ is a mix of social values, information, communication with others, stories, beliefs, his/her own experience, language used. That is why media are so important in constructing the „reality“ of every person as they are a source of information, opinions and values. Important to mention, that during creating „social reality“ media are getting legitimized and accepted by all social institutions. That is why something that is taken as normal, widely accepted or not accepted at all in media is taken for the same in the cultural environment in the society. The media picture becomes even more trustworthy for ordinary people. (Jirák and Köpplová, 2015) Similar ideas can be found in the book „Úvod do teorie masové komunikace“, where the author Denis McQuail (2007) writes that all the information gained from media might be the only one people receive. That is the reason why media often have impact on how people understand their history, connect past with present, and find their place in a system of social relations. Media are a „map“ that enables people to understand who they are (their identity), where they are, what was their past and what future and why they should expect. Media can be also considered as a mediator in a process of definition and description of social reality (both for the known and unknown one). That is the way how people usually receive information about different cultures, social groups and countries. It is obvious, that this gained picture comes with pre-defined opinions about the unknown reality that are constructed artificially with certain aims. To sum up all above mentioned, media construct a cultural environment for millions of people and the problem that they can be used to influence masses cannot be neglected.

Media can play ambiguous role in social life. Journalism (in democratic societies) is considered to be a social institute that provides a space for freedom of speech. Journalism itself is a significant indicator of the level of political democracy in different countries. Mass media are usually taken for the same as they are a communicating intermediary between journalism as a social institute and masses that receive information. On the other hand, journalism itself, same as mass media, more and more often becomes an objective of deliberate strategic influence by advertisement companies, politicians, lobbyist groups that would like to have impact on a public opinion. Moreover journalism itself is a base of media policy of any country. The way it supports the government influences ideas, opinions and international relations. Nowadays in capitalistic societies media are mostly used as an intermediary in different market relationships in a social context that is value for masses. (Jirák and Köpplová, 2015)

Other important issue that cannot be neglected is the ownership of mass media. There are two main types of ownership: private media organisations and state media. Private media are usually oriented towards making profit. State media are more focused on non-economic interests such as supporting the cohesiveness of the whole society or explaining the state positions in system of international relations etc. The belief that any of these two are influenced by their owners and at least partly portray their attitudes and interests in political, social or economic sphere is widespread among scientists and ordinary people. (Jirák and Köpplová, 2015) Interesting fact that is not widely mentioned: state media exist only in poor and/or autocratic or somehow non-democratic state regimes. In Europe state media own only Belarus and partly Russia. All over the world only several African, Asian and Middle East countries have state media. Among them are Ethiopia, China, Iran, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Myanmar. According to Cpress in 2019, democratic regimes cannot afford themselves to have any kind of state media due to high risks of influence peddling. State media can be easily used for manipulation by understatement data and information, that leads to retardation of democratic processes in any society. The quality of media products are rapidly declines as media do not have rivals, but wide support from the government instead. (Berger et al., 2019) Democratic societies, though, are more opened to minimalistic media control or regulation due to orientation on individual consumerism and economical liberalism that result in a higher welfare of society. (McQuail, 2007)

Media in a private ownership also have problematic issues. The necessary and wanted image of any situation, person or issue is broadcasted to an enormous amount of people, who often do believe in what is shared. The question is to what extent there is a risk that media will not be able or willing to be a „social institution of the freedom of speech“ in case this freedom is against the interest of the media owners. This risk is even bigger in the sphere of journalism especially creating and broadcasting news. (Jirák and Köpplová, 2015) Media owners' interests are almost always somehow reflected in media agenda and media content. If media owners have any political preferences or opinions, the media will support them. If main objective of owning the media for a person is making money, the media will be mainly oriented only on profit. (Berger et al., 2019)

The media impact on society cannot be estimated precisely. Media have become so strongly connected to all other social institutes, that it is impossible to detach them in scientific researches. There is no clear border whether any social, political or economic consequences have occurred due to influence of any social institute, media, both or other factors. Similarly as society cannot be isolated from media (firstly as an information source), media cannot be isolated (even during researches) from society. Generally people believe that mass media have certain impact both on themselves and on the whole society. It is believed that media can influence people's behaviour, educate, broaden the horizons of knowledge, help in making political or economic decisions, influence people's lifestyle and as a consequence their health. Media can also scare, make man-made tension, mislead, threaten the stability of society, persuade and manipulate, encourage or inhibit social development. (Jirák and Köpplová, 2015)

Moreover, it is always difficult to predict how any text of an article or broadcasted news will be interpreted by the media user. To know precisely, what the author wanted to say by writing the media text, there is a need to contact him/her and ask personally (however not everyone can usually give a clear answer). The reader's decoding of textual signs depends on social conditions and social realities. So it is never possible to say for sure what the consequences from the man-made media „reality“ and news connected to it might be. The question if media images could provoke any reaction in society with following social or political changes cannot be answered unequivocally; as decoding of information can be completely different based on a personal factor. (Jirák and Köpplová, 2015) Denis McQuail (2007) in the book „Mass Communication Theory“ questions an interesting statement if mass media are the reason or the consequence of social changes. This question can be answered differently according to various theories that support different opinions.

For this reason this bachelor thesis is not primarily aimed to prove or explain how Donbas inhabitants may understand news connected to their region; or to insist on the only explanation what impact mass media have had on following social and political processes; but to explore what man-made image had been proposed for decoding (understanding on a personal level) for people and had been made during the several years before the war conflict began.

Brief introduction to the context of Donbas region

The following chapter will describe the historical region Donbas from political, social, economic and historical points of view. This chapter is included as an important stage to a better understanding of regional peculiarities and mentality of Donbas inhabitants. With this general view of the regional context, the reader might better understand why different topics occurred in mass-media in different timeline. Despite Donbas is a general name for historical region that does not have certain borders and according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2020) is a “*large mining and industrial region of southeastern Europe, notable for its large coal reserves. The coalfield lies in southeastern Ukraine and in the adjoining region of southwestern Russia. The principal exploited area of the field covers nearly 9,000 square miles (23,300 square km) south of the Donets River, but coal deposits also extend westward to the Dnieper River in the greater Donets Basin*”; the author will describe only Ukrainian part of Donbas, mainly Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts (*Ukrainian oblast (область) means region*).

To make this chapter more structured it will be divided into 3 parts:

1. The brief history of Donbas region
2. Economical orientations of the region.
3. Social features of the region.

The brief history will help to trace who owned these territories in different historical periods, that will explain the subsequent economic and social policies applied to the Donbas and the nature of its development. With an understanding of the economical orientation and social context of the region covered by the media, it will be easier for the reader to understand the cause-effect relationships of why the media write about Donbas in a particular way. Moreover, it might be clearer why certain topics have been covered in media, and for which contingent of the population media items are targeted (from people’s living standards and lifestyle to their mentality).

The brief history of Donbas region

Historically the land where Donbas is partly situated was called Dyke Pole (Wild Land³) and was almost completely uninhabited as a result of a long-term confrontation between states *Rzecz Pospolita (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth)*, *Moscovia (Tsardom of Russia)* and the Crimean Khanate. First settlers are considered to arrive from ethnical Ukrainian lands in the XVI century. Ethnical Ukrainians were escaping from slavery to uninhabited land that was dangerous due to military raids from different sides. During the XVII century the colonization of Dyke Pole was happening faster as it was being colonized by Zaporozhian Cossacks, warriors who were able to withstand a military onslaught. In the middle of the XVII century, as Moscovian borders were expanded, southwards merchants and artisans joined the colonisation. Afterwards the process of urbanization on Dyke Pole began. Ethno-national composition of people in the area changed in the middle of XVIII century. Russian Empire invited foreigners to live in the region, giving them free land to improve the economic situation of the region. Consequently, Serbs, Moldovans, Wallachians, Slovenes, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, Macedonians moved to Dyke Pole. The national composition of Dyke Pole was firstly defined in 1779: Ukrainians (64,76%), Moldavians (11,3%), Russians (9,85%), Greeks (6,31%), Armenians (4,76%), Georgians (0,45%), others (2,57%). Although Ukrainians were the biggest national group in the region, their social positions were the weakest. Russians were mainly on the highest positions in the military sphere and in the region government; foreign colonists were under law protection and Ukrainians nor were not protected neither had any

³ Other possible translations are the Badlands and the Wild Fields.

chances to make a career on higher positions. Interesting fact that foreign colonists purposefully lived in closed communities that prevent them from assimilation with other nationalities. In the 1783 the Crimea peninsula was added as a new territory of Russian Empire. Several years before in 1775, the Zaporozhian Sich (military state of Ukrainian Cossacks) was destroyed by Catherine the Great to eliminate political confrontation. Consequently, no more military Cossacks settlements were in the region of Dyke Pole. Furthermore, as there were no more threats of military raids from Crimea, the geopolitical meaning of the region Dyke Pole changed. It was no more dangerous border zone, but economically depressed and sparsely populated region. (Demyanchuk, 2015)

The following development of the region was mainly based on a coal mining and industry. Due to big amounts of salt lakes in the region, treatment and therapeutic centers were opened. In sea town Mariupol (completely destroyed by Russians during the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022 - *author*) the custom and the port were opened in 1800 and 1809 that economically empower the Donbas region. Around new mines and factories new villages and towns occurred. The more financially successful was a mine/fabric, the bigger town was around. More and more people come to Donbas in search of working place and better life. After the elimination of privileges for foreign colonisers in the end of XIX century, national groups were affected by assimilation processes. Gradually, urban environment in towns and bigger cities began to be Russian-oriented culturally. Ukrainians also as Belarusians were not considered as another ethnic group, but the branch line of "great Russian" ethnos. Higher salaries and protection of human rights during the work were attractive to people all over the Russian Empire to move to Donbas region. That is the reason why Donbas was one the most industrial regions in Ukraine at the beginning of XX century. (Demyanchuk, 2015)

Following 20 years passed, and the Soviet era began. Main problem that Soviet government had been solving for its first decade of existence was illiteracy of population. Ukrainian lands were second most literacy in Russian Empire, even though the policy of Liknep (Ukr. Likvidaciya nepysemnosti that means "elimination of illiteracy") has been implemented. Lenin emphasized that for better life, there is a need in greater manufacturing. And greater manufacturing can be only done with literacy population. In virtue of the policy of Liknep almost in 1923rd 45,4% of men and 34% of women were considered to be literate. Interestingly, that same time the mobilization of the working class all around the USSR to Donbas has been held. During 1924-1925 more than 172 thousand people among whom were miners, construction workers, handymen moved to Donbas. During following 1925-1926 the migration wave was even higher – approximately 315 thousand people. Even though the ethnic structure was diverse, most of migrants came from Russia and Belarus. (Barabash, 2013) That might be the reason why the region has been Russian-spoken for decades since that period and why a significant part of Donbas population have been against any type of Ukrainization – something that has been completely foreign for non-indigenous people⁴. Generally, Donbas was one of the most industrialised regions in the whole USSR, and consequently, one of the richest and most developed in Ukraine; that will have a certain impact on people's mentality (more detailed in social aspects). In 1991 Donbas became a region under independent Ukraine, and despite some pro-Russian movements ("Hromadianskyi kongres Ukrayiny" (HKU)⁵ and "Interruh Donbasu" (IRD)⁶) and agitation, the situation was peaceful. During 1990-1998 when state property has been sold and privatised, the oligarchic clans in the region occurred. The Donbas elite inherited influence from communist times when the region was one the most economically important area for Moscow. Additionally, mainly all oligarchs have been in power as politicians in a

⁴ Based on the author's own opinion.

⁵ In Ukrainian "Громадянський конгрес України" (ГКУ)

⁶ In Ukrainian "Інтеррух Донбасу (ІРД)"

regional level within the Communist Party. So, since 90s they have had not only power to influence, but a high amount of strategically important privatised state property. As members from the Communist party, who have had close ties both political and economic with Russian politicians, it is not difficult to understand pro-Russian “moods” in the region. During following 22 years (1991-2013) Donbas elites would establish pro-Russian political parties and influence the locals with strong propaganda, mainly made and distributed by media (newspapers, radio and then TV). Consequently, there would be a tension between Kyiv and Donetsk, that would like to be the centre of the country; and three attempts to implement region separation procedures (1993-1994, 2004, 2014) highly supported by Donbas oligarchs as a method of blackmailing the Kiev authorities. (Kazanskyy and Vorotyntseva, 2021). Since 2014 the region was partly occupied by Russians, even though long time they have been denying their presence in the region and have covered the occupation as a civil war between nationalists and patriotic residents of Donbas. (Cheberiak, 2018) However, after the full-scale invasion of Russia and all-out war in Ukraine in 2022, no scientific rebuttal is needed to disprove Russian propaganda.

Economical orientations of the region

Most of Ukrainians, who were not born on Donbas and have not lived there for any period of time, the region has been always seemed as “terra incognita” with a strong stereotype as an industrial area. (Osipian, 2006). The structure of the industry in Donetsk oblast’ (region) consisted of:

- Electricity (Vuhlehirska power station, Starobeshevsk power station, Slaviansk power station, Kurakhove Power Station, Zuivska power station)
- Fuel industry (mainly the coal industry and gas pipelines)
- Coal industry (248 mines functioned in USSR and 122 mines have functioned in Independent Ukraine)
- Mining and quarrying (Nikitov Mercury Combine, Donetsk Chemical and Metallurgical Plant Ilyich Iron and Steel Works, Dokuchaevskiy Fluxing Mill⁷ and many others)
- Coke and Chemical Industry (Avdiivka Coke and Chemical Plant, Azovstal iron and steel works, Donetskkoks and many others)
- Iron and steel industry (Illich Iron & Steel Works, Donetsk Metallurgical Plant, Yenakiyev Iron and Steel Works and many others)
- Non-ferrous metal industry
- Chemical industry
- Machine building and metal processing (Novokramatorsky Mashynobudivny Zavod, Azovmash Mariupol, Azov Shipyard and others)
- Metalworking industry
- Building Materials Industry
- Glass industry
- Porcelain and faience industry
- Wood and paper industry
- Light Industry
- Food industry (Wikipedia, 2022b)

The agriculture in Soviet times had the following structure: 277 collective farms, 149 state farms, 16 poultry farms (1985). There were 2,040 thousand hectares of agricultural land in the oblast. The area of irrigated lands was 207.3 thousand hectares, drainage - 4.3 thousand hectares. Small-scale irrigation

⁷ The names are translated by the author.

systems on local water sources prevail. In 1985 there were 1 529 thousand hectares of cultivated land. Among agricultural commodities there have been cereals (winter wheat, spring barley, maize), technical crops (sunflower, soya, forage). (Wikipedia, 2022b)

Social features of the region

Donbas inhabitants have had a specific mentality that has been based both on historical development of the region and “industrial” lifestyle. According to Pakhomenko (2015) the components of the Donbas inhabitants’ mentality are:

- “Ukrainian-Russian biculturalism (double identification);
- Russian language;
- the industrial type of culture and “Heavy industry” values since 1930s of XX century;
- criminal and authoritarian mentality type were the factors of the adaptation in this region for the refugees from the whole Russian Empire;
- criminal and semi-criminal psychology;
- sincere worship of the Soviet past and its symbols as well as its complimentary to the Russian state;
- high degree of loyalty towards the local elite and their homeland”.

Historically, due to the beginning of the industrialization process since 19th century through the USSR, where the industry was considered to be the most important field of social and economic development, Donbas people have been instilled with a sense of superiority and importance for almost two centuries. Donbas contributed to the state budget formed in Kyiv more than it received back in a context of financial transfers, social policy and payments, that worsened the attitude to the capital. The negative attitude to Kyiv was also supported by Donbas elite, who would like to have more influence and power on a national level. (Osipian, 2006) Same view was supported by Kazanskyy and Vorotyntseva in their book “How Ukraine has been losing Donbas”⁸ (2021).

Being an industrial region, Donbas locals negatively perceived the rest of Ukraine as an underdeveloped rural area. According to this view, such cities as Odessa, Charkiv, Kyiv due to their urban developed environment could not be considered as Ukraine. (Osipian, 2006) Interestingly, that the core emphasize in the regional history was always made on industrialization processes since 19th century that caused in the wide-spread idea among local people, that Donbas joined Ukraine in 1918 willingly. The fact of the presence of Ukrainian Cossacks settlements at least since 17th century has been always ignored. (Zablotski, 2004; cited by Osipian, 2006). So, according to Osipian (2006) “Donbas positions itself not only as a separate part of Ukraine, but also as equal to it”. Paradoxically, same time (period since 2000) the situation with Ukrainian mines (the proud of the region) was difficult enough. For Kyiv it was much cheaper to buy Polish or Russian coal than Donbas one. However, to prevent social and political conflicts the government was forced to subsidize regional mines. Theoretically, if Donbas would be joined to Russia, Russia would close mostly all mines as illiquid, and because of its own high coal reserves. Consequently, the high level of unemployment and social tense would be in the region. (Osipian, 2006) This is a great contrast to the political ambitions of the region and sense of self-importance.

The region has been always under the Moscow influence, also in a cultural sphere: Russian TV shows, newspapers, books. (Osipian, 2006) Important to mention, that due to the fact the territory is a border

⁸ The name of the book from Ukrainian original «Як Україна втрачала Донбас» was translated by the author of the bachelor thesis, more about the book on <https://lostDonbas.com.ua>

area, locals have had close kinship with people from the Russian part of Donbas and from other parts of Russia that supports the feeling of Ukrainian-Russian biethnicity. (Kazansky and Vorotyntseva, 2021)

Methodology

In this chapter the methodology of the research will be described. Before the description itself, the author would like to thank Barbora Říhová whose master thesis “The media image of Austria in Události of Česká televize (Czech television) in 2001-2010”⁹ inspired and encouraged the author a lot during her search for the most suitable research method.

In line with the aim of this bachelor thesis, i.e. to analyse the media image of Donbas region created during the 2010-2013 in Russian and Ukrainian media, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1) *How often did Russian and Ukrainian media write about the Donbas region during the set period of time?*
- 2) *What topics related to Donbas were covered in Russian and Ukrainian media?*
- 3) *Has certain thematic agenda of Russian and/or Ukrainian media changed over the years?*
- 4) *What amount of information about Donbas occurred in mass media?*
- 5) *In what way are the prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) used by the media?*

The last Research Question may need further explanation.

In Russian language several prepositions can be used to answer the question “where?”: “в” (v) and “на” (na). The Russian preposition “в” is translated as “in”, preposition “на” is translated as “on”. The usage of these prepositions is more complex and difficult with geographical names. The general rule says that with names of countries and regions without a common noun the preposition “в” (v) is always used. As an example, Vladimirskii gives “в Донбассе” (in Donbas). An exception to the rule is “на Украине” (on Ukraine). However, other explanation of usage of these prepositions exists. When a person answers the question “where?” and describes a territory with clear and precise borders (as countries have) the preposition “в” (in) is used. When the person answers the question “where?” and describes a historical territory as a region the preposition “на” (on) is used. And that is the reason why the usage of prepositions in this case is so important. Traditionally in Russian language the form “на Украине” (on Ukraine) is used. By the Russians Ukraine has always been considered to be a region without clear borders under the Russian Empire. During the Soviet Union the same preposition was used with the word Ukraine, however with the whole name of the country The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic the correct preposition “in” was used (*в Украинской Советской Социалистической Республике*). According to this logic, after 1991 the only correct preposition with toponym Ukraine is “в” (in) because we describe a sovereign country with clear state borders. Deliberately using the wrong preposition “на Украине” (on Ukraine) signalizes that this country is not being considered to be independent by the speaker. An interesting fact is that during different historical periods of independent Ukraine both prepositions “в” (in Ukraine) and “на” (on Ukraine) were used depending on the political relationships between Russia and Ukraine. In 90s when Ukraine was close enough to Russia in different spheres, mainly the preposition “в” (in Ukraine) was used. However, after the Orange Revolution in 2004 Russian media began to use the collocation “на Украине” (on Ukraine) to emphasize non-independence of the pro-Western Ukrainian government. In 2010 the following presidential elections were held in Ukraine and they were won by pro-Russian politician Yanukovich. The research question will help to analyse whether Russian media agenda has changed due to pro-Russian governmental policy even on an almost invisible language level. The same can be said about the toponym “Donbas”. Donbas is a historical

⁹ Title of the master thesis was translated to English by Barbora Říhová.

region without clear borders, according to the logic of the rule the collocation “на Донбассе” (on Donbas) is correct and this is the only variant used by Russian speaking Ukrainians. (Zubov, 2000) However, as mentioned above, Владимирский gives the example “в Донбассе” (in Donbas). The author suggests that the research of prepositions used with this toponym might explain how Russia has regarded this region: as an integral part of the neighbourhood state (using “на Донбассе” (on Donbas)) or as an independent region with certain borders within Ukraine “в Донбассе” (in Donbas). As the period 2010-2013 will be analysed, the conclusion about media agenda several years before the war conflict began could be done.

Due to the long period of time chosen to be analysed and the high amount of media items, the content analysis was chosen as the most suitable research method to analyse a big data set and answer all the researched questions. Additionally, inspired by the seminar by Prof. dr hab. Krzysztof T. Konecki held on 01.04.2022 for Palacký University (Olomouc, Czech Republic), the author decided to add some autoethnography elements in the research. Autoethnography is a researched method focused mainly on personal experience as a core for understanding the way of perception of different questions and issues. A method, that bases on a self-reflection that enables to understand personal beliefs in the context of different reactions to external events. (Bochner and Ellis, 2006; cited by Adams, Ellis and Holman Jones, 2017)

According to Morgan, content analysis was mainly used as a quantitative research method for analysing big text data sets by coding the information into explicit categories and then analyse them with statistical operations. However, nowadays more and more scientists consider content analyses to be both a quantitative and qualitative research method (Hsieh Hsiu-Fang and Sarah E. Shannon, 2005). Even though content analysis uses statistical operations, it is mainly used to describe complex reality that cannot be only categorised and split into groups, but rather needs further explanation. It is the same case with the content analysis used in this bachelor thesis. It is obvious that to reach the aim to describe the man-made media image of Donbas in certain mass media it is not enough just to say in what news topics the mention of this region occurred. This is one more reason why the author includes other research questions and would like to compare different mass media sources.

According to R. Sedláková (2014) in the preparation phase of content analysis the author should make a clear vision of what to analyse and how to do it. Four main questions may lead to a correct and clear strategy of content analysis. The author should answer 1) what media sources will be analysed; 2) what kind of media content will be analysed; 3) during what period of time certain kind of content will be analysed and 4) what media content units will be used.

What media sources will be analysed?

To make the choice of mass media more logical and structured, several criteria were implemented. The author would like to analyse one Ukrainian and one Russian mass media that:

- a) have been opinion-makers, both during the analysed period 2010-2013 and nowadays;
- b) have been one of the most frequently used media;
- c) might support the state policy
- d) have a “search” on their websites and it is possible to search news from 2010-2013.

Opinion-maker mass media is a media source that influences the opinions of its users (readers) and in the same time is one of the most followed and popular media according to the statistics. The most followed also means the most used. Following the other criteria “mass media might support the state

policy”, the author initially wanted to analyse state media due to the logical assumption that state media might follow and support the state policy. According to Schulz et al. (2004) state-owned media may be prone to one-sidedness or even propaganda corresponding to the political interest of the government.

However, the problem is that there is no popular¹⁰ Ukrainian state media that would be an opinion-maker. The absence of popular state media in Ukraine can be explained by the law about denationalization of mass media that was introduced by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine in 2006 and has been modified for years (Prysyazhna, 2008). The main objective of denationalization of mass media was to save budget money. By implementing this law the state also supposed the development of democratic processes in the society without state propaganda in media. Despite the author’s initial willingness to compare state mass media of both countries, the comparison of mass media from the same “category” might be more objective. Due to the absence of opinion-maker state media in Ukraine, private one will be analysed. Similarly Russian private opinion-maker media will be chosen for the analysis. According to Schulz et al. (2004) when the media are organised as a private enterprise, their economic considerations and public role can be pitted against each other. Dramatization and sensationalism, personalisation, oversimplification and incoherence might occur in media in order to make bigger economic profit from selling news. Furthermore, it is widely known that after the denationalization of mass media in Ukraine almost all of them were sold to oligarchs or politicians who obviously have their own political interests. Among the owners of the most popular Ukrainian media are oligarchs Igor Kolomoyskyi, Viktor Pinchuk, Rinat Akhmetov, politicians Andriy Sadovyi, Viktor Medvedchuk and others. The Insider (2020) claims that according to research made by USAID-Internews in 2019 media sources that are owned by aforementioned people are the most used ones and reach 95% of the whole audience in Ukraine. The situation was similar in the researched period 2010-2013: people mainly used only several mass media that belonged to oligarchs or politicians.

The last criteria for choosing the media for the research is that the media have a “search” on its website and news from 2010-2013 could be searched. The author will analyse only the news and articles available on the Internet on media websites. The “search” will help to find the necessary information more easily. The key word for the search on websites will be “Донбасс” (Donbas). One of the limits of the work is that the description of media image based only on one key word cannot be completely objective. However, the author expects more than a thousand press releases to be coded even with the only one key word for the search.

Following all the mentioned criteria, Ukrainian media Obozrevatel and Russian Gazeta.Ru were chosen to be analysed.

Ukrainian Obozrevatel (as it describes itself¹¹) is an online publishing house established in 2001. Since then, the site has regularly ranked at the top of the Ukrainian online media daily traffic rankings. Today Obozrevatel has the biggest coverage of Ukrainian audience. According to Google Analytics data, Obozrevatel is visited by over 2 million unique users per day and over 26 million users per month. (Wikipedia, 2021b) The owner of Obozrevatel is Mykhailo Brodskyy, Ukrainian entrepreneur and politician during 1998-2014. (Wikipedia, 2021)¹² The website has a search by key words and date. It is

¹⁰ By the word “popular” the author means media that are generally well-known in society among the whole country and massively used by readers.

¹¹ <https://www.obozrevatel.com/story/about-company-ua/>

¹² In the chapter several articles from the Wikipedia can be found. Neither specific information about publishing houses, nor the biography of Mykhailo Brodskyy can be found in other sources. Consequently, Wikipedia was the

difficult to say whether the publishing house might have supported the state policy during 2010-2013. On the one hand Obozrevatel has been considered to be an independent mass media. On the other hand, its owner was a politician who was working in the government during the mentioned period. Even though Obozrevatel has a bilingual website and the option to read news both in Ukrainian and Russian, the author will use the Russian language version to be able to answer the sixth research question “*Is the misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) used by media?*” as the grammar rule is taken from the Russian language.

Russian Gazeta.Ru (as it describes itself¹³) is one of the online publishing houses which belong to Rambler&Co - the biggest media holding organization in Russia. The publishing house was set in 1999 and has covered social and political topics in Russia and around the world ever since. The average monthly reach of the audience is about 40 million people. The media holding Rambler&Co consists of such online publishing houses as Lenta.ru, Gazeta.Ru, Rambler portal, Championat, Secret Firmy, WMJ.ru, Motor.ru, LiveJournal and others. (Gazeta.Ru, ©1999-2022) Gazeta.Ru has had a state license since 10.11.2016. The owners of Rambler&Co have changed over the time, e.g., Russian billionaire lawyer Alexander Mamut, Russian politician Vladimir Potanin and “Russian majority state-owned banking and financial services company” Sberbank have been among them. (Wikipedia, 2022c)

What kind of media content will be analysed?

The main aim of the bachelor thesis is to analyse what media image of the Donbas region was created by the chosen Russian and Ukrainian mass media. How did Russian and Ukrainian media write about this region? Despite the fact that media image is created in different ways by using different kinds of material (text, photo, video); the main unit of content analysis in this work will be press releases.

During what period of time certain kind of content will be analysed?

The press releases during the period of 2010-2013 will be analysed. This time period was chosen for several reasons:

- important socio-political events that happened in this timeline (presidential election in Ukraine 2010, UEFA Euro 2012, Euromaidan 2013) which were important for the region development;
- the author originally intended to analyse the media propaganda used by different parties of the war conflict beginning from 2014. However, the key element for this analysis, as well as fundamental understanding of conflict roots, might be an overview of media agenda that was created several years before the war began. Had Russian and Ukrainian media written press releases about this region? How often? What topics were covered? etc. The understanding of Donbas media image and man-made media “reality” might open the debate for other researches on the following topic: Were the mass media used by any of the parties as a propaganda tool in order to prepare the conflict?

What media content units will be used?

The unit of analysis will be the written text of one piece of news or press release that will be analysed by different criteria. (pp. 25-26)

only source to provide necessary information as, for example, publishing houses on their web sites in a section “about us” usually do not mention owners or other political or/and economical background of the media.

¹³ <https://www.gazeta.ru/about/>

The next step aims to describe the design of a coded character set created according to the research questions. The first research question *“How often have Russian and Ukrainian media written about the Donbas region during this period of time?”* will be answered using the sum of all analysed news articles. The date will be written down to see the frequency of how often was the Donbas region mentioned in media, and also whether the frequency was influenced by season or important socio-political events etc. For this reason the month will be evidenced in the coded character set as well. To answer the second research question *“What topics related to Donbas have been covered in Russian and Ukrainian media?”* the author will divide analysed articles by pre-defined topics. Initial pre-defined topics are politics, economy, natural resources (gas, coal etc.), traffic collision, culture, language, sport, religion, history of the region, other national minorities. The reason for such topics as “politics”, “economy”, “traffic collision”, “culture”, “sport” to be included, is that the author considers them to be the most common in any publishing houses for daily press releases. The topic “natural resources” is included because Donbas has been an industrial area rich for these. Topics “language” and “religion” are included due to the events that happened during the war invasion. The author is interested to see whether topics that have been so important for nowadays history had been covered several years before the war conflict. To understand whether contemporary problems and conflict aspects have older "invisible" roots or not. Russia has been accusing the Ukrainian government for infringement of the rights of Russian speakers from the beginning of the war, but had the language issue ever occurred before 2014 in mass media? Religion issue such as the separation of Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Moscow Patriarchate was one of the key political aims of pro-Western Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko by getting Tomos in 2017. (Demianenko, 2020) The author does not expect the topic religion to occur, but it would be interesting to note whether it somehow appeared in mass media during the period 2010-2013. According to Grechko (2012) Donbas has been a multinational region during the whole its history, that is the reason for the topic “other national minorities” to be included in the coded character set. Same reason was applied to the topic “history of the region”. According to Kazanskyy and Vorotyntseva (2021) historical differences in the region developing has been a key for different political speculative narratives during last few decades. Due to this fact the author decided to research, whether this topic has ever occurred in media, and in case if yes in what other contexts.

Despite the pre-defined topics, the coding will be also a combination of deductive and inductive coding; that means that possible categories might be changed during the process. Some new categories may occur, or non-relevant ones might be deleted (emergence of the terms from the data). The bachelor thesis will not be able to answer whether mass media could have been partly used for beginning the war conflict or for supporting one of the parties, however the thesis is aimed to provide analysis that might be used for other researches to answer these questions.

The following research questions *“What amount of information about Donbas occurred in mass media?”* will be answered by counting the number of articles and pieces of news as well as the number of words in them. According to the number of words the articles will be described as short, average, long, etc. Short press releases (articles) will be counted if they have 101-500 words. Average press releases (articles) will be counted if they have 501-1000 words and long ones if they have 1501- and more words. The last research question *“In what way are the prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) used by the media?”* on the examples of “на Украине” (on Ukraine) and “в Донбассе” (in Donbas) will be answered yes or no. The coding will be done manually by reading each press release and putting data in Excel sheets. The following pre-defined coded character set will be used in Excel (table 1):

Table 1: Pre-defined coded character set for the research of media items

Units name	Value variations	Meaning	Code	Comment
Research question 1: How often have Russian and Ukrainian media written about the Donbas region during this period of time?				
Month	1	January	Code "1" will be used for the relevant month. Code "0" will be used for others	If the press release was from January, "1" will be put under this code unit. March, April, May and others will be coded as "0"
	2	February		
	3	March		
	4	April		
	5	May		
	6	June		
	7	July		
	8	August		
	9	September		
	10	October		
	11	November		
	12	December		
Research question 4: What amount of relative information in mass media occurred?				
Number of words	101-500	Short press releases	Code "1" will be used for the relevant category. Code "0" will be used for others	Criteria about the length were set after reading internet articles about the optimal length both in Russian and English languages (due to the different language structures). The number of words in press releases was counted automatically with the help of Microsoft Word.
	501-1500	Average press releases		
	1501 and more	Long press releases		
Research question 2: What topics connected to Donbas have been covered in Russian and Ukrainian media?				
Main topic	politics		Code "1" will be used for the relevant category. Code "0" will be used for others	
	economy			
	natural resources (gas, coal etc.)			
	traffic collision			
	culture			
	language			
	sport			
	religion			
	history of the region			
	other national minorities			
Research question 5: Is the misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) used by media?				
Misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на)	using "на Украине" (on Ukraine)		Code "1" for "yes". Code "0" for "no".	If the misuse of preposition occurs, then "1" as "yes, occurs" is coded in the relevant case
	using "в Донбассе" (in Donbas)			

Source: author (2022)

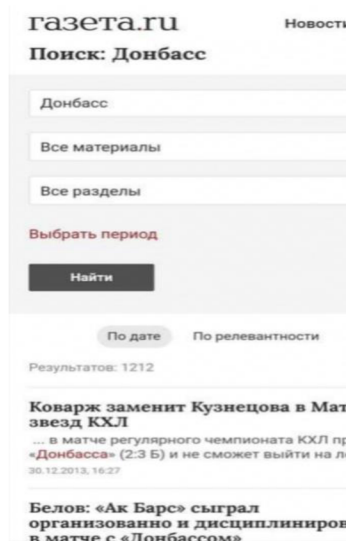
The process of coding

The above mentioned coding system was designed to be partly deductive with pre-defined topics based on general knowledge and own experience of the author, and inductive with any necessary changes in the coding system due to the data content. That means that it was not necessary for the author to anticipate all possible issues that could have occurred in media, because the author could make changes in the coding system during the process of coding. To make the coding system suitable enough for answering the research questions, it was tested before the main coding. The testing was done at the beginning of February; the press releases with the key word Donbas in search for the year 2010 in Obozrevatel publishing house were coded. During the testing of the system the author found out issues that were not correct and suitable enough, and as the result the coding system was changed before the main coding process. The author was writing down notes during the testing coding (what to change, how, interesting points and new ideas). After the first testing coding from February 2022, the author proposed the following:

- 1) To add a “secondary topic” after the main one – articles often cover more than one issue;
- 2) To define categories of topics more precisely;
- 3) To add additional categories of topics: criminality, technology, social topics (healthcare, education, children etc.), mines (the region has been rich on mines; they are an important part of the regional life both economically and socially);
- 4) To note the reference to nationalists;
- 5) To note the reference to Stepan Bandera;
- 6) To note the reference to language issue;
- 7) To define whether the press release is a piece of news/ article/blog/ interview;
- 8) To write down selected pieces of news which for some reason were not added to the set, explain the reason;
- 9) To add the column whether Donbas was mentioned in the context of Kyiv;
- 10) To note whether the author of the article was named.

The points 4), 5), 6) and 10) might need more detailed explanation. Before choosing the Internet publishing houses for the analysis, the author checked whether they fulfill the aforementioned criteria. Both Obozrevatel and Gazeta.Ru had a search on their websites, both had necessary articles. While Obozrevatel listed approximately 150 articles with the key word Donbas during the period 2010-2013, Russian Gazeta.Ru listed more than 1200 press releases during the same period (pic.1).

Picture 1: *The print screen of the search on the website of Gazeta.Ru made on 22nd of January, 2022*



Source: Simona Ševelová (2022)¹⁴

The author read some articles and most of the titles of press releases from both publishing houses and noticed that there were references to nationalists in Ukraine and to Stepan Bandera. The author considered this fact to be unexpected, interesting and important, therefore she decided to add it in the coding system. Stepan Bandera is one of the most discussed and controversial personalities in the Ukrainian history. The aim of this bachelor thesis is not to give the author's opinion about this man or to write down his biography. However, for an overview it is important to mention that Stepan Bandera was a leader of The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists that fought against the Soviet Union before and after the Second World War for the independence of the Ukrainian state. Nowadays Stepan Bandera is considered to be a national hero for many Ukrainians because of his fight for Ukrainian independence; while for Russians he is mainly a symbol of Ukrainian nationalism and anti-Russian policy. During a long historical period any manifestation of Ukrainian patriotism was described as nationalism, people who spoke patriotically about the Ukrainian language, history, culture were called nationalists or banderovtси (named after Stepan Bandera). (Temirov, 2019) Russian media have been creating mysterious and terrifying images about banderovtси for decades (state policy against anti-Russian claims and attitudes), that is why the author could not omit this issue. (Cheberiak, 2018) The language issue is another interesting geopolitical tool which has been used by Russians in Ukraine a lot. Almost all Ukrainians are bilingual. That means that they at least passively understand and/or speak both Ukrainian and Russian. (Azarova and Horchynska, 2017) In 2014 when Russia occupied Crimea and invaded the Donbas region, Russians justified it as a protection of Russian-speaking population that had been disenfranchised due to the language they speak¹⁵. For this reason it is important to analyse whether the language issue has ever occurred in media before the invasion in 2014. In case it has, the following question may be possibly asked: Did the Russians prepare the ground for the war invasion many years before 2014 by writing articles about the language issue? It is also interesting to consider the issue from the opposite side and

¹⁴ the print screen was made by Simona Ševelová at the request of the author of the bachelor thesis, due to the fact that the author was in Ukraine that day, where this website has been blocked

¹⁵ In Russian media there have been two controversial narratives: they are protecting protect Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the region, however same time denied any of their presence on Donbas. The source of information is authors personal experience and insight view as Ukrainian, who has lived and followed the situation for years. The thesis cannot be supported by literature, as Russian scientists look at the annexation only from the DNR and LNR points of view. Media items with language narratives from 2014 at the moment (May 2022) cannot be found.

see whether Ukrainian media somehow reflected that issue or this issue was not relevant at all. The last analysed issue “To add the column whether Donbas was mentioned in the context of Kyiv” might also need further explanation. This question was inspired by reading the book “How Ukraine has been losing Donbas”¹⁶, which describes the long-term confrontation between the two biggest Ukrainian cities: Kyiv and Donetsk.

These changes were made before the main coding process which became exceedingly complicated because of the Russian invasion on the 24th of February 2022 and the following Russian-Ukrainian war. As a Ukrainian, the author experienced the events deeply, trying to get over mental pain and difficult times. For that reason the research was stopped for a while. On the 8th of March 2022, due to the rumours that Russia might shut down its Internet from the outside world and switch to another system; the author of the bachelor thesis decided to code Russian Gazeta.ru as quickly as possible in order to collect data before the total blockage. The same day the author found out that the publishing house Gazeta.Ru has no more a search on its website and the access to the archive materials is no more available. The non-accessibility of the search on the website made it impossible for the author to follow the above mentioned methodology and to collect the data. Before the blockage of archive materials more than 1000 articles could have been found (confirmed by pic.1).

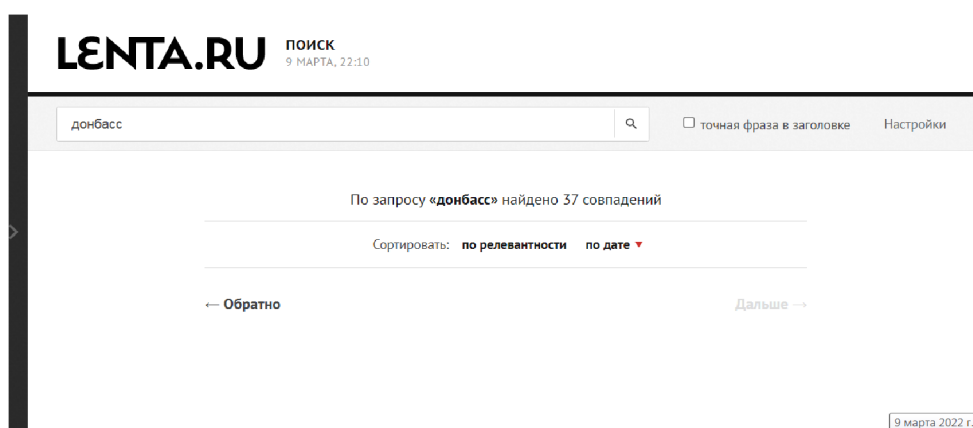
On the 9th of March the author decided to code another Russian publishing house in order to collect at least some necessary data before the total blockage of Russian websites. To make the work transparent, the author also decided to create her own archive by copy-pasting all articles in Microsoft Word in case the websites were no longer available due to the war. The same day one more change was made in the coding system and the following was added: “To add the name of section in which the press release referring to Donbas is published by the media on its website”

Finally, the publishing house Lenta.ru was chosen. Lenta.ru as well as Gazeta.Ru belongs to Rambler&Co – the biggest media holding organization in Russia. Both publishing houses were set in 1999 and have been one of the most popular sources of news for decades. The average monthly reach of the Lenta.ru audience is about 20 million people. Moreover, the website is statistically considered to be in the rating of 500 most popular websites on the Internet. (“Lenta.ru” 2001-)

Subsequently, the main coding process began. All analysed articles from the Lenta.ru website were copied to a Microsoft Word document, so that the author could read the articles again at any time even in case of total blockage of the website. In addition to the articles, the date, the media section of each article, the category (whether it is an article or a piece of news) were written down to a personal media archive. Initially, the website did not function correctly (on the 9th of March). For example the articles from 2013 were not available at all, only the information that there are 37 of them was displayed. (pic.2)

¹⁶ The name of the book from Ukrainian original «Як Україна втрачала Донбас» was translated by the author of the bachelor thesis, more about the book on <https://lostDonbas.com.ua>

Picture 2: *The example of incorrect work of the Lenta.ru website*



Source: author (2022)

The website had to be restarted 4 times, but finally the searched articles were shown.

During the inductive coding of Lenta.ru (together with the notes from the testing coding) all the following changes in the coding system and the coded character set were made:

- 1) The secondary topic for articles was added. Initially, it was supposed to describe the main topic in more details. For example, if the main topic is politics, the secondary topic could be elections/political crimes/biography of politicians etc. However, during the coding the author was not able to find any clear regularities to create subcategories. For this reason the coding was simplified and the main categories were replicated, for example, an article about politics (main topic) can also contain economical topics (secondary topic). The secondary topic was added only where needed. If a piece of news had only one topic (e.g. sport topic), the secondary topic would remain blank.
- 2) The media sections according to publishing houses where press releases were published were coded.
- 3) Links to press releases were written down during the coding.
- 4) Is Donbas the main topic of the press release? (yes/no question) Some articles seemed to be completely out of topic, centring on different themes; and Donbas was recollected only by accident. For this reason the author decided to track whether the piece of news writes about Donbas deliberately, or apropos. The column for coding was added.
- 5) Is Donbas recollected in the context of Kyiv? (yes/no question) The column for coding was added.
- 6) Are there any references in the media to the USSR? (yes/no question) What media image of the Donbas region has been created over the years? Do media write about Soviet nostalgia or any other issue connected to USSR? The column for coding was added.
- 7) Is Bandera mentioned in the piece of news? The author noticed articles with his name in their titles during the creation of the archive. It might be interesting to discover whether there was any consistency in referring to him, especially by the Russian media which created a terrifying image of this man. The column for coding was added.
- 8) Is the word “nationalists” used? How much attention did media pay to the defunct issue? The column for coding was added.
- 9) Is the author of the article mentioned? The column for coding was added.
- 10) The column where the author briefly wrote what the article/the piece of news was about was added.

- 11) Sometimes some pieces of news seemed to be so irrelevant for a foreign media publishing house that the author decided to write them down.
- 12) During the coding the author noticed that there is often no misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) in the articles. The explanation is simple: these word collocations were not used at all. To make statistics more objective (as the problem of the misuse of prepositions does not occur because the usage is correct, but because the word collocation is absent) the option "no usage of collocations" was added. If the column "no usage of collocations" was left blank, it means that at least one collocation was used in the article, and it was correct.
- 13) Author decided to note what kind/type of media materials occurred. For this reason the author noted whether the press releases are news/article/blog/interview. The following definitions of these words were used for the correct interpretation of different kinds of articles.
 - "Article - a nonfictional prose composition usually forming an independent part of a publication (such as a magazine)". (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022a)
 - "Blog - a regular feature appearing as part of an online publication that typically relates to a particular topic and consists of articles and personal commentary by one or more authors". (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022b) Important to mention, that author assumed to code blogs only if they are written by media experts on particular topic. By experts it is meant people who do know the topic and its specific and are invited by the publishing house to write a media item. Usual blogs, where any logged person can write comments were decided to be omitted as usually publishing houses never take the responsibility for others' opinions. In this particular case the definition of blog was pre-defined by the author to make it more suitable for the research aims and topic.
 - "Interview - a meeting at which information is obtained (as by a reporter, television commentator, or pollster) from a person". (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022c)
 - "News - material reported in a newspaper or news periodical or on a newscast". (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022d)
- 14) Afterwards the author changed the way of answering the yes/no questions during the coding. Initially there were two columns for "yes" and "no" answer. If there was a reference to Stepan Bandera, than "1" was written in the column "yes" and "0" in the column "no". This system was simplified by using only one column instead of two, where code "1" meant "yes", and code "0" meant "no". These changes were made in the following columns: "Donbas as the main topic", "Donbas mentioned in the context of Kyiv", "References to USSR", "Mention of Bandera", "The use of the word 'nationalists' ", "Language issue (Ukr-Rus)", "The author of press release is mentioned".
- 15) During the coding of Lenta.ru press releases, beginning from the 2011, the author added two new topic categories: Crimes and Social issues. Daily life topics as health care, education, superannuation and other belong to the category Social Issues. Important to mention, that accidents in mines and during industrial production were also included to the category Social Issues. It might be not seen as a daily life topic, however Donbas has been a mine and industrial region, and different news about accidents occurred frequently (in average several times per month).
- 16) The coding was ambiguous with sport press releases, where "Donbas" was the name of a Donetsk hockey team. On the one hand these press releases could be considered as being off-topic, as the key word "Donbas" is just the name of the team. On the other hand, this team has played a significant part in the social life of the region, it has been the pride of Donbas. The hockey club "Donbas" represented the region both on a country and international level. Due to the importance

of this club to the regional identity, the press releases about it were also added to the coding. However, if this club was not the main topic of a press release, or was mentioned only in the context of scores in a tournament, or the article was mainly about a team player from “Donbas” club, the press release was not coded as it is considered to be irrelevant for the research.

- 17) The column “Graphs in press releases” was changed to “Graphical materials in press releases (maps, diagrams, graphs etc)” during the coding. The change was made in order to record any graphical materials, not only graphs.
- 18) During the coding of press releases from the year 2012, a new topic category called Environment was added.

Before the coding of press releases in Lenta.ru themselves, the author created an archive by copy-pasting articles in a Microsoft Word document. During the coding the author was working mainly with websites (luckily the websites were not blocked). There is no way to prove the following idea, but during the second reading and coding of the articles the author perceived that the availability of some of these changed over time, probably due to the war. As publishing houses closed and opened access to some materials in different time differently. When the Lenta.ru was coded, the author decided to use the same inductively modified coding system to code the Ukrainian media. The only blank column during the preparation of the coding of Ukrainian Obozrevatel was “The media sections according to publishing houses where press releases were published”. On the 27th of March the author planned to begin the coding of press releases from the Obozrevatel website according to the methodology. The search functioned, so relevant articles could be found. However, when the author tried to open any article from the list (search by the key word “Donbas” (rus. - Донбасс) in the period 1.1.2010-31.12.2013), not a single article could be uploaded, only a white screen could be seen. The website could have been under hacker attacks due to the war, therefore the author decided to try again in the following days. Several days passed, but there was still no access to the archive, therefore the author decided to try writing emails to the publishing house on the email addresses that could be found on the Obozrevatel website. As there was no reply, the author had to find urgently a different Ukrainian publishing house that could fulfill the criteria. It was maybe the most difficult task of the whole process of working on the practical part of the bachelor thesis. The list of the most read Ukrainian media was found on the Internet, and most of the publishing houses were checked for the criteria. The search was difficult for many reasons which the author recorded (examples down below).

Other Ukrainian media (and reasons why they do not meet the criteria):

- <https://replyua.net> – no search on the website;
- <https://hronika.info> - no search on the website;
- <https://www.segodnya.ua/search.html?search%5Bquery%5D=донбасс&search%5Bsubmit%5D> - access was denied by the website;
- <https://znaj.ua/ru/search?query=донбасс> - invalid search;
- <https://apostrophe.ua/site/search?q=донбасс> – media materials available dated only from 24.2.2022 (the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war);
- <https://ictv.ua/ru/> - invalid search, no dates can be set up;
- <https://tsn.ua/ru/search?query=донбасс> - invalid search, no dates can be set up;
- <https://gordonua.com/search.html?s%5Btext%5D=> - no archive materials available from the necessary time period;

- <https://glavcom.ua/search.html?s%5Btext%5D=дoнбacc> – there is no search according to dates; small number of materials, maybe the main archive is not available, most of the news that can be seen are only from the last few days;
- <http://replika.in.ua>¹⁷ – no access to the website;
- <https://espresso.tv/search-results?q=дoнбacc> – news only from 2022 are available in search;
- <http://newsoboz.org>¹⁸ - no access to the website;
- <https://www.segodnya.ua/search.html?search%5Bquery%5D=дoнбacc&search%5Bsubmit%5D=> -access was denied.

Finally, the publishing house Censor.net with an available archive of materials was chosen as one that meets the criteria of the research. Censor.net is a Ukrainian social and political news portal with a forum. The portal was founded in 2004 and since then its editor-in-chief has been Yuriy Butusov (Ukrainian journalist and the adviser to the Minister of Defence of Ukraine in 2020-2021). The publishing house covers key events both in Ukraine and in the world. The average daily traffic of the site is more than 500 thousand visitors. More than 300 news items are published on the website daily. Materials are published in Ukrainian and Russian, some of them are translated into English. (Wikipedia,2022).

The portal has more than 500 media items available from the searched period which is five times more than Obozrevatel has. In order to have access to the materials at any given time an archive of media items from the website was made. A useful advice for future similar research: it is advisable to save all necessary information straight away. During the war the access to almost any information can be cut down. If the author had made an archive of media items straight away in the end of January 2022, she would have saved herself much time and trouble. The author did not add any materials from the Censor.net forum, because the publishing house is not responsible for any information posted there.

The final coding data set after all transformations and changes has the following form:

Table 2: *The coding system of media items in Censor.net and Lenta.ru publishing houses*

Units name	Value variations	Meaning	Code	Comment
Research question 1: <i>How often have Russian and Ukrainian media written about the Donbas region during this period of time?</i>				
Link	The link to the website with the media item was added.			
Month	1	January	Code "1" will be used for the relevant month. Code "0" will be used for others	If the press release was from January, "1" will be put under this code unit. March, April, May and others will be coded as "0"
	2	February		
	3	March		
	4	April		
	5	May		
	6	June		
	7	July		
	8	August		
	9	September		
	10	October		
	11	November		
	12	December		
Research question 4: <i>What amount of relative information in mass media occurred?</i>				
Number of	101-500	Short press	Code "1" will be	Criteria about

¹⁷ The website will not occur in the references as on 1.6.2022 it did not exist any more.

¹⁸ The website will not occur in the references as on 1.6.2022 and before it has been unavailable.

words		releases	used for the relevant category. Code "0" will be used for others	the length were set after reading internet articles about the optimal length both in Russian and English languages (due to different language structures). The number of words in press releases was counted automatically with the help of Microsoft Word.
	501-1500	Average press releases		
	1501 and more	Long press releases		
Added question: <i>Is Donbas the main topic in the media item?</i> (yes/no question)				
	Yes/no		Code "1" for "yes", code "0" for "no"	
Added question: <i>The media sections according to publishing houses where press releases were published</i>				
	Russian media:	Ukrainian media:	Code "1" will be used for the relevant category. Code "0" will be used for others	Value variations were added according to different sections on websites of Internet news portals. The value variations are different in Russian and Ukrainian media. They were also added gradually during the coding.
	Former Soviet Union	Economy		
	Internet and media	Sport		
	Economy	Ukrainian policy		
	Finance	Accidents		
	Russia	Society		
	From life	Curiosities		
	Sport	Photo report		
	Online	Technology		
		Without topic ¹⁹		
Research question 2: <i>What topics connected to Donbas have been covered in Russian and Ukrainian media?</i>				
Main topic	Politics		Code "1" will be used for the relevant category. Code "0" will be used for others	
	Economy			
	Crimes			
	Natural resources (gas, coal etc.)			
	Mines			
	Environment			
	Traffic collision			

¹⁹ Translated from Russian by the author of the bachelor thesis.

	Social issues				
	Culture				
	Language				
	Sport				
	Religion				
	History of the region				
	Other national minorities				
Secondary topic	Politics		Code "1" will be used for relevant category. Code "0" will be used for others		
	Economy				
	Crimes				
	Natural resources (gas, coal etc.)				
	Mines				
	Environment				
	Traffic collision				
	Social issues				
	Culture				
	Language				
	Sport				
	Religion				
	History of the region				
	Other national minorities				
Research question 5: <i>Is the misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) used by media?</i>					
Misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на)	using "на Украине" (on Ukraine)			Code "1" for "yes". Code "0" for "no".	If the misuse of preposition occurs, then "1" as "yes, occurs" is coded in the relevant case
	using "в Донбассе" (in Donbas)				
	no usage of collocations		Code "1" if the collocation did not appear. Code "0" if there was at least one incorrect usage	If the collocation was used incorrectly it is coded as "0". If there was no usage of collocation it is coded as "1"	
Added question: <i>Is Donbas mentioned in the context of Kyiv? (yes/no question)</i>					
	Yes/no		Code "1" for "yes", code "0" for "no"		
Added question: <i>Are there references to USSR in the media item? (yes/no question)</i>					
	Yes/no		Code "1" for "yes", code "0" for "no"		
Added question: <i>Is Stepan Bandera mentioned? (yes/no question)</i>					
	Yes/no		Code "1" for "yes", code "0" for "no"		
Added question: <i>Is the word "nationalists" used? (yes/no question)</i>					
	Yes/no		Code "1" for "yes", code "0" for "no"		
Added question: <i>Is a language issue (Ukr-Rus) mentioned in the media item? (yes/no question)</i>					

	Yes/no		Code "1" for "yes", code "0" for "no"	
Added question: <i>Is the author of the media item mentioned?</i> (yes/no question)				
	Yes/no		Code "1" for "yes", code "0" for "no"	
Additional information important for research:				
Type/category of a media item	News		Code "1" will be used for the relevant category. Code "0" will be used for others	
	Articles			
	Blog			
	Interview			

Source: author (2022)

The coding was made in Microsoft Excel programme, where one sheet was used for coding one year. Two sheets were used separately to note media items which were not included in the research and the reason why it was so. 10 Excel sheets were used in total (Lenta.ru 2010, Lenta.ru 2011, Lenta.ru 2012, Lenta.ru 2013, Lenta.ru excluded items, Censor.net 2010, Censor.net 2011, Censor.net 2012, Censor.net 2013, Censor.net excluded items). Down below the illustration of the coding process can be seen (pic. 3), excel sheets can be found in the annexes 3.

Picture 3: *The illustration of the process of coding in Microsoft Excel*

Source: author (2022)

Results of the research

During the analysis of the results of the coding, the usual descriptive statistics were used. All analyses, same as graphs and diagrams, were made in the Microsoft Excel programme. During the description of the research results, the author will profile each year separately and consequently compare them. Years and publishing houses will be separated visually for easier orientation in the text. Firstly Russian Lenta.ru will be analysed year by year; secondly, Ukrainian Censor.net will be analysed year by year. Consequently, the results of the analysis will be compared.

The analysis of the Russian media Lenta.ru

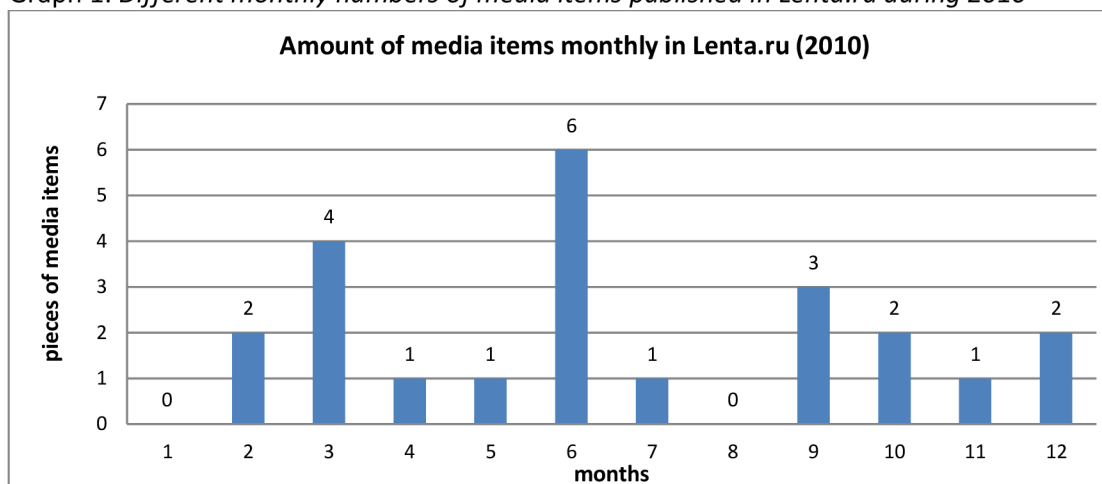
Lenta.ru 2010

Totally 23 media items written by Lenta.ru during 2010 were coded. Three media items were discarded as those that do not fulfill the research criteria. Media items that were discarded and reasons for such a decision:

- <https://lenta.ru/news/2010/03/10/getrunken/> - Donbas aero ("Донбасс аэро") was the name of the company; not connected to the context of the region.
- <https://lenta.ru/articles/2010/07/06/review/> - the keyword "Donbas" was used as a part of the name Kentavr s Donbasa ("Кентавр с Донбасса"); not connected to the context of the region.
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2010/10/04/group/> - "Donbas" meant the name of the channel; not connected to the context of the region.

Different amounts of media items were published in Lenta.ru during the whole year. (graph 1)

Graph 1: *Different monthly numbers of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2010*

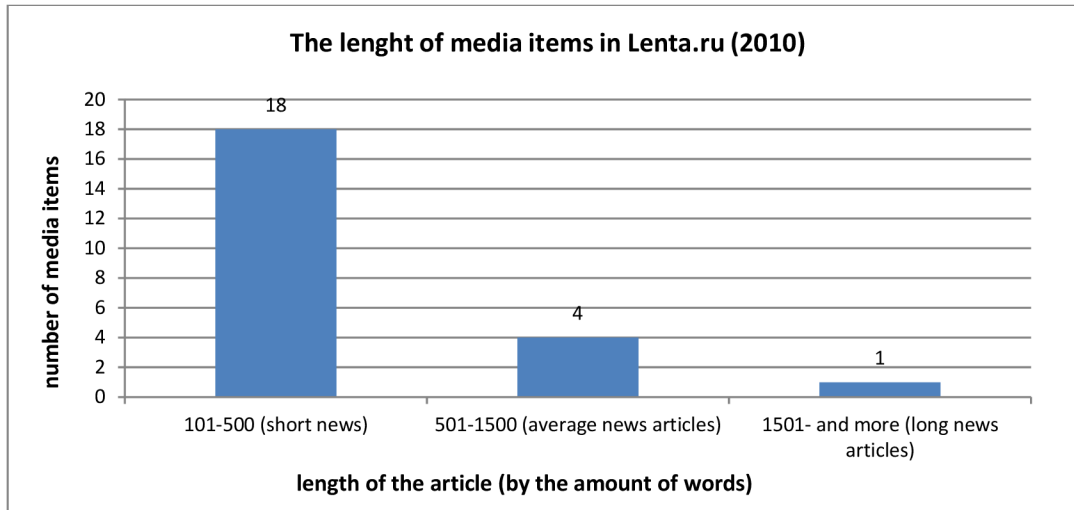


Source: author (2022)

From the graph, the reader can see that the highest number of articles in Lenta.ru during 2010 were written in July. Most of the news in July 2010 was written about the new Head of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine (as the main candidate was originally from Donbas). No articles were written in January and August. That is surprising as in January 2010, the presidential elections were held in Ukraine, and the candidate Yanukovich was from Donbas. Comparison with other years could enable us to understand if there was any regularity in publishing media items about Donbas.

In the graph 2 the length of published media items can be seen.

Graph 2: How long media items about Donbas were published during 2010?

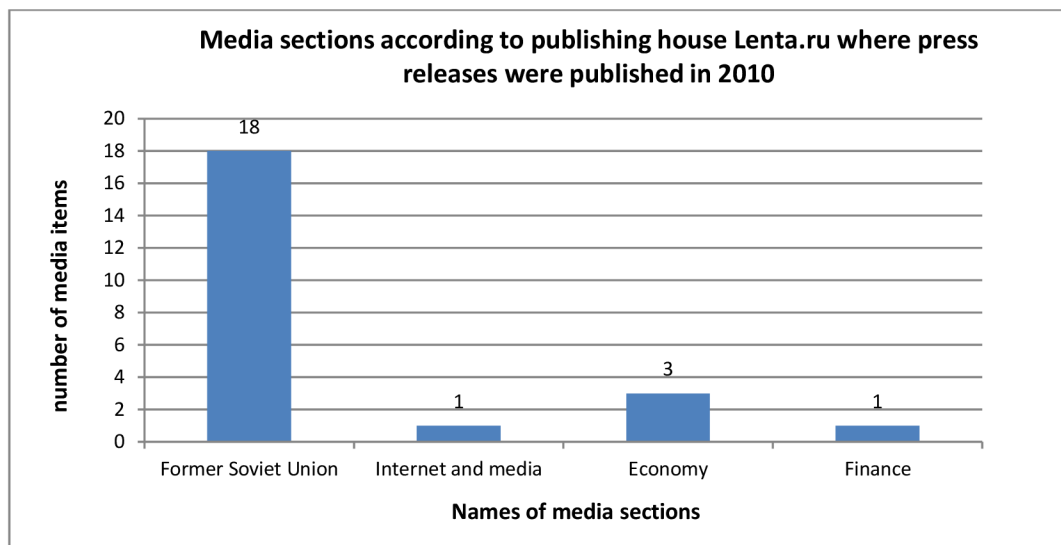


Source: author (2022)

The majority of media items were short pieces of news (about 101-500 words), there were 18 of them. 4 media items were considered as average length (501-1500 words), and the only one was a long news article (1501 and more words).

The following graph (3) shows media sections according to publishing house Lenta.ru where press releases were published in 2010.

Graph 3: Media sections according to publishing house Lenta.ru where press releases were published in 2010



Source: author (2022)

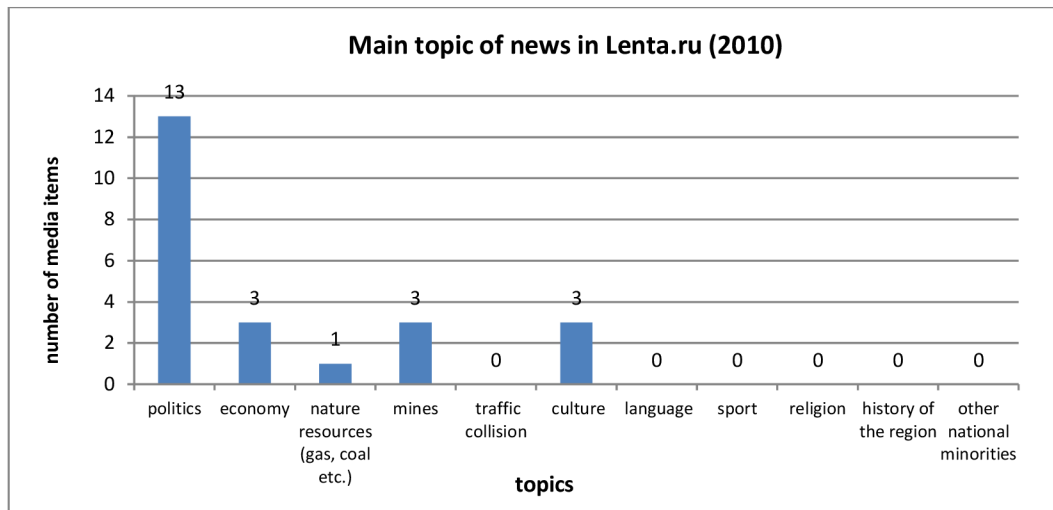
In the Internet publishing house Lenta.ru during the year 2010, four media sections occurred. Among them were: The former Soviet Union, Internet and media, Economy, Finance. Most media items (18 of them) were written down in the media section Former Soviet Union. This section is highly controversial and enables to understand how the Donbas region was taken by the media. The author does not want to generalize and write "was taken by Russians", as only one media is studied; however, if we remember that the media has been monthly read by 20 million people, it is obvious that some cause and effect on people's minds it might have been done. The topic of what kind of effect or impact it caused on people's psychical wellbeing might be an inspiration for possible following researches. However, this media

section seems outlandish, unexpected, and odd even without a more detailed analysis. The other country's territory is classified as a former something that has not already existed for 20 years. Same, as if hypothetically Slovakian media would write about Czech Moravia (a historical region that borders Slovakia) in a media section called "The former Czechoslovak Socialist Republic"²⁰. Interestingly, the media items from this section were mainly coded as written on political topics by the author. Moreover, among them, there were pieces of news about accidents in mines, social protests, the need for pension reform, the new judge in the Constitutional Court, and others. Other media items were coded in different media sections. Only one media item was written in the section Internet and media and in the section Finance, and three in the section Economy.

Bases on the analysis results the next graph (4) shows what topics the media articles were written on.

Among pre-defined topics during the inductive coding were: Politics, Economy, Natural resources (gas, coal, etc.), Mines, Traffic collisions, Culture, Language, Sport, Religion, History of the region, Other national minorities. As mentioned in the chapter Methodology, the topic Social issues contains various daily life problems such as health care, education, superannuation, accidents in mines, and others.

Graph 4: *Main topics of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2010, according to the author*

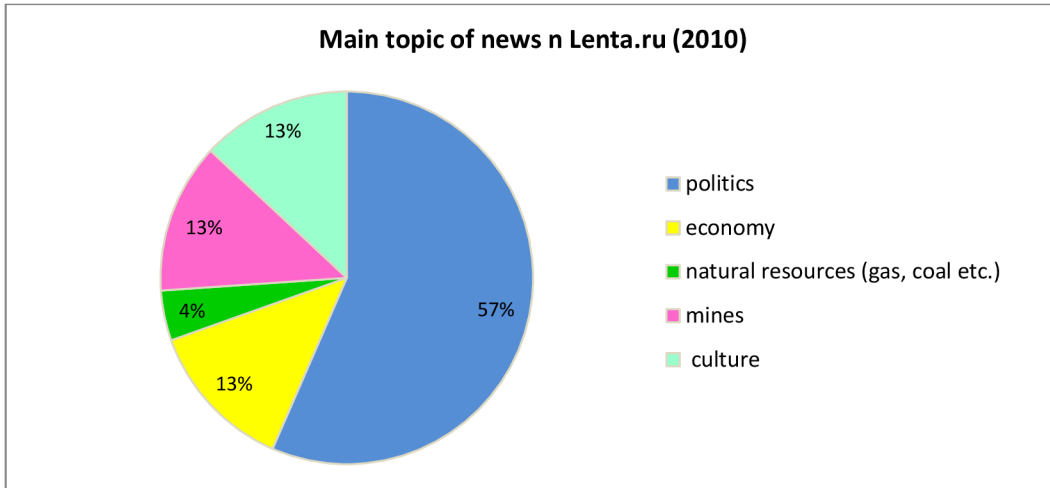


Source: author (2022)

As it is shown in the graph 4, most of the articles were classified as on political topic (13 of them). 3 of the articles were classified as those with economical main topic (samely as the publishing house Lenta.ru did, even though one article that was considered as on economical topic by the publishing house was coded by the author as that one on the other topic, and vice versa). For clarity, the pie chart was made, where data are presented as percentages (graph 5).

²⁰ Author's example of hypothetical situation that would look like similarly.

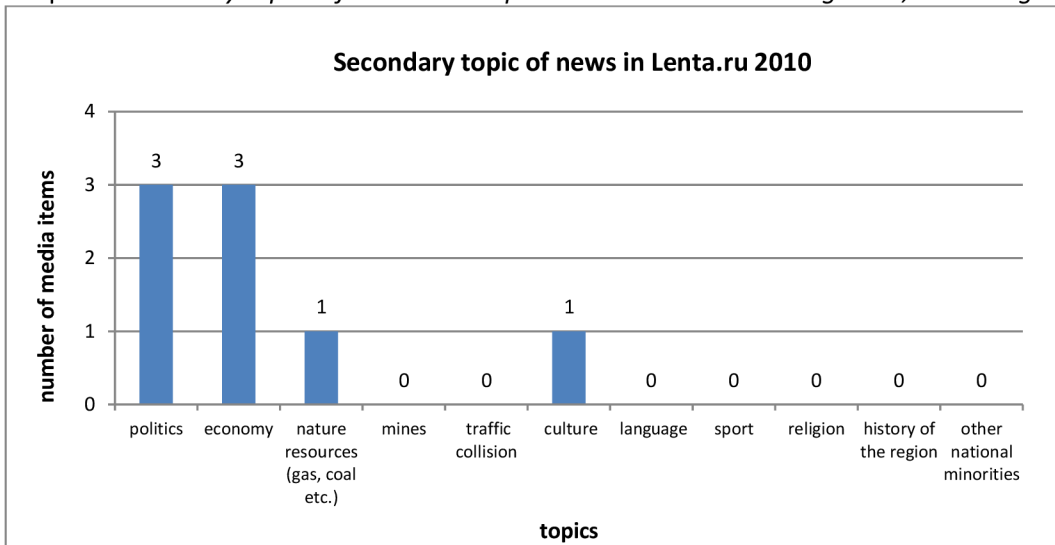
Graph 5: *The ratio of main topics of published media items in Lenta.ru 2010*



Source: author (2022)

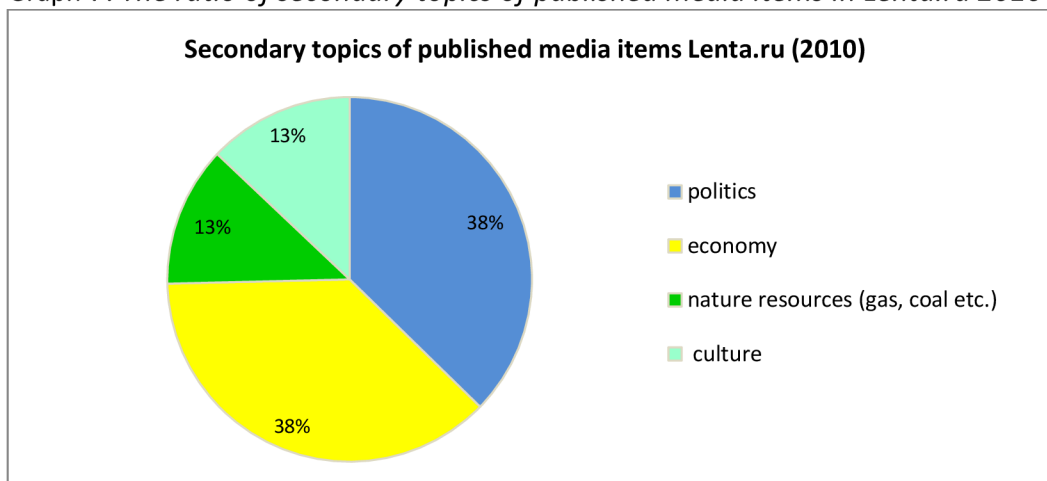
Then the author analysed secondary topics of published media items, where they occurred. That is the reason why the whole number of coded articles in this category is lower than the whole number of all published media items. The ratio of different topics to the whole number of published media items in Lenta.ru in 2010 was counted statistically (the whole numbers of media items in each category were divided by the whole sum of all media items with a secondary topic). The results can be seen on the following graphs (graphs 6 and 7).

Graph 6: *Secondary topics of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2010, according to the author*



Source: author (2022)

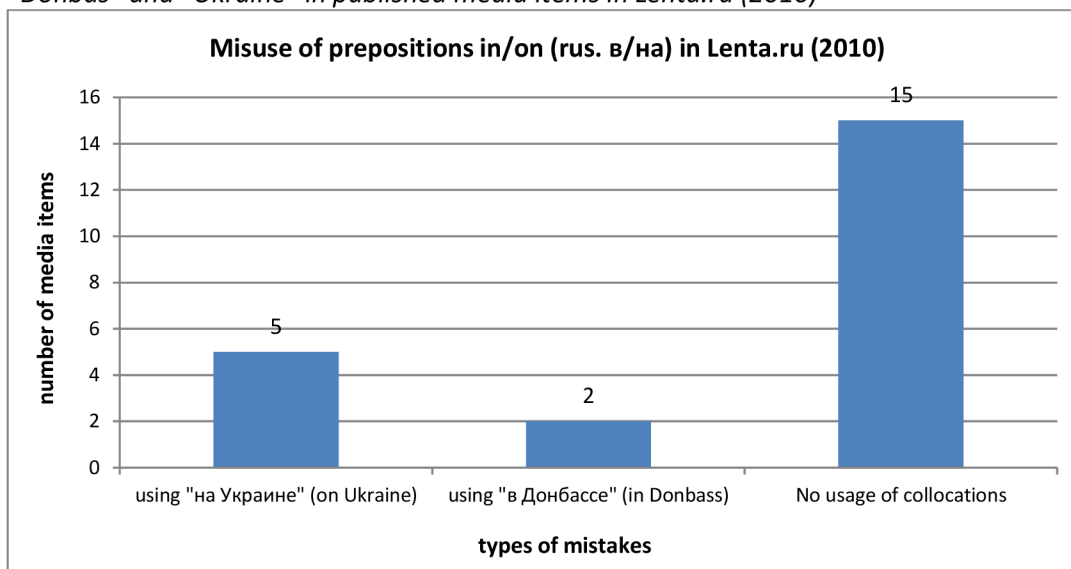
Graph 7: *The ratio of secondary topics of published media items in Lenta.ru 2010*



Source: author (2022)

Furthermore, the misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with the toponym “Donbas” was analysed. Reasons, why the author considers this issue to be important, are described in the chapter Methodology. Briefly, the preposition in (rus. в) is usually used for certain territories with clear administrative borders. Donbas is a historical region without clear borders, so the only usage of the preposition on (rus. на) is correct. Using wrong prepositions with geographical names enables to show what attitude towards territory a speaker has. The following graph (8) shows the frequency of how often the prepositions were misused.

Graph 8: *The frequency of incorrect and no usage of prepositions in/on (rus.в/на) with the toponyms “Donbas” and “Ukraine” in published media items in Lenta.ru (2010)*



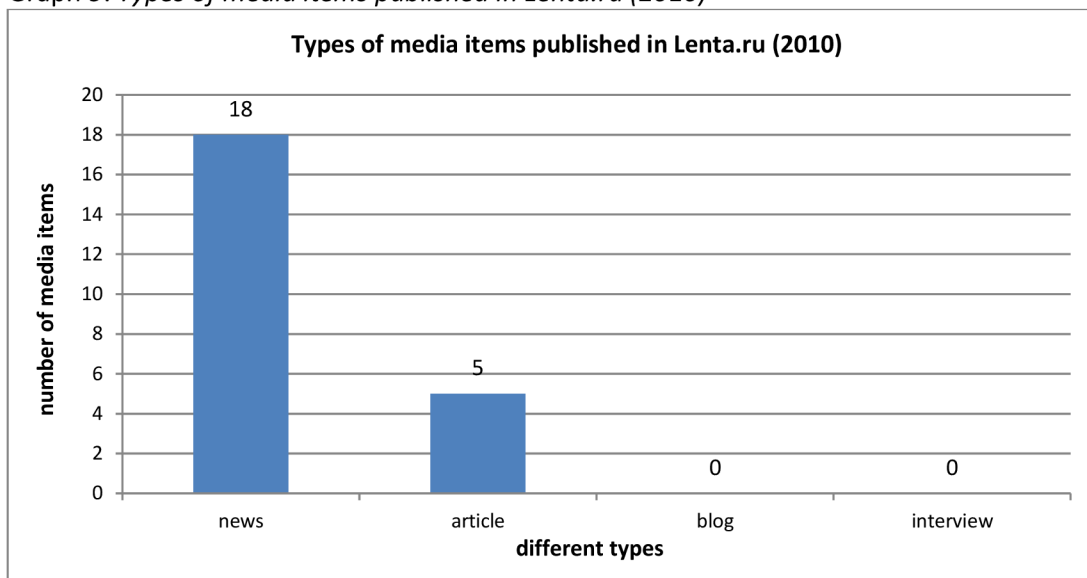
Source: author (2022)

As can be seen from the graph 8, in 15 cases, the collocation was not used at all, but there was a mistake in each remaining media item. Using the wrong collocation “on Ukraine” (rus. на Украине), a speaker automatically considers Ukraine as a historical region, not a sovereign state. Using the wrong collocation “v Donbase” (rus. в Донбассе), a speaker automatically considers Donbas as a sovereign territory with clear borders, never a historical region.

All yes/no questions among which are: "Donbas as the main topic", "Donbas mentioned in the context of Kyiv", "References to USSR", "Mention of Bandera", "The use of the word "nationalists", "Language issue (Ukr-Rus)", "The author of a press release is mentioned", will be answered straight away in comparison with other years. The comparison might enable to make hypotheses about possible dynamics of development and changes in media policy.

Furthermore, the last but not the least category considers the type of published media item (whether there is a piece of news/article/blog or interview). Results are shown in graph 9.

Graph 9: *Types of media items published in Lenta.ru (2010)*



Source: author (2022)

Obviously, the majority of media items were news press releases. Some of the media items (5 of them) were considered as longer articles. No expert blog or interview was published in Lenta.ru in 2010.

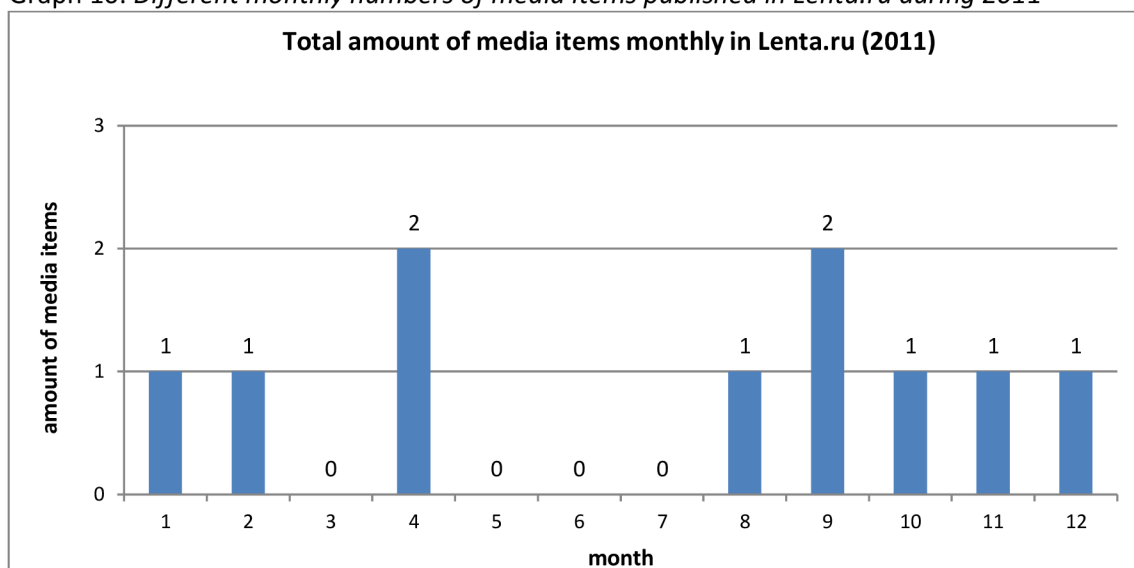
Lenta.ru 2011

Totally only 10 media items written during 2011 from Lenta.ru were coded. 2 media items were discarded as those that do not fulfill the research criteria. Media items that were discarded and reasons for such a decision:

- <https://lenta.ru/news/2011/04/26/arsen/> - "Donbas shokolad" is the name of photo series; not connected to the context of the region.
- <https://lenta.ru/photo/2011/05/19/savadov/> - same reason. "Donbas shokolad" is the name of photo series; not connected to the context of the region.

The next graph shows the frequency of published media items during 2011. (graph 10)

Graph 10: Different monthly numbers of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2011



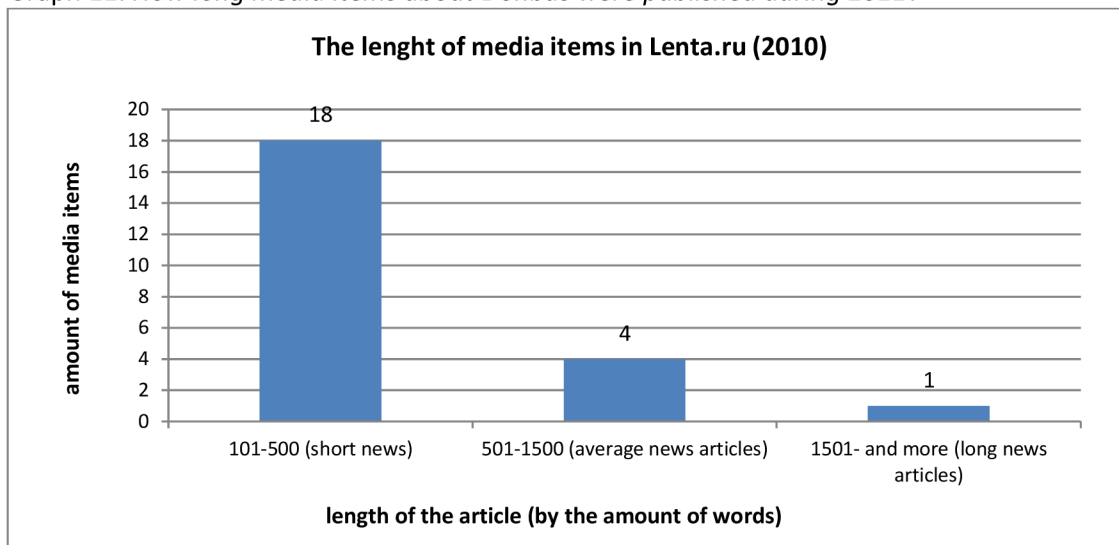
Source: author (2022)

The total number of written media items in Lenta.ru during 2010 is small. Only 10 media items were written (two times less than in 2010), and the explanation of why is not easy.

One of the possible hypotheses that might explain the decrease of published amount of media items in Lenta.ru is that after pro-Russian president Yanukovych won the presidential elections, Russia had no more need to write about this region as they knew that the policy of Ukraine would be pro-Eastern. Pro-Russian policy that has been implemented during 2010-2013 is not only a part of general knowledge and the reason for the Revolution of Dignity in 2013, but also a topic for many scientific researches. For example, Adamovych (2016) in his work describes how deputy conventions were a method for lobbying Russian interests among Ukrainian pro-Eastern politics, including the overview of pro-Russian narratives in the Party of Region (Yanukovych was a leader of the party) during the long period of time, more than 8 years. Bakanova (2015) in her work briefly mentioned how Yanukovych was one of the geopolitical Russian tools. However, abovementioned hypothesis would have to be verified in future research. Additionally, no media items were written from May till July 2010.

The following graph 11 shows the length of published media items.

Graph 11: How long media items about Donbas were published during 2011?

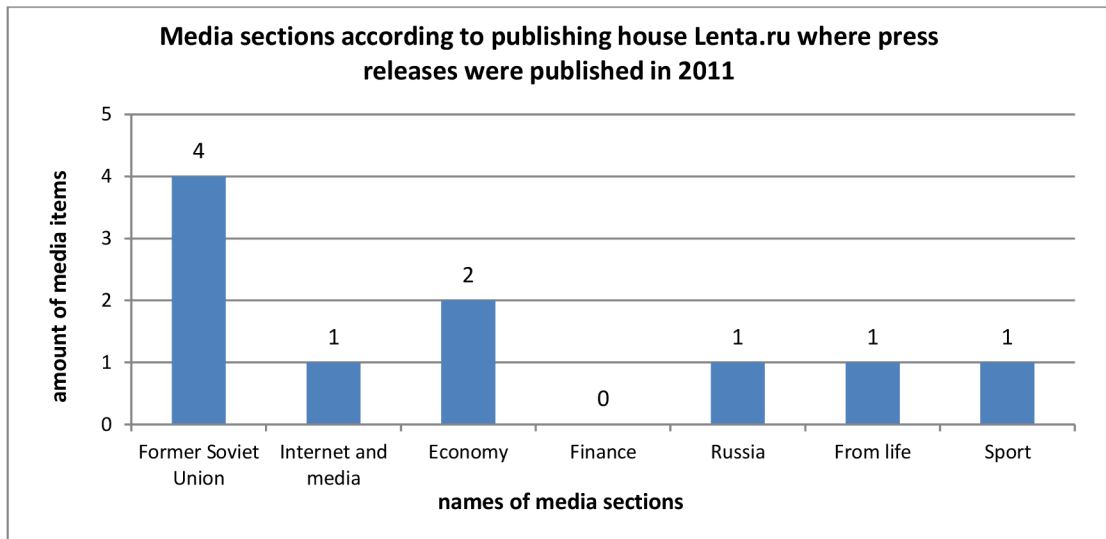


Source: author (2022)

Most of the media items (18 of them) were short (101-500 words), 4 media items were considered average news articles (501-1500 words), and the only one was long (more than 1501 words).

The next graph (12) shows media sections according to publishing house Lenta.ru where press releases were published in 2011.

Graph 12: Media sections according to publishing house Lenta.ru where press releases were published in 2011



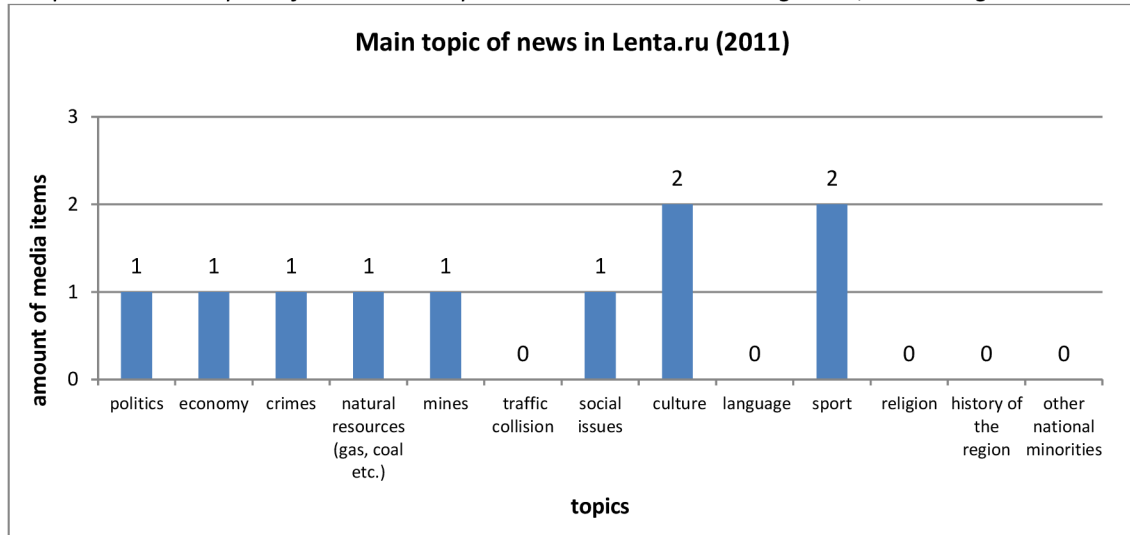
Source: author (2022)

Beginning with 2011, the author observed the emergence of four more categories: "Russia", "From life", "Sport". The interesting question is why the piece of news about the Ukrainian region Donbas was suddenly written in the category "Russia". That is even more controversial than the category "Former Soviet Union". One of the possible hypotheses that can be done but will have need future researches is that the media section called "Russia" and written media items about Ukrainian Donbas occurred deliberately to get make the readers to be used to read news about Donbas in the section of another country.

Again, same as in 2010, the majority of media items (4 out of 10) were written in the section "Former Soviet Union". However, unlike the previous year, other sections are more covered. Sections "Internet and media", "Russia", "From life", "Sport" were covered by only one article. Section "Economy" – by 2 media items.

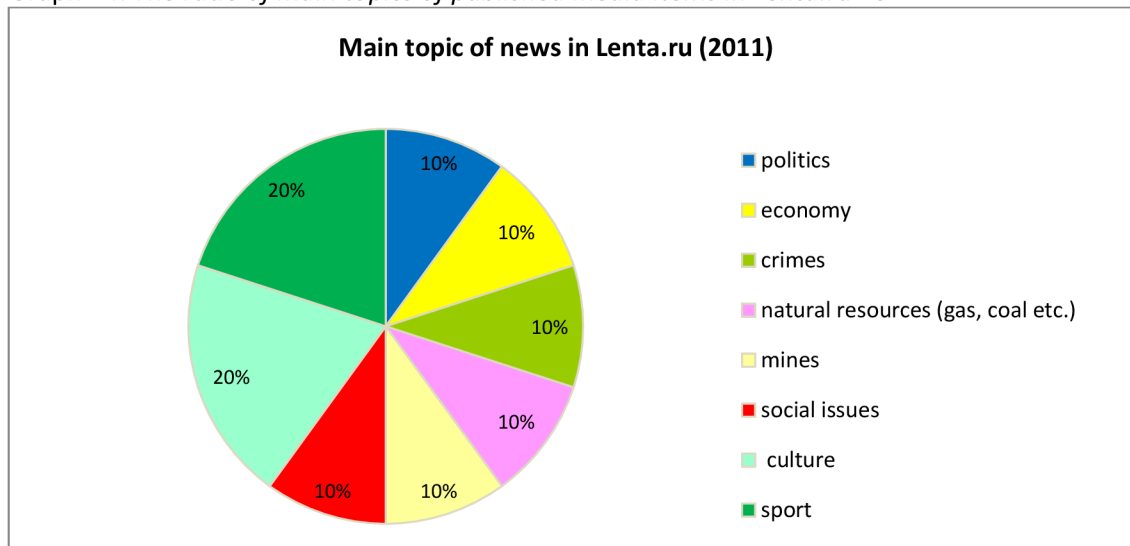
The following graphs (13 and 14) show the author's opinion about topics that media items were written on. During the inductive coding, the author added new categories in the section main topics, among them are crimes and social issues.

Graph 13: *Main topics of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2011, according to the author*



Source: author (2022)

Graph 14: *The ratio of main topics of published media items in Lenta.ru 2011*

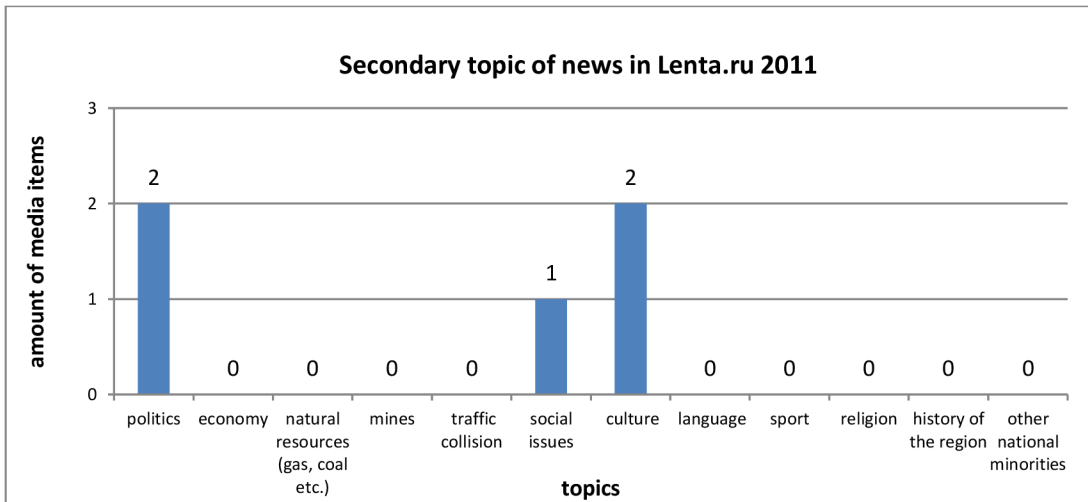


Source: author (2022)

Topics Sport and Culture were covered the most (20% each). All other topics were covered evenly. Among them in 2011 were Politics, Economy, Crimes, Natural resources, Mines, and Social issues.

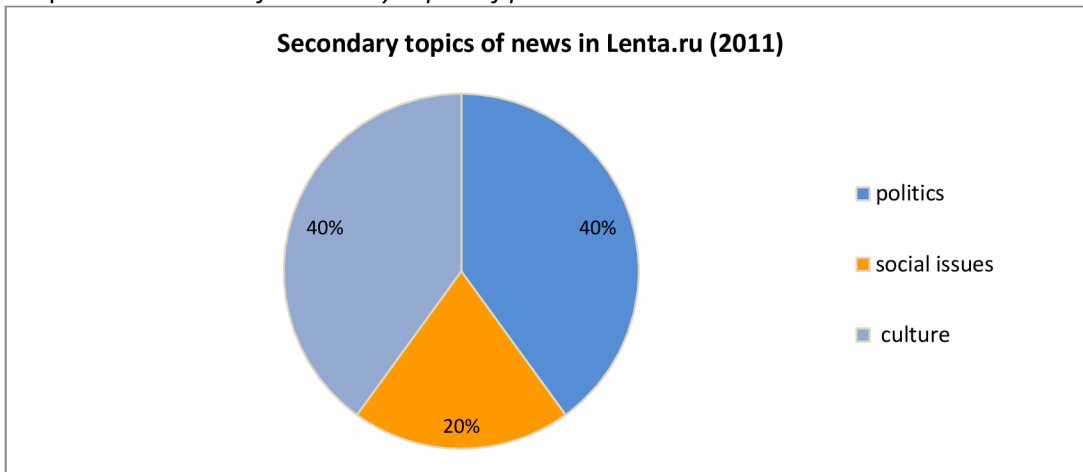
Half of the media items have a secondary topic. The coverage of secondary topics can be seen on graphs 15 and 16.

Graph 15: *Secondary topics of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2011, according to the author*



Source: author (2022)

Graph 16: *The ratio of secondary topics of published media items in Lenta.ru 2011*

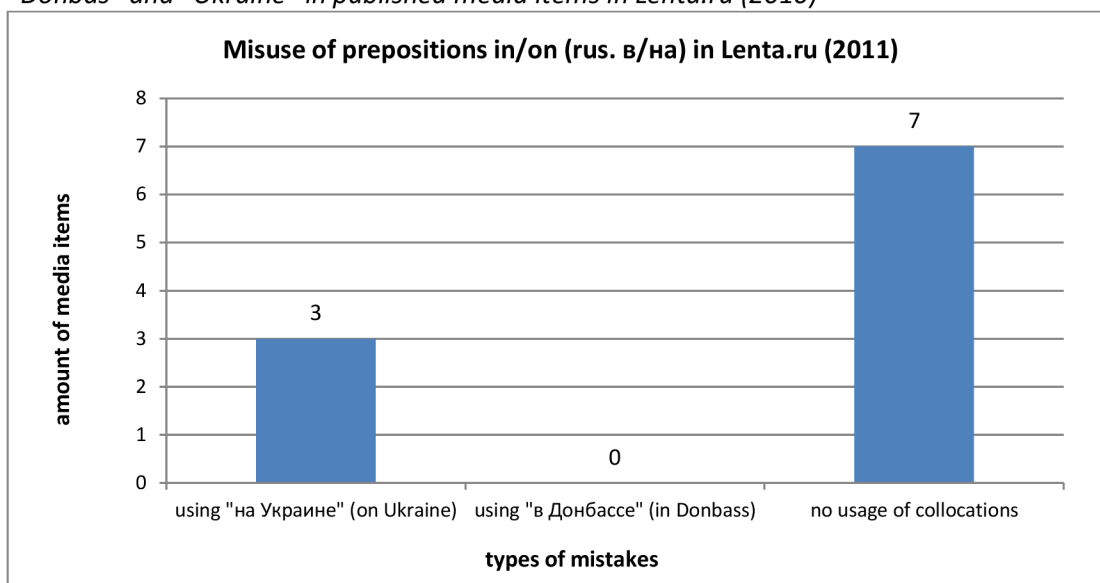


Source: author (2022)

From the graph, it can be seen that in 2011 media items mostly had only one out of three secondary topics, such as: Politics, Social issues, Culture.

The following graph (17) shows the misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) in media items published in 2011.

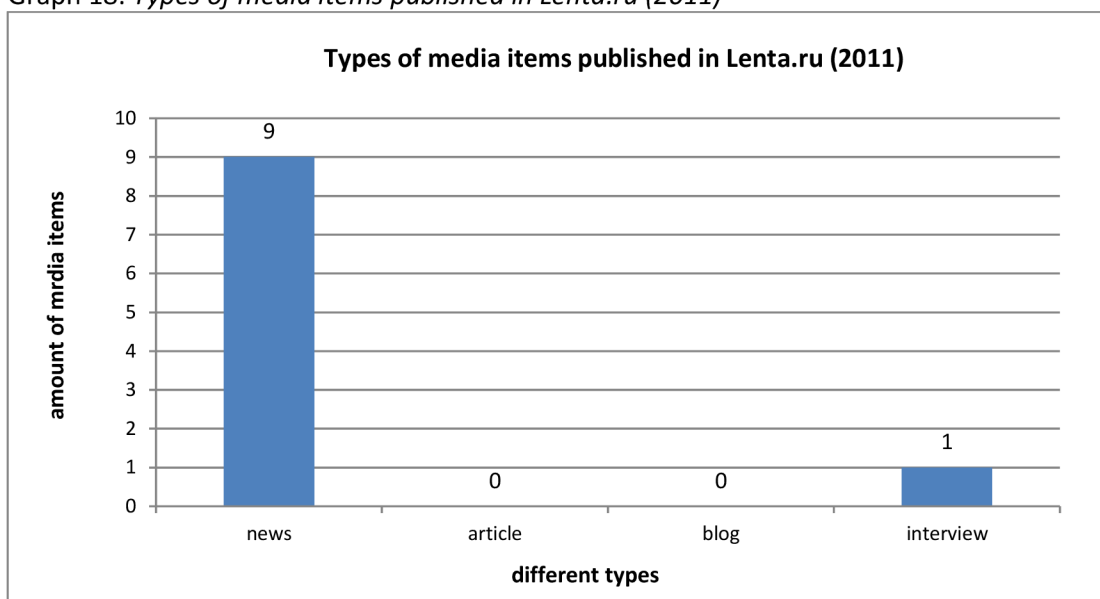
Graph 17: The frequency of incorrect and no usage of prepositions in/on (rus.в/на) with the toponyms “Donbas” and “Ukraine” in published media items in Lenta.ru (2010)



Source: author (2022)

The total amount of published media items in 2011 was 10. Seven of them have no usage of any collocations from the research; however remaining three have the used the incorrect collocation "on Ukraine" (rus. на Украине) rather than "in Ukraine" (rus. в Украине) that might mean consideration of Ukraine as a historical region, not a sovereign state with clear borders.

Graph 18: Types of media items published in Lenta.ru (2011)



Source: author (2022)

From the graph 18 it can be seen that almost all media items published in 2011 were news, and the only one interview was published.

Lenta.ru 2012

Totally only 25 media items written during 2011 from Lenta.ru were coded. Eighteen media items were discarded as those that do not fulfill the research criteria. Media items that were discarded and reasons for such a decision:

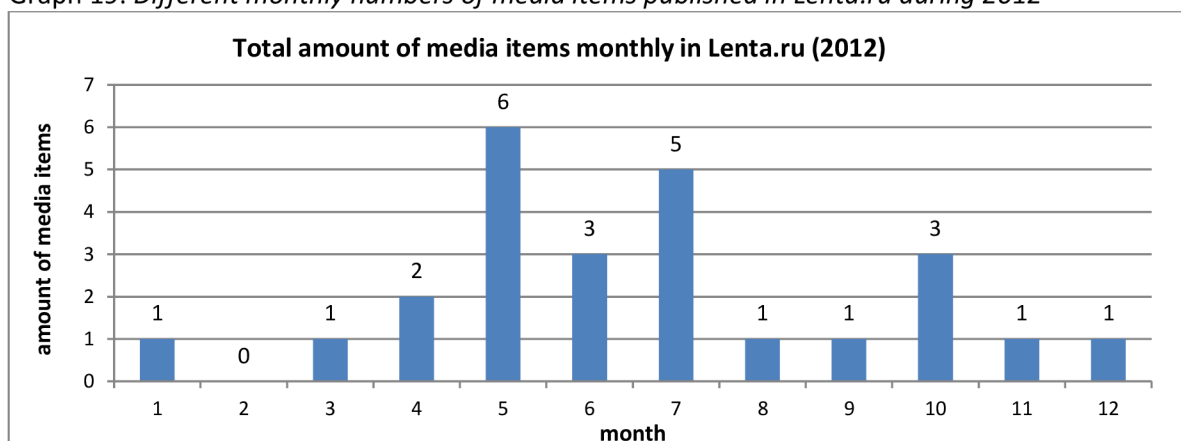
- <https://lenta.ru/articles/2012/04/05/shahty/> - Russian Rostov region is mentioned as a part of historical Eastern Donbas;
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/04/17/detain/> - Donbas is a name of the ship;
- <https://lenta.ru/articles/2012/10/30/moremoney/> - Donbas arena is the name of the stadium; in this case not connected to the context of the region.

In all following cases, "Donbas" was mentioned as the name of the regional hockey team. In the Methodology chapter, the author has already written that these media items are the most controversial for coding as they represent the region in a particular context. Despite it, all discarded media items were not written in the context of Donbas region, and the keyword "Donbas" in a search only reflects the same name of the team. That was a reason for the author not to code these media items.

- <https://lenta.ru/articles/2012/06/19/radulov/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/07/13/davydov/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/09/07/ska/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/09/30/hockey/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/10/26/karjala/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/10/29/trekronor/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/11/07/ovi/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/11/26/backstrom/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/12/03/suomi/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/12/06/ska/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/12/06/cup/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/12/12/squad/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/12/21/radulov/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/12/22/hockey/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2012/12/25/khlallstar/>

Monthly differences in published numbers of media items in Lenta.ru during 2012 can be found on the following graph (19).

Graph 19: *Different monthly numbers of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2012*

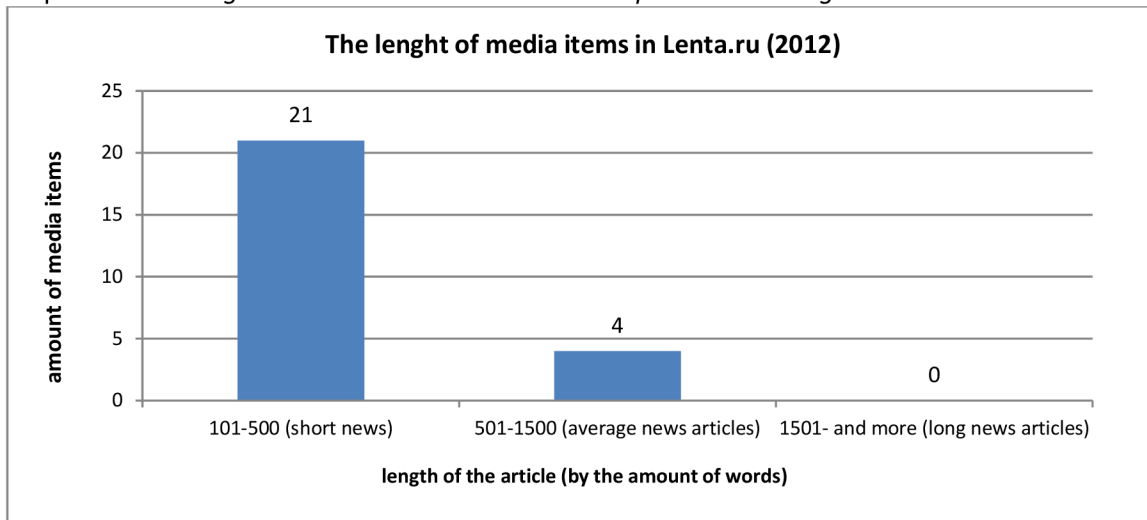


Source: author (2022)

Most media items about Donbas during 2012 were written in May (6 of them) and in July (5 of them). No articles were written in February. The UEFA Euro 2012 was held from the 8th of June till the 1st of July 2011 and interestingly did not influence the amount of published material so much.

The average length of published materials can be seen in the following graph 20.

Graph 20: *How long media items about Donbas were published during 2012?*

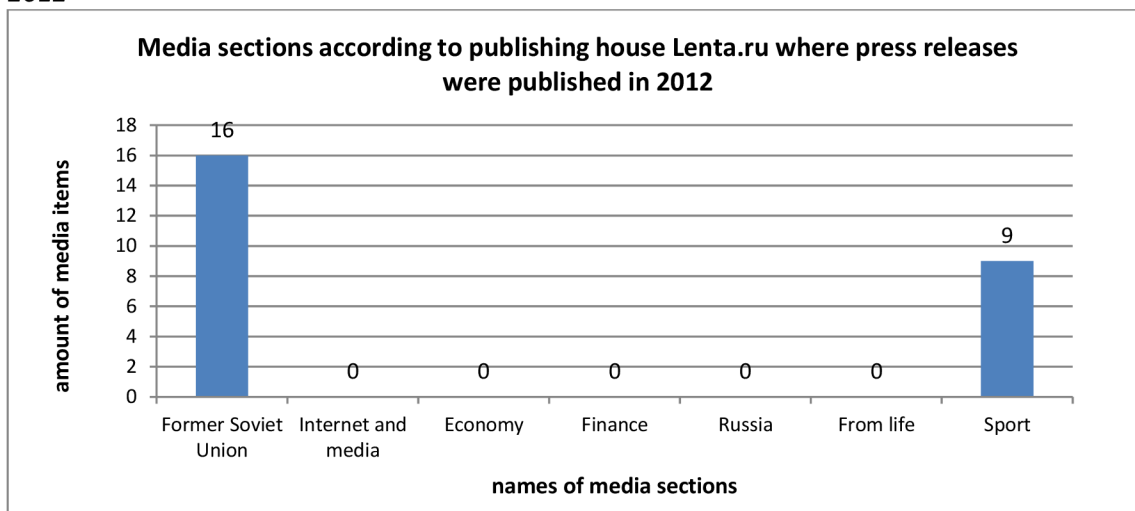


Source: author (2022)

Most of the articles (21 of them) were short news (101-500 words). Four media items were considered to be average news articles (501-1500 words).

The next graph (21) shows in what media sections the media items with the keyword "Donbas" were published on the website of the publishing house Lenta.ru in 2012.

Graph 21: *Media sections according to publishing house Lenta.ru where press releases were published in 2012*

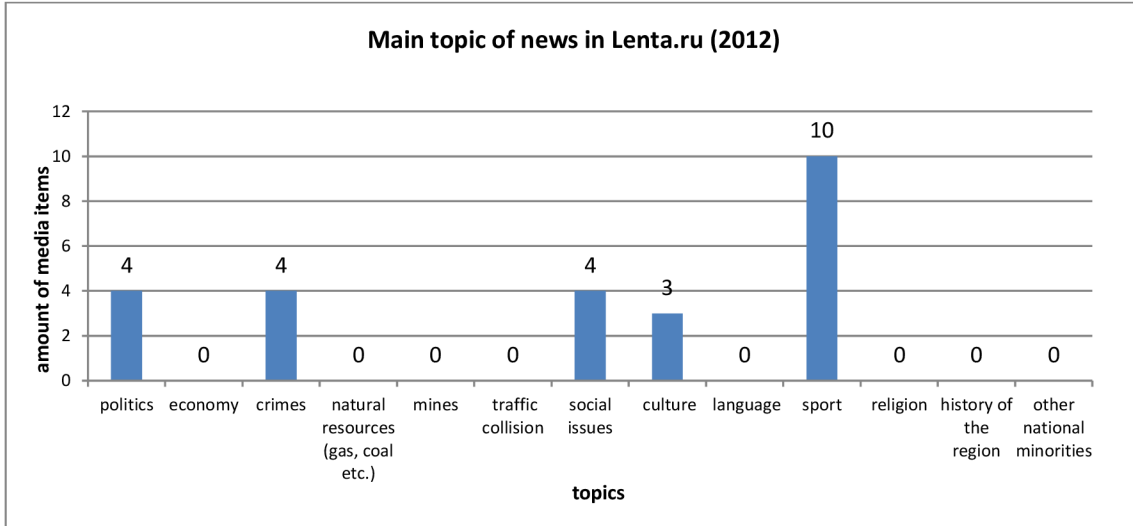


Source: author (2022)

Again, same as in previous years, most of the articles (16 of them) were published in the controversial media section called "Former Soviet Union"; other 9 media items were classified as Sport one.

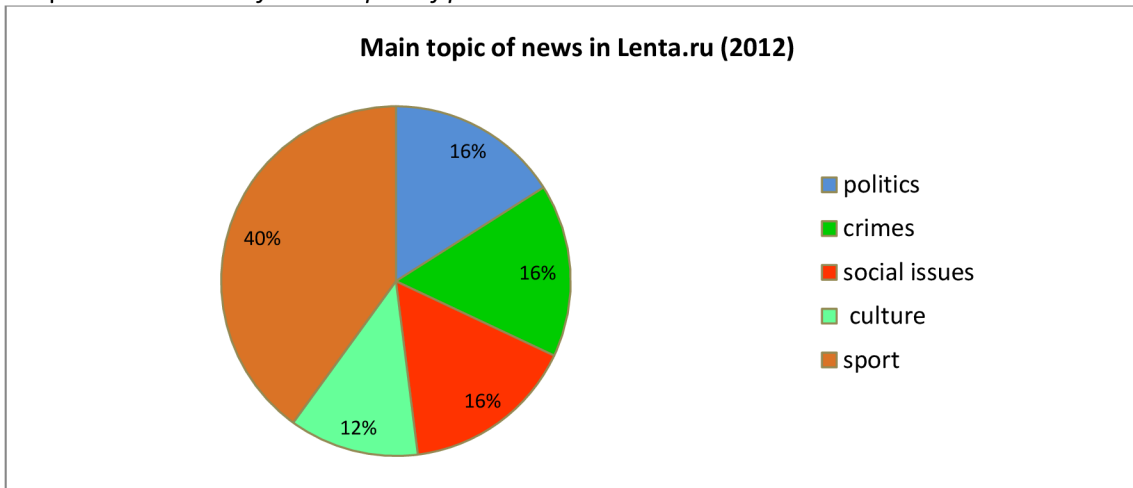
In comparison, how did author classify the same articles can be seen on the graphs 22 and 23.

Graph 22: Main topics of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2010, according to the author



Source: author (2022)

Graph 23: The ratio of main topics of published media items in Lenta.ru 2010

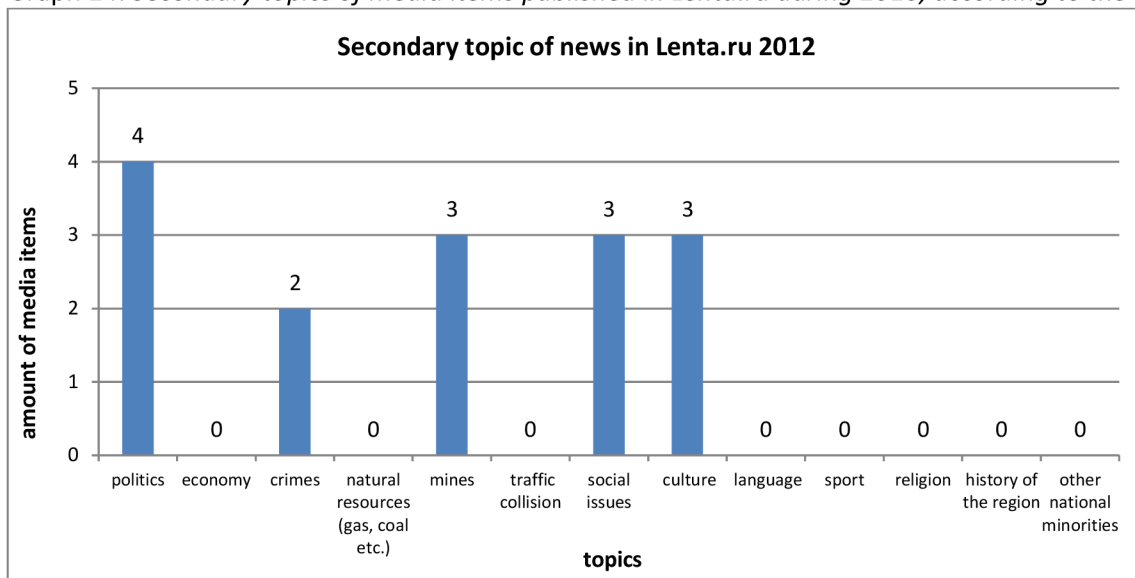


Source: author (2022)

Among the main topics were Sport, Politics, Crimes, Social Issues, Culture. The dominant main topic was Sport (40% of all other topics), topics Politics, Crimes, Social issues were equally represented by 16% each. Furthermore, other media items were considered to be written on a cultural topic.

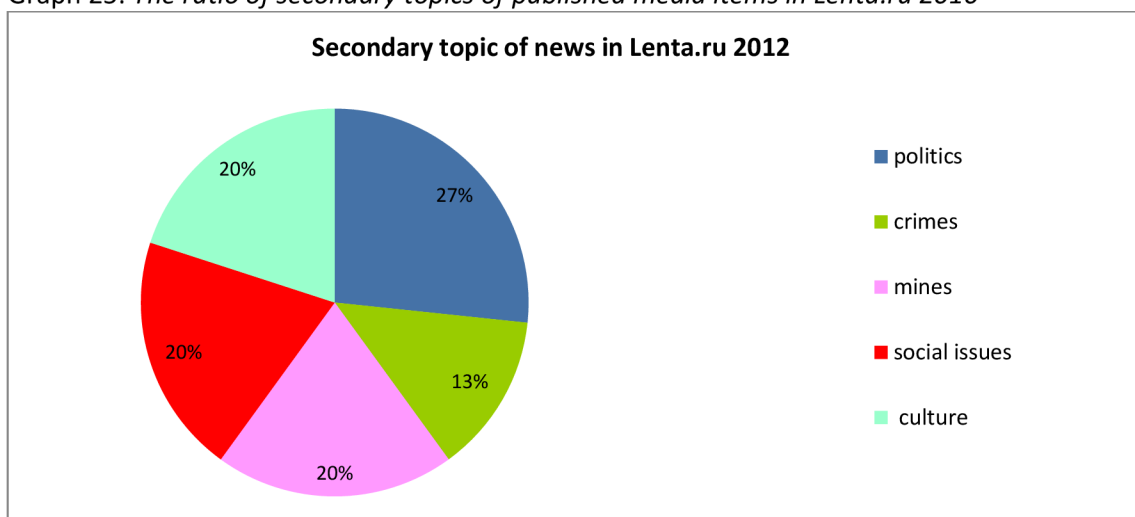
The following graphs (24 and 25) show what secondary topics were covered in media items published in Lenta.ru in 2012.

Graph 24: Secondary topics of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2010, according to the author



Source: author (2022)

Graph 25: The ratio of secondary topics of published media items in Lenta.ru 2010

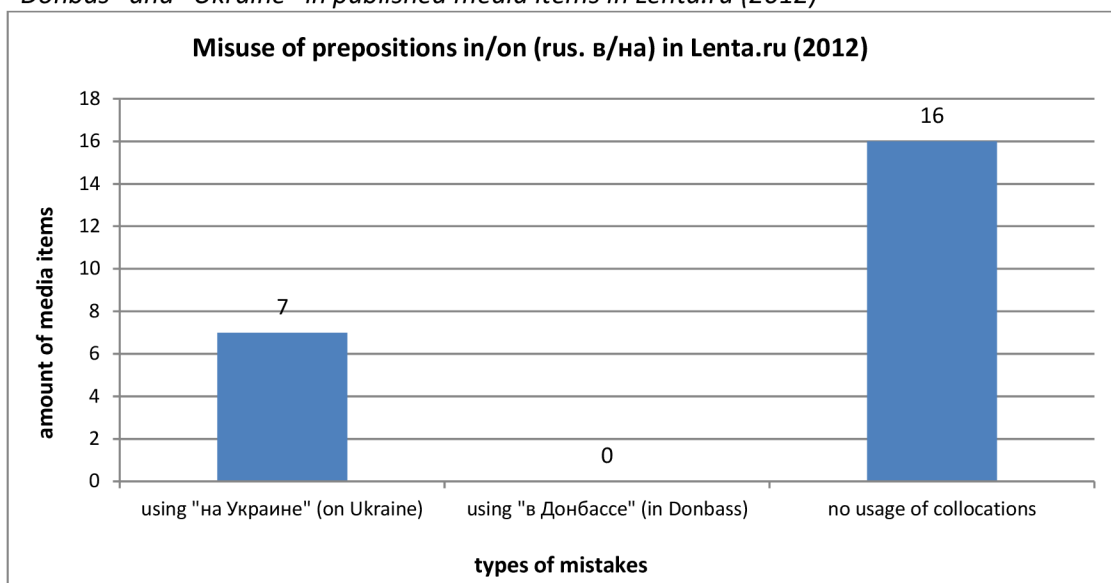


Source: author (2022)

Among secondary topics were covered Politics, Crimes, Mines, Social issues, Culture. All of them were covered almost equally (20% for Mines, Social issues and Culture; 13% for Crimes and 27% for Politics).

Next graph (26) shows the misuse of prepositions in researched collocations by Lenta.ru in 2012.

Graph 26: *The frequency of incorrect and no usage of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with the toponyms "Donbas" and "Ukraine" in published media items in Lenta.ru (2012)*

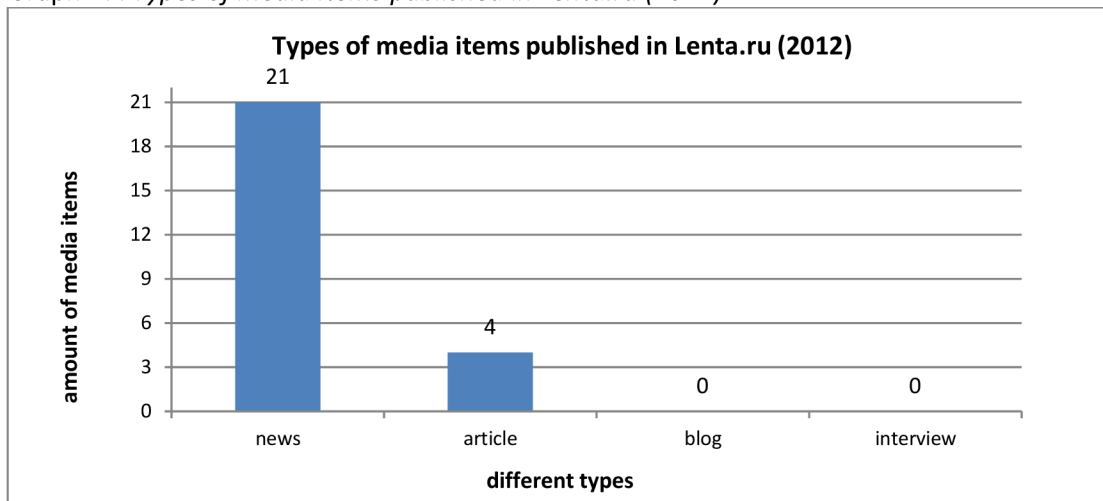


Source: author (2022)

In most articles, any researched collocations were not used (16 of them). Seven times there was a wrong collocation "on Ukraine" (rus. на Украине). However, interestingly and unexpectedly, in 2 articles, one of these or both collocations were used correctly.

The following graph (27) shows different types of media items published in Lenta.ru in 2012.

Graph 27: *Types of media items published in Lenta.ru (2012)*



Source: author (2022)

Most of the published media items were pieces of news (21 of them), 4 of them were articles. Lenta.ru did not publish any blog or interview in 2012.

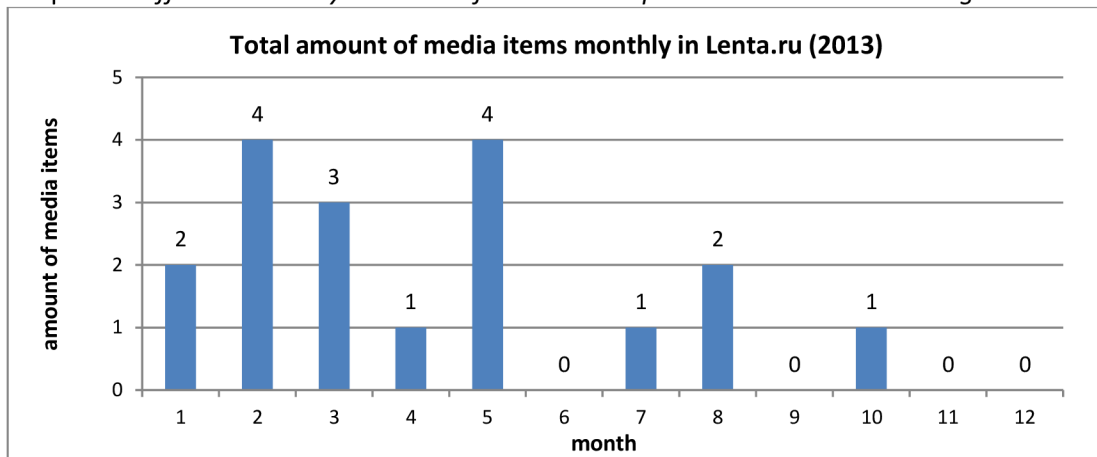
Lenta.ru 2013

Totally 18 media items written during 2010 from Lenta.ru were coded. Nine media items were discarded as those that do not fulfill the research criteria. Down below, there are links to discarded media items. All of them were discarded as "Donbas" was mentioned as the name of the hockey team out of the Donbas region context.

- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/01/28/nationalteam/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/03/20/dynamo/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/03/22/hockey/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/04/04/fhr/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/08/27/hokej/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/09/08/khl/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/09/11/khl/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/09/13/spartak/>
- <https://lenta.ru/news/2013/10/08/rylov/>

The following graph (28) shows the statistics of how many media items were published during the year 2013.

Graph 28: *Different monthly numbers of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2010*

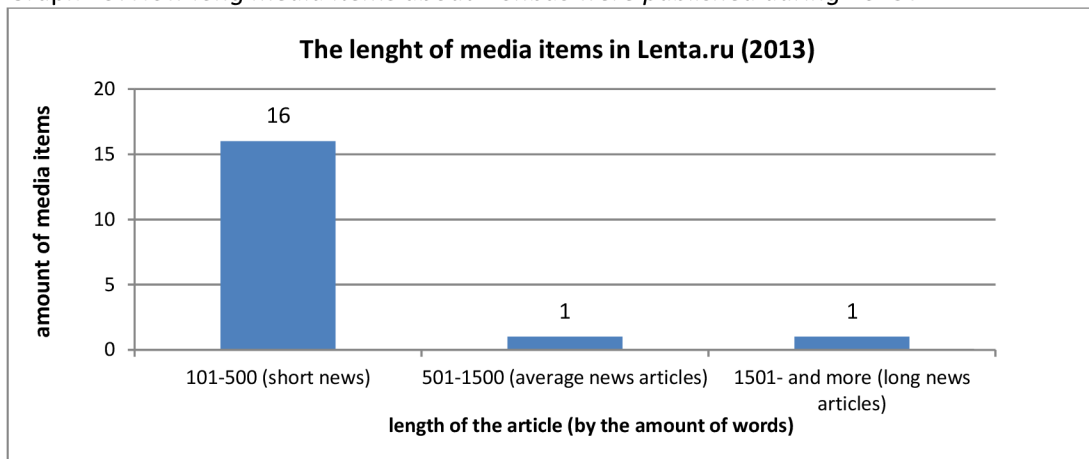


Source: author (2022)

The most significant number of media items about Donbas published in Lenta.ru in 2013 is 4. Four media items were published in February and May. No media items were published in June, September, November, or December. That might be an interesting topic for following possible researches as the Revolution of Dignity in November 2013 started. Surprisingly, no media item or piece of news was written in the Donbas region context. That is strange because in the following three-five months, Crimea would be annexed, and the invasion of Donbas would begin.

The average length of published materials can be seen in the following graph 29.

Graph 29: *How long media items about Donbas were published during 2013?*

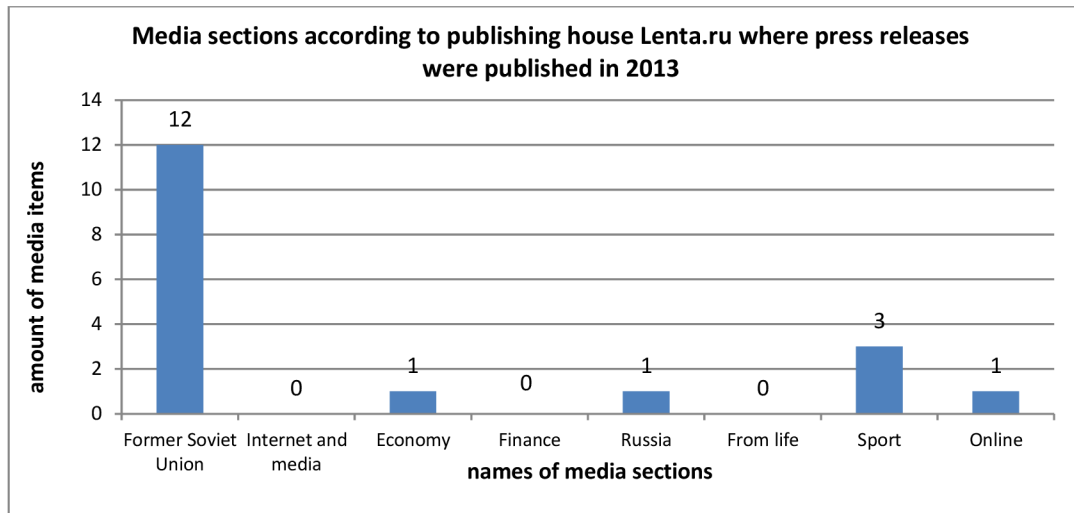


Source: author (2022)

Most of the media items were short news (101-500 words). There was also one average news article (501-1500 news) and a long one (1501 and more words).

The next graph (30) shows media sections according to publishing house Lenta.ru where press releases were published in 2013.

Graph 30: *Media sections according to publishing house Lenta.ru where press releases were published in 2013*

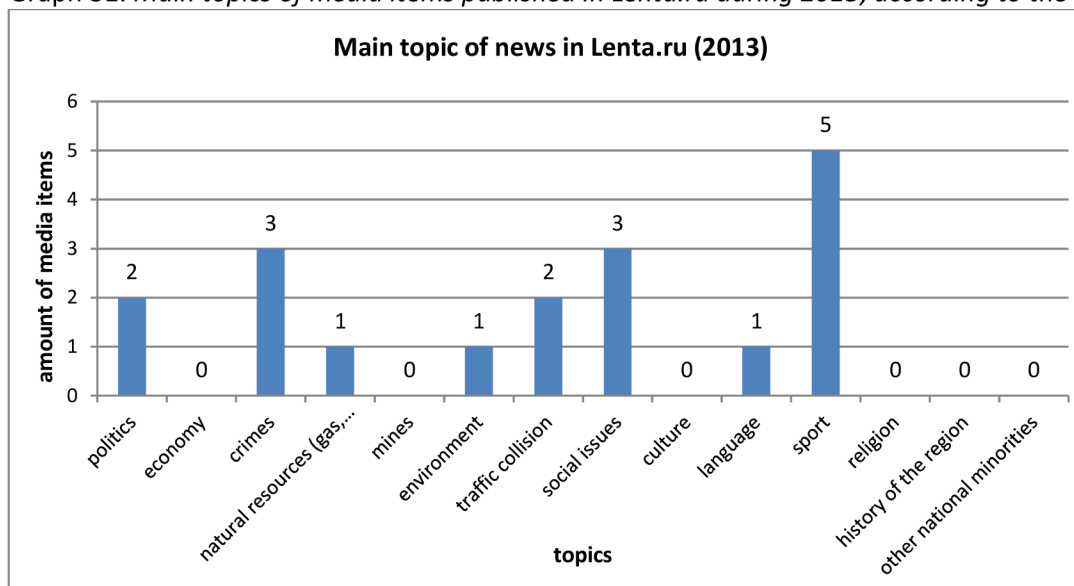


Source: author (2022)

In 2013 one more media section called “Online” appeared on the website of Lenta.ru. Only one media item was written in this section. Most of the media items, again, were put in the "Former Soviet Union" section (12 media items), and one media item appeared in the controversial category "Russia". Three media items were in the sport section and one in the section Economy.

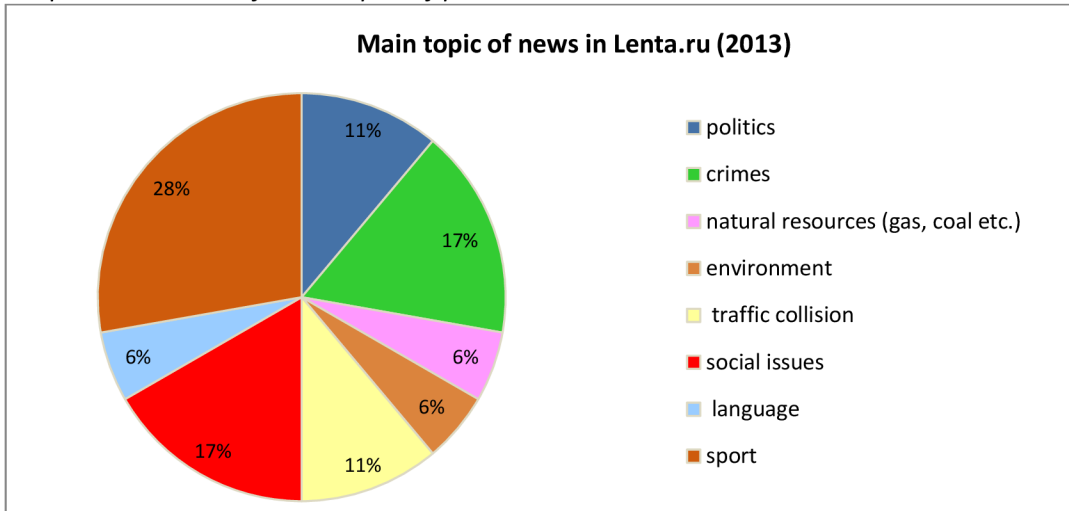
Next graphs (31 and 32) show the author's opinion about topics that media items were written about.

Graph 31: *Main topics of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2013, according to the author*



Source: author (2022)

Graph 32: The ratio of main topics of published media items in Lenta.ru 2013

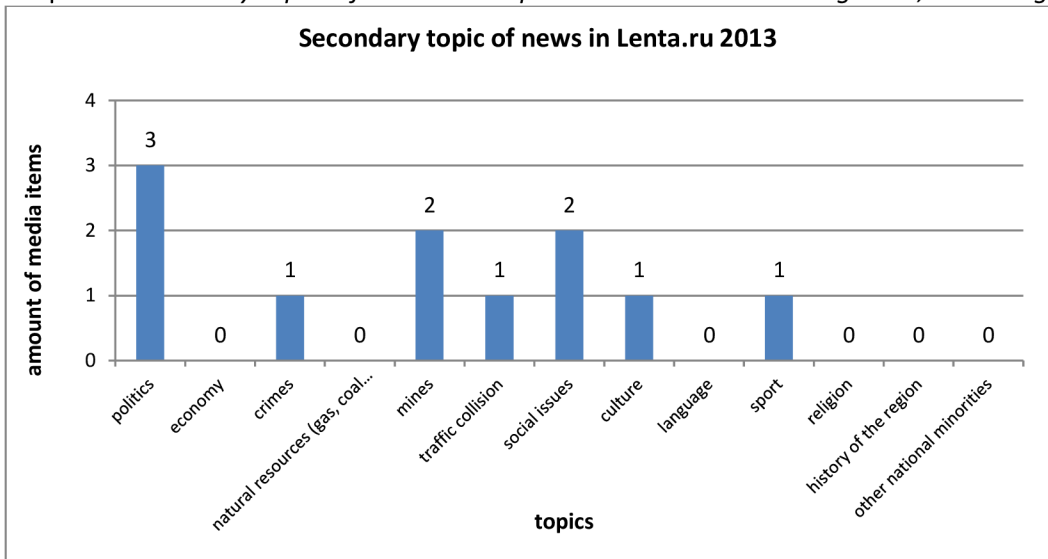


Source: author (2022)

So, as can be seen, among the most popular topics were Sport, Social issues and Crimes. Some media items were considered to be written about such topics as Politics, Traffic collisions, Natural resources, Environment, Language. The author added the topic Environment only in 2013 as there was no need for this topic before (no media items were written about this issue).

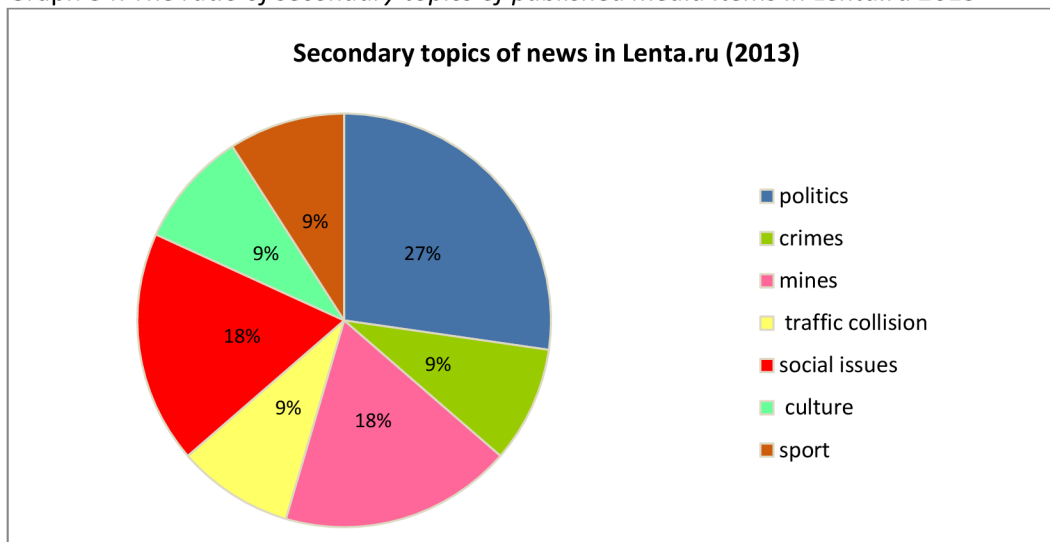
The following graphs (32 and 33) show the author's opinion about secondary topics that media items were written on.

Graph 33: Secondary topics of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2013, according to the author



Source: author (2022)

Graph 34: *The ratio of secondary topics of published media items in Lenta.ru 2013*

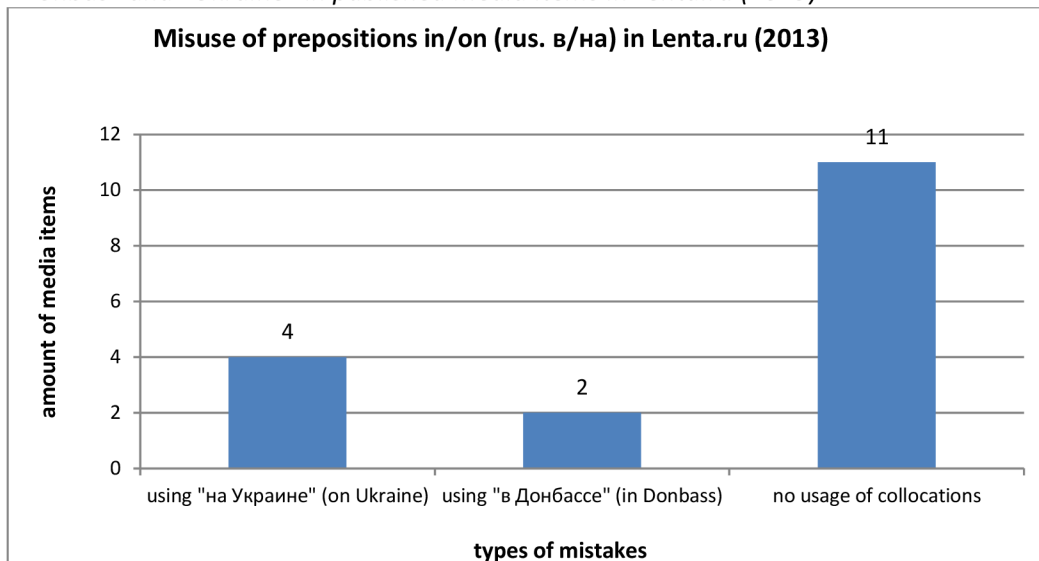


Source: author (2022)

From the graphs, it can be seen that Politics was covered the most as a secondary topic. Evenly were covered such topics as Mines and Social issues (both 18%). Furthermore, other topics (Crimes, Traffic collisions, Culture, Sport) were also covered evenly by 9% each.

The following graph (35) shows linguistic misuse of prepositions with geographical names.

Graph 35: *The frequency of incorrect and no usage of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with the toponyms "Donbas" and "Ukraine" in published media items in Lenta.ru (2013)*

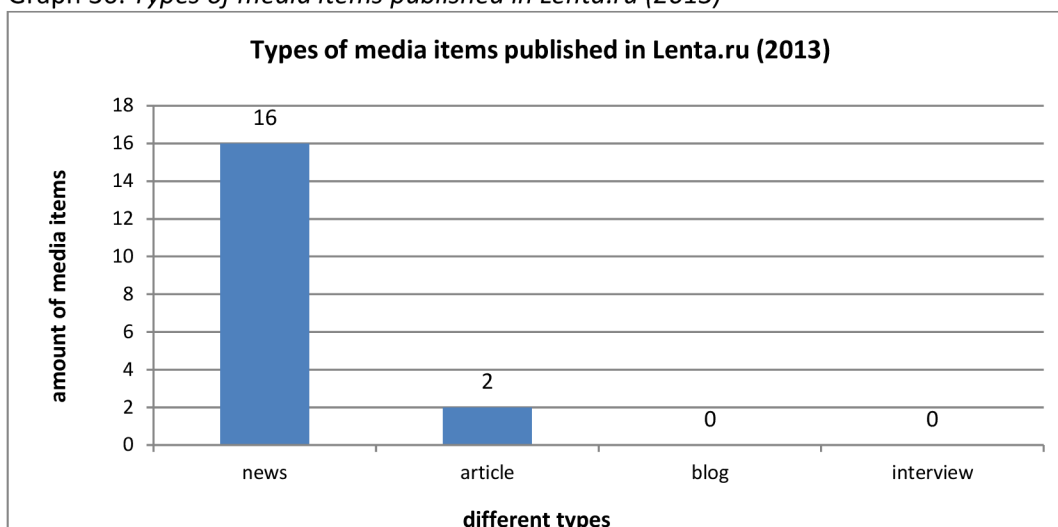


Source: author (2022)

In 11 cases, any collocations were not used. Despite it in all others, where at least one researched collocation was mentioned, there was a mistake. In 2013 both types of mistakes occurred: "on Ukraine" (rus. на Украине) and "in Donbas" (rus. в Донбассе). That means that the media, using incorrect prepositions, purposefully emphasize that Ukraine is a historical region, whether Donbas is a specific territory with clear administrative borders. Interesting to see how this media policy has been transforming over researched period 2010-2014 (comparison can be found below).

The following graph (36) shows what type of media items occurred in Lenta.ru in 2013.

Graph 36: *Types of media items published in Lenta.ru (2013)*



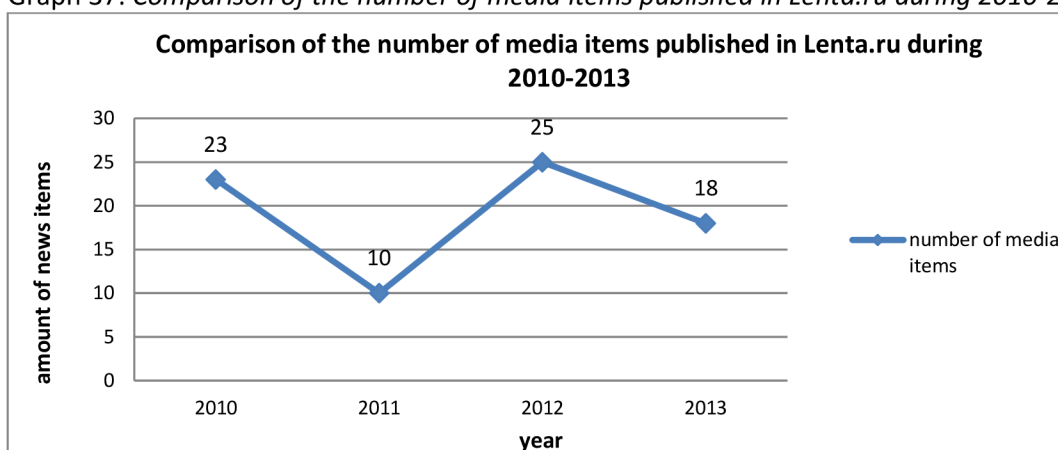
Source: author (2022)

Most of the media items were written as pieces of news (16 of them). Additionally, there were only 2 articles, no blog, or any interview.

Comparison of changes of researched issues that have been occurred in media items published by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

The next graph shows the dynamic of numbers of published media items by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013. Briefly, how many media items were written during the researched period, and in what way this number was changed.

Graph 37: *Comparison of the number of media items published in Lenta.ru during 2010-2013*

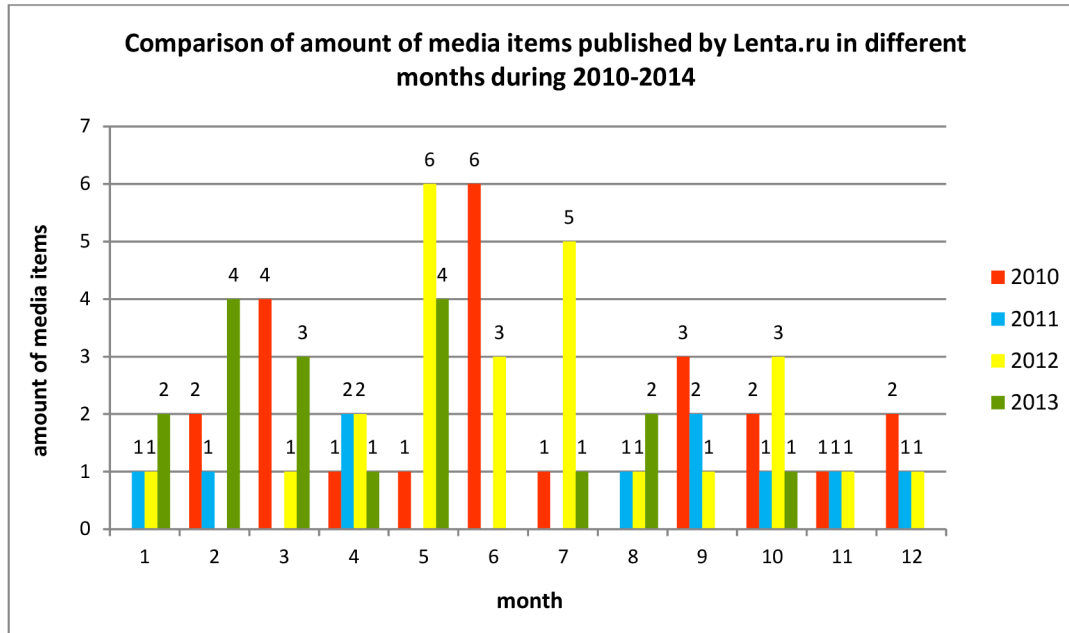


Source: author (2022)

From the graph 37, it can be seen that the number of published media items by Russian publishing house Lenta.ru is comparable or relatively the same, approximately 20 media items per year. Twenty-three media items published in 2010 might signify that the publishing house was interested in writing more about the presidential elections 2010 in Ukraine. However, there was no published material in January, when elections were held, and only 2 articles in the following February. Interestingly, the following 2011 year there was not much written material about Donbas, with only 11 written media items. There were not any extraordinary social or political events; moreover, the presidential elections were won by the pro-Russian politician that might be an explanation for such a slight interest in this region. The following 2012 year 2,5 times more media items were written – 25 pieces of news. Due to

UEFA Euro 2012 that was partly held in Donetsk, it is not surprising that a higher amount of published material was written as sport news (graph 41). In 2013 among significant social and political events was the Revolution of Dignity that began at the end of November. Surprisingly, no media item was written in November and December 2013. The following graph shows how many media items were written in different months during four researched years.

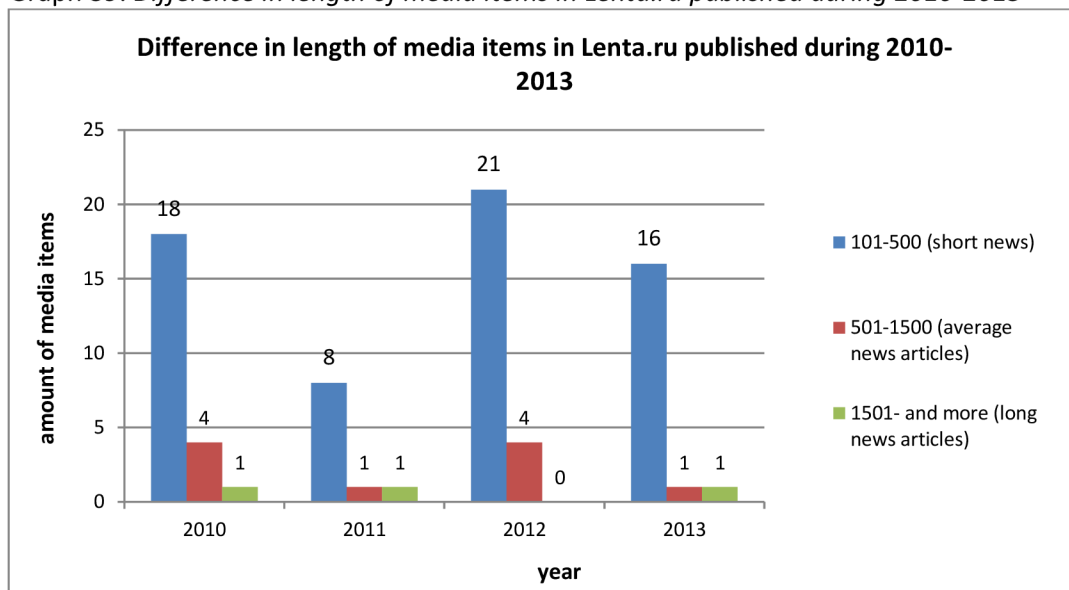
Graph 38: Comparison of the amount of media items published by Lenta.ru in different months during 2010-2014



Source: author (2022)

The next graph shows the differences in the length of published media items by the Russian publishing house.

Graph 39: Difference in length of media items in Lenta.ru published during 2010-2013



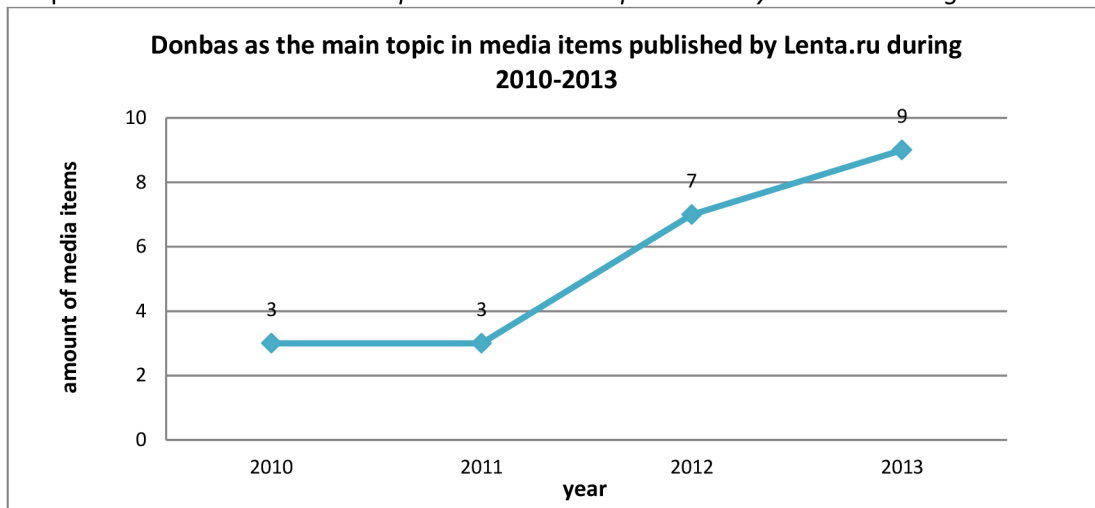
Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen, the predominant majority of the media items during the all researched years were pieces of news no more than 500 words. Long articles (1501 and more words) were more of a rarity,

with only one long article in 2010, 2011, 2013; and there was no written long media article in 2012. It is difficult to say whether there is a pattern in writing average news articles (501-1500 words) as 4 were published in 2010 and 2012, and 1 of them was published in 2011 and 2013. The author personally does not suppose any pattern to be there, however more precise answer can be given after a possible analysis of other years before and after researched period.

The following analysed issue answers whether the Donbas region was the main topic of published media items or not (just a recollection of the region in a broader context); and how it has been changed for four researched years.

Graph 40: *Donbas as the main topic in media items published by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013*

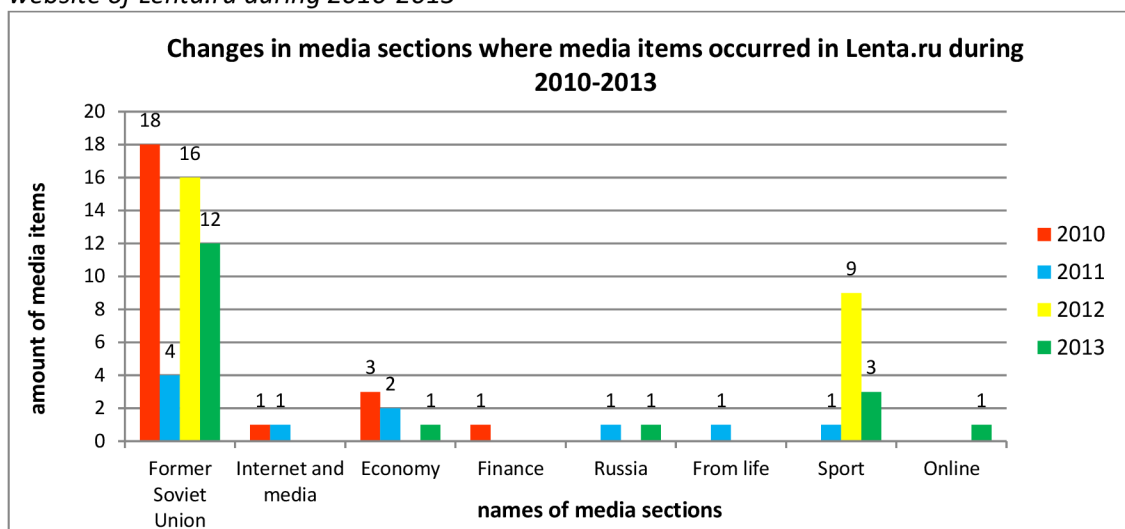


Source: author (2022)

From the graph 40, it can be seen, that the publishing house has written about Donbas as a main topic of a media item gradually more and more. From 3 published articles in 2010 and 2011 up to 7 articles in 2012 and 9 articles in 2013. Media has started to focus more on Donbas topic during 2010-2013.

Following graph (41) shows in what media sections, according to the publishing house, the media items about Donbas were written. Down below, there are different sections from the website of Lenta.ru; different colors mean different years. The graph shows how were different media sections on the website covered differently during 2010-2013.

Graph 41: Comparison of different numbers of published media items in different media sections on a website of Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

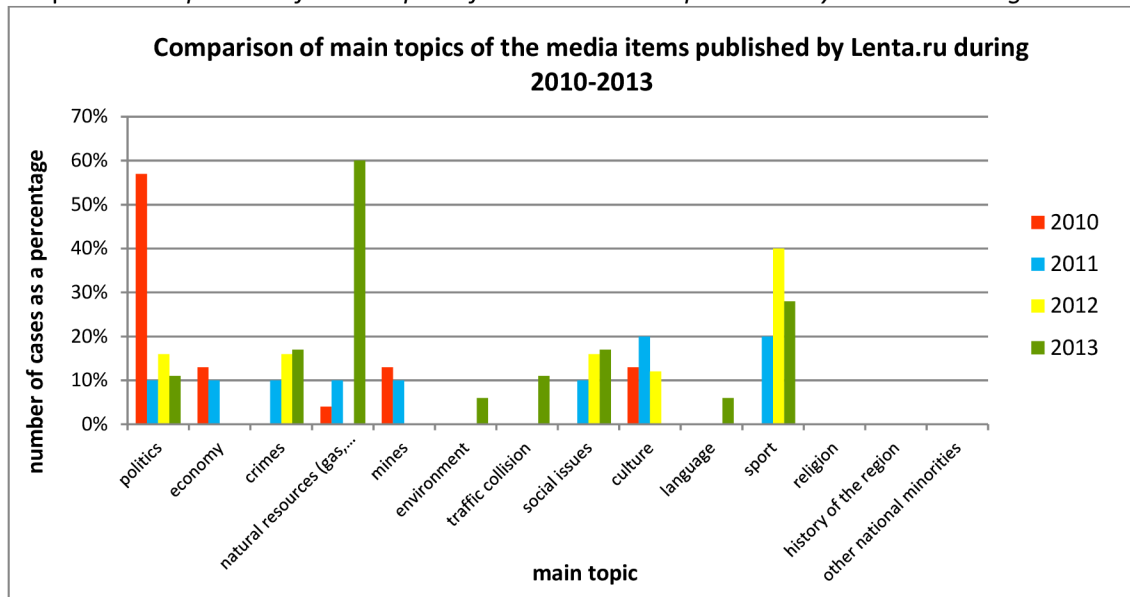


Source: author (2022)

The graph 41 shows that the media section called "Former Soviet Union" was used the most for organizing media items on the website. The author has already written about her opinion about this section and the reason why it cannot be considered as a suitable one (if the media is aimed to describe events in a particular region in the other country, the sovereignty of which appreciates). Section "Internet and media" was used only once in 2010 and 2011, and did not appear anymore. Section "Economy" was not used so much: 3 media items in 2010, 2 media items in 2011, and only one media item in 2013. In the author's opinion, a significant part of media items added to the section "Former Soviet Union" was more suitable for the category "Economy". The media section "Finance" was covered only once in 2010. The controversial section "Russia" (there must occur an important question how ever could pieces of news about foreign territory be added in the category of another country) was used twice: one media item was published in 2011 and the other in 2013. To make parallels on social and political events at that time: 2011 was a year for stable international relationships with Ukraine due to the victory of pro-Russian politician Yanukovich in the presidential elections in January 2010; 2013 was a year where the Revolution of Dignity began. The section "From life" was used only once in 2011. The section "Sport" was the second most used among other sections. There were no media items published in 2010; however, there were 1 in 2011, 9 in 2012, and 3 in 2013. The section "Online" was used only once in 2013. Interesting to see that in 2012 all published media items were only added to sections "Former Soviet Union" and "Sport" on the website, and no other media section was used.

The following graph (42) shows the author's opinion of the main topics that the media items were written on.

Graph 42: Comparison of main topics of the media items published by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013



Source: author (2022)

The graph 42 might need a further explanation of why the values on the vertical axis are given in percentage. The changes in the frequency of publishing a media item on a certain topic were researched. Since the initial numbers of media items are different in different years, to make the comparison more illustrative, the author decided to count the frequency of each topic in percentage. For example: during comparing 5 media items in the year X to 10 in the year Y does not necessarily mean that the second value is bigger as if in the year X, the whole amount of media items might be 8 (the share of media topic in the first case is $5/8 \cdot 100\% = 62,5\%$), whereas in the Y the whole amount of media items might be 100 (the share of media topic in the second case $10/100 \cdot 100\% = 10\%$). That is the reason for another counting for the analysis that can be found in most of the following graphs. All the following graphs, where the values will be given in percentage have the same logic.

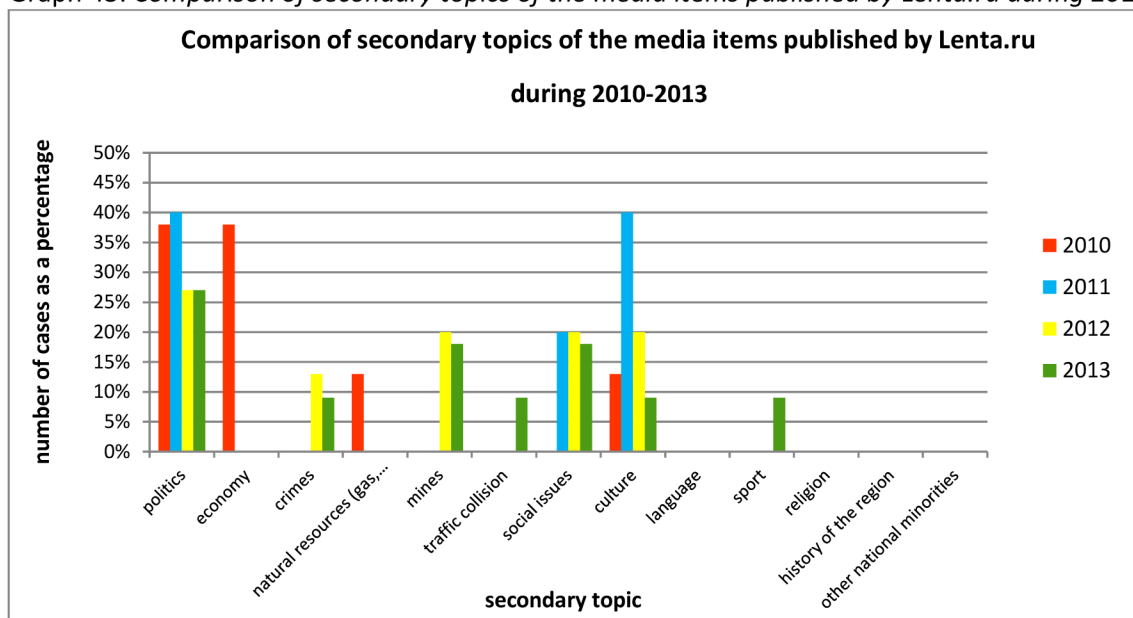
In graph 42 there are no value captions on the graph with the only purpose to make it more readable.

Politics were the main topic of the majority of media items (57%) in 2010; however since that, the number of published media items on this topic as the main one has decreased: only 10% in 2011, 16% in 2012 and 11% in 2013. The economy was a central topic for 13% of media items in 2010 and 10% in 2011; since then, no media article had an economy as the main topic. During the coding of data from 2011, the author added a new category called "Crime". Logically, no media item had a crime main topic in 2010; but the amount of media items with this main topic has been increasing during the researched years: from 10% in 2011, 16% in 2012 up to 17% in 2013. The topic of natural resources was the main one for 4% of media items in 2010, and for 10% of media items in 2011. Important to mention that in 2013 60% of media items had this topic as the main one. The topic mines was the main one for 13% of media items in 2010 and 10% of media items in 2011; however, was not used at all in 2012 and 2013. The topic environment was added almost at the end of the coding process while coding media items published in 2013, where only one media item was categorized as written about the environment (6% of the total amount). Two media items written about traffic collisions as the main topic were published in 2013 (11% of the total amount). The topic of social issues was added while coding the material published in 2011. Logically, there is no media item coded as that one with the main topic on social issues, however during following 2011-2013 years more and more media items were published: 10% of the total amount in 2011, 16% of the total amount in 2012 and 17% of the total amount in 2013. The

topic culture was the main one for 13% of all media items in 2010, 20% of all media items in 2011, and 12% of media items in 2012. No media item with the cultural main topic was published in 2013. The language was the central topic for one media item published in 2013. Topics of religion, history of the region, and other national minorities were not covered as the main ones at all. In 2010 majority of the media items were written on a political topic; in 2011, two main topics for the majority of articles were sport and culture; in 2012, the topic sport was covered the most as the main one, and in 2013 the topic natural resources.

Analogical logic can be used to decode the following graph, considering secondary topics of the media items. In graph 43, again, there are no value captions on the graph with the only purpose to make it more readable. Important to mention that the result was divided by the total number of articles with secondary topics to count the percentage value. As not all of them had secondary topics, the divided numbers were different, for example in main and secondary topics even in the same year.

Graph 43: Comparison of secondary topics of the media items published by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013



Source: author (2022)

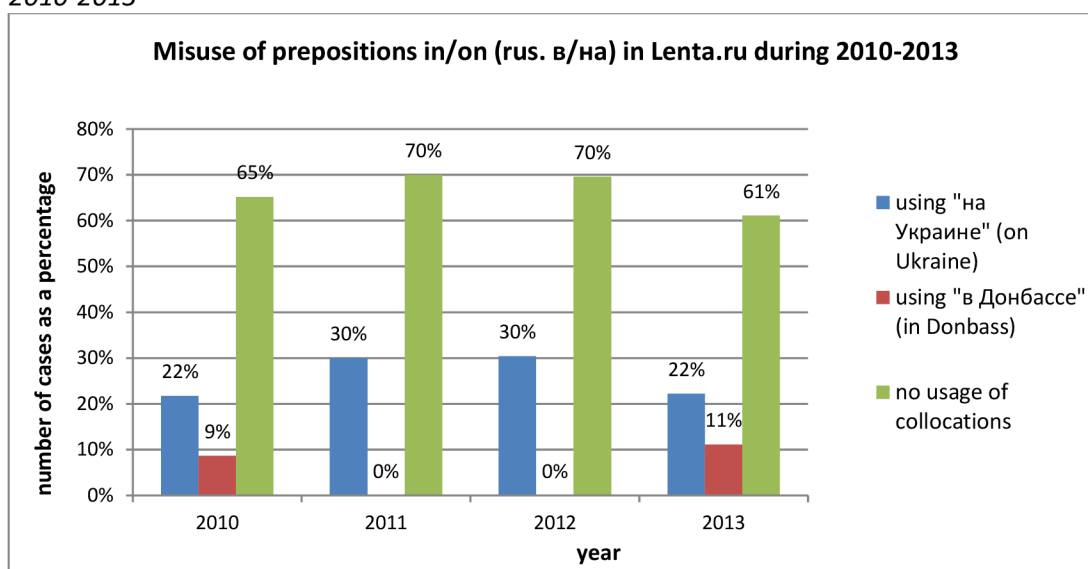
Such topics as language, religion, history of the region, other national minorities were not an issue of a secondary topic in published media items by Lenta.ru during the period 2010-2013 at all. Topics religion, history of the region and other national minorities were not covered by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013 at all, neither as a main topic of media items, nor as a secondary one. In 2010 the majority of the media items had two most covered secondary topics: politics and economy (38% each). In 2011 the majority of the media items also had two most covered secondary topics: politics and culture (40% each). In 2012 the topic politics was covered as a secondary topic of media items the most, same as in 2013.

If we compare the development of different topics as secondary ones, there is no clear pattern. Topic politics was covered relatively many times: 38% of all items with a secondary topic in 2010, 40% in 2011, and 27% both in 2013 and 2014. The topic economy was a secondary one for some media items only in 2010 (38% of all items with a secondary topic). This fact is rather unexpected and surprising as media often cover economic topics. The topic of crimes as a secondary one has appeared in media items published since 2012. In 2012 13% of all media items were considered to have this secondary topic, and 9% of all media items in 2013. The topic of natural resources was a secondary one only for 13% of all

media items in 2010 and then never appeared. The topic of mines as a secondary one was not covered in 2010 and 2011 at all, following years in 2012 20% of media items are considered to be with this secondary topic, and 18% in 2013. The topic of traffic collisions as a secondary one appeared only in 2013 with 9% of all published media items with a secondary topic. The topic of social issues appeared in 2011 and was covered relatively evenly: 20% of all media items in 2011 and 2012, and 18% in 2013. The topic of culture was a secondary one for 13% of media items in 2010, 40% in 2011, 20% in 2012, and 9% in 2013.

The following graph (44) shows the dynamic of incorrect usage of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with geographical names "Donbas" and "Ukraine" (incorrect "in Donbas"(rus.в Донбассе) and "on Ukraine" (rus. на Украине), in cases where collocations were used.

Graph 44: *Misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with toponyms Donbas and Ukraine in Lenta.ru during 2010-2013*



Source: author (2022)

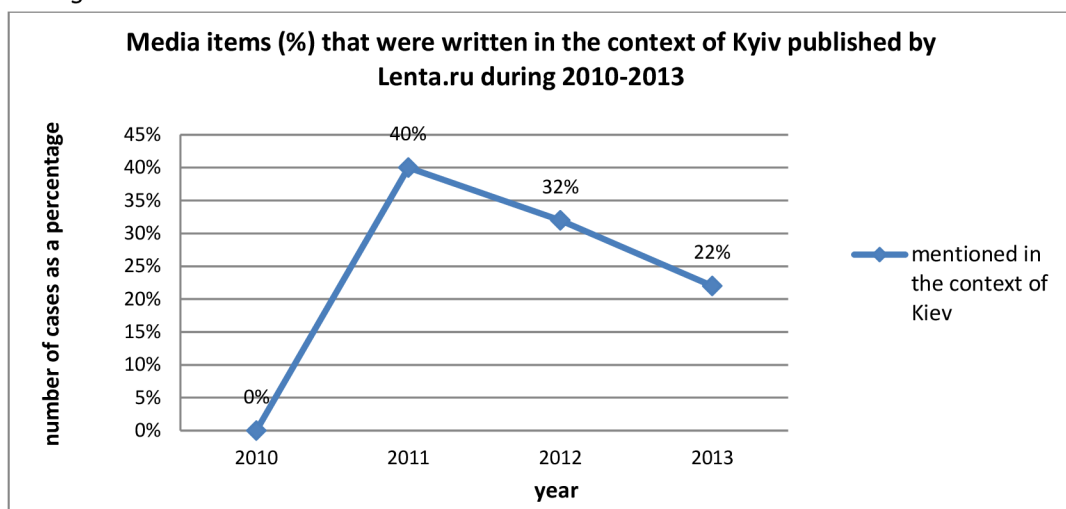
Firstly, the author should explain a technical clarification about values in percentage. The logic of using data in this format is the same as in all graphs mentioned above; however there the readers might ask themselves why the total amount of all values in one year is not 100%. The explanation is following: the graph shows only mistakes and number of cases where collocations were not used (all coded as "1" in Excel sheet); if there was a collocation without mistakes it was not coded. That means that if in 2010 the sum of all values in (22% + 9% + 65%) is 96%, the rest 4% were articles where the usage of researched collocations was correct.

From the graph 44, the reader can see that in most cases, the collocation was not used at all in media items (in 65% cases in 2010, in 70% cases in 2011 and 2012, in 61% cases in 2013). Almost every media item that contained the collocations had one or both types of mistakes. Only 4% of all published media items in 2010 and 6% of all published media items in 2011 used correct prepositions with the toponyms. The wrong usage "on Ukraine" (rus. on Ukraine) was more frequent than the wrong usage "in Donbas" (rus. в Донбассе). Almost in all researched cases where collocations occurred, it is possible to hypothesize that Ukraine was considered a historical region without clear borders and never a sovereign country by the publishing house Lenta.ru. That might be a key for understanding how Ukrainian lands were considered by one of the biggest Internet publishing houses in Russia and by all its readers. It does not necessarily mean that usual people deliberately used wrong collocations to emphasize political or

historical issues; however, it does mean that the publishing house purposely used incorrect prepositions. The question is how much the wrong unconscious use of prepositions indicating territorial differences may have affected people's psyche. The question might be an inspiration for possible future researches.

The following graph (45) shows how many media items were written in the context of Kyiv. The researched question was inspired by the book *How Ukraine has been losing Donbas*²¹, where the confrontation between cities and political clans is described in detail (see: chapter Brief introduction to the context of Donbas region).

Graph 45: Media items (%) about Donbas that were written in the context of Kyiv published by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013



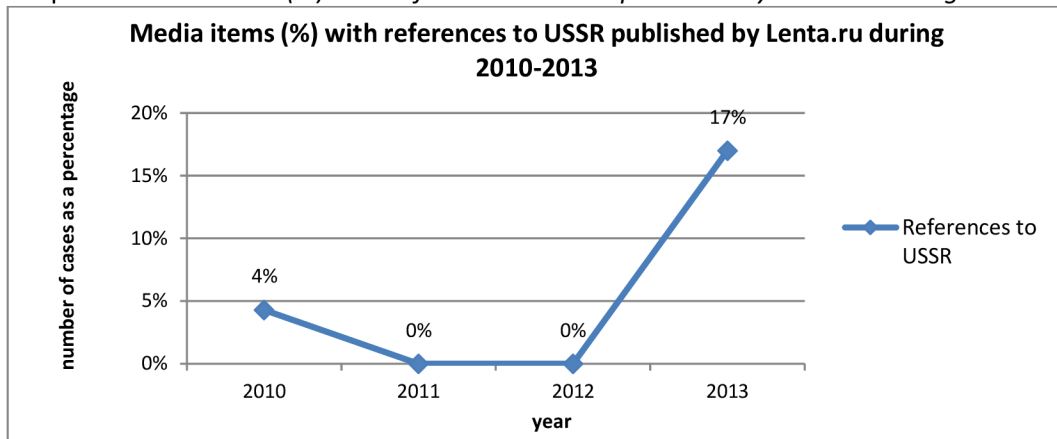
Source: author (2022)

No comparison between cities or Donbas region was mentioned in the context of Kyiv in 2010. However, it was mentioned in the context of the capital in 2011 a lot (40% of all media items). In the following 2011 and 2012 years, the number of media items written in the context of Kyiv decreased (32% and 22%). It is difficult to say whether the Donbas region has begun to be taken more independently from Kyiv or it was made deliberately to prepare readers to see news about Donbas separately without any context (following news about separatism in Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics). After consideration the amount of written information about Donbas in the context of Kyiv, different explanations come to mind. One possible hypothesis: Donbas region (Donetsk) was written in the context of Kyiv to show readers that this city is a worthy opponent to the capital and then make the reader used to read news without any additional context. The author does not approve that this is the only explanation; moreover, she does not approve that hypothesis is correct, but it definitely has a right to be written.

The next researched issue is how much material was written in the context of the USSR. The author does not include articles where the only context of the USSR is that media item was published in the media section "Former Soviet Union" on a website. Articles that have some references to USSR in their texts are analysed and coded. The results of the coding process can be seen in the following graph.

²¹ The name of the book from the Ukrainian original «Як Україна втрачала Донбас» was translated by the author of the bachelor thesis, more about the book on <https://lostDonbas.com.ua>

Graph 46: Media items (%) with references to USSR published by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

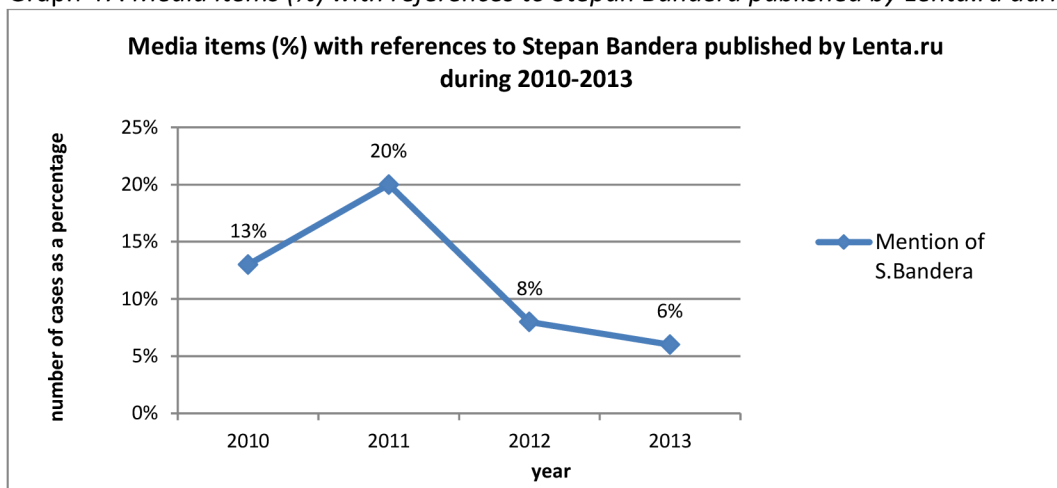


Source: author (2022)

The values are given in percentage for easier comparison due to the different amounts of published media items during the researched years. If we do not consider the majority of articles that were put in the section "Former Soviet Union" as those that have references to USSR, we can see that there are not so many media items that suit the criteria to be coded. Only 4% of all published media items in 2010 have references to USSR; no article had such a reference in 2011 and 2012. Despite it, in 2013, surprisingly, relatively a significant amount of published media items have references to the USSR - 17%, that is almost 1/5 of all published material by the publishing house. The bachelor thesis research shows that the USSR was mentioned differently over the years. The explanation why it is so and what media image of the USSR has been created for decades might be a topic for the following research.

The next graph (47) shows the amount of media items published during 2010-2013 that have references to Ukrainian politician and significant figure in Ukrainian fight for independence Stepan Bandera.

Graph 47: Media items (%) with references to Stepan Bandera published by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

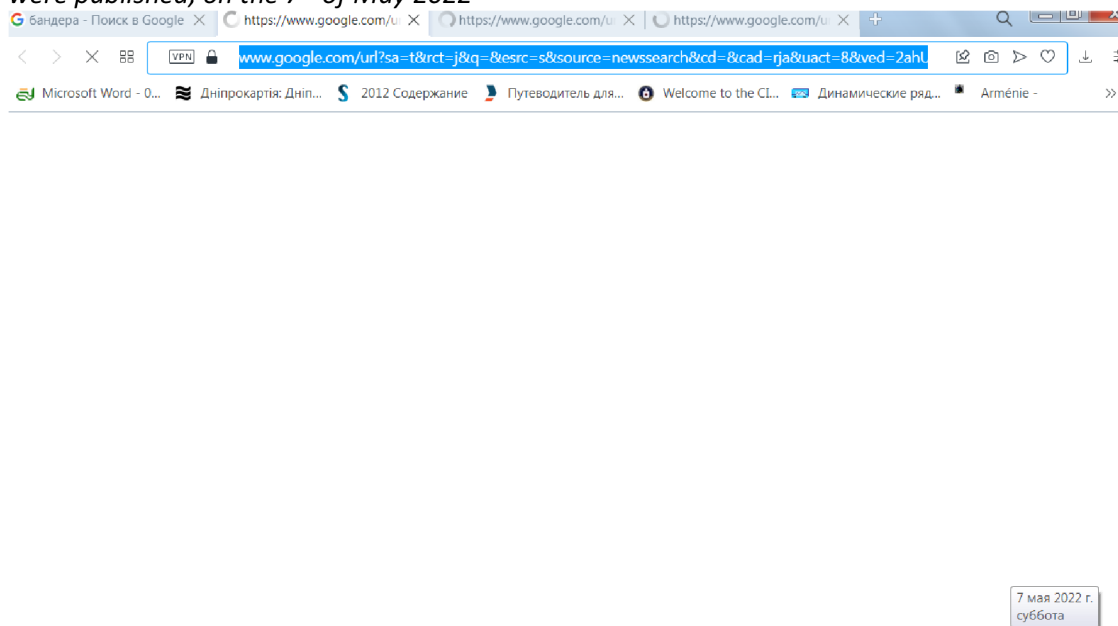


Source: author (2022)

The references to Stepan Bandera occurred every year during the researched period. In 2010 13% of all published media items had references to Stepan Bandera, 20% of media items in 2011, 8% of media items in 2012, and 6% of media items in 2013. It is difficult to say why there have been fewer and fewer references to Stepan Bandera since 2011; however important to notice that almost every fifth media item contained them in 2011, that is quite a significant number.

Interesting parallels with the present time (May 2022) could be done. Nowadays, the Russian-Ukrainian war is translated by different Russian media as a fight against Ukrainian nationalists banderovtzi and against Stepan Bandera (even though the man was killed in 1959). On the 7th of May the author typed in Google search “Bandera” (rus. Бандера); and opened the tab “news”. The author wanted to read some media items about Bandera published by Russian media houses, she tried to open different links found on the search, but no one could be opened. (see pic. 4)

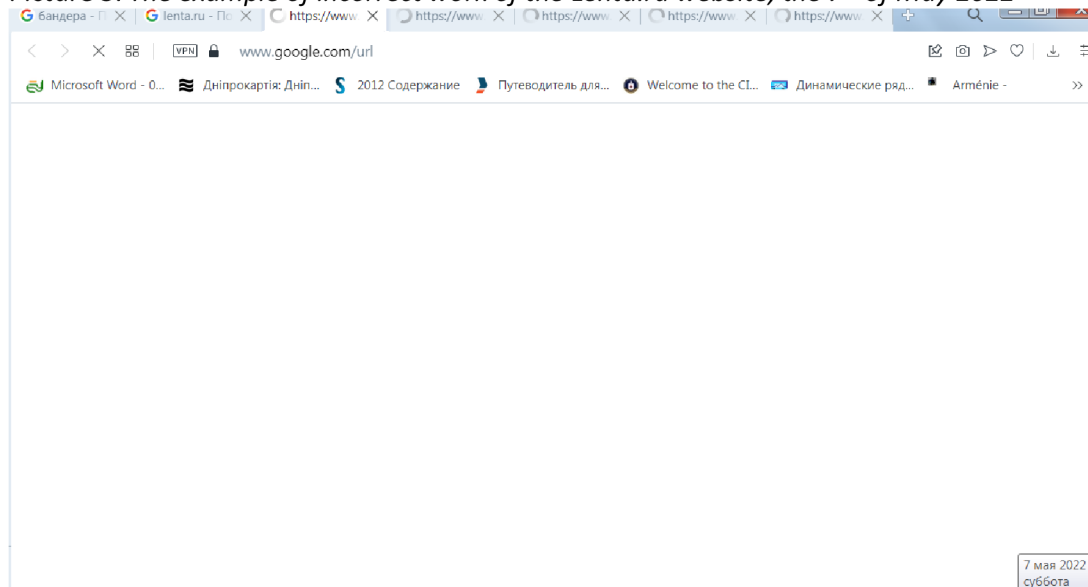
Picture 4. *The example of incorrect work of different websites where media items about Stepan Bandera were published, on the 7th of May 2022*



Source: author (2022)

Then the author decided to check whether the problem of incorrect work of Russian news websites is connected to the articles about Stepan Bandera, or if there is no access to any materials at all. The author tried to open the website of the publishing house Lenta.ru and some news from this website. The result of these tries can be seen on the following picture:

Picture 5. *The example of incorrect work of the Lenta.ru website, the 7th of May 2022*

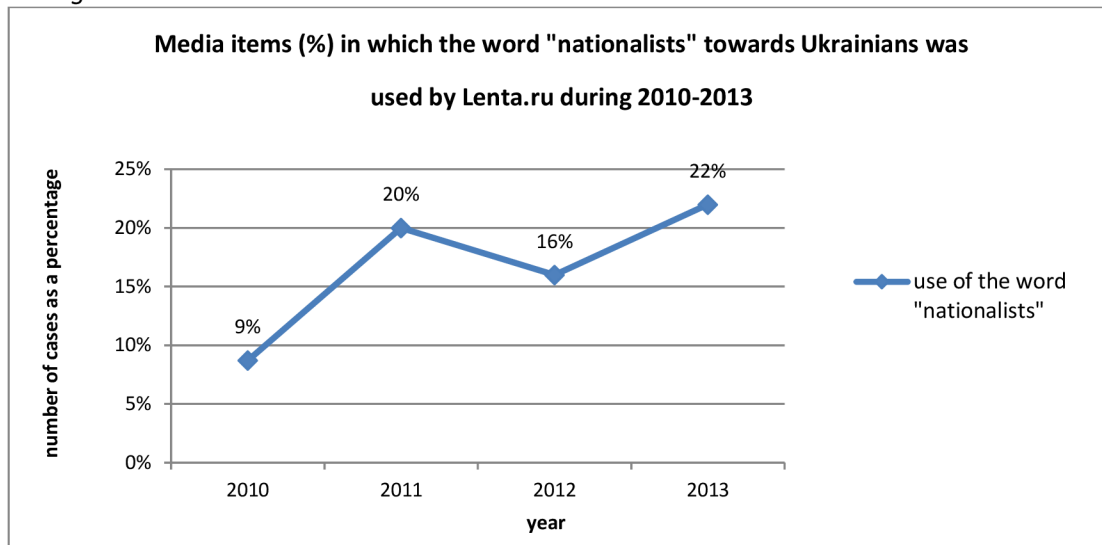


Source: author (2022)

Trying to open Russian media items from different websites of different publishing houses was unsuccessful. The reason is not known, it is possible that websites were attacked by hackers during the wartime; however, more possible is that Russia closed their media websites for the users outside Russia (opening websites in anonymous tabs did not help). Once again, the author has made sure that making an archive of researched published media items was the right decision.

The following graph (48) shows a similar researched issue as the previous one, the frequency of using the word "nationalists". This word has often been used together with the name Stepan Bandera, so it might be interesting to see whether there are some correlations.

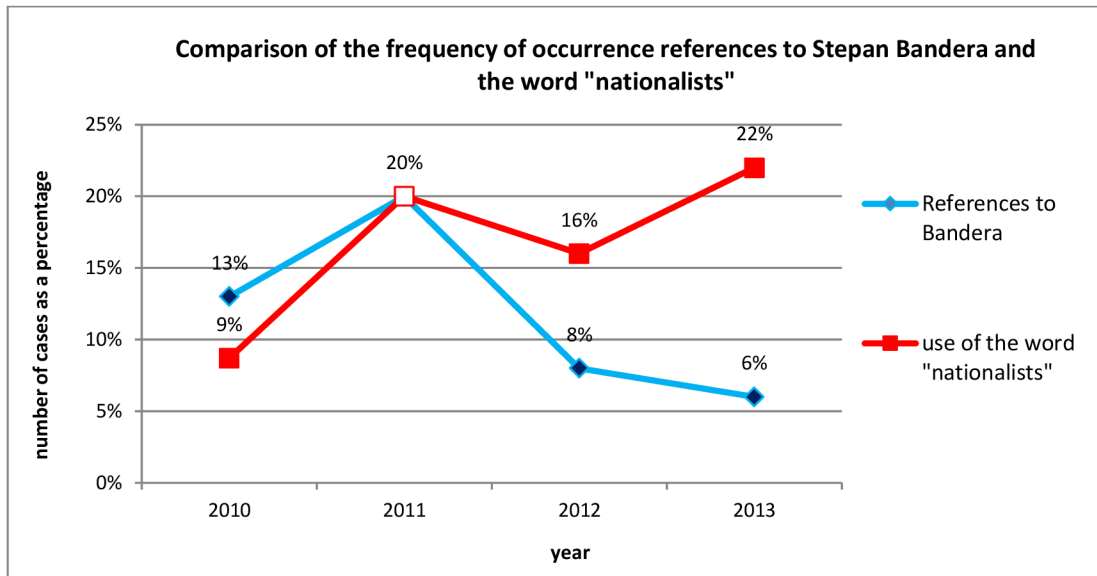
Graph 48: *Media items (%) in which the word "nationalists" towards Ukrainians was used by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013*



Source: author (2022)

From the graph 48, it can be seen that the frequency of the usage of the word "nationalists" towards Ukrainians was high enough. Not so high in 2010 – only in 9% of all published materials, but since that the frequency has become average two times higher: 20% of all published media items in 2011, 16% of all media items in 2012 and 22% of media items in 2013. One of the most prominent Russian publishing houses named Ukrainian as "nationalists" for a long period of time. Same as it is doing now, while covering the current events during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Below, there is a comparison of the frequency of references to Stepan Bandera and "nationalists".

Graph 49: Comparison of the frequency of occurrence references to Stepan Bandera and the word "nationalists"

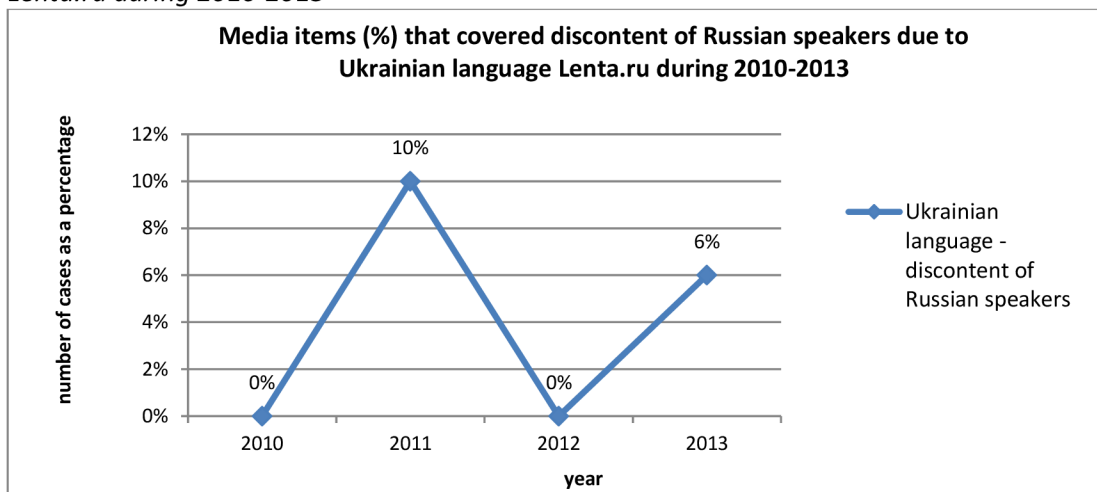


Source: author (2022)

From the graph 49, it can be seen that while the use of the word "nationalists" has become more and more frequent in the researched period, the frequency of the references to Stepan Bandera has felt down during 2010-2013.

The next research is how often have the language issue problems ever occurred in media before the occupation of the Donbas region that was explained as a protection of the rights of Russian speakers? The following graph (50) shows the frequency of occurrence of media items where there was written about Russian speakers' discontent.

Graph 50: Media items (%) that covered discontent of Russian speakers due to Ukrainian language Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

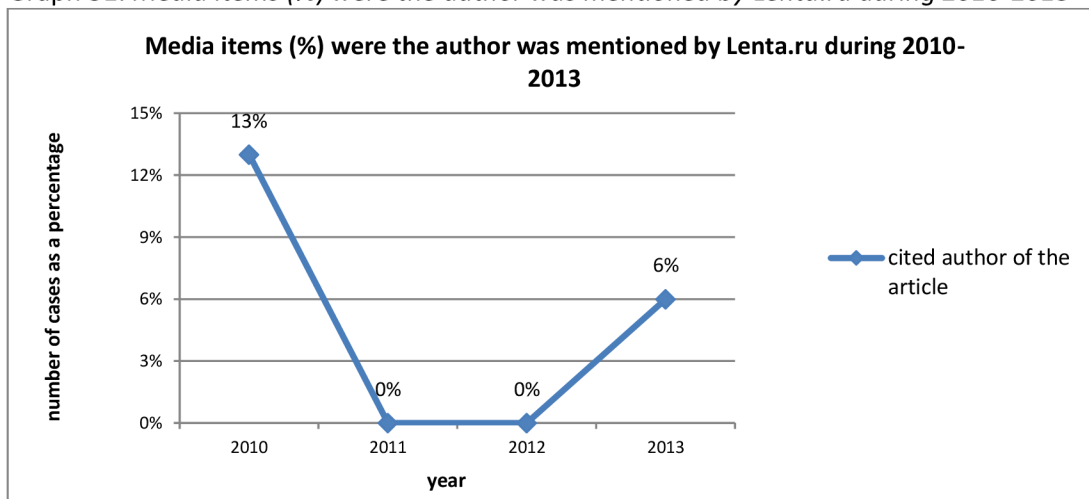


Source: author (2022)

The language issue was not a popular topic to write about. The frequency of occurrence of discontent of Russian speakers due to the Ukrainian language was also low: no occurrence in 2010 and 2012; and the occurrence only in 10% of all published media in 2011 and in 6% of all published media in 2013.

The next graph (51) shows how often the author of a media item was written.

Graph 51: Media items (%) were the author was mentioned by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

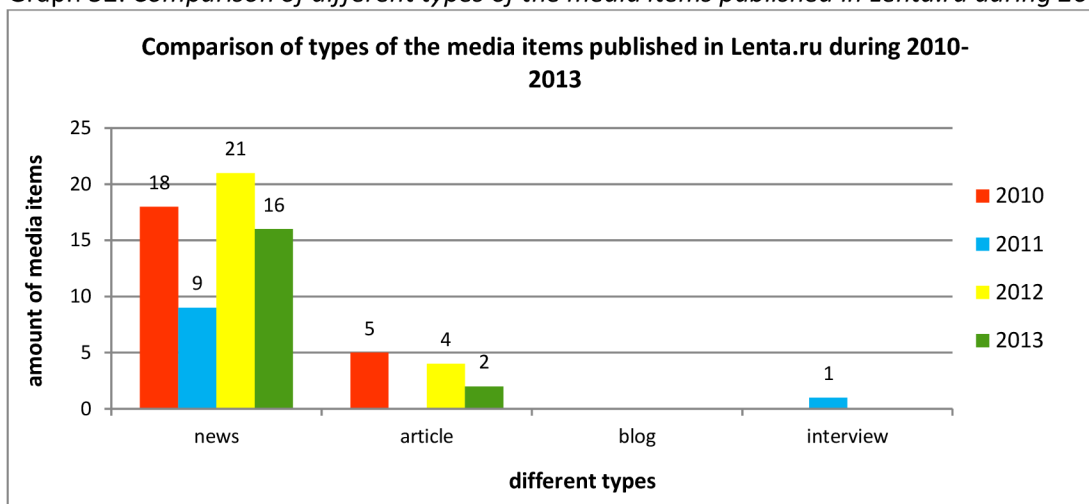


Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen only in some cases the author of media items was mentioned: in 13% cases in 2010 and 6% cases in 2013. There was not any mention of authors both in 2011 and 2012.

The following graph (52) shows the comparison of different types of media items published during 2010-2013.

Graph 52: Comparison of different types of the media items published in Lenta.ru during 2010-2013



Source: author (2022)

From the graph 52 it can be seen that almost all media items were categorized as news. There were some articles: 5 pieces in 2010, 4 pieces in 2012 and 2 pieces in 2013, and only the one interview in 2011.

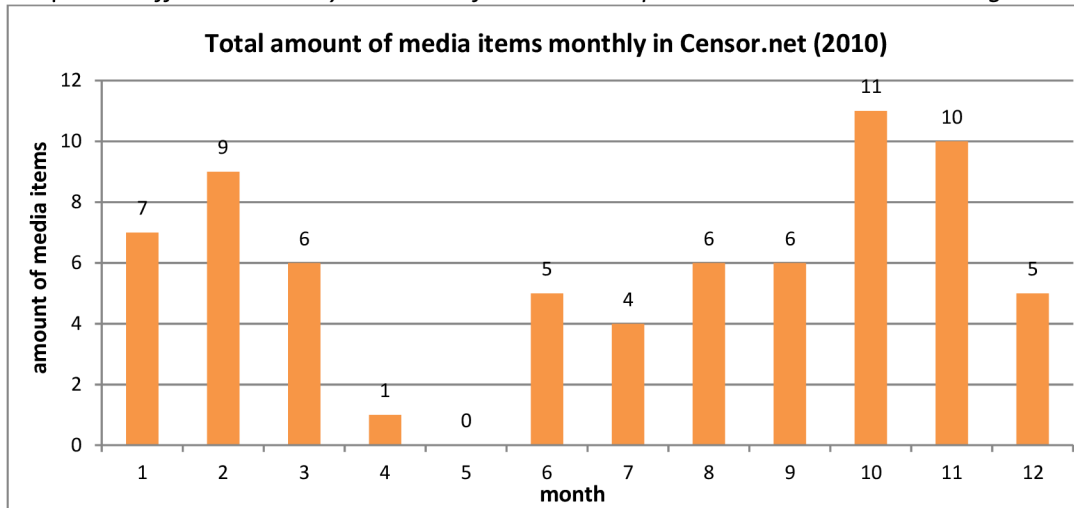
The analogical analysis of media items published by the Ukrainian publishing house Censor.net during 2010-2013 will follow in the next subchapter.

The analysis of the Ukrainian media Censor.net

Censor.net 2010

Totally 70 media items published in 2010 by Censor.net were coded. 44 media items were excluded from the coding process as they were published by different users on the website forum, where it is written that the publishing house is not responsible for any kind of information or opinions. Due to a big amount of information, the author decided not to write down all 44 links on excluded media items. The following graph shows different number of media items that were published in Censor.net during the whole year.

Graph 53: *Different monthly numbers of media items published in Censor.net during 2010*

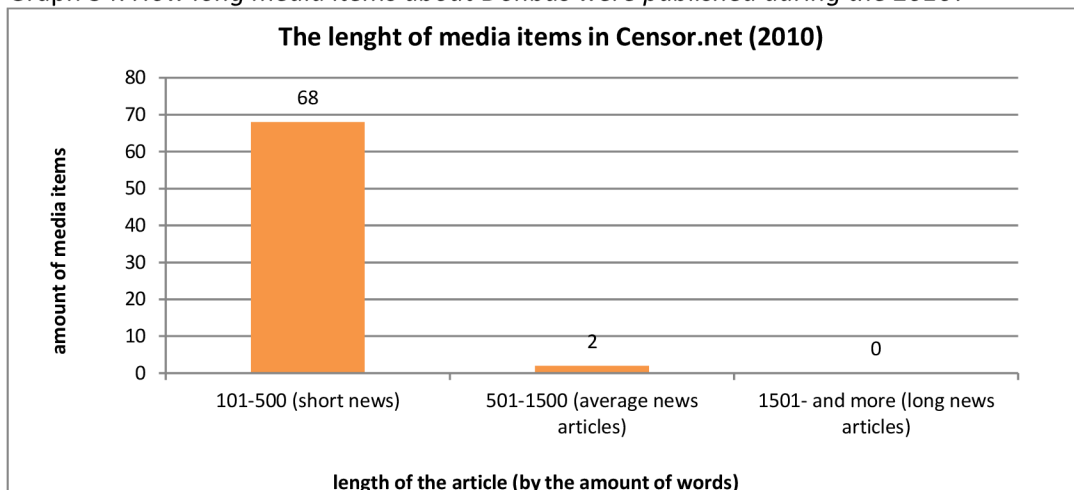


Source: author (2022)

From the graph 53 it can be seen, that there was only one month in 2010 when no media item about Donbas was published – June. The biggest number of articles – 11 was published in October 2011. Many (7-10) media items were published in January, February and November. The majority of all published media items in January and February covered the presidential elections 2010. During other months the number of published media item was quite stable: 4-6 per month. “Stable” months were March, June, July, August, September.

The following graph (54) shows the length of published media items in Censor.net during 2010.

Graph 54: *How long media items about Donbas were published during the 2010?*

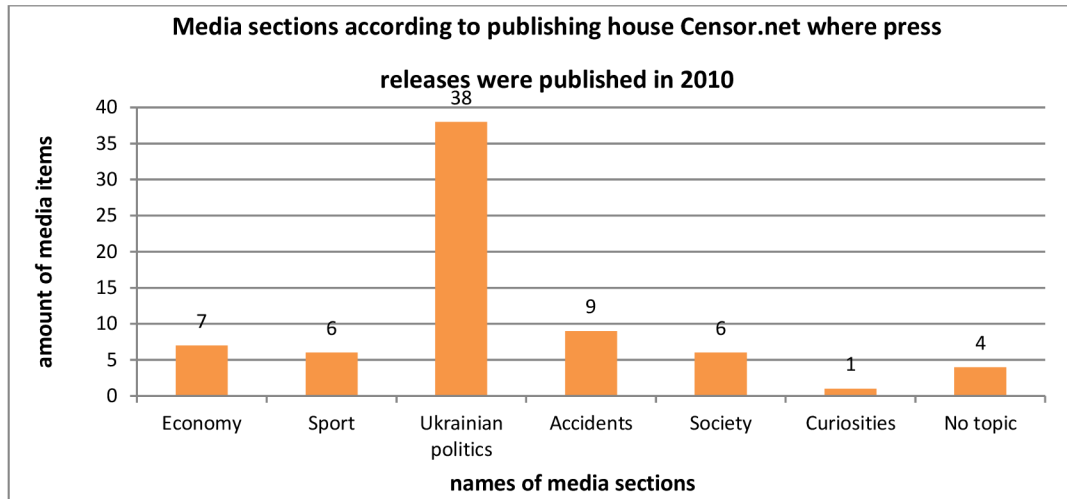


Source: author (2022)

Almost all published media items were short news (101-500 words): 68 media items out of 70. There were 2 average news articles (501-1000 words) and there was no any long news article (1501 and more).

Next graph (55) shows to what media sections the researched media items were added by the publishing house Censor.net to be published on its website.

Graph 55: Media sections according to publishing house Censor.net where press releases were published in 2010

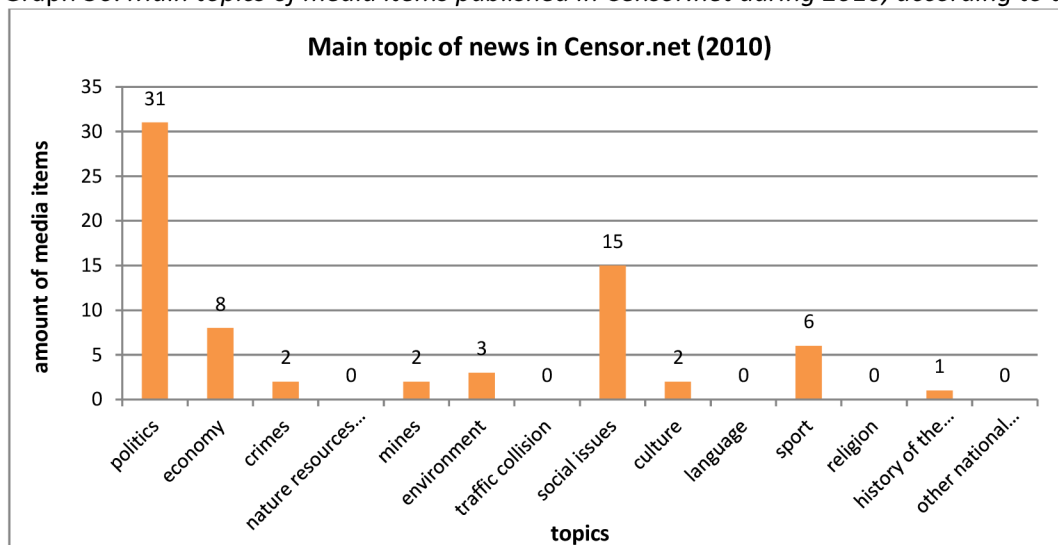


Source: author (2022)

Among media sections where the media items were published in 2010 were: Economy, Sport, Ukrainian politics, Accidents, Society, Curiosities. Some media items (4 of them) were not added to any section, so the author named this section as “No topic” for coding. The majority of media items were published in the section Ukrainian politics (38 of them), 9 media items were published in the section Accidents, 7 media items were published in the section Economy, 6 media items were published in the sections Sport and Society and 1 media topic was added into a section Curiosities.

Following graphs (56 and 57) show what topics were the main ones for the researched media items.

Graph 56: Main topics of media items published in Censor.net during 2010, according to the author

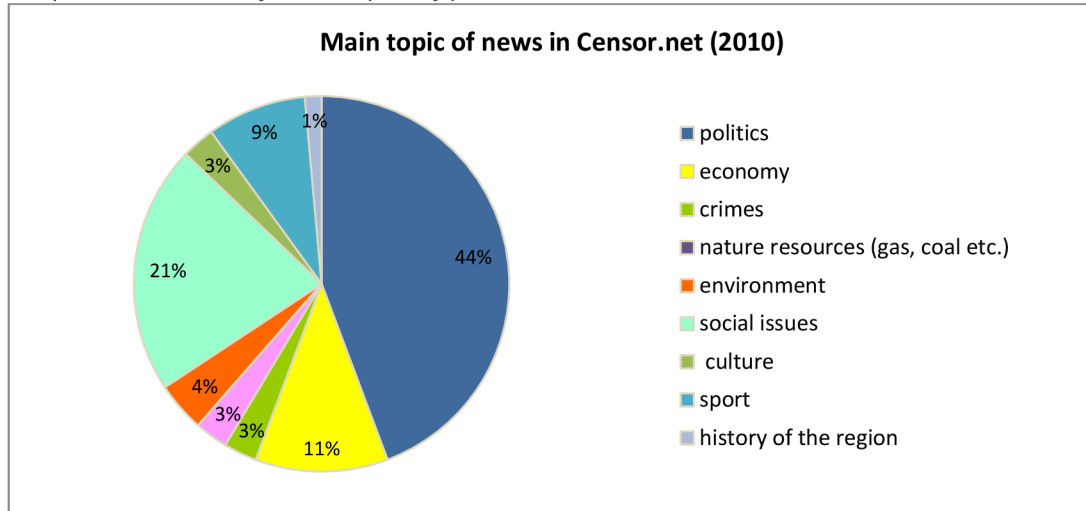


Source: author (2022)

The majority of media items (31 of them) were classified to have political main topic. 15 media items were classified as ones with the main topic connected to social issues. Topics natural resources, traffic collision, language, religion, other nationalities were not covered at all. 6 media items were consider as sport ones. 8 media items had the main topic on economy. Only 2 media items had the main topic on crimes, culture, and mines; and only 1 media item was with the main topic about history of the region.

The following graph (57) shows the same information, though in percentage.

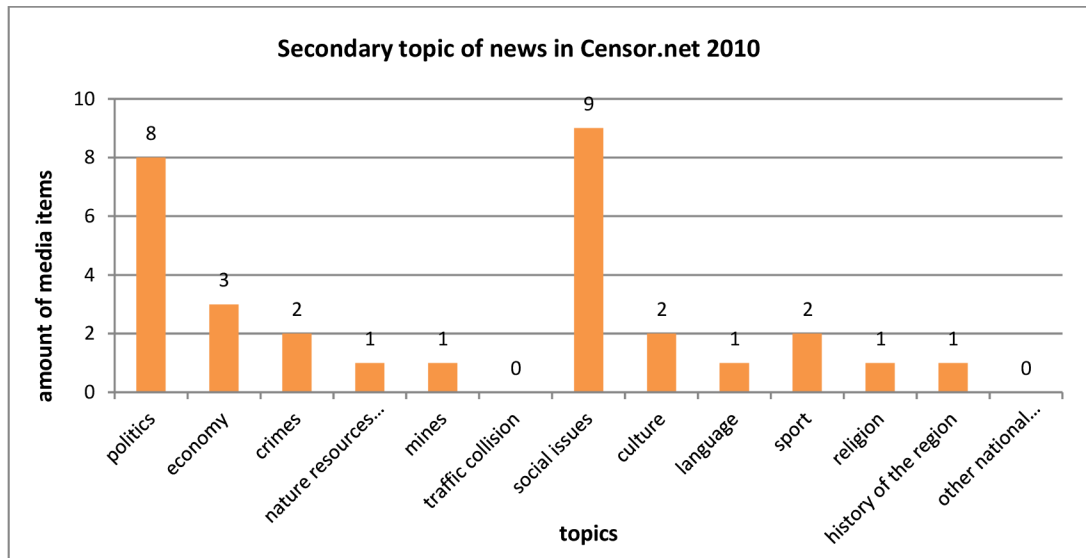
Graph 57: *The ratio of main topics of published media items in Censor.net 2010*



Source: author (2022)

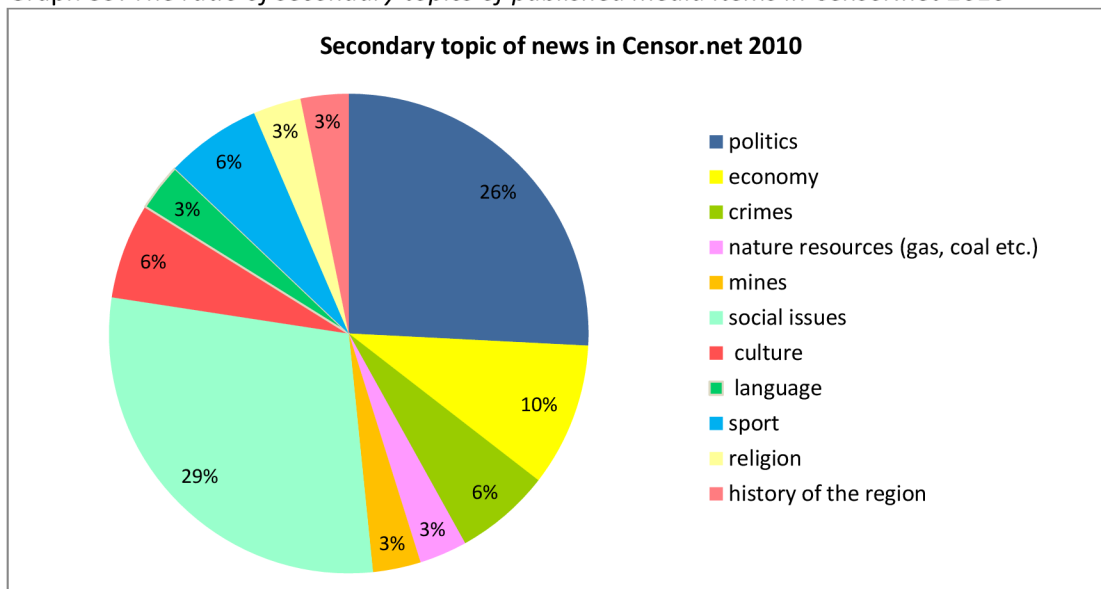
Next graphs (56 and 57) show what secondary topics if any the published media items had.

Graph 58: *Secondary topics of media items published in Censor.net during 2010, according to the author*



Source: author (2022)

Graph 59: *The ratio of secondary topics of published media items in Censor.net 2010*

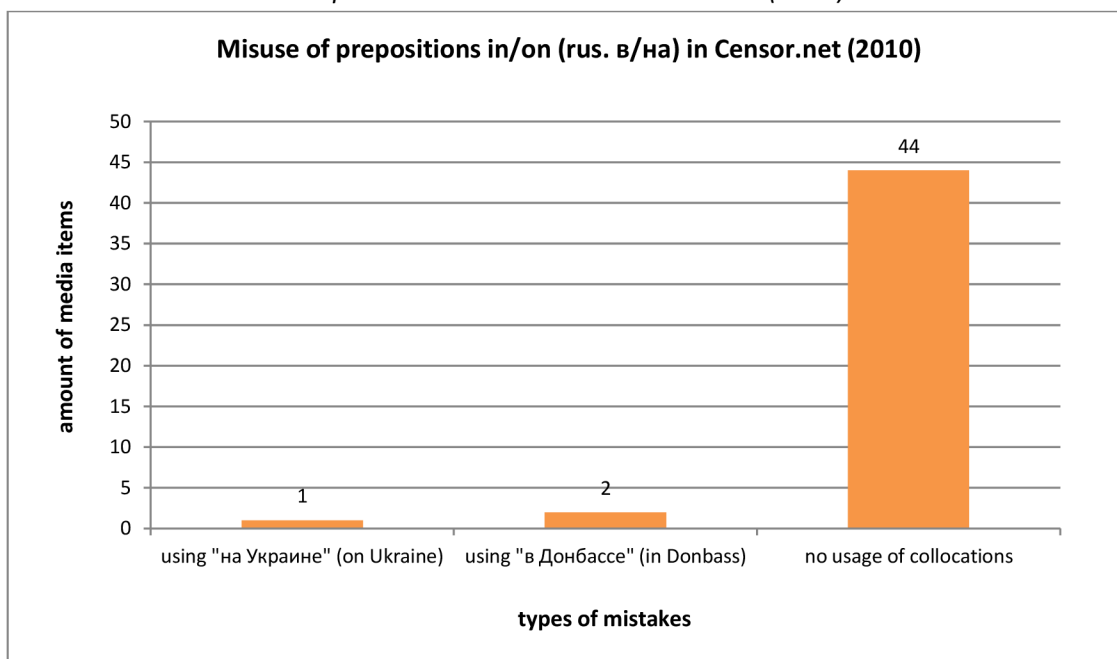


Source: author (2022)

From the graphs it can be seen that the most covered was topic social issues as a secondary one (29% of all cases). Many articles had political secondary topic (26% of all cases) and economical topic (10% of all cases). Topics crimes, sport and culture were covered equally (6% each). All other topics among which are natural resources, mines, language, religion and history of the region were covered equally (3% each).

Next graph (60) shows the misuse of prepositions in/on with toponyms Ukraine and Donbas.

Graph 60: *The frequency of incorrect and no usage of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with the toponyms "Donbas" and "Ukraine" in published media items in Censor.net (2010)*



Source: author (2022)

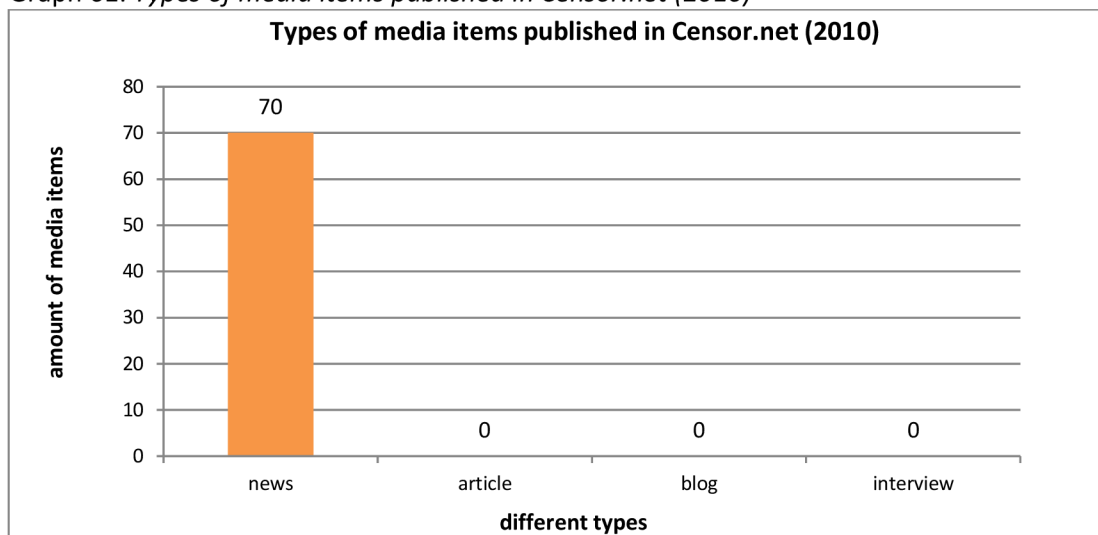
As it can be seen from the graph 60, there were only three cases in total were the wrong collocations "on Ukraine" and "in Donbas" (rus. на Украине и в Донбассе) were used. In 44 cases the collocations

were not used, but in the rest 26 were and among them were 3 mistakes (1 wrong use “on Ukraine” and two times wrong collocation “in Donbas”).

All results of coding the yes/no questions will be given down below in comparison of the period 2010-2013. Same, as results are presented in subchapter about Lenta.ru media items.

The next graph (61) shows what types of media items were coded by the publishing house Censor.net in 2010.

Graph 61: *Types of media items published in Censor.net (2010)*



Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen from the graph 61, absolutely all media items were considered to be pieces of news. No article, blog or interview was published by Censor.net in 2010.

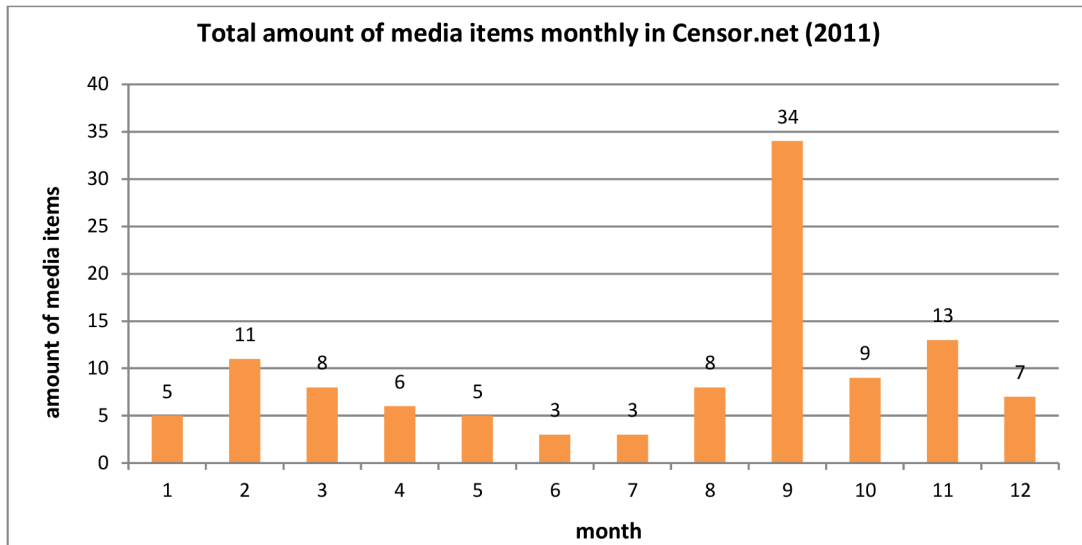
Censor.net 2011

Totally 112 media items written by Censor.net during 2011 were coded. Only 6 media items were discarded as those that do not fulfill the criteria of the research (forum on the website). As 6 media items is not such a big number as 44 in previous 2010 year, the author decided to wrote down links. Media items that were discarded:

- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2556589/rossiya_zayavila_svoi_prava_na_Donbas
- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2568266/rossiya_zayavila_svoi_prava_na_Donbas
- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2587032/yanukovichu_posvyatili_pesnyublagodarnost_quotspasibo_jitelyam_Donbasaquot_ukrainskaya_versiya_samizdat
- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2592250/spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa
- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2593228/Donbas_protiv_rejima_yanukovicha
- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2596025/vot_takto_jiteli_Donbasa

The following graph (62) shows different number of media items that were published in Censor.net during the whole year.

Graph 62: *Different monthly numbers of media items published in Censor.net during 2011*

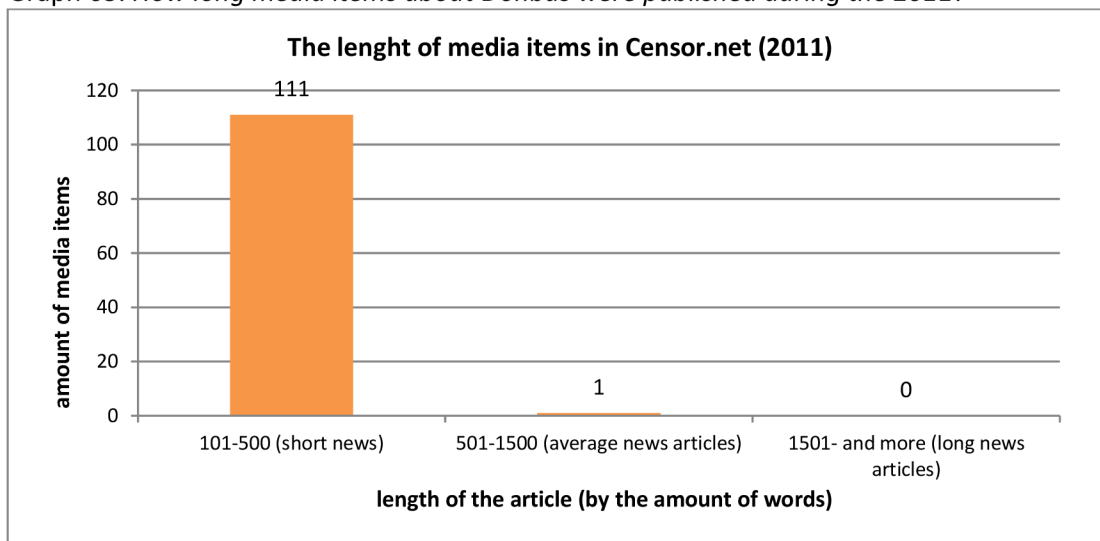


Source: author (2022)

The majority of media items were written in September 2011 (34 of them). Many of published materials that time were covered and discussed a social situation that became a political one. During one football match fans were “presented” obscene shouting about the president Yanukovich. That shouting became a popular one and was printed a lot on T-shirts and sold. The government was fighting with this shouting for a long period of time even with a help of a court. At the end of the subchapter (p.102) all links to media items that covered this issue will be written down (to emphasize how much material on this topic was written, that the situation seemed absurd) as the continuation of the scandal will be in following years. Other months during the year were not so “rich” on published materials about Donbas: 13 media items in November, 11 media items in February, 9 media items in October and so on.

Next graph (63) show how long materials were published in Censor.net in 2011

Graph 63: *How long media items about Donbas were published during the 2011?*

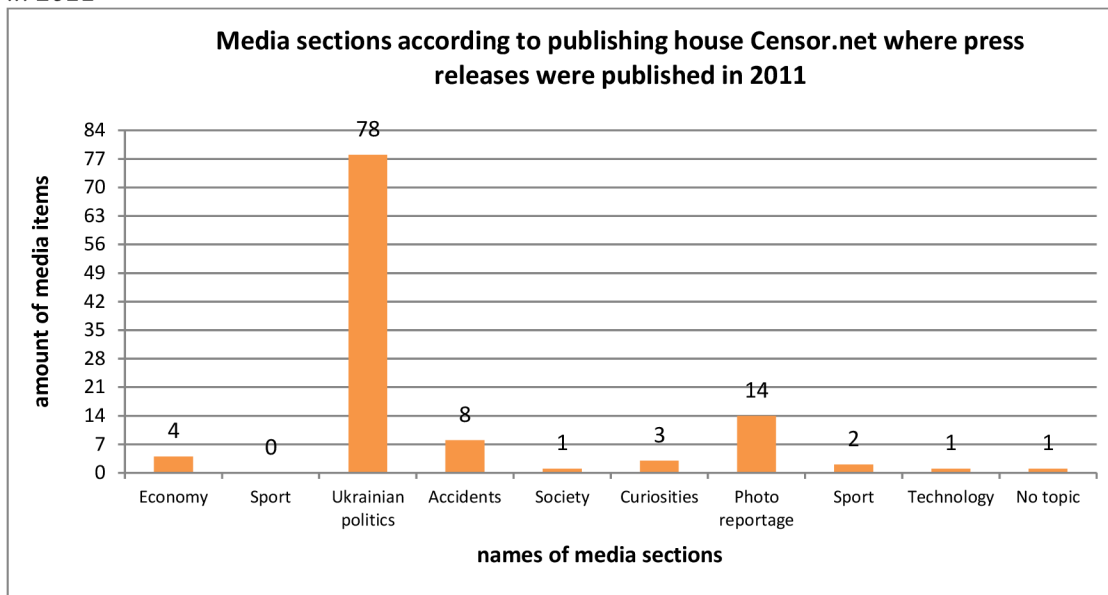


Source: author (2022)

Almost all media items were short (101-500 words) news, only 1 media item was an average piece of news (501-1500 words). And no long article (1501 and more words) was published by Censor.net in 2011.

The next graph (64) shows media sections on a website to which published media items during 2011 were added by the publishing house Censor.net.

Graph 64: Media sections according to publishing house Censor.net where press releases were published in 2011

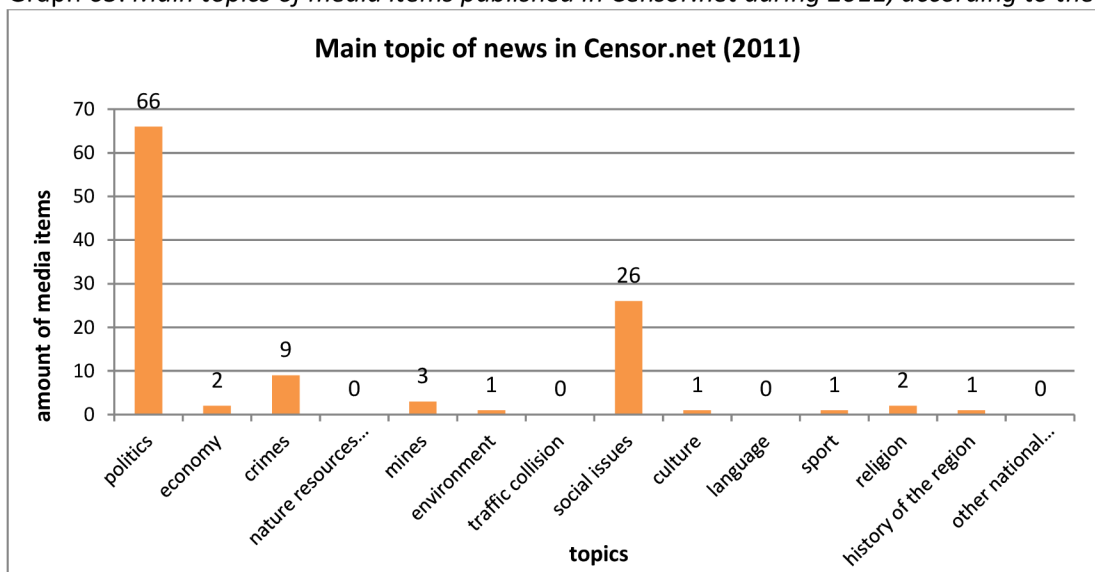


Source: author (2022)

In 2011 new media sections Photo reportage, Sport and Technology occurred on the website. The majority of media items were written in the section Ukrainian politics (78 of media items). Some media items (14 of them) were written in the section Photo reportage, 8 media items were published in the section accidents, 4 media items in the section Economy, 3 items in the section Curiosities, 2 in the section Sport and only one media item in sections Society and Technology. There was one media item without any section on the website.

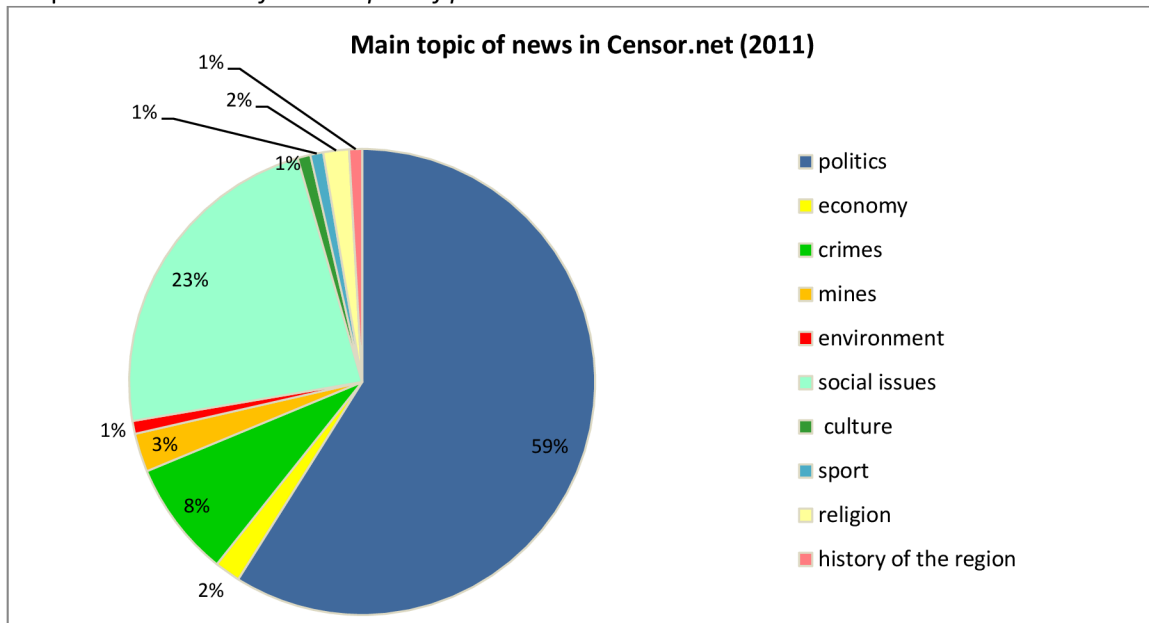
Following graphs (65 and 66) show main topics of the media items published by Censor.net in 2011 (according to the author’s opinion).

Graph 65: Main topics of media items published in Censor.net during 2011, according to the author



Source: author (2022)

Graph 66: *The ratio of main topics of published media items in Censor.net 2011*

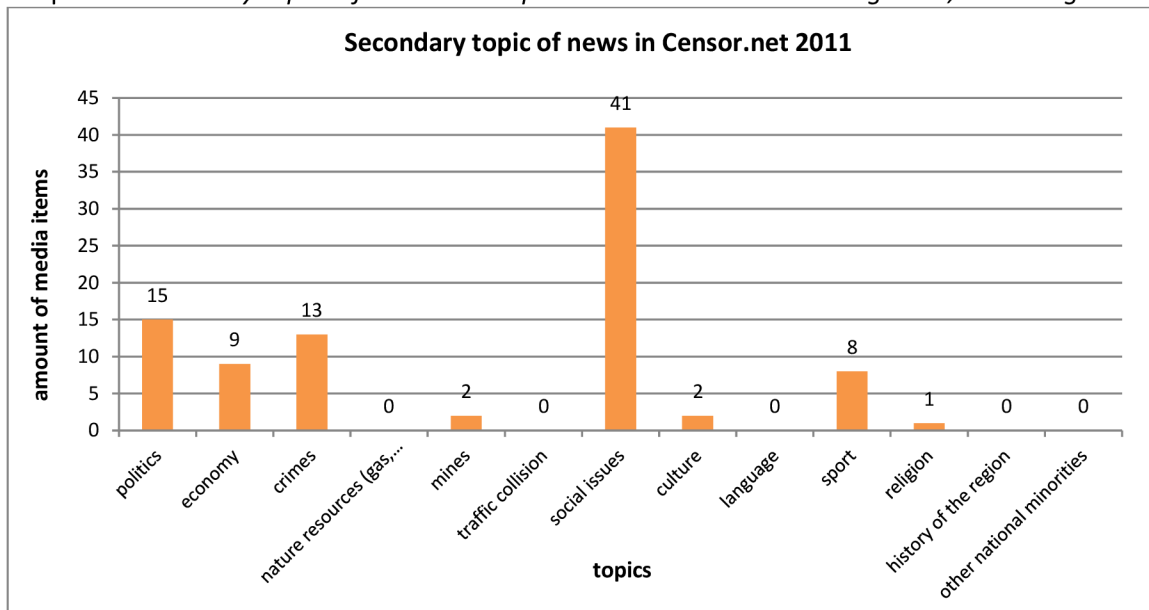


Source: author (2022)

Both graphs 65 and 66 show the same information in different formats. The percentage format is used to make the data easier for comparison. The majority of media items had a political main topic (59% of them), the second biggest main topic of the media items were social issues (23%), and the third main topic was crimes. All other media items had different main topics that were covered almost equally: 3% of media items were written about mines, 2% of media items had a main topic economy and religion, and 1% of media items had their main topic as environment, sport and history of the region.

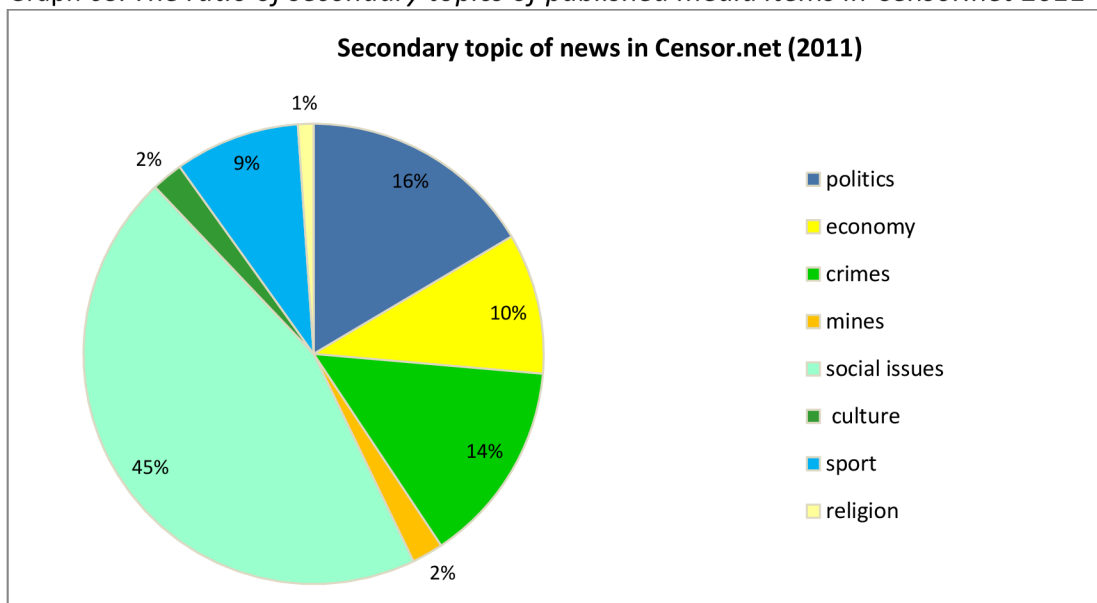
Following graphs 67 and 68 have the same logic and show the coverage of different secondary topics in researched media items.

Graph 67: *Secondary topics of media items published in Censor.net during 2011, according to the author*



Source: author (2022)

Graph 68: *The ratio of secondary topics of published media items in Censor.net 2011*

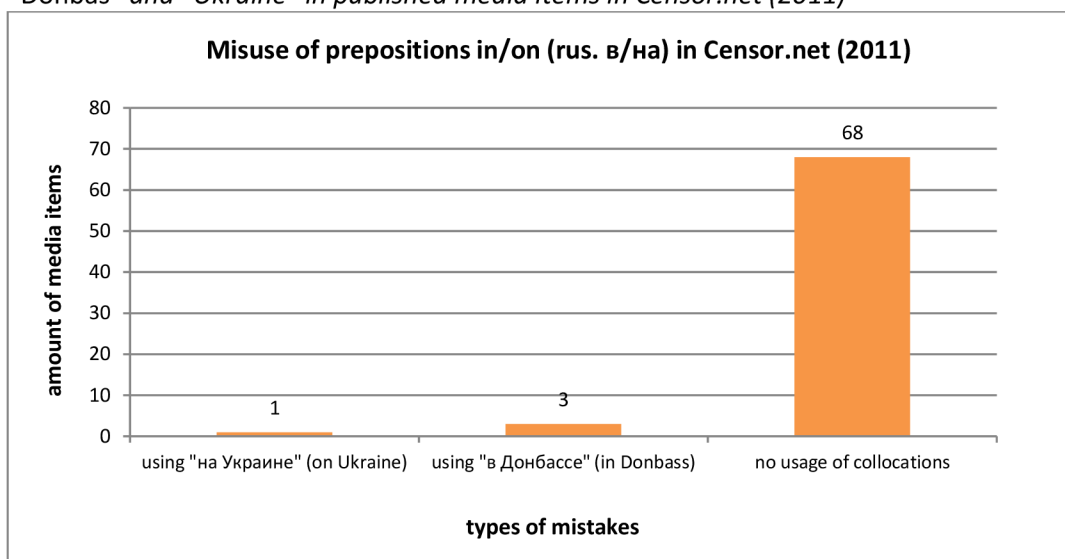


Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen the most covered secondary topic was social issues (45% of all researched cases). Politics was a secondary topic for 16% of media items, culture was a secondary topic for 14% of media items and economy – for 10%. 9% of all media items had a sport secondary topic, topics culture and mines were the secondary ones for 2% of media items and 1% of media item covered a religion as a secondary topic.

Next graph shows (69) the frequency of wrong usage of prepositions in/on with toponyms Donbas and Ukraine.

Graph 69: *The frequency of incorrect and no usage of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with the toponyms “Donbas” and “Ukraine” in published media items in Censor.net (2011)*



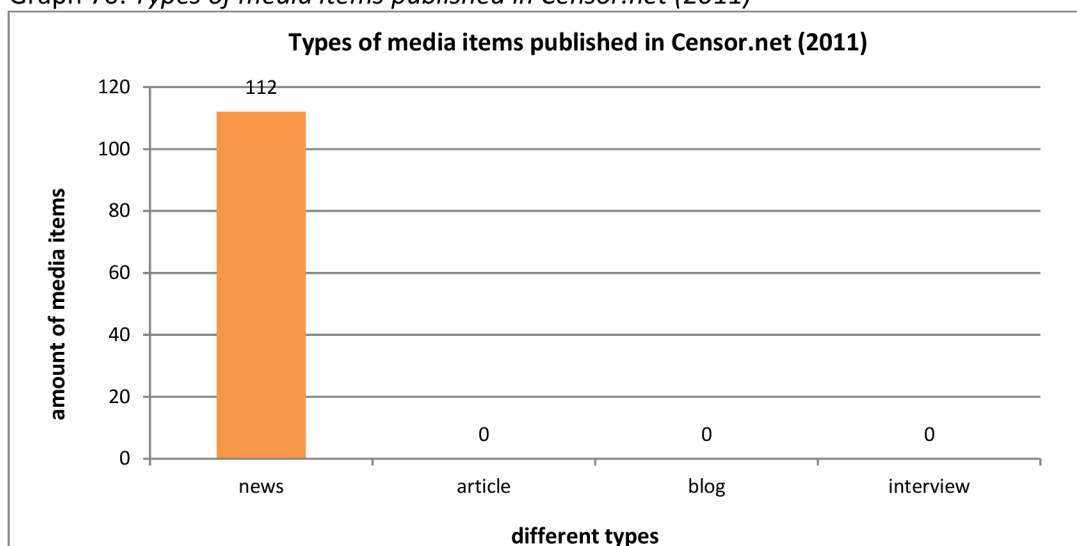
Source: author (2022)

In 68 cases there was no use of any of two researched collocations. In the rest 44 cases (totally 112 media items were published in 2011) only in 4 cases there was a misuse of prepositions. Only once the

wrong “on Ukraine” (rus. на Украине) and three times the wrong “in Donbas” (rus. в Донбассе) were used.

The next graph (70) shows what types of media items were published by Censor.net in 2011.

Graph 70: *Types of media items published in Censor.net (2011)*



Source: author (2022)

All published media items in 2012 were pieces of news. No article, blog or interview was published by Censor.net in 2011.

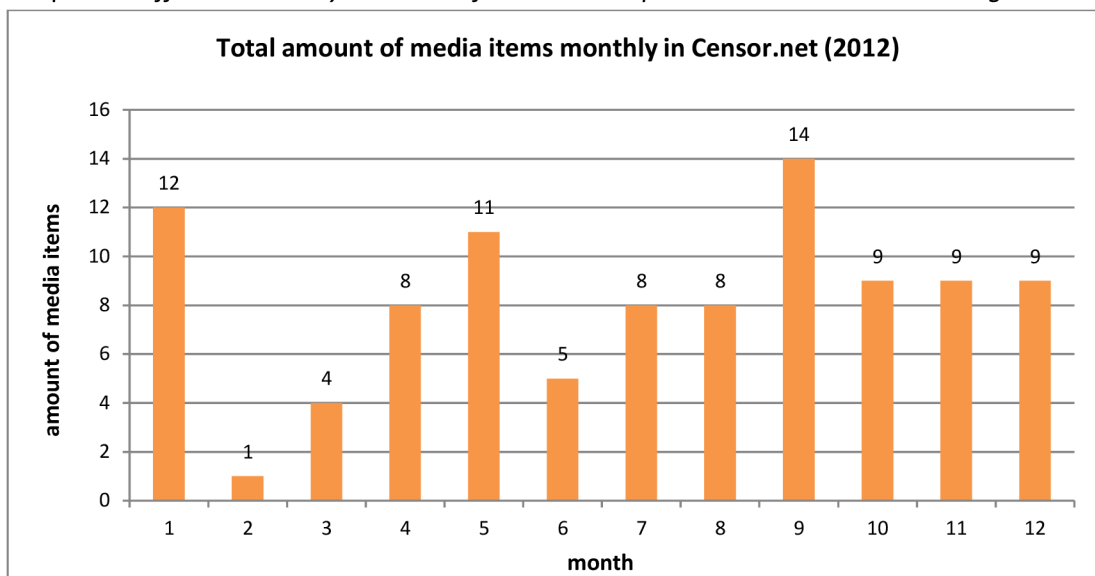
Censor.net 2012

Totally 98 media items written by Censor.net during 2012 were coded. Only 5 media items were discarded as those that do not fulfill the criteria of the research. Media items that were discarded and the reasons for it:

- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2601279/spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_poblagodarivshim_yanukovichu - excluded as a forum;
- https://censor.net/ru/photo_news/220026/zastroyischik_iz_Donbasa_otbiraet_territoriyu_u_legkoatletov_kieva_na_aktsiyu_protesta_vmesto_svoih - excluded as the news was in a category "News of Kyiv";
- https://censor.net/ru/news/220816/s_segodnyashnego_dnya_so_stolichnogo_zavoda_radikal_nachnut_vyvozit_opasnye_othody_chast_na_Donbas - excluded as the news was in a category "News of Kyiv";
- https://censor.net/ru/photo_news/246498/pravosudie_i_Donbas_rulyat_v_kieve_foto - Donbas is a name of the car;
- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2665451/chem_horoshim_mojet_pohvastatsya_Donbas - excluded as a forum.

The following graph (71) shows the frequency of publishing media items by the publishing house during 2012.

Graph 71: *Different monthly numbers of media items published in Censor.net during 2012*

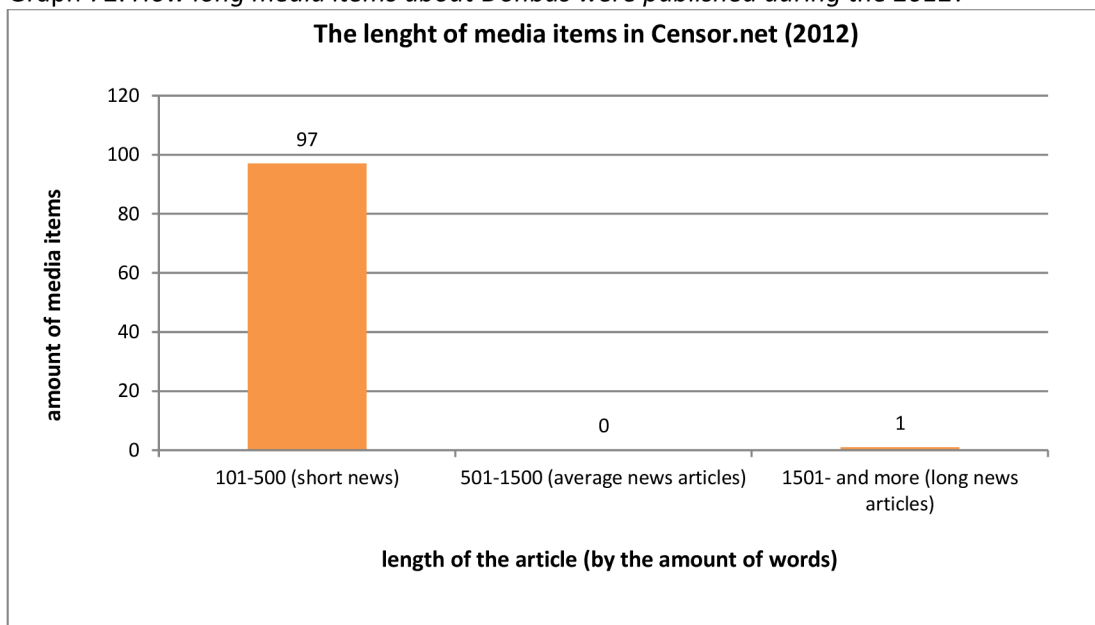


Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen, most of the media items (11-14) were written in January, May, September. The second half of the year 2012 was rich for written media items, beginning from July the number of published items was quite stable: 8-9 per month (in July, August, October, November, December). Among significant events the UEFA Euro 2012 was held in June-July 2012; however there are not so many published media items in June.

The next graph (72) shows the length of published media items during 2012.

Graph 72: *How long media items about Donbas were published during the 2012?*

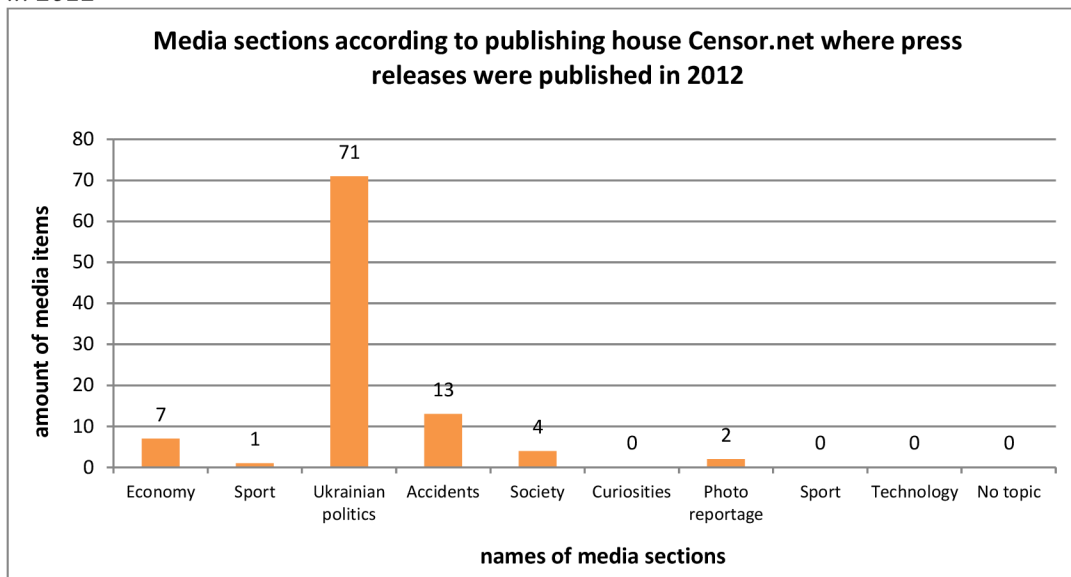


Source: author (2022)

The reader can see that almost all media items were short (only 101-500 words), and the only one media item was long (1501 and more words).

The following graph (73) shows media sections to what published media items were added by the publishing house Censor.net on its website in 2012.

Graph 73: Media sections according to publishing house Censor.net where press releases were published in 2012

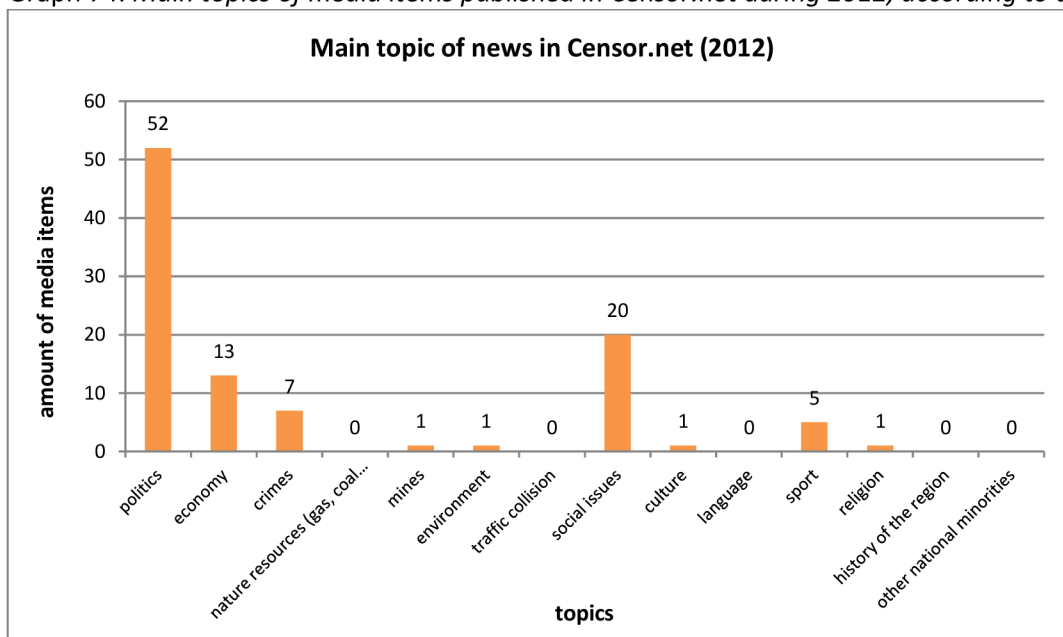


Source: author (2022)

Most media items (71 of them) were added to the section called “Ukrainian politics” on the website. 13 media items were added to the section “Accidents”, 7 media items occurred in the section “Economy”, 4 media items were added to the section “Society”, 2 media items – to the section “Photo reportage” and only one media item was published in the section “Sport”.

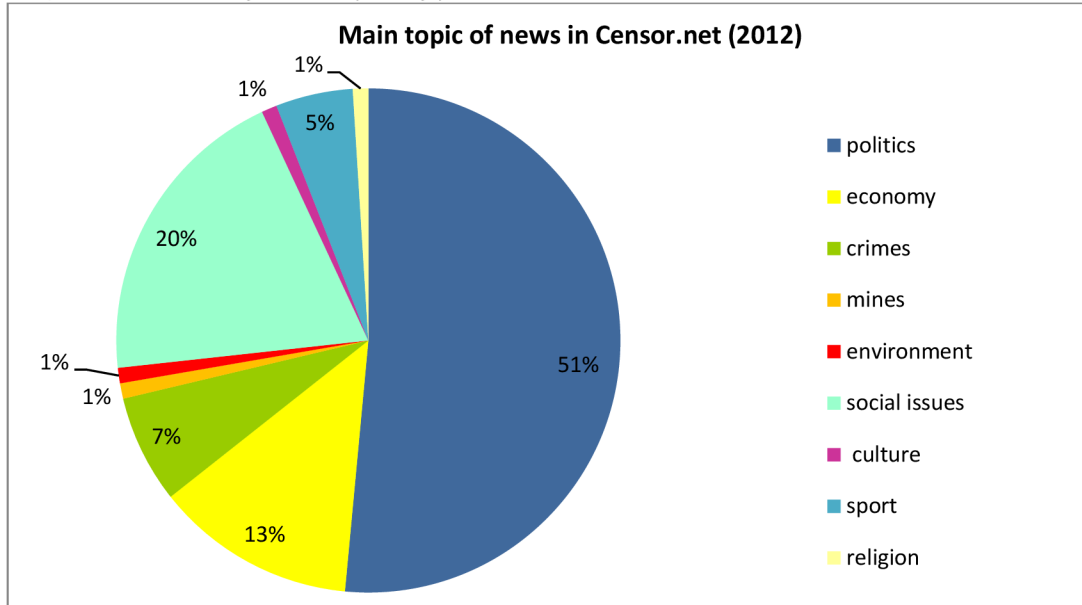
Next graphs (74 and 75) show main topics of the researched media items published during 2012 in the author’s opinion.

Graph 74: Main topics of media items published in Censor.net during 2012, according to the author



Source: author (2022)

Graph 75: *The ratio of main topics of published media items in Censor.net 2012*

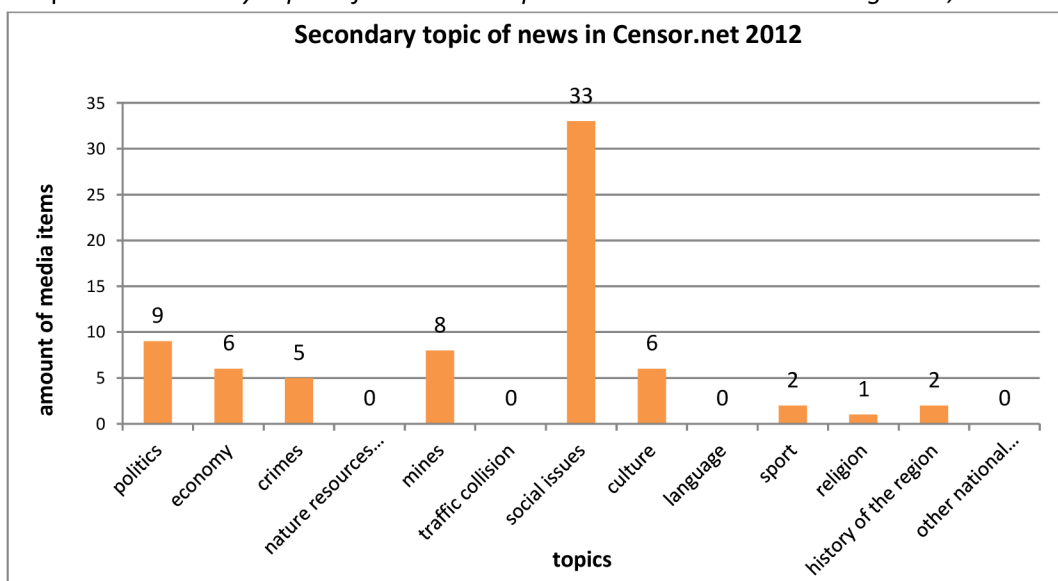


Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen from graph 74 and 75s, the main topic of media items was politics (51% of all published material). Second most covered main topic was social issues (20% of all published material), and third most covered main topic was economy (13% of all published material). Topics crimes and sport were the main one for 7% and 5% of published media items. Other topics such as mines, environment, culture and religion were the main one for only 1% of published media items each. Surprisingly, sport topic as the main one was not covered so much by the publishing house even though the UEFA Europe 2012.

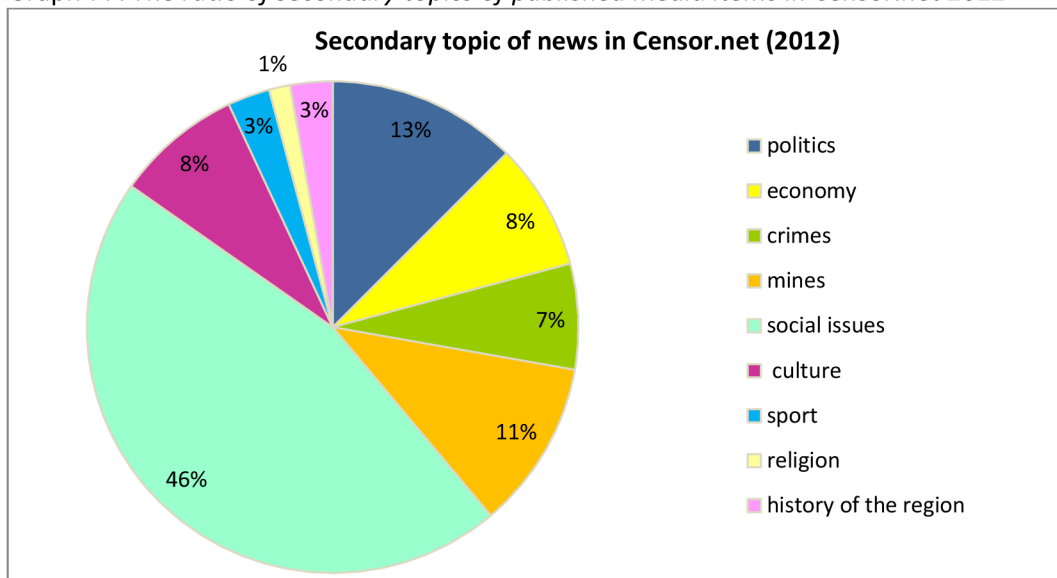
Following graphs (74 and 75) show the coverage of different topics as the second one for written media items.

Graph 76: *Secondary topics of media items published in Censor.net during 2012, according to the author*



Source: author (2022)

Graph 77: The ratio of secondary topics of published media items in Censor.net 2012

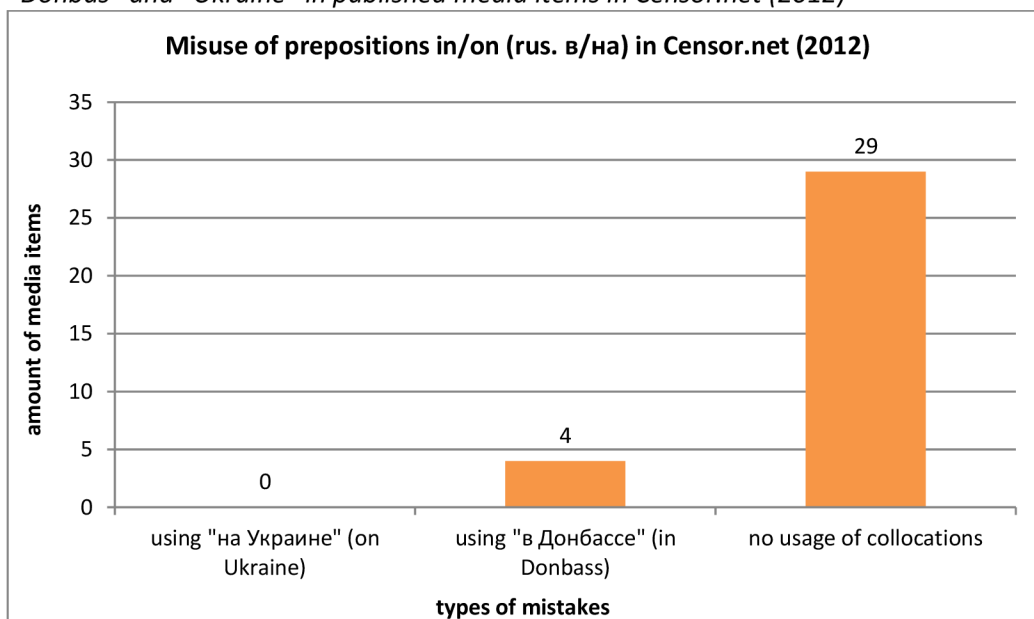


Source: author (2022)

From the graphs 76 and 77 it can be seen, that the most covered secondary topic was social issues (46% of all published media items). Politics as a secondary topic was covered in 3% of cases, mines – in 11% of cases. Secondary topics culture and economy were covered equally – 8% of published media items each. The topic crimes was a secondary one in 7% of cases. Secondary topic sport and history of the region were also covered equally: 3% of all cases each. The topic religion was a secondary one only in 1% cases. Surprisingly, sport is neither covered as a secondary topic much, as it could be expected due to the UEFA Euro 2012.

The following graph (78) shows the frequency of incorrect use of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with the toponyms Ukraine and Donbas.

Graph 78: The frequency of incorrect and no usage of prepositions in/on (rus.в/на) with the toponyms "Donbas" and "Ukraine" in published media items in Censor.net (2012)

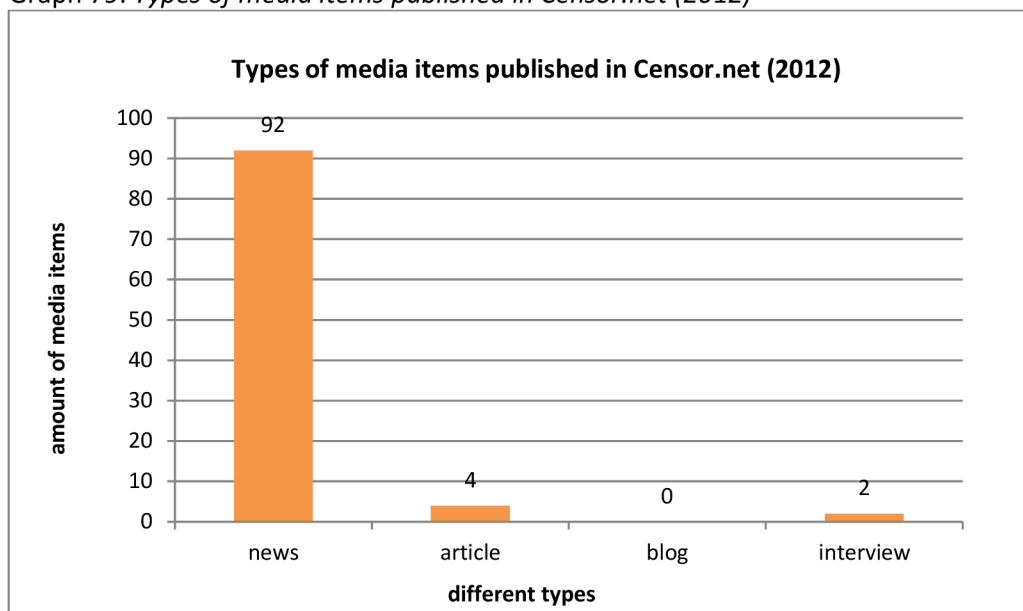


Source: author (2022)

In 29 cases out of 98 the preposition was not used. In the rest 69 media items 4 mistakes occurred. The incorrect collocation “on Ukraine” (rus. на Украине) was not used at all, the incorrect “in Donbas” (rus. в Донбассе) was used 4 times.

Next graph show (79) what types of media items were published by Censor.net during 2012.

Graph 79: *Types of media items published in Censor.net (2012)*



Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen from the graph 79, most published media items again were pieces of news (92 media items), there were only 4 articles and 2 interviews in 2012.

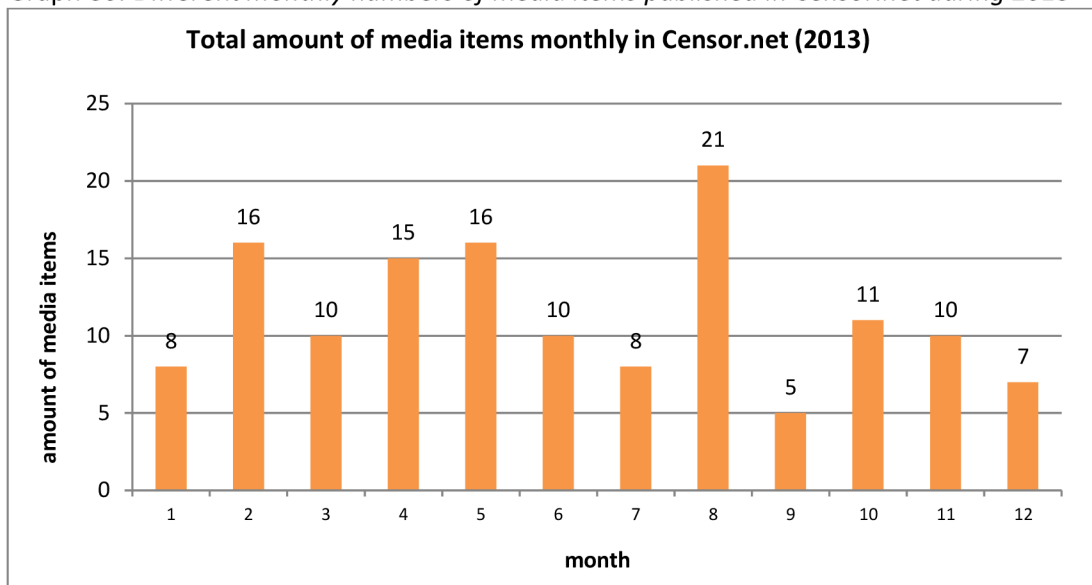
Censor.net 2013

Totally 137 media items written by Censor.net during 2013 were coded. Only 2 media items were discarded as those that do not fulfill the criteria of the research. Media items that were discarded and the reasons for it:

- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2669519/pri_podderjke_posolstva_ssha_v_donetske_zapuskayut_programmu_o_jizni_geev_Donbasa - excluded as a forum;
- https://censor.net/ru/forum/2678530/Donbas_doljen_spasti_yanukovicha_prosto_prochitayite - excluded as a forum.

The following graph (80) shows the frequency of publishing media items by the publishing house during 2012.

Graph 80: Different *monthly numbers of media items published in Censor.net during 2013*

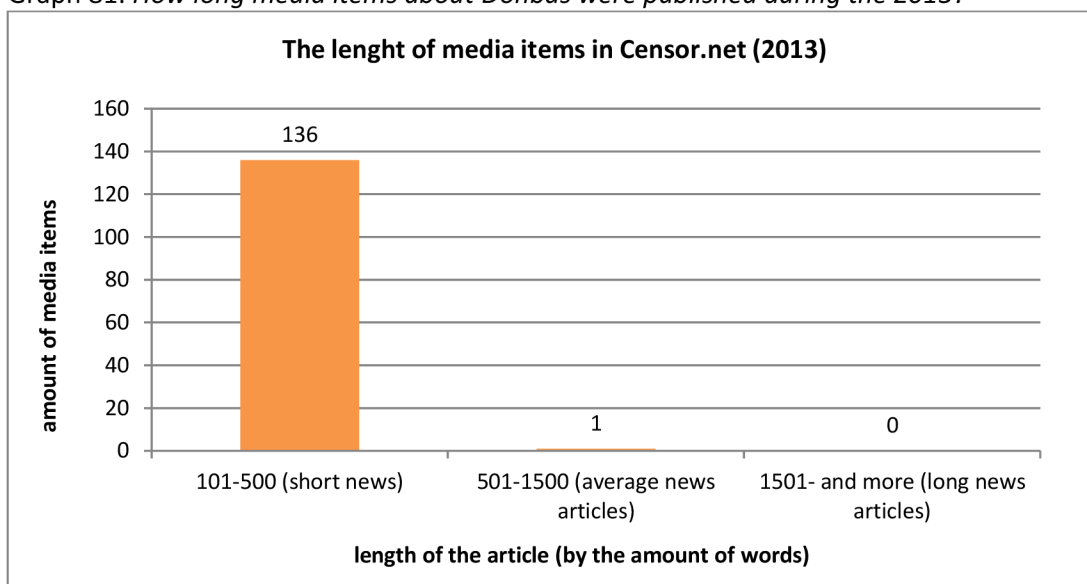


Source: author (2022)

Most of media items were written in August 2013 (21 of them). Moths such as February, April, May were almost equal in the published number of media items: 15-16. 10-11 media items were published in March, October and November. 7-8 media items were published in January, July, December; and 5 media items were published in September.

Next graph (81) shows the length of published media items in 2013.

Graph 81: *How long media items about Donbas were published during the 2013?*

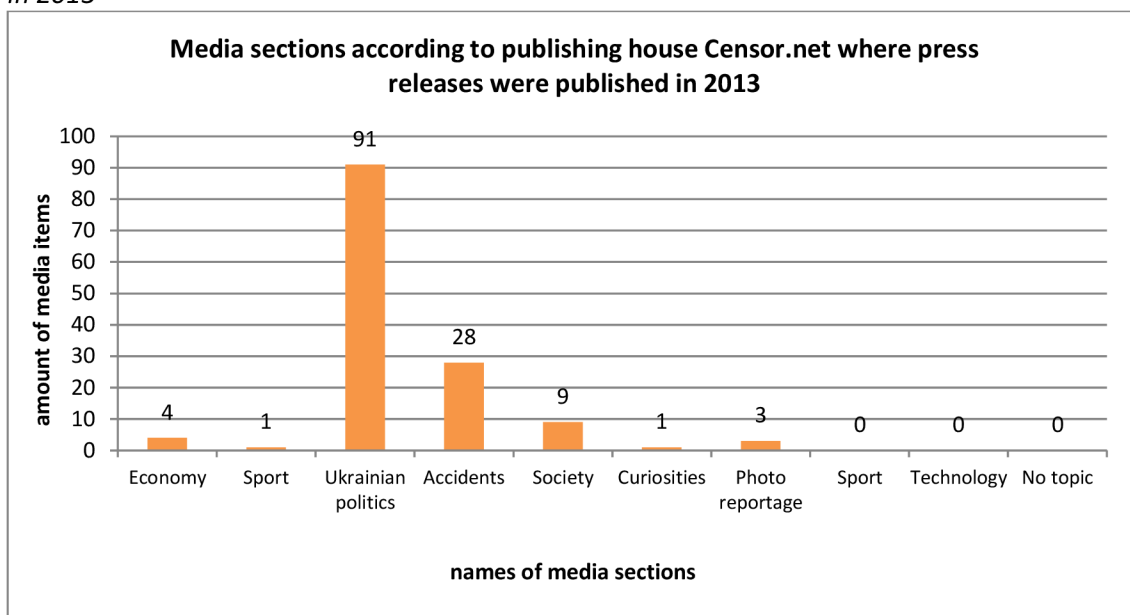


Source: author (2022)

Almost all media items were short (101-500) and the only one media item was an average (501-1500 words). No long news articles were published in 2013 by the publishing house Censor.net.

Next graph (82) shows to what media sections on the website of the publishing house the media items published in 2013 were added.

Graph 82: Media sections according to publishing house Censor.net where press releases were published in 2013

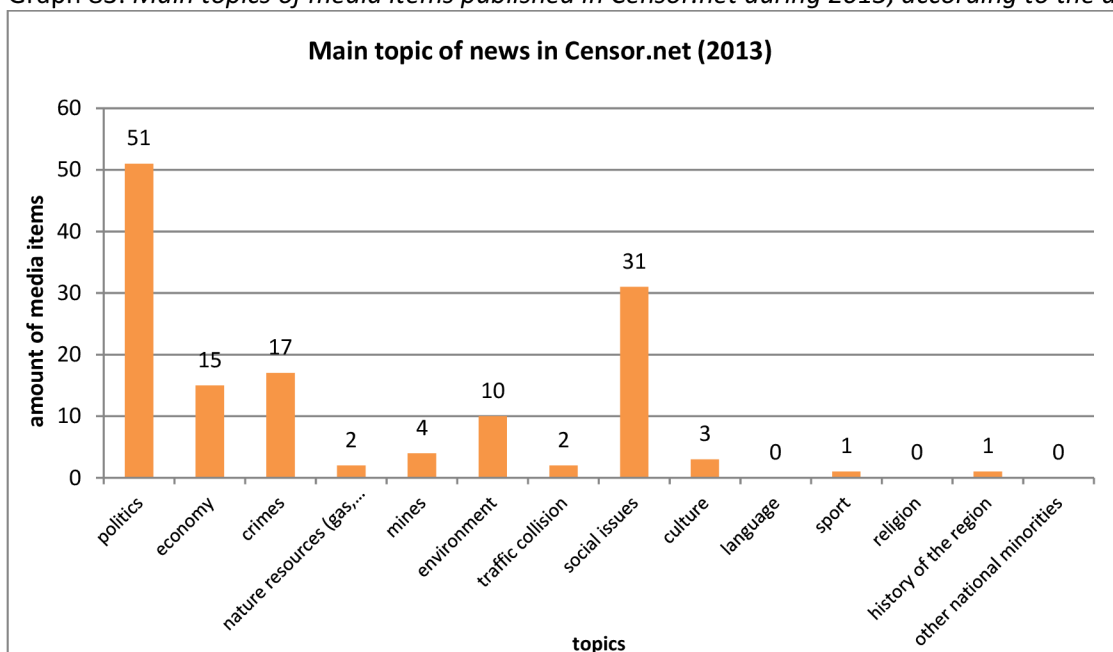


Source: author (2022)

Most media items (91 of them) were added to the section “Ukrainian politics”. 28 of the media items were published in the section “Accidents”, 9 media items in the section “Society”, 4 media items in the section “Economy”, 3 media items in the section “Photo reportage” and one media item was published in the sections “Sport” and “Curiosities”. No media items were added to the media sections “Sport” and “Technology”, and any item was without the specified topic.

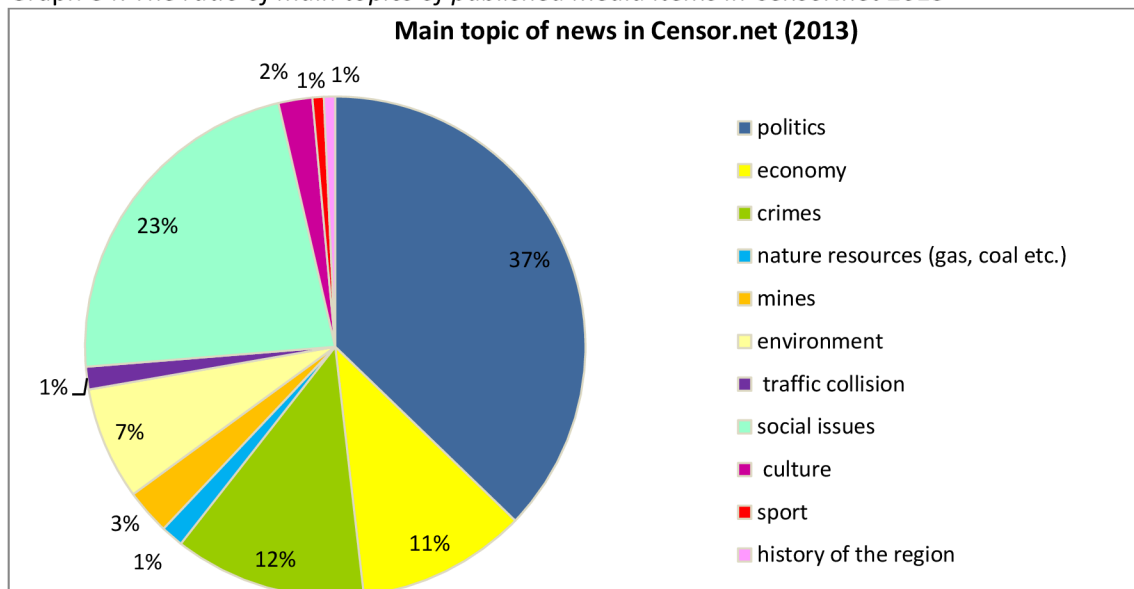
Next graphs (83 and 84) show what main topic the published in 2013 media items had.

Graph 83: Main topics of media items published in Censor.net during 2013, according to the author



Source: author (2022)

Graph 84: *The ratio of main topics of published media items in Censor.net 2013*

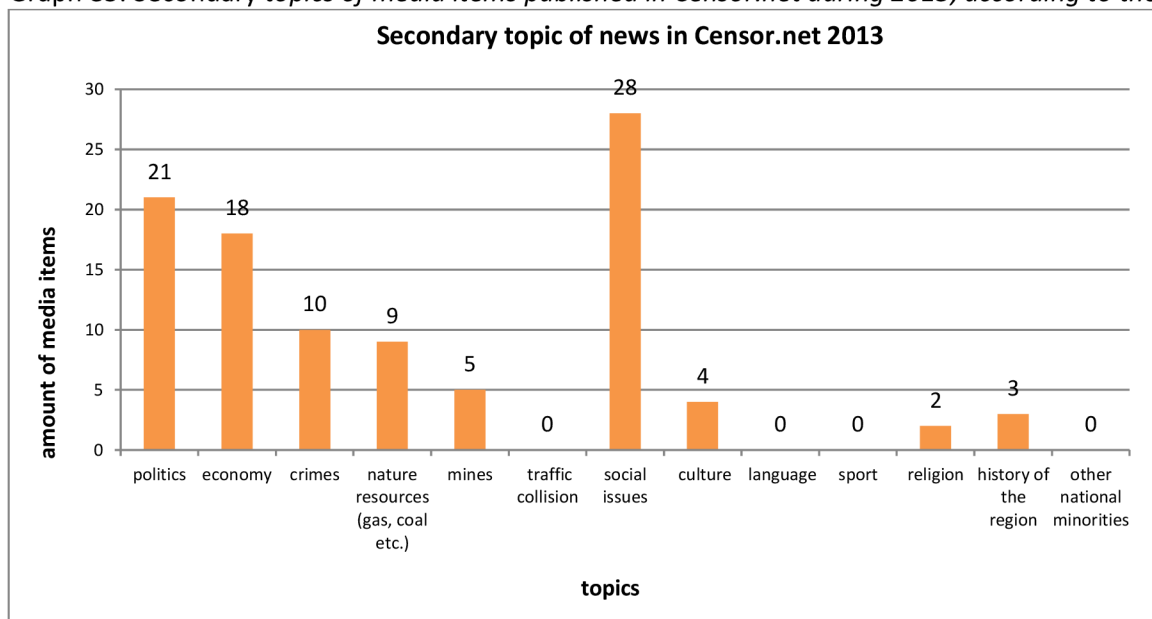


Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen from the graphs most of media items (37%) covered political topic. Second most covered topic was social issues (23%). Crimes were the main topic for 12% of all media items. Economy was the main topic for 11% of all published media items. 7% of all media items had environmental main topics. All the other topics covered almost equally (1-3% of all media items), among them are: nature resources, mines, traffic collision, culture, sport, history of the region. Interestingly, only 5 media items out of 137 wrote about Euromaidan (other name for the Revolution of Dignity) in the context with Donbas region.

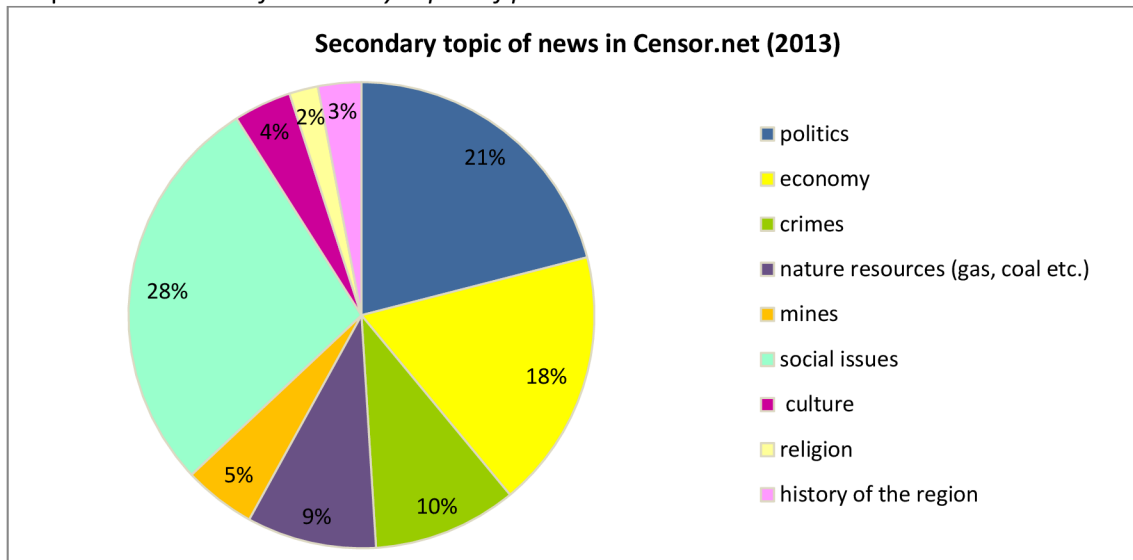
Next graphs (85 and 86) show the frequency of occurrence different topics as secondary ones in media items published in 2013.

Graph 85: *Secondary topics of media items published in Censor.net during 2013, according to the author*



Source: author (2022)

Graph 86: *The ratio of secondary topics of published media items in Censor.net 2013*



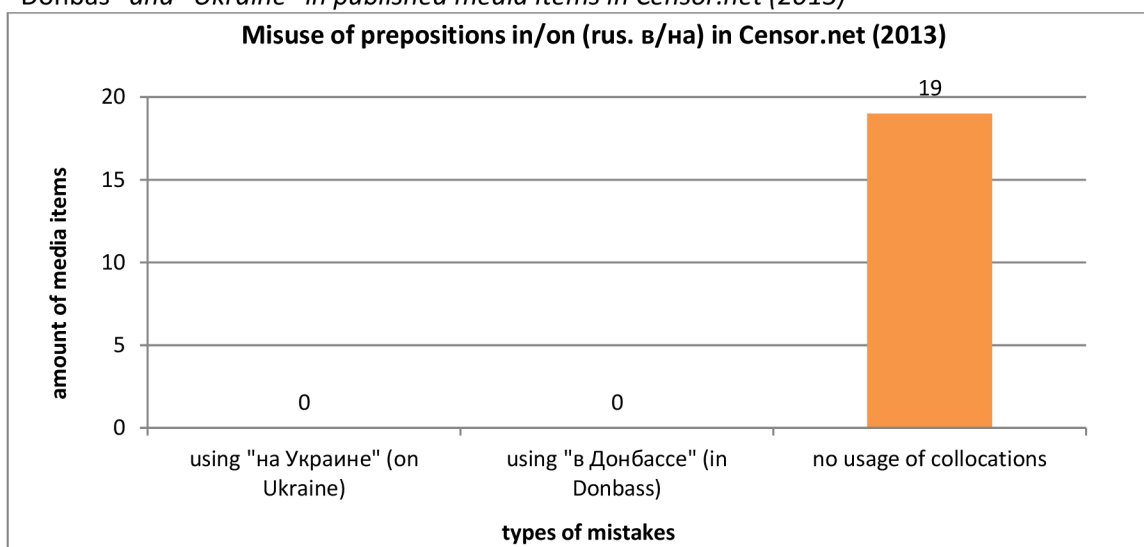
Source: author (2022)

The logic of researching the secondary topic of media items is the same as in all abovementioned cases. Not all media items had a secondary topic, so only ones that had were coded. That is the reason why the total amount of all media items with secondary topics is lower than the number of all published media items this year. And that is the reason why the percentage values were counted by dividing sums of media items written on the same topic by 100 (the sum of all media items with a secondary topic), never by 137 (the sum of all published material in 2013).

The most covered secondary topic was social issues (28% of all cases). Politics was a secondary topic for 21% of media items, economy – for 18% of media items. All other secondary topics were covered less: 10% for crimes, 9% for nature resources, 5% for mines, 4% for culture, 3% for history of the region and 2% for religion.

Next graph (87) shows the frequency of misuse of researched prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) with toponyms Donbas and Ukraine.

Graph 87: *The frequency of incorrect and no usage of prepositions in/on (rus.в/на) with the toponyms "Donbas" and "Ukraine" in published media items in Censor.net (2013)*

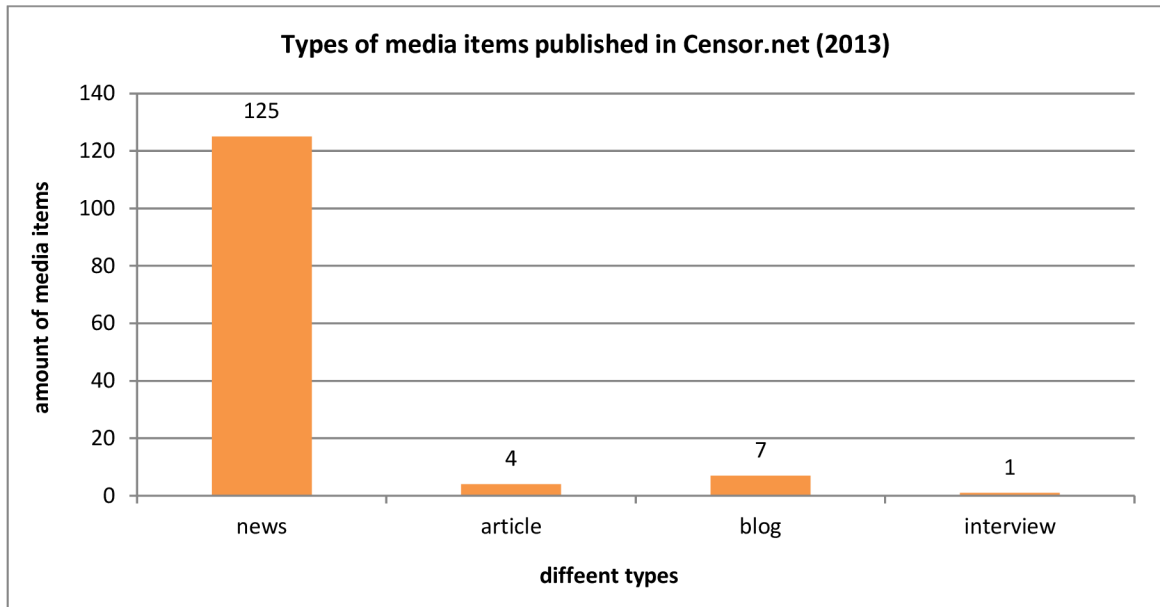


Source: author (2022)

In 19 cases out of 137 the collocations were not used. In all other 118 cases the prepositions were used correctly. Difficult to say, whether journalists began to give more attention to this issue, writing the collocations correctly, or it had been only misprints years before as the numbers of mistakes had been low.

The next graph (88) show what type of media items were published by Censor.net in 2013.

Graph 88: *Types of media items published in Censor.net (2013)*



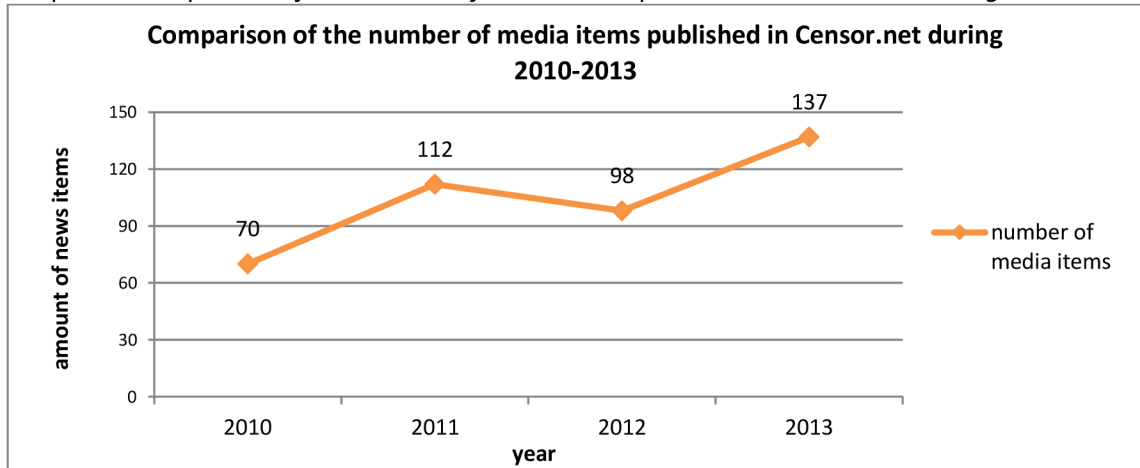
Source: author (2022)

Most of media items (125) were pieces of news. 4 articles, 7 blog articles and 1 interview were published by Censor.net in 2013.

Comparison of changes of researched issues that have been occurred in media items published by Censor.net during 2010-2013

The next graph (89) shows the dynamic of changes in numbers of published media items by Censor.net during 2010-2013. Briefly, how many media items were written during the researched period and in what way this number was changed.

Graph 89: *Comparison of the number of media items published in Censor.net during 2010-2013*

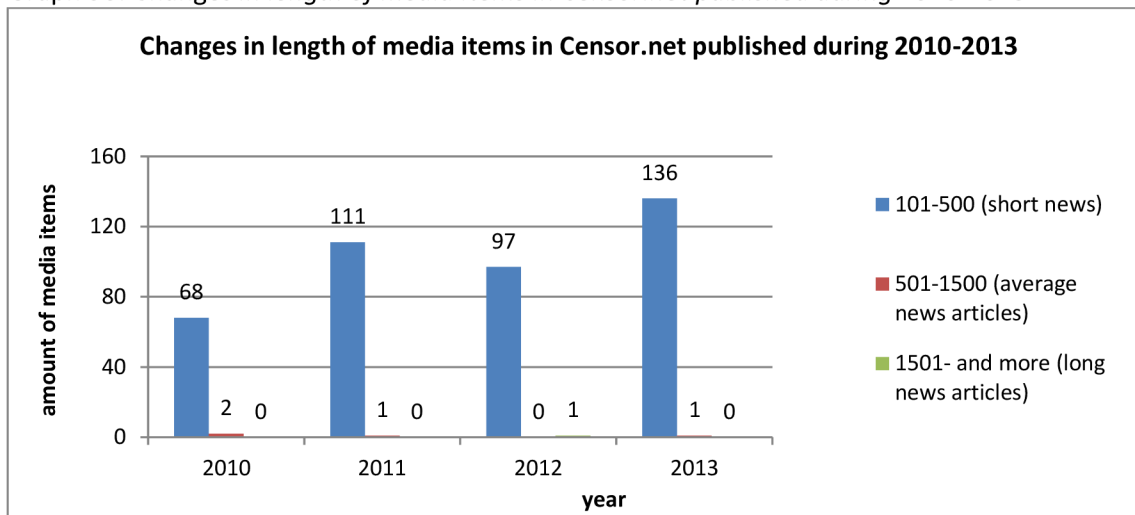


Source: author (2022)

From the graph 89 the changes in the number of published media items can be seen. 70 media items were published in 2010, 112 media items were published in 2011, 98 media items published in 2012 and 137 media items published in 2013. During the researched period media items about Donbas region occurred more and more often.

The next graph (90) shows how long media items were published during the researched period and whether preferred length has been changed.

Graph 90: Changes in length of media items in Censor.net published during 2010-2013

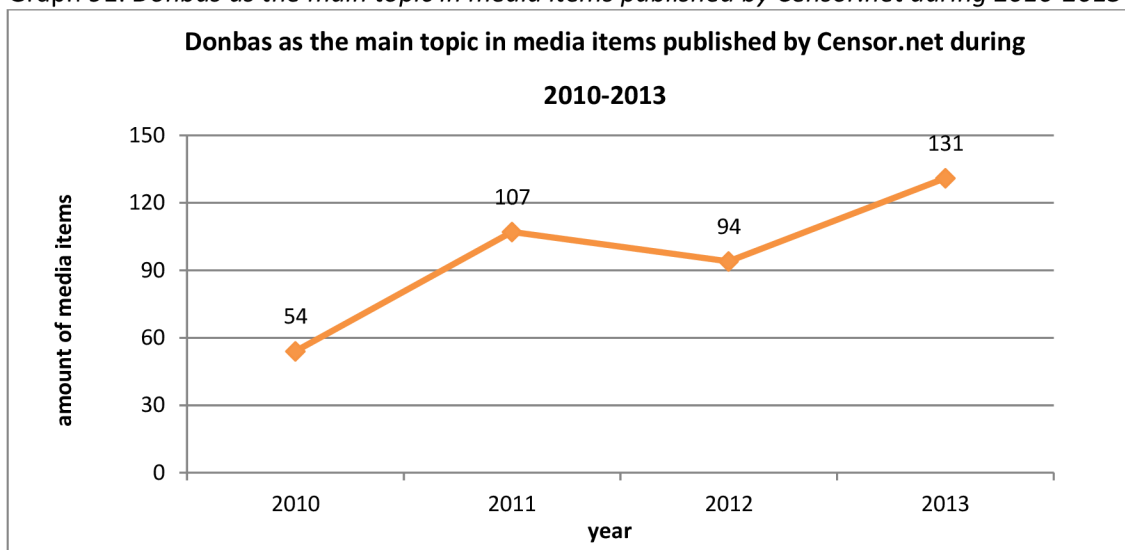


Source: author (2022)

The absolute majority of published media items published during 2010-2013 were short news (101-500 words). Only 2 average media items (501-1500 words) were published in 2010, and 1 average media item was published in 2011 and 2013. The only one long news article during the researched period of four years occurred in 2012. It seems that the publishing house Censor.net specialized in publishing short pieces of news without longer analytical articles.

The next graph shows numbers of media items in which Donbas was a main topic.

Graph 91: Donbas as the main topic in media items published by Censor.net during 2010-2013

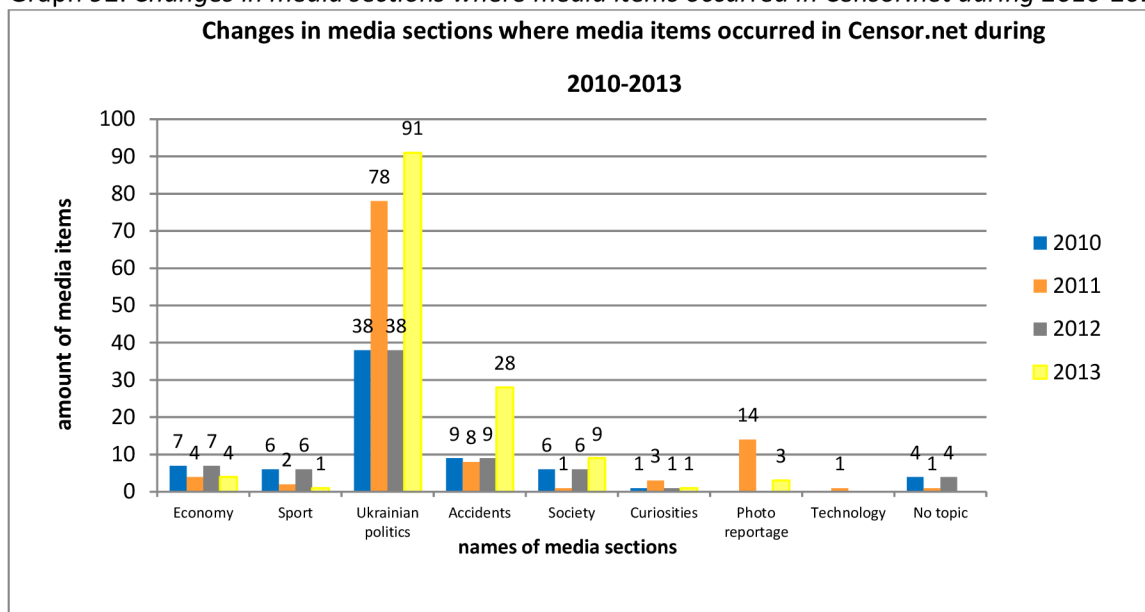


Source: author (2022)

As it can be seen from the graph 91, a big amount of published media items were primarily written about Donbas as a main topic: 54 media items in 2010, 107 media items in 2011, 94 media items in 2012 and 131 media items in 2013.

The following graph (92) shows to what media section on the website the published media items were added, and in what way the coverage of different topics has change during the researched time.

Graph 92: *Changes in media sections where media items occurred in Censor.net during 2010-2013*

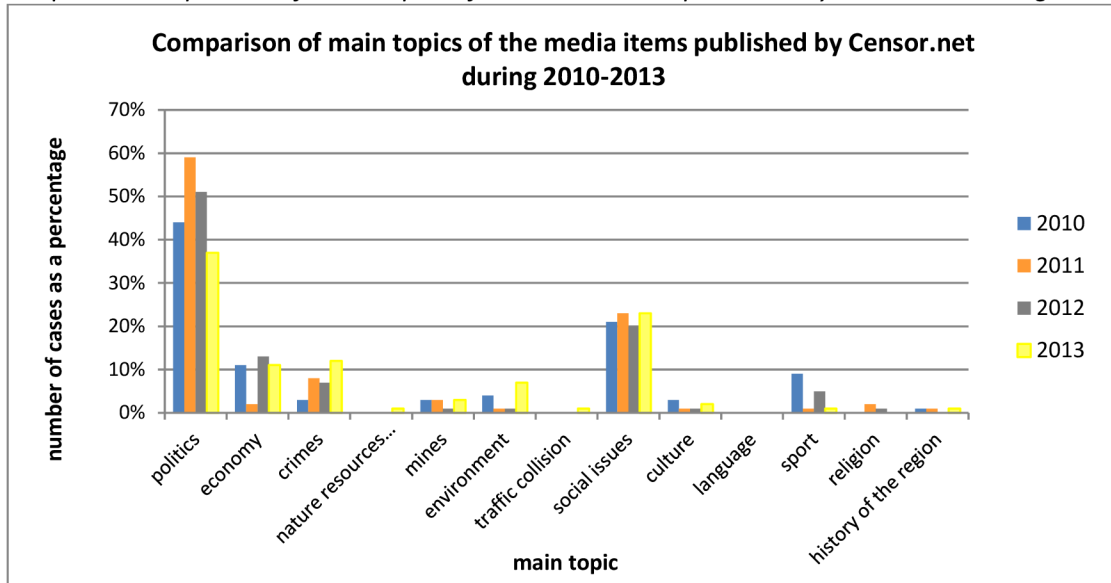


Source: author (2022)

The most “popular” media section on the website (that has the biggest number of published media items during 2010-2013) is the section “Ukrainian politics”. The coverage of this section was not stable: 38 media items in 2010 and 2012, 78 media items 2011 and 91 media items in 2013. The section “Economy” had 7 published media items in 2010 and 2012, and 4 published media items in 2011 and 2013. The section “Sport” was not covered much. There were only 6 media items in 2010 and 2012, 2 media items in 2011 and 1 media item in 2013. Such a small coverage of a sport topic in the sport media section was unexpected at least in 2012 due to the UEFA Euro 2012. The section “Accidents” was stable enough 8-9 published media items in 2010-2012, however in 2013 3 times more media items were added to this category. The media section “Society” on the website was not covered a lot: 1-9 published media items in 2010-2013. The section “Curiosities” was covered even less: only 1 published media item in 2010, 2012 and 2013 and 3 published media items in 2012. The media section “Photo reportage” appeared on the website for the first time in 2011, when 14 media items were published. The section was not used in 2012 and 3 media items were added to this section in 2013. The media section “Technology” was used only once in 2011 when the only one media item was published. Some materials on the website did not have any media sections: 4 of them in 2010, 1 in 2011 and 4 in 2012.

The following graph (93) shows main topics of all researched media items published by Censor.net during 2010-2013. The topics were classified by the author. The values are given in the percentage due to the same logic that was used while comparing different years and number of media items in Lenta.ru. Due to the fact that there are differences in numbers of published media items in each year (2010-2013) the comparison given in percentage might be more illustrative. This logic was the same for all graphs that show the values in percentage.

Graph 93: Comparison of main topics of the media items published by Censor.net during 2010-2013

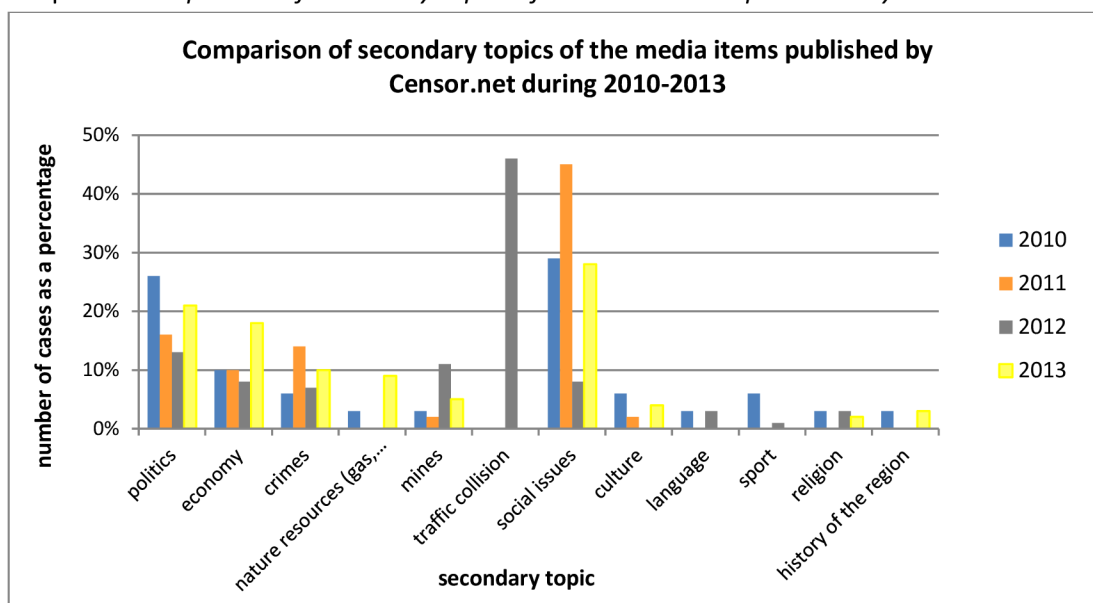


Source: author (2022)

Most of the researched media items had politics as a main topic (44% of media items in 2010, 59% in 2011, 51% in 2012 and 37% in 2013). Economy was a main topic for 11% of media items in 2010, 2% in 2011, 13% in 2012 and 11% in 2013. Crimes has become more covered as a main topic in media items since 2010 (3% of all media items) to 12% of media items in 2013. Nature resources as a main topic occurred only once in 2013 and covered 1% of published that year media items. Mines were a main topic for some media items, the value was stable: approximately 3% of all published media items each year. Environment was a main topic for 4% media items in 2010, 1% of media items in 2011 and 2012 and 7% of media items in 2014. Traffic collision as a main topic occurred only once in 2013 and covered 1% of all published media items that year. Social issues were the second most covered main topic after politics. The values were stable over 4 years: approximately 1/5 of all published media items. The culture was not covered so much as a main topic: only 1-3% of all media items during 2010-2013. The language topic was not covered as a main one at all. There were 9% sport media items in 2010, next years the values fell down: 1% of media items in 2011 and 2013, and only 5% of media items in 2012 (the year when UEFA Euro was held). Religion was a main topic for 2% of media items in 2011 and for 1% of media items in 2012; in 2010 and 2013 the topic did not occur as a main one. The main topic history of the region was covered by 1% of media items in 2010, 2011 and 2013. The topic other nationalities was not mentioned at all during 2010-2014.

The following graph shows analogical information about secondary topics (if the media items had them) of published material during 2010-2013.

Graph 94: Comparison of secondary topics of the media items published by Censor.net during 2010-2013



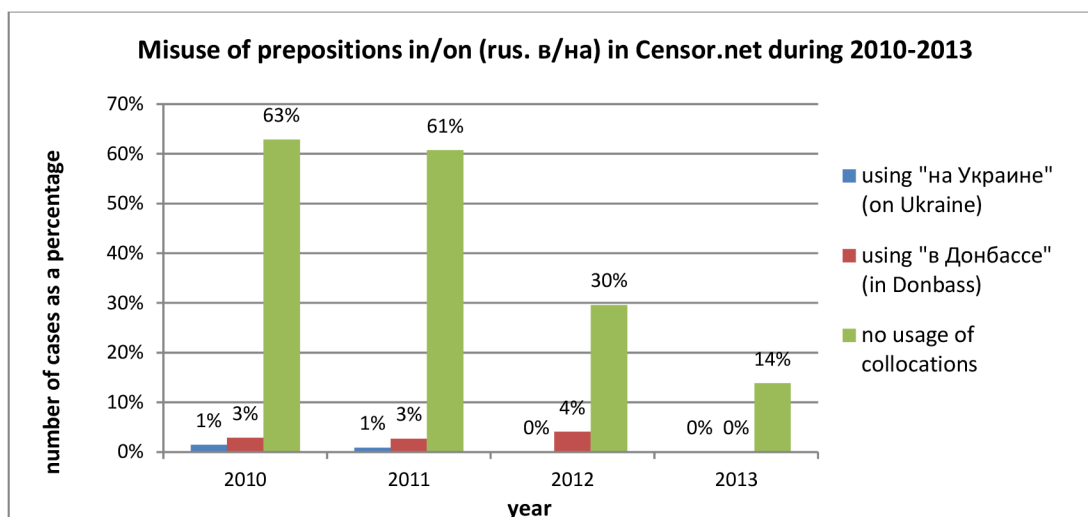
Source: author (2022)

The values are given in percentage for easier comparison among the researched period. In average, the most covered secondary topic was social issues: 29% of media items in 2010, 45% of media items in 2011, 28% of media items in 2013, however only 8% in 2012. Politics as a secondary topic occurred in 26% cases in 2010, 16% cases in 2011, 13% cases in 2012 and 21% of cases in 2013. Economy as a secondary topic was not often, but the values were quite stable: 10% of media items in 2010 and 2011, 8% of cases in 2012 and 18% of media items in 2013. Secondary topic crimes occurred in 6% of media items in 2010, 14% of media items in 2011, 7% of media items in 2012 and 10% of media items in 2013. Nature resources were the secondary topic for 3% of media items in 2010 and 9% of media items in 2013. The secondary topic mines occurred each year in media items about Donbas: the values were around 2-5% in 2010, 2011 and 2013, and 11% in 2012. Traffic collision as a secondary topic occurred only 2012, however the topic covered almost a half (46%) of all media items. The culture was a secondary topic for 2-6% of media items in 2010, 2011, 2013; and did not occur in 2012. Sport was a secondary topic for 6% of media items in 2010 and only 1% of media items in 2012. Interestingly, that the publishing house did not pay a lot of attention to the UEFA Euro 2012, that was a significant sport event held in Ukraine, as the numbers of published information on a sport topic are low. Surprisingly, religion was covered as a secondary topic in media items. There amount of information was not high, though stable: 2-3% in 2010, 2012 and 2013. Same can be said about the topic history of the region, surprisingly this topic was covered by the publishing house as a secondary one (that was not expected): by 3% of media items published in 2010 and 2013.

Same, as in Lenta.ru the topic other national minorities did not occur as a main or secondary topic at all in published media items. Although some other topics were covered differently: while the topics language, history of the region and religion did not occur in Lenta.ru at all, they were covered by media items published by the Ukrainian publishing house Censor.net.

Next graph (95) shows how often if ever the misuse of prepositions occurred in published media items by Censor.net during 2010-2013.

Graph 95: Misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на) in Censor.net during 2010-2013



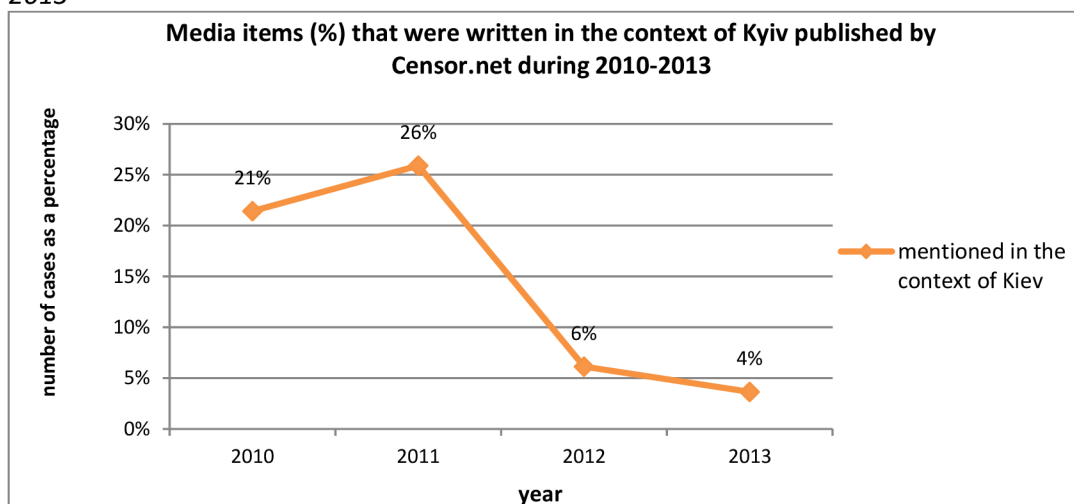
Source: author (2022)

In 2010 and 2011 in more than a half cases the collocations were not used. In all other cases where the collocations were presented (37% cases in 2010 and 39% cases in 2011) the wrong use of prepositions was minimal: only 1% of media items both in 2010 and 2011 had the wrong “on Ukraine” (rus. на Украине), and 3% of media items both in 2010 and 2011 had the wrong “in Donbas” (rus. в Донбассе). Difficult to say whether the mistakes in these cases were misprints. In 2012 in 70% of cases where the collocation was used, the wrong “in Donbas” occurred in 4% of cases. The toponym “Ukraine” was written with the correct preposition “in”. In 2013 no mistakes occurred.

Comparing to Russian Lenta.ru the number of cases where the prepositions were used wrong is minimal. Lenta.ru used wrong collocations “on Ukraine” almost in each media items where the collocation occurred, while only 1% of all cases in 2010 and 2011 and no cases in 2012 and 2013 written by Censor.net were written wrongly. The use of collocation “in Donbas” was not so often both by Lenta.ru or Censor.net, however Lenta.ru also had more cases where the collocation was used incorrectly.

The following graph (96) shows how many of published media items were written in the context of Kyiv.

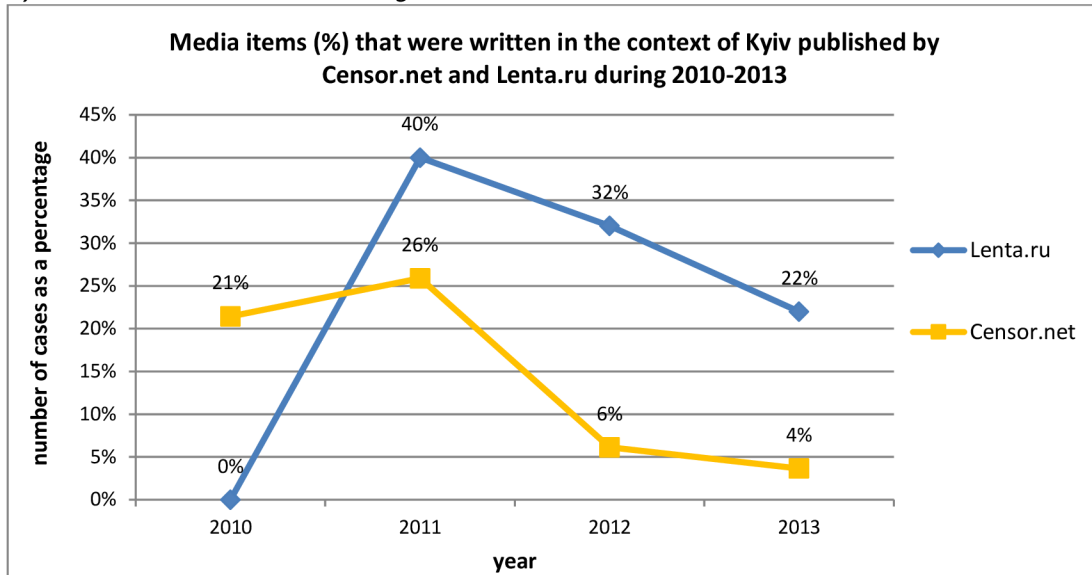
Graph 96: Media items (%) that were written in the context of Kyiv published by Censor.net during 2010-2013



Source: author (2022)

There is an interesting dynamic, that after the 2011 most media items were not written in the context of Kyiv. The values declined approximately 4 times after 2011: from 21-26% in 2010 and 2011 to 6-4% in 2012 and 2013. However, the total amount of written media items in the context of Kyiv is not so high in comparison with the amount of published media items by Lenta.ru. The comparison can be seen in the following graph (97).

Graph 97: Comparison of amount of media items (%) that were written in the context of Kyiv published by Censor.net and Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

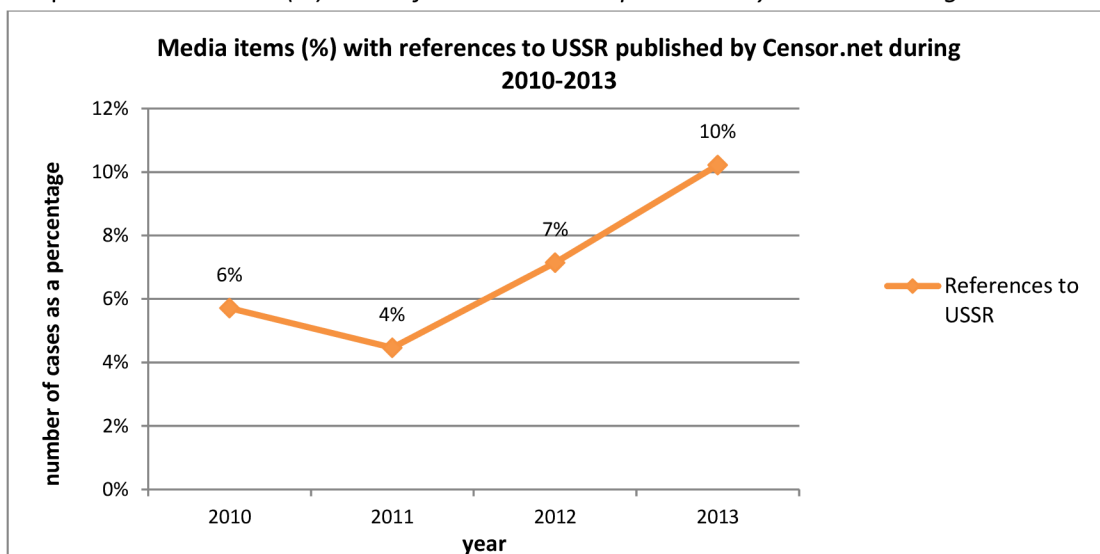


Source: author (2022)

The common trend can be seen: both publishing houses wrote about Donbas region less and less in the context of Kyiv beginning from 2011.

The next graph (98) shows how many media items published by Censor.net during 2010-2013 had any references to USSR.

Graph 98: Media items (%) with references to USSR published by Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

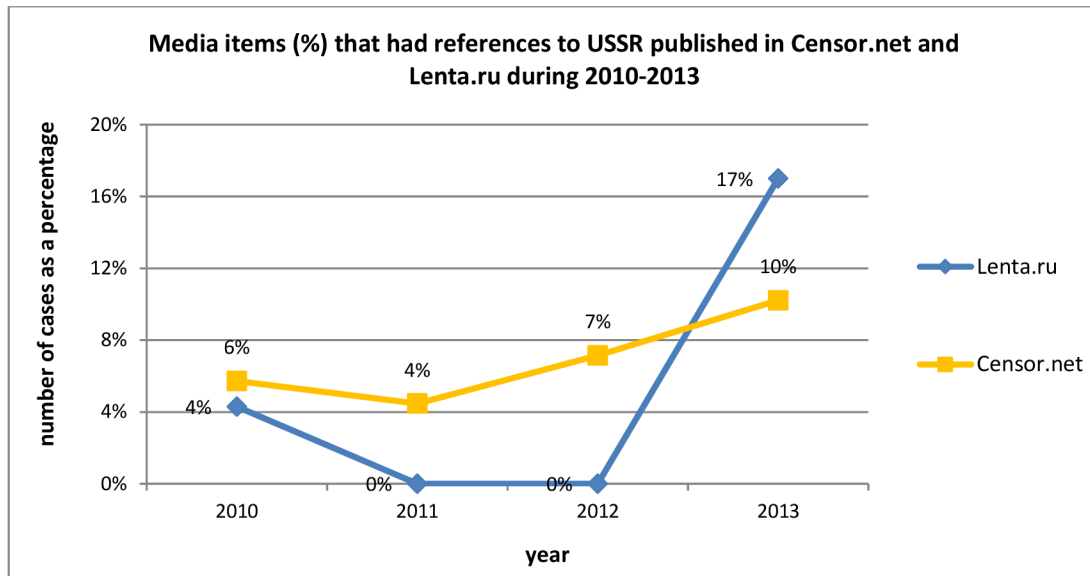


Source: author (2022)

Interestingly, that the amount of media items published by Censor.net and that had any references to USSR has increased during 2010-2013 (6% in 2010, 4% in 2011, 7% in 2012 and 10% in 2013).

Next graph (99) shows the comparison between the amount of published media items that had references to USSR in Censor.net and Lenta.ru during 2010-2013.

Graph 99: *Media items (%) that had references to USSR published in Censor.net and Lenta.ru during 2010-2013*

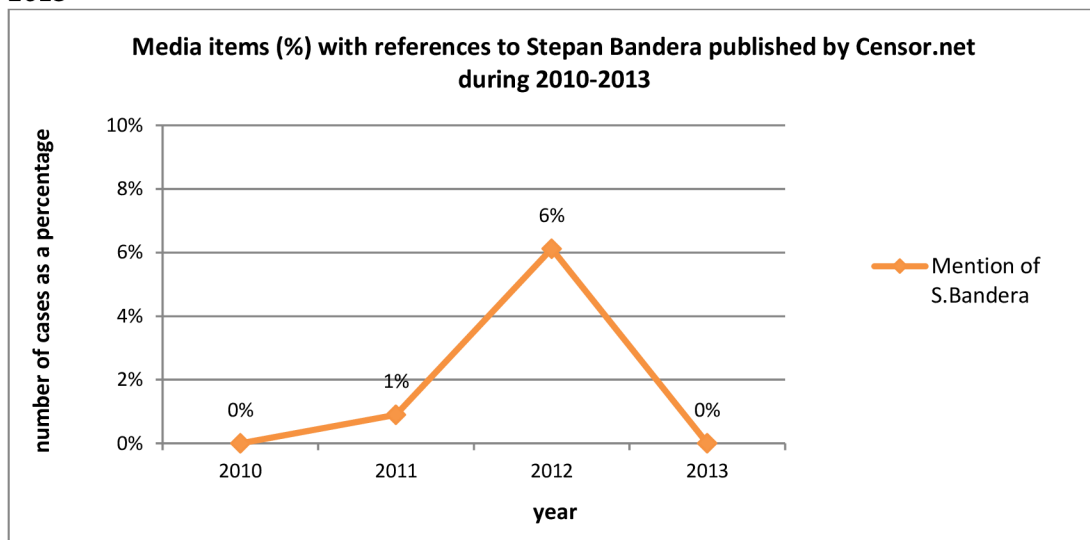


Source: author (2022)

Interesting fact, the Ukrainian Censor.net had more references to USSR during 2010-2012 than Russian Lenta.ru but less references in 2013.

Next graph (100) shows how often there were references to Ukrainian politician Stepan Bandera in media items published by Censor.net during 2010-2013.

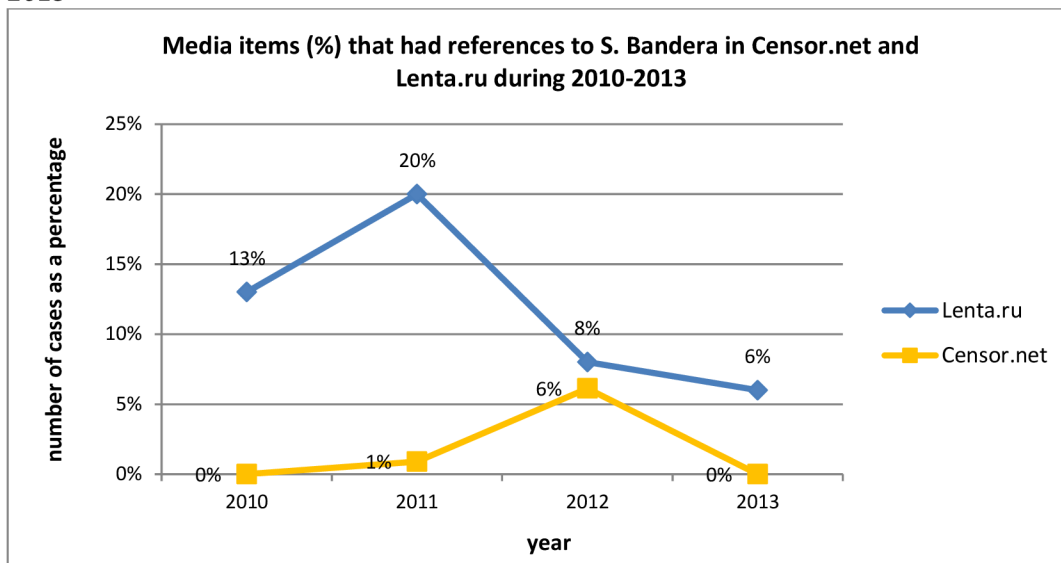
Graph 100: *Media items (%) with references to Stepan Bandera published by Censor.net during 2010-2013*



Source: author (2022)

Ukrainian Censor.net did not mention Stepan Bandera a lot: only in 1% of cases in 2011 and 6% of cases in 2012. The comparison between the frequency of mentioning S. Bandera in Censor.net and Lenta.ru can be seen in the following graph (101).

Graph 101: Media items (%) that had references to S. Bandera in Censor.net and Lenta.ru during 2010-2013

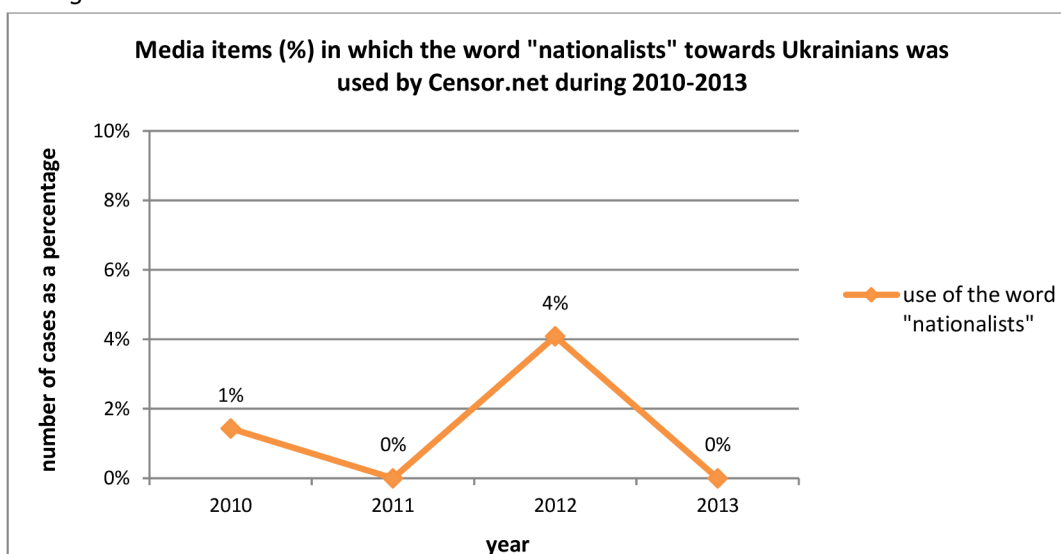


Source: author (2022)

In general, Lenta.ru mentioned Stepan Bandera in their media items much more often than Censor.net. In Censor.net the mentioning of the politician seems to be more like exception than a rule. In Lenta.ru the mentioning of S. Bandera seems to be purposeful but with declining trend.

Next graph (102) shows how often the word “nationalists” was used in published material by Censor.net.

Graph 102: Media items (%) in which the word "nationalists" towards Ukrainians was used by Censor.net during 2010-2013

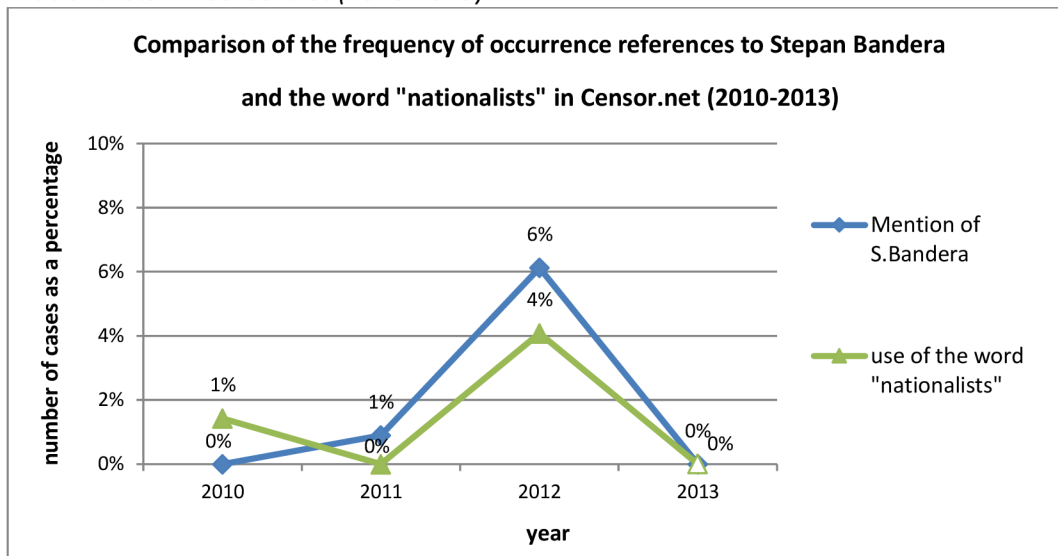


Source: author (2022)

The use of the word “nationalists” infrequent, seems more like an exception than the rule. The word was used only in 1% of all published materials in 2010 and 4% in 2012. There was no usage of the word in 2011 and 2013 at all.

The following graph (103) shows the comparison of trends in mentioning Stepan Bandera and usage the word “nationalists”.

Graph 103: Comparison of the frequency of occurrence references to Stepan Bandera and the word “nationalists” in Censor.net (2010-2013)

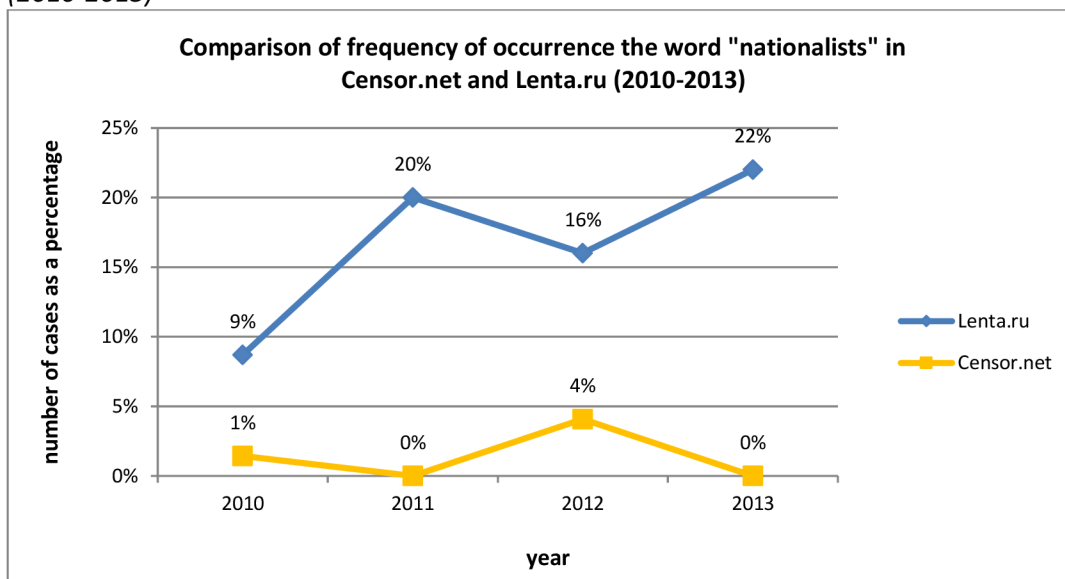


Source: author (2022)

The researched issues seem to have similar trend: almost no occurrence in 2010, 2011, 2013 and a little bit more occurrence in 2012.

The next graph (104) shows differences in the frequency of usage the word “nationalists”.

Graph 104: Comparison of frequency of occurrence the word “nationalists” in Censor.net and Lenta.ru (2010-2013)

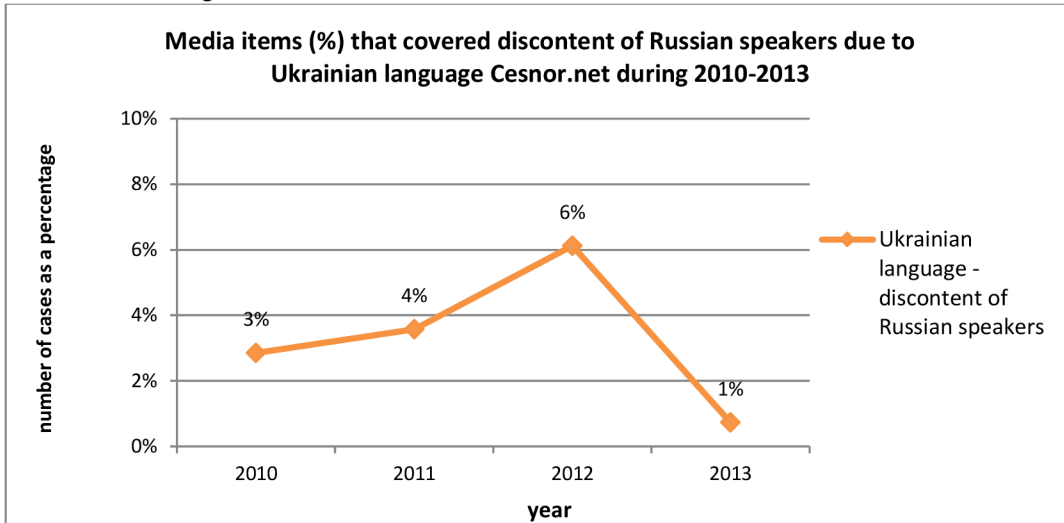


Source: author (2022)

The difference in the frequency of occurrence the word “nationalists” in media items published by two different publishing houses is significant. While in Censor.net the word was not used almost at all, the Russian Lenta.ru had a clear trend in using this word towards Ukrainians more and more often. This might be important for possible following researches of propaganda in the context of the Russian invasion in 2014 and Russian-Ukrainian war 2022.

The next graph (105) shows how often any language conflicts between Russian and Ukrainian speaker Ukrainians occurred in media items.

Graph 105: *Media items (%) that covered discontent of Russian speakers due to Ukrainian language Censor.net during 2010-2013*

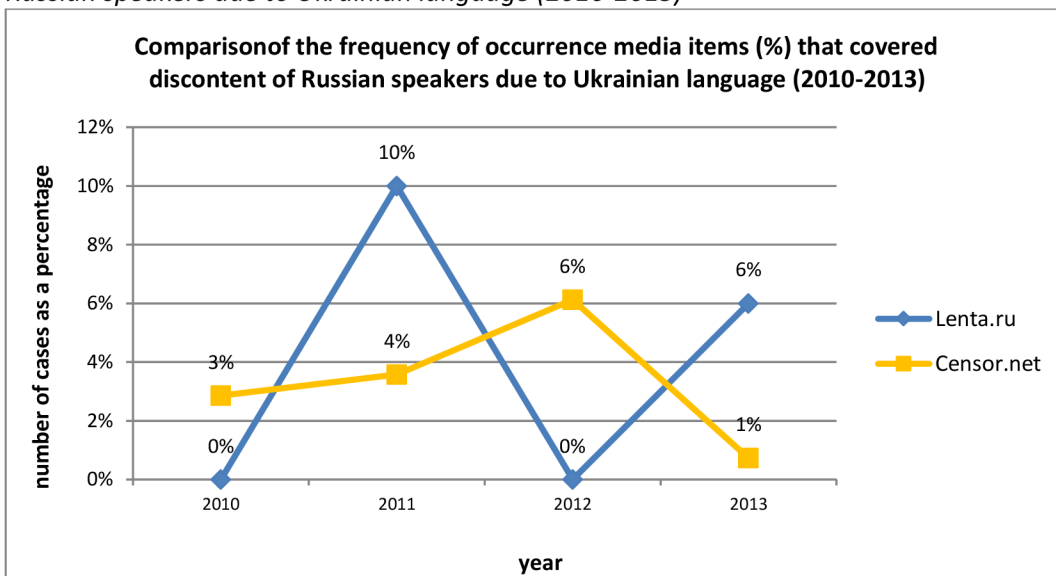


Source: author (2022)

The frequency of occurrence the researched issue is not high. In 2012 there were more cases (6% of media items) where the discontent of Russian speakers due to Ukrainian language occurred.

The next graph (106) shows the comparison of the frequency of occurrence the researched issue in media items published by Censor.net and Lenta.ru during 2010-2013.

Graph 106: *Comparison of the frequency of occurrence media items (%) that covered discontent of Russian speakers due to Ukrainian language (2010-2013)*

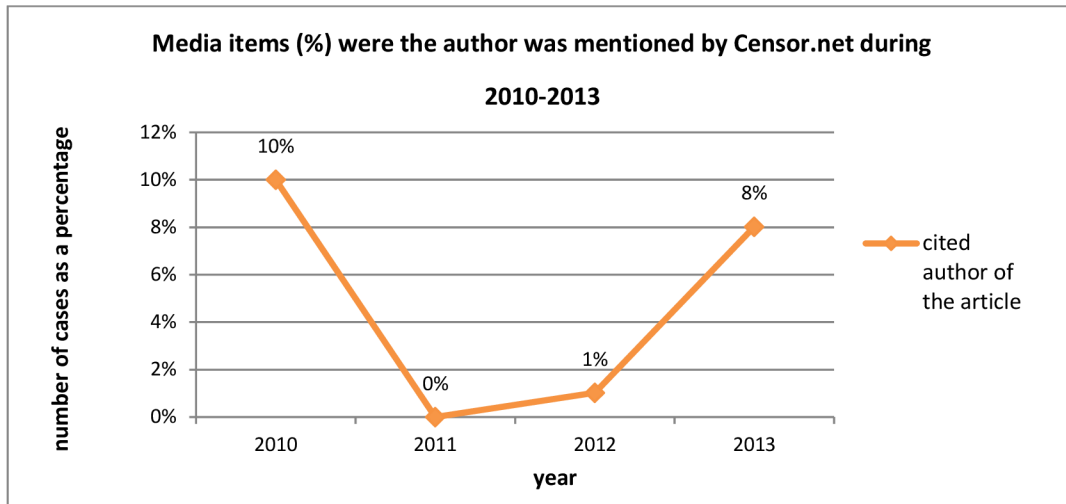


Source: author (2022)

Interestingly, that years when Censor.net wrote about the discontent of Russian speakers due to Ukrainian language more, the Lenta.ru published less materials with this issue and vice versa.

Next graph (107) shows the amount of media items published by Censor.net where the author of the media item was mentioned.

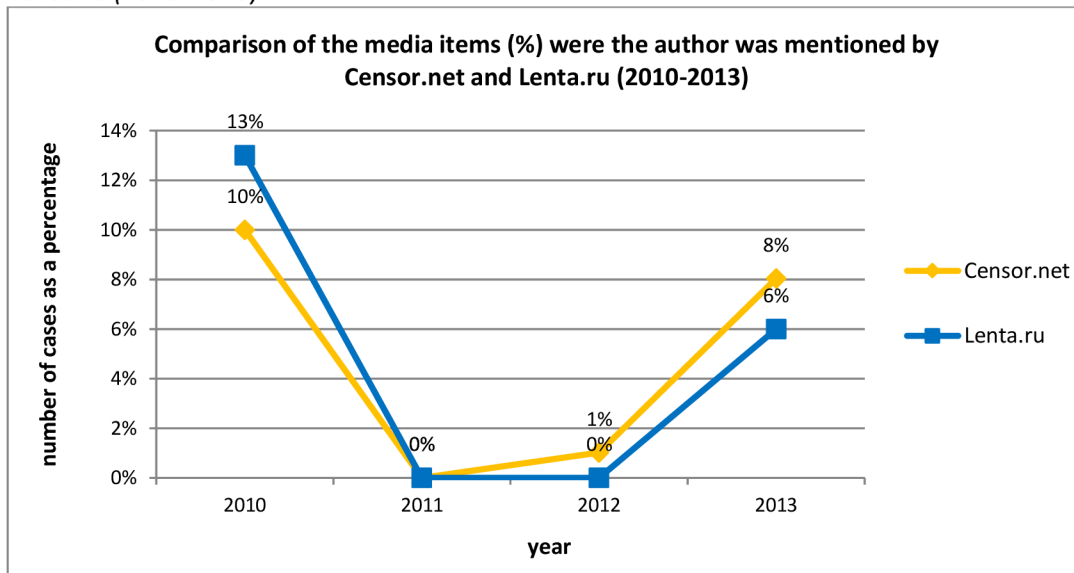
Graph 107: Media items (%) were the author was mentioned by Censor.net during 2010-2013



Source: author (2022)

In some media items the author was mentioned (10% in 2010 and 8% in 2013). No mention of the author was in 2011 and only 1% of media items mentioned author in 2012.

Graph 108: Comparison of the media items (%) were the author was mentioned by Censor.net and Lenta.ru (2010-2013)

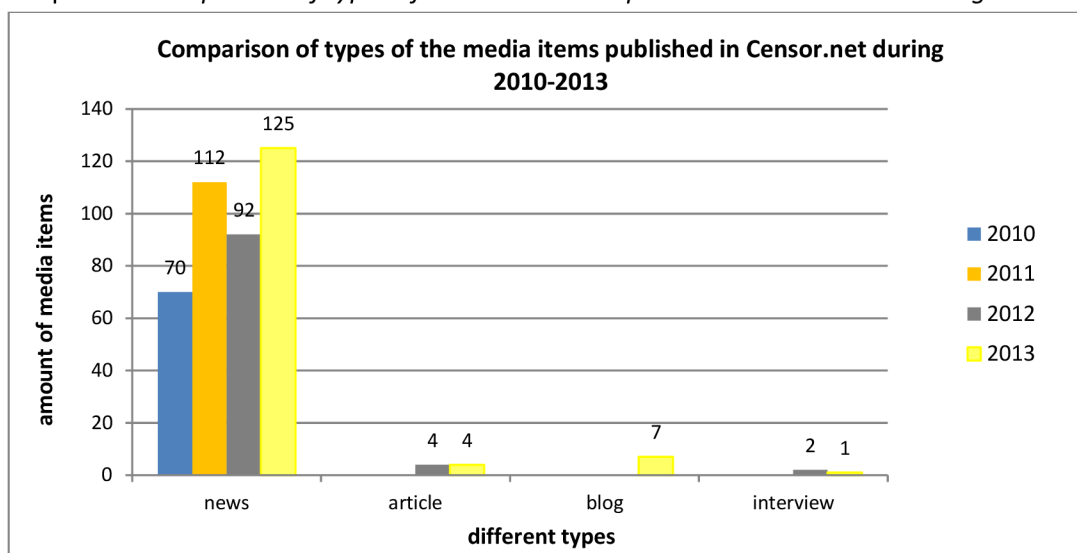


Source: author (2022)

Interesting to see how similar was the trend of mentioning authors of the media items in two different publishing houses during 2010-2013.

Next graph (109) shows different types of media items published by Censor.net in 2010-2013

Graph 109: Comparison of types of the media items published in Censor.net during 2010-2013



Source: author (2022)

Most of all published media items during the whole period by Censor.net were news. There were only 4 articles in 2012 and 2013, 7 blogs in 2013 and 2 interviews in 2012 and one in 2013. The amount of published other than news types of media items were insignificant comparing to the whole amount of published material.

Additional list of media items published by Censor.net about social and political tensions in Ukraine due to obscene shouting about the president Yanukovich and T-shirts:

- Posle того, kak fanaty "poblagodarili zhiteley Donbasa", Surkis reshil vernut' na stadion militsiyu, © 2004—2022. CENSOR.NET [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 11.08.2011 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/178149/posle_togo_kak_fanaty_poblagodarili_jiteleyi_Donbasa_surki_s_reshil_vernut_na_stadion_militsiyu
- Krichalka "Spasibo zhitelyam Donbasa..."stala populyarnym ringtonom, © 2004—2022. CENSOR.NET [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 10.8.2011 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/178021/krichalka_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_stala_populyarnym_ringtonom
- Rolik s "blagodarnostyu zhhitelyam Donbasa za Prezidenta" stal hitom v socialnykh setyah, © 2004—2022. CENSOR.NET [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 09.08.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/177935/rolik_s_blagodarnostyu_jitelyam_Donbasa_za_prezidenta_stal_hitom_v_sotsialnyh_setyah
- Fanaty uzhe ne blagodariat "zhiteley Donbasa." Im obyasnili, chto budet "bo-bo" i zanialis' sootvetstvuyushchiye organy, - predstavitel' FK "Dinamo", © 2004—2022. CENSOR.NET [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 15.08.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/178454/fanaty_uje_ne_blagodaryat_jiteleyi_Donbasa_im_obyasnili_cto_budet_bobo_i_zanyalis_sootvetstvuyus
- Magazin, prodavshiy unikalnyye futbolki "Spasibo zhitelam Donbasa...", uzhe ne rabotayet, © 2004—2022. CENSOR.NET [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 30.08.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z:

https://censor.net/ru/news/179994/magazin_prodavavshiyi_unikalnye_futbolki_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_uje_ne_rabotaet

- Vlast' preduprezhdaet, chto zhiteley Donbasa blagodarit' nel'zya, - lider fanatov kievskogo "Dinamo", © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 01.09.2011 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/180333/vlast_predupreidaet_chno_jiteleyi_Donbasa_blagodarit_nelzy_a_lider_fanatov_kievskogo_dinamo
- "Spasibo zhiteleyam Donbasa": kievskoye "Dinamo" oshtrafovali na 100 tysyach za skandal'nyuyu rechevku v adres Yanukovycha, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 02.09.2011 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/180417/spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_kievskoe_dinamo_oshtrafovali_na_100_tysyach_za_skandalnyuyu_rechevku_v_adres
- Za "Spasibo zhiteliyam Donbasa..." k proizvoditeliyam futbolok vorvalsia UBOP, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 06.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/180792/za_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_k_proizvoditeliyam_futbolok_v_orvalsya_ubop
- Proizvoditelia futbolok obyskali ne za "Spasibo zhiteleyam Donbasa", - MVD, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 06.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/180818/proizvoditelya_futbolok_obyskali_ne_za_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_mvд
- Proizvoditel' futbolok "Spasibo zhiteleyam Donbasa" napisal Yanukovichu pismo: Vy gotovy perestupit' cherez Ukrayinu?, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 07.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/180925/proizvoditel_futbolok_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_napisal_yanukovichu_pismo_vy_gotovy_perestupit_cherez
- Fanatu Dinamo svetit 4 goda. Za "Spasibo zhiteleyam Donbasa...?", © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 08.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/181094/fanatu_dinamo_svetit_4_goda_za_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_a
- Zavtra na Maydane ustroyat rasprodazhu futbolok "Spasibo zhiteleyam Donbasa", © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 14.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/181611/zavtra_na_maydane_ustroyat_rasprodaju_futbolok_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa
- Na Maydane, krome futbolok "Spasibo zhiteliyam Donbasa", budut prodavat' i drugiye suveniry. Tsena uzhe izvestna, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 15.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/181779/na_mayidane_krome_futbolok_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_budut_prodavat_i_drugie_suveniry_tsena_uje_izvestna
- Aktsiya s futbolkami "Spasibo zhiteliyam Donbasa" zakonchilas' grabezhom, siniakami i pogoney. Obeshchayut napechatat' yeshche i vernut'sa. FOTOREPORTAZH, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 15.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/photo_news/181815/aktsiya_s_futbolkami_spasibo_jitelyam_Donbasa_zakonchilas_grabejom_sinyakami_i_pogoneyi_obeschayut

- V UNP sovetuyut Yanukovychu cuditsia za "Spasibo zhiteliam Donbasa", yesli eto oskorbliayet yego chest', © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 17.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/181991/v_unp_sovetuyut_yanukovichu_suditsya_za_spasibo_jitelya_m_donbasa_esli_eto_oskorblyaet_ego_chest
- "Berkut" vernul obovnyy futbolki "Spasibo zhiteliam Donbasa", © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 15.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/181833/berkut_vernul_obovnyy_futbolki_spasibo_jitelyam_donbasa
- Izdateliu futbolok "Spasibo zhiteliam Donbasa..." ugrozhayut, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 19.09.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/182169/izdateliu_futbolok_spasibo_jitelyam_donbasa_ugrozhayut
- Donetskij gorsovet: "Spasibo zhiteliam Donbasa za prezidenta - pida...sa!" - eto kitayskaya polittehnologiya, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 01.10.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/183514/donetskiyi_gorsovet_spasibo_jitelyam_donbasa_za_prezidenta_pidasa_eto_kitayskaya_polittehnologiya
- Sozdatel' avtobolok "Spasibo zhiteliam Donbasa..." v Shveytsarii vstretilsa s sovetnikom Platini, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 09.10.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/184299/sozdatel_futbolok_spasibo_jitelyam_donbasa_v_shveytsarii_vstretilsya_s_sovetnikom_platini
- Avtor futbolok "Spasibo zhiteliam Donbasa..." podast v sud na UEFA i direktora Evro-2012, © 2004—2022. *CENSOR.NET* [online]. Kyiv: "Цензор.НЕТ", 27.10.11 [cit. 2022-05-27]. Dostupné z: https://censor.net/ru/news/186194/avtor_futbolok_spasibo_jitelyam_donbasa_podast_v_sud_na_uefa_i_direktora_evro2012
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Conclusion

This thesis was aimed to describe the media image created by selected opinion-maker Russian and Ukrainian media during the period 2010-2013. The work has been focused on the question what media policy, and consequently the media image of the region of studied publishing houses had been implemented and created several years before the partly occupation of Ukrainian Donbas by Russians in 2014.

According to stated criteria the Ukrainian Internet publishing house “Obozrevatel” and the Russian publishing house “Gazeta.ru” were selected to be researched. However, due to the beginning of Russian full invasion on the territory of Ukraine and the start of Russo-Ukrainian war on the 24th of February, 2022 there were unexpected complications with the research. Among them were the deletion of the search on the “Gazeta.ru” website that made it impossible to implement the research methodology; and the blockage and non-access of the “Obozrevatel” website when the coding process had being made. As a result, the author had to choose another publishing houses that suits stated research criteria; therefore the Ukrainian publishing house “Censor.net” and the Russian publishing house “Lenta.ru” were selected to be researched. Important notion to be done from the author’s personal experience of researching the “topic of the day” issue, especially in the context of mass media, is that any available material and information should be saved immediately during the work, as it can be deleted or modified any time due to political/war instability.

Totally 417 media items from Ukrainian “Censor.net” and 76 media items from Russian “Lenta.ru” were coded and analysed. The work itself was aimed to be descriptive, that also means that it enables to follow the dynamic of changes in researched issues. The author focused on the such questions as how often the Donbas region occurred in media, how long the media items were and what was their type, whether Donbas was the main topic of news or never, in what media section on the websites media items about the region occurred, what main and secondary topics the media item had (in the context of what publishing houses thought it was worth writing about). Moreover the issues of the misuse of the prepositions “on/in” with the toponyms Ukraine and Donbas (the way to understand how this territory was taken by both sides) was analysed. Additionally the author researched whether media items were written with the context of Kyiv, whether they had references to USSR or Stepan Bandera; the frequency of usage the word “nationalists”, Ukrainian language issue (from the position and context of discontent of Russian speakers); and whether authors of researched media items were mentioned.

During the research and analysis of media items, the author discovered interesting regularities and questions that should be proven and answer scientifically and might become an inspiration for possible future researches:

- 1) In the publishing house Lenta.ru media items about Donbas were deliberately written in the media section “the former Soviet Union” on its website at least during 4 researched years. The name of the media section is highly controversial, and due to the fact that Lenta.ru has been monthly read by 20 million people, the question is what cause on people’s psychics and perception of the territory of the neighbor country it has made over the long period of time.
- 2) In the publishing house Lenta.ru media items about Donbas sometimes occurred in the media section “Russia” on the website. The name of the section is even more controversial than “the former Soviet Union”. What are the possible reasons to add pieces of news about the territory of the other country in the section named after foreign country? What is the probability that Russian

media have been preparing their readers to see news about Donbas in the media section of their country, and consequently, the occupation of the part of Donbas has been prepared for many years before 2014?

- 3) What was the reason for a high decline of published media items about Donbas by Lenta.ru in 2011? Were there any causal linkages with the win of the pro-Russian president Yanukovich in the presidential elections in 2010 and the rapid decline of the media “interest” in this topic?
- 4) Unexpectedly no media items in Russian Lenta.ru were published in June, September, November and December 2013. In the context of the beginning of the Revolution of Dignity in November 2013 in Ukraine, the logic question occurs: why there was no published material about Donbas at that period due to the fact, that in three-five months Crimea would be annexed and the invasion of Donbas would begin?
- 5) Important issue to research is how much the wrong unconscious use of prepositions indicating territorial differences (incorrect “on Ukraine” and “in Donbas”) may have affected people's psyche and perception of belonging and integrity both of Donbas and Ukraine.
- 6) During the reading, coding process and analysis of Russian media items the author perceived them to be often irrelevant for a foreign media. Many cases written in Lenta.ru were written in a local scale (unimportant events or issues even for another region except of Donbas, moreover for a foreign publishing house). Can it be said, that Russia report local Donbas events in order to bring the region closer to its own population and to change the people’s perception?
- 7) Interestingly, Russian Lenta.ru has always had at least one image in each media item. Usually this images were only stock photos, however in contrast, Ukrainian Censor.net had not had any photos at all until approximately 2013. The impact of the presence/absence of images in media items and their both quality and content might be an important topic to deep into.

The topic of mass media is an inexhaustible source of possible analysis, predictions and questions. Mass media play a significant political role both in a daily life and international affairs levels by creating a man-made reality and necessary agenda for masses. Due to political events in 2022 the topic of Donbas region is being up-to date, same as understanding of its media image and the answers how the invasion and war could be prepared and what role the media played in it. Analyses of media items same as media images could partly help to answer complex ambiguous questions.

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Annexes

1. The archive of researched Lenta.ru media items published during 2010-2013

The annex can be found on CD attached to the work²³

²³ The annex has 244 pages and consists of copied links and texts of the all researched media items. Due to the vast amount of information, the annex will be available on the attached CD without a printed copy.

Annexes

2. The archive of researched Censor.net media items published during 2010-2013

The annex can be found on CD attached to the work²⁴

²⁴ The annex has 671 pages and consists of copied links and texts of the all researched media items. Due to the vast amount of information, the annex will be available on the attached CD without a printed copy.

Annexes

3. Excel table from the coding of media items

Excel file consists of 10 sheets: coded media items from Lenta.ru 2010-2014, where each year was coded separately. Same for the publishing house Censor.net 2010-2014, where four sheets for each researched year during the coding were used. Additionally, the pages of excluded media items in both Russian Lenta.ru and Ukrainian Censor.net were added. Excel sheets themselves consist of the vast amount of information (codes for researched issues). One Excel sheet (one research year out of four; and one out of two publishing houses), that examines years with higher numbers of published media items about Donbas, often has more than a hundred pages in a PDF format. Due to the massive amount of information and limited space, the author will provide the reader with the example coding of one year with the following comments that are aimed to enable the reader to understand the logic of the whole coding. The whole Excel file with the coding of all the years can be found on the attached CD.

Firstly, the links on each media item are written down. The coding was made in a horizontal row that means that all the coded numbers in the same row relate to the same media item.

The explanation on the example of the first media item (all the values from the row with the first URL link):

- Month: 12 columns mean 12 month. The code “1” under the column “1” means the media item was published in January.
- Amount of the words: the code “1” under the column “501-1500 (average news articles)” means the media item has from 501 up to 1500 words.
- Donbas as a main topic: the code “1” under the column “yes/no” means that Donbas is the main topic of the media item.
- Media section on website: the code “1” under the column “Russia” means the media item can be found in this media section on the website.
- Main topic: the code “1” under the column “crimes” means that the main topic of the media item is crimes.
- Secondary topic: the code “1” under the column “politics” means that it is the secondary topic of the media items, and there is some information about political crimes in the media item.
- Misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на): the code “1” under the column “using “на Украине” (on Ukraine)” means that this incorrect collocation is in the media item.
- Context of Kyiv: the code “1” under the column “yes/no” means the media item is written in the context of Kyiv.
- References to USSR: the code “0” under the column “yes/no” means there are no references to USSR in the media item.
- Mention of S. Bandera: the code “1” under the column “yes/no” means the media item mentions S. Bandera.
- use the word “nationalists”: the code “1” under the column “yes/no” means the word “nationalists” is used in the media item.
- Language issue (Ukr-Rus): the code “0” under the column “yes/no” means there is no mention of any of possible language issues.
- Cited author: the code “0” under the column “yes/no” means the author of the media item is not cited.
- Photos in press release: the code “1” under the column “yes/no” means there is at least one photo in the media item. The code “1” under the column “if yes, how many?” means there is one photo.

- Category: the code “1” under the column “news” means the media item is considered to be a piece of news.
- Briefly the content: short brief annotation what is the media item about.

Between the columns “Category” and “Briefly the content” sometimes some author’s notes can be found about the relevance of the media item. Some media items were considered to be highly irrelevant for the foreign mass media (from the perspective of Russian publishing house creating some media items about the territory of the foreign country), possible hypothesis about the explanation of the presence of this kind of material can be found in the Conclusion.

LENTA.RU 2011

links	month												amount of words			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	101-500 (short)	501-1500 (average news articles)	1501- and more (long)	
https://lenta.ru/articles/2011/01/21/makeevka/	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	0
https://lenta.ru/articles/2011/02/25/year/	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	1
https://lenta.ru/news/2011/04/01/poledance/	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		0	0
https://lenta.ru/news/2011/04/20/friendly/	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		0	0
https://lenta.ru/news/2011/08/04/mine/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1		0	0
https://lenta.ru/news/2011/08/09/gold1/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1		0	0
https://lenta.ru/news/2011/09/02/an nagerman/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1		0	0
https://lenta.ru/news/2011/10/04/forbes/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1		0	0
https://lenta.ru/news/2011/11/22/maidan/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		0	0
https://lenta.ru/news/2011/12/19/miner/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1		0	0

<i>Donbas as main topic</i>	Media section on website							
	yes/no	Former USSR	Internet and media	Economy	Finance	Russia	From life	Sport
1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

main topic

politics	economy	crimes	nature resources	mines	traffic collision	social issues	culture	language	sport	religion	history of the region	other national minorities
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

secondary topic

	politics	economy	nature resources	mines	traffic collision	social issues	culture	language	sport	religion	history of the region	other national minorities
	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

<i>misuse of prepositions in/on (rus. в/на)</i>		"yes" = 1 - no usage. "no" = 0 - incorrect one	<i>context of Kyiv</i>	<i>References to USSR</i>
using "на Украине" (on Ukraine)	using "в Донбассе" (in Donbass)	no usage of collocations	yes/no (= 1/0)	yes/no
1	0	0	1	0
1	0	0	1	0
0	0	1	0	0
0	0	1	1	0
0	0	1	0	0
1	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	0	0
0	0	1	0	0
0	0	1	1	0
0	0	1	0	0

<i>Mention of S. Bandera</i> yes/no	<i>use the word "nationalists"</i> yes/no	<i>Language issue (Ukr-Rus)</i> yes/no	<i>cited author</i> yes/no	<i>photos in</i> yes/no
1	1	0	0	1
1	1	1	0	1
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1

press release	if yes, how many?	category					briefly the content
		news	article	blog	interview		
	1	1	0	0	0		In Makiivka, unknown threatened to set off an explosion and extorted 4 million euros. The money was brought from Kiev, but it was not taken away and there was no explosion
	1	0	0	0	1		Yanukovych was summing up period of his rule at the turn of the century
	1	1	0	0	0	IRRELEVANT ARTICLE FOR FOREIGN MEDIA	There stripping competition will be held at the Donetsk club.
	1	1	0	0	0		Friendly football championship at the Donbass Arena
	1	1	0	0	0	IRRELEVANT ARTICLE FOR FOREIGN MEDIA	Mine explosion, one man is seriously injured
	1	1	0	0	0		Ukraine has found gold deposits in various regions and plans to mine it
	1	1	0	0	0		Herman says Yanukovych did not plagiarise someone else's articles in his book
	1	1	0	0	0		Donbass factories are top richest companies in the country according to Forbes
	1	1	0	0	0	IRRELEVANT ARTICLE FOR FOREIGN MEDIA	The old man came to Maidan with a sign saying "Yushchenko, Donbass is with you."
	1	1	0	0	0	IRRELEVANT ARTICLE FOR FOREIGN MEDIA	Football team Shakhtar will produce its own chocolates