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## ESPORTS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS: FACTOR OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION AND FICTION ASPECTS

*Using certain cases, the article raises the scope of problems regarding cultural intervention in esports through the universal codes of media, as well as the use of esports as an instrument of hybrid war. A certain consideration is given to esports as a theme or a unit of such codes in more traditional media (news media in particular), as well as co-called 'new media' (such as podcasts), which is followed through a middle link of hybrid media evolution (universal code of movies), meaning evolution which does not make previous fragments obsolete per se. Article also dwells upon esports from a POV of international political communication: parallels are drawn to media interest for sports events, characterized is the approximate difference between the two components which could be found in this type of media, now only forming when compared to traditional coverage of sports events.*

*Using the method of case studies and logical-intuitive analyses a few educated guesses are made about the future development of esports themes from the point of view in international political communication, the role of that forming link in the media institutes in general, as well as retranslation unit of political messages. Expressed is a certain concern with how unnoticed any messages could be through the high level of coding in specialized media, which provides the esports coverage.*

*Conclusions are drawn about: relevance of following research regarding representation of esports competitions in the media from the perspective of international political communications; perspectives of observing the representation of esports microcosm in media; forming of institutionalization of non-state compounds in esports which have certain influences on international political communications as a co-called 'wild cards'. Specified is that it's too soon to talk about forming of an actor in international political relations, but at the very least a new leverage of actorship in the branched system of universal codes of media, research of which separately will be unsatisfactory and will bring unrepresentative results to the table.*

**Keywords:** *esports, videogames, international political communications, universal codes of media, universal code of movies, representation.*

Internationally, media is still getting accustomed to the fact that eSports are an important and widely developing part of our lives (it even has problems, at times, accepting it as sports to begin with), given that video games and simulations are becoming more prominent and important virtually everywhere. At that point there is a crucial need to look at how eSports are represented in media and where it could go from here. Especially concerning and not to be overlooked is growing but 'untamed' representation in fiction, as such happens to have an underrated grip on many societal processes, through what the author tends to call with a term *universal codes of media* as explained later. Often understated, such codes not only increase the passive appeal of depicted in some cases, but can also stimulate misunderstandings (nefariously exploited for personal gain and political imbalance later on).

Developments of media representation of eSports is analyzed in the article using the methodology of author's previous unique researches, encompassing case study method and logical-intuitive analysis with the use of quasi-concepts [38], as well as experience acquired by author as a freelance video game journalist. [53; 54; 55; 56] Another important and planned part of the article is analyses of representation of eSports in Ukrainian media and fiction, comparisons to international case studies on that matter. International political communication aspects will come into play not just because of author's appeal to political science, but also because how increasingly entangled political context is in regards of eSports: ranging from implications first drawn in Oleg Sentsov's 2011 movie *Gámer* (which is often attacked for political context being present in Sentsov's biography as a repressed citizen of Ukraine in an annexed Crimea) and relatively harmless messages drawn in 2009's similarly named *Gamer* [28; 60]. The latter still sizzles with political metaphors

to modern abundance of media coverage (both generic and specific) pertaining to real eSports events. Case studies provided in the article will examine societal, political and mythological roles assigned by media outlets to eSportsmen all over the world, touching upon variants.

Article will hopefully not just provide for a better understanding of media's difficulties in approaching layers upon layers of gaming subcultures, it could possibly serve as a gateway guide for aspiring researchers and video game journalists alike, trying to make sense in the increasingly entangled and colorful world of eSports, technology and gaming. Conclusions will hopefully be drawn on how important media representation and aspects of fiction are for eSports, but also how eSports becoming a more prominent theme in the spotlight of traditional and new media (as exemplified mainly by podcasts). They will also touch upon how those mutual entanglements between the two could possibly benefit globalized society in a world struck by disastrous uncertainty of fairly recent global events.

Main focus of the article is divided into three sections. The first section dwells upon international political communication and draws its correlation to eSports through universal codes of media, cementing the place of video games in the media hierarchy and assorted provisions this place gives eSports as a catalyst of international political communication. The second section examines the fiction aspects of eSports as well as one's representation in media, correlating the two and examining the underlying political tissue. It also introduces quasi-concepts of *intuitive noise* and *conscious noise*. The third section draws unexpected connections between eSports and new media in the form of podcasts, streamlining the political connective tissue present in both of them.

Dwelling upon intricate correlation between international political communication and universal codes of media this article's purpose is to specify the place of eSports in such for those who wander from any corner of that impending discussion. As such, the main objective of the article is to demonstrate the underlying processes of political communication in eSports occurring through the universal codes of media.

Additional objectives of the article include:

- To explain in simple terms how international political communication occurs in general and how it may happen and oftentimes happens through eSports;
- Provide (through case studies) assorted links between existing types of media and accentuate where eSports is situated in such.
- Provide recommendations for possibilities in following researches in assorted media aspects of eSports.

At this point it became evident (as seen by the existence of this very book) that eSports is becoming an increasingly important and publicized area. Recent years suggest that it climbs up higher and higher in the media agenda with the likes of *The Washington Post* and ESPN. Respectively, the former hired additional reporters and an editor to cover the topic [27], while the latter added eSports to covered line-ups in 2016, for the first time ever since early 2000's and competitive poker. [32]

Perhaps the most dramatic increase in eSports coverage in recent years was (rather logically) seen in 2020, since traditional sports largely decreased their scales due to the pandemic of COVID-19 novel coronavirus. [8] That alone attracted not only unforeseen financial and media support to assorted eSports platforms, but also elusive and intriguing aspects of celebrity appeal, as exemplified by actors James McAvoy and star racer Fernando Alonso joining the ranks of eSportsmen. [53-54] As for aforementioned financial support: things are looking all the more bright and spectacular with giants like Lenovo and Microsoft making moves on the eSports market, sponsoring assorted events and purchasing platforms. [52; 57] As such, salaries of prominent eSportsmen (some of them very young) also attract extensive media coverage. [58]

Cross (2020) additionally notes that while the niche is flourishing it is hardly attracting a very sufficient amount of new followers to growing coverage by traditional media [8]. That is because eSports are covered readily by assorted specialized websites and online newspapers.

One of such, publishing in Ukraine (and in Ukrainian) is PlayUA, where the author happens to be a freelance contributor with additional benefit of collecting case studies very much helping in the research, as well as gaining some confidence in the area that continues to puzzle not only traditional media, but also research. It was of especial value for the author (someone hailing from political studies with movies being a particular focus) to cover *The Game Awards* for PlayUA [56]. It is of note that this ceremony hails a combined game industry, but eSports is a particular and traditional focus with assorted nominations dedicated to eSportsmen, trainers, teams etc. However, these nominations are particularly odd ones out when it comes to this particular ceremony, which shares a lot of similarities with the Oscars. So much so that a lot of familiar actors and directors show up to give a very certain kind of flair to a ceremony, celebrating especially how video games became first and foremost, narrative fiction of highest artistic value.

Similarly to how Internet Movie DataBase (IMDb) always considered video games a type of movies (in a wider sense of motion pictures and/or moving images), video games right now becoming less of an amusement arcade novelty and more of an entertainment industry juggernaut. Where exactly does eSports fit in that conundrum? Effectively, they become an unexpected bridge between sport, news media, narrative fiction and politics. The latter component really needs an introduction on its own, which the author should note is repeated somewhat from a chapter available through IGI Global in an authored research insight book, also by author. [39-40].

The way information affects people on assorted levels (including emotional, intellectual and neurological) should be discussed in correlation with how increasingly political the world has become recently. Globalization gives media, especially new media of the Internet a blazing carte-blanche of newfound abilities, regardless of its actual audience. This happens due to new media having an ability to influence traditional media (as well as other new media) directly, thus giving it what could be called a *proxy audience*. Phenomenon of misinformation spreading like wildfire on social media could be at the very least partially attributed to that idea. However, there are larger forces at play, as phenomena of media appeal, fandom and cultural codes are also very much present in the realm of video games and eSports. Understated when it comes to international political communication, they form crucial bridges between nations, governmental and nongovernmental bodies (often called *actors* in specific terminology of political science and international relations). Perhaps more importantly and/or problematic is their *by proxy influence*. However, before jumping to that proceeding we perhaps could use a certain retrospective look at what exactly international political communication *is*, why it came to be and why eSports even could be viewed through such a prism.

The earliest uses of the term international political communication could be traced to (at least) 1950's, however most published works using that term provide a very specialized retrospective of such communication not agreeing on a singular, clear definition. [36] In more recent cases (such as J. Gastil's (2008) book on political communication and deliberation [12]) contemporary theories of international political communications are linked to influence of world public opinion on nations.

I. Charskykh gives perhaps the most detailed definition of international political communication: a cross-border, dynamic environment existing through a continual exchange of politically-charged content between- and with the participation of states and other international relations actors who defend their values and interests while substantiating their actions in front of worldwide audience on the scale that could be called international. [6, pp. 58-60]

Dwelling upon such definition Charskykh have also outlined *three main functions of political communication* (by which *international* one very much abides):

- **First (structural):** Provides for intergovernmental messaging, also messaging between public, media, organizations and corporations.
- **Second:** connective tissue for leaders and their people, it strengthens the sense of community while facing external challenges.
- **Third (media):** Shaping the agenda, this function focuses primarily on the role of media, its inherent ability of shaping the agenda; latter attributed (nearly exclusively) to said function's power of idea installation into one's mind. [6, pp. 58-60]

Author makes no secret of the fact that one's previous research concerns mostly the media function of political communication. However an important side note should be given to the second function, since it tremendously fits eSports and forms an interesting bridge to explore. In a way, a sense of community is not just crucial to eSports, it could be considered a tissue or glue keeping the phenomenon together when it comes to establishment, maintenance and organizational formation. As such, researches admit there are negative and positive factors about it. While comparison to gambling community is hardly a compliment [35], there are also admittedly positive social benefits of it in the spheres of education (both higher and schools), being especially beneficial in SEL (social and emotional learning). [23] Considering that COVID-19 pandemic stripped most sports fans and practitioners of their usual routine and social aspects of it, press readily credits eSports with regaining that same sense of community. [20; 17]

Returning to media function: it led to creation of attributive agenda setting theory, also known as second level theory. As opposed to first level theory of agenda setting, which researches the broadcasting vector from media to general public, attributive agenda setting theory researches *features* and *symbols*. [6, pp. 58-60]

As demonstrated by Table above, which hopefully streamlines some of the points we're about to make, there is a strong sense of connection between two subjects of attributive agenda setting theory, main functions

Table 1

**Correlation between attributive agenda setting theory, main functions of political communication, types of political communications and forms of audiovisual media**

<i>Attributive Agenda Setting Theory</i>	<i>Main Functions of Political Communication</i>	<i>Types of Political Communication</i>	<i>Forms of Audiovisual Media</i>
Features	Second Function	Factual Statements/Propaganda	News
Symbols	Third (Media) Function	Noise/Propaganda/Factual Statements	Fiction/Education/News

and types of political communication, as well as forms of audiovisual media (although the point could be expanded to media in general we'll stick to that earlier definition from our research since video games are technically audiovisual media too). As we've encountered the first two already, correlation between types of political communication and forms of media needs a special introduction. J.R. Pierce's *Symbols, signals and noise: the nature and process of communication* (1967) points out that noise is a concept in communication which is inseparable from media and is solidified in it. While it is fairly obvious that traditional news media is grounded in the second function of political communication and presents facts, the third function (which encompasses media in general) happens to combine all of the types of such communication as well as all of the forms of media.

Traditionally, noise is viewed as a negative kind of information and the problem about it is that noise is not a part of understanding of what code is, despite pretty much being a key term in the study of codes. Through that use in Pierce's book [59, pp. 81-95] it becomes evident that there is a rough, but an already established connection that could be drawn between symbols/signals dichotomy and propaganda/factual one. Symbols in that system of codes are correlated more with propaganda and noise than they are with factual statements and yet they become more and more inevitable to encounter in any and all news due to co-called pop-cultural osmosis of the postmodern world. The networking opportunities of social media increased unprecedentedly in the twenty-first century, bringing all of the functions of political communication together as well as making them, to a point, international by definition.

That statement, understandably 'loud' and in need of additional backing and research, is something that is very much evident and important for eSports. As an expansion of sports in general, they already make for an important chunk of co-called political *soft power*. [29]

Term 'soft power' was coined and explained by J. Nye [29] in 1990 and means an opposite of *hard power* in politics: cooperating, attracting and co-opting rather than coercing or threatening. Nye himself is clearly opposed to the idea that propaganda in its pure form is correlated with soft power, however he notes that 'the best propaganda is *not* propaganda'. (Nye, 2012) That would leave us with a notion that best propaganda is either *factual statement* (which is an easy concept enough to gasp), but also that it might be either purposefully or incidentally produced via *noise*.

From the code perspective, news about eSports might definitely seem like noise to political science: many aspects of eSports lack the system and could mean anything or nothing depending on interpretation. In a way that is a continuation of how ordinary sports became a political instrument via soft power. (Nye, 2008) However there is also an attached cultural aspect to it. Said cultural link of eSports is noted and dissected by a lot of specialists in marketing and public relations [3; 19; 22; 49]. eSports expert T. Nguyen even summarizes, as follows: 'It's about culture, not channel marketing'. [19]

It's really hard not to notice that Chinese Republic provides the biggest market for eSports: \$326.2 million in revenue in 2019 [49], something that is hard not to link to Nye's notes of this very state aspirations of soft power and overall popularity of that concept in China. [31]

Fewer researchers of political studies draw attention to eSports. Primarily published piece on that topic appears to be by Johnson, M. & Mejia, R. (2017) [16]. Among the points drawn in that article, crucial ones are that video games (in and off of eSports), are a *complex* assemblage of real-world material and social forces, prone to political valorization and condemnation, as well as manifesting ideological concepts through virtual worlds. [16]

There exists a tradition of sorts (or at the very least a collective habit, transcending this website) on Wikipedia to collect adaptations of comic book characters in large portions [44; 47] or even separate articles in cases of popular figures like The Joker and Wolverine [45; 46]. Coincidentally and characteristically, both above mentioned characters entered one of the largest eSports titles in recent years,

*Fortnite* [58], as token guest characters, something often done to ‘spice up’ the gameplay and give a flair of exclusivity to certain events occurring in it.

It is deeply troublesome and might even seem pointless to approach such events from a standpoint of political science. However, armed with the knowledge from the previous section of this very article we might classify this as *noise*. But, then again, how could inclusion that is at least semi-planned be classified as noise? Could it be that we stumbled upon a previously unnamed type of international political communication here, something that (for lack of better terms) could be called *intuitive noise*? Existence of co-called ‘le sens obtus’ in semantic codes, elusive meaning which also happens to be at least to a point a deliberate inclusion was first noted by the author as very much applicable to political science’s approaches to media. [42]. Among the examples provided was vagueness with which movie *Joker* (2019) [33] based on the same very character that was included in *Fortnite* in 2020, provided a plethora of political statements which heavily resonated internationally with assorted protests. [7; 18; 26; 33] An added factor of uncertainty as to how this situation could be approached is the fact that certain gamers deeply associated themselves with *Joker* way before the movie came out, with figure of that same comic book villain standing in for nearly every political movement in existence, ranging from ultra-right groups to radical left-wing anarchism and many, many things in-between.

A certain retrospective on correlation between traditional media and the emerging eSports scene (hailing from the competitive side of video games) was an inevitable and unavoidable part of this article’s conception simply to emphasize how certain stereotypes could still be seen after decades despite being erroneous. Vice versa: certain conclusions deserving a double take get overlooked due to stylistic shifts society inevitably experiences culturally each decade (oftentimes at least twice a decade).

It should be said there is a very much noted lack of proper fiction centering on eSports, unlike assortment of documentaries which already became a stable niche of sorts. [24]. Providing a full list of, for example, movies about eSports is a task for another time and not an easy one. In addition to search engine complications McMahon mentions, with Fiction being the name of a prominent eSports team clogging the search [24], there is also another, bigger problem. Said problem could be formulated as a lack of distinction between general *video game* phenomenon and *eSports*. It is especially so because of some elusive definitions as to whether fictional examples and ‘foreshadowing’ of sorts (eg. science fiction movies which depict eSports effectively before it came to be) count and, if so, to what extent.

It is logical to assume that those looking for coverage and opinion on modern eSports and/or even a retrospective of such are not too keen (if probably at least somewhat interested) on witnessing the evolution of video games from text adventures and *Pong* (1972) [1] up until first actual sport-like events taking place arguably in the era of arcades and 8-bit, with *Donkey Kong* (1983) [25] being the foremost subject of many controversies, documentaries, rumors and urban legends. Quite similarly, when it comes to representation of eSports in narrative fiction, it often gets relegated to a museum of sorts, showcasing examples like *Tron* (1982) [21], *WarGames* (1983) [4] and *The Wizard* (1989) [13]. Despite (at the very least) the latter providing some valuable cultural insight into the genesis of eSports, there is much more to discern (in authors humble opinion) in cases like 2015’s *Kung Fury* [34]. That movie (a short film, in fact, if immensely popular) re-uses several familiar artifacts of this particular era such as arcade cabinets and Power Glove (also seen in *The Wizard*) in a deliberately abstract pastiche of media perception of that very area (1980’s). A note especially interesting for that matter is the fact that all-adult gamers are depicted in the arcade in *Kung Fury* as opposed to teenage and kid demographic. That is something it retranslates readily from real life through non-obvious and very much non-verbal communicative elements audiovisual media developed since the days of silent film. A side point, not relevant to *Kung Fury* as a whole, but very much relevant for our research is that teenagers and young adult demographic is not readily interested in arcades, which are simply beyond their age demographic when it comes to widespread availability.

Then there is also another interesting aspect: the fact that in an absurd world of *Kung Fury* the Power Glove becomes a very political instrument in the downfall of Nazi Germany, heavily fictionalized but still recognizable caricature of twentieth century’s most villainous political superpower, lead by (equally fictionalized but recognizable) Adolf Hitler [34].

There is an even earlier example that showcases developments of eSports culture we witness now. 2009’s *Gamer* finds a teenage protagonist in a near future, a rising Internet celebrity (concept already familiar at the time but still seeming novel in public consciousness) tangled in increasingly violent and political international conspiracy. Villain of the story (however cartoonish) is someone using the widespread media influence of eSports for one’s own gain. That is something becoming increasingly worrying and realistic for today’s audience if they happen to suspend disbelief and attempt discerning the parts the movie definitely got right

about the future. While connections to Hitler from the above mentioned example of *Kung Fury* are not as strong, there are more than enough underlying elements tying fictional computer programmer Ken Castle from 2034 to certain stereotypes and images, often associated with dictatorship in the digital age. [43]

Interestingly, McMahon's podcast *eSports in Fiction*, despite curious omission of that particular movie provides very similar notions in its introduction which describes how fascinating the rabbit holes of professional eSports became. [24].

Drawing to conclusions of this section we should directly address the fact that businesses of eSports probably should consider being more deliberate in choosing the affiliated *symbols*. It's one thing that Joker appeals to many so the character's different versions are featured all over the place and it's entirely another that potentially you can substitute Joker with Adolf Hitler and the sense of such inclusion will remain just as vague as it was (if increasingly worrying and offending). Narrowly avoiding the suggestion that Joker indeed equals Adolf Hitler, we should consider that the ripple effect might eventually equal the context in *public opinion* if not explained properly.

And there is a problem of eSports effectively evading explanations and political context altogether, something that could be compared to initial sports-above-politics approach that brought us 1936 Summer Olympics held in Nazi Germany and often proclaimed a textbook example of propaganda. If the noise of eSports chooses *not to be propaganda*, it should be, to a point, a *conscious noise* which is not as oxymoron as it sounds, as conscious approach to noise actually makes us understand how such noise came to be and therefore discern it from the meaningful parts of the code. However, since noise effectively becomes part of *the code*, it becomes much harder to discern. After all, there is a notion that codes are 'cracked' which means that you need either a key or a breaking method to understand them when it comes to information.

As such we are drawn to another case study. In it, podcasts in correlation with eSports effectively try to discern through the types of international political communication, such as factual statements, propaganda and noise without even being aware of such actions on their part. That could also be considered an example of *intuitive noise*.

There is a jarring and refreshing omen to be seen in *Gámer* when compared to recent media coverage of eSports, such as 8-year old eSportsman receiving an impressive salary of \$33,000 [58]. In the movie, released in 2011 (and largely encompassing the director's feelings about the scene throughout the 2000's), a much more mature teenager succumbs to depression and assorted crises attempting a career in eSports, captured in an almost documentary-like precision. Director Oleg Sentsov largely attributes his days as an eSportsman to movie gaining some cult identity on its own [50], however it's Sentsov's following role in the political events and *hybrid war* between Ukraine and Russia that attracted the most attention to it in recent years, re-launching independent filmmaker's career further into stardom which Sentsov himself is not sure entirely merited and compares well to cases of other political prisoners stuck in situations not unlike his.

However, another prominent director hailing from Crimea (who also happens to be a podcaster), Nariman Aliev mentions prominently that *Gámer* was widespread in formal filmmaking education in Ukraine at the time [50], thus cementing that Sentsov's choice of eSports as a focus for narrative fiction somehow became pretty much *timely*. That never prevented Sentsov's choice to become an additional point of purely political bullying and criticism when it comes to the subject matter of his directorial debut, which was at the time of his imprisonment his only feature work available. Enforcement of the stereotype that eSports is not worthy of coverage (let alone narrative fiction centered around it) was (and still is) in full play when it comes to political banter.

That said, the format of the podcast which is where the two filmmakers met in 2021 is an interesting perspective alone when it comes to eSports comparisons and correlation analyses. Both are very much connected to the Internet and digital revolution. Despite that both are also elusive for traditional media, but pretty much compete for attention with several traditional formats already losing in that battle (such as radio in case of podcasts).

Either they lose, or they join forces. Latter is exemplified by magazine *The Village Ukraine*, a local version of a popular magazine picking up Season 2 of Aliev's podcast *MINCULTPRYVIT* for distribution on their digital platforms. In fact, filmmakers doing a podcast (which is usually audio as opposed to native for that profession audiovisual media) is a much more logical combination in the days of the Internet as evidenced by the oldest, largest and most complete database of *movies* recently starting to accept podcasts. [15]. Through 2010's podcasts became an extremely relevant segment of some of the platforms revolutionizing the audiovisual side of the Internet, such as YouTube. There is a specific term '*video podcast*' for those

podcasts offering more than audio, but even in cases like *MINCULTPRYVIT* (when the video component is hardly anything crucial to the audio part), it is a certain coverage element not to miss when it comes to promotion and distribution. [2].

On a related note, *PlayUA* has a plethora of podcasts on their own as well as covering them as both relevant sources for news and subject of such.

On another related note, perceived accordingly to points drawn in previous sections, this whole section itself could be considered an example of *conscious* and/or *intuitive noise*. Such an approach was chosen deliberately as an illustration because it needs to be addressed that when it comes to eSports and politics, vagueness is inevitable and in the author's humble opinion that should not be the case.

Fulfillment of the main objective of the chapter (to demonstrate the underlying processes of political communication in eSports occurring through the universal codes of media) was inevitably a hard task to achieve. After all, eSports continues to be an elusive terra incognita to many disciplines, political science being one of them. Real-life affectations and results of virtual competitions keep puzzling researchers, who somehow miss the opportunity to bring together assorted types of media. Only logical, since author's research previously characterized movies as a similarly untamed territory. [42].

International political communication of all three types is readily evident through all of the cases presented in the chapter with noise being an especially underlying and worrying type, because where there's noise it could be used to mask a sinister proceeding. Noticing such, an inevitable attempt at influencing the growing field by corrupt, neglectful and frankly harmful forces is a perspective we should be ready for in the rest of the 21st century, as eSports are here to stay.

We could only hope that provided recommendations and case studies will eventually result in research of larger scales and foremost practical applicability. It is evident that it is literally impossible not to proceed at any eSports research without an interdisciplinary perspective, very much including media studies and political studies. We can also hope that coined terms *intuitive noise* and *conscious noise* would be of certain interdisciplinary use, as they might be the key to eSports from the perspective of many fields of study, including but not limited to cultural studies and political science. Researches of both kinds pertaining to eSports roles in modern society are crucially needed in order for eSports not to enter the realm of propaganda without at least knowing what is propagated and at best – knowing how to counteract the insertion of propaganda and agenda.

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**Єрьомін М. Б. Кіберспорт у міжнародних політичних відносинах: фактор медіарепазентації та аспекти наративності**

У статті піднято через конкретні кейси проблематику культурної інтервенції в кіберспорті через універсальні коди медіа, використання кіберспорту у якості знаряддя у гібридних війнах. Окрема увага приділена проникненню кіберспорту у якості тематики та одиниці таких кодів у більш традиційні медіа (зокрема новини), а також т.з. нові медіа (зокрема подкасти), яке прослідковується з увагою до серединної ланки медійної гібридної еволюції (універсального коду кінематографу), тобто такої еволюції яка не робить попередні ланки водночас застарілими. У статті також розглянуто увагу щодо кіберспорту з точки зору міжнародної політичної комунікації, проведено паралелі з медійною увагою до традиційних спортивних змагань, охарактеризовано приблизну різницю між цими двома явищами та компоненти, які увійшли у цей тип медіа, що наразі лише формується у порівнянні з традиційним coverage спортивних подій.

За допомогою методів case studies та логіко-інтуїтивного аналізу зроблено кілька обґрунтованих припущень щодо майбутнього розвитку теми кіберспорту з точки зору міжнародної політичної комунікації, ролі цієї ланки що формується у самому інституті

медійності та у якості ретранслятора політичних меседжів. Висловлено певне занепокоєння тим, наскільки непоміченими будь-які меседжі можуть бути через високий рівень кодифікації у спеціалізованому медіа, яке займається висвітленням кіберспорту.

Зроблено висновки про: доречність подальшого вивчення репрезентації кіберспортивних змагань у медійних прошарках з точки зору міжнародної політичної комунікації; перспективність спостереження за репрезентацією у медіа кіберспортивного мікрокосму; формування інституціоналізованих недержавних сполук у кіберспортивних просторах що мають по собі низку впливів на міжнародну політичну комунікацію у якості т.з. «дикої карти». Поточнено що мова, поки що, іде не про появу актора міжнародних відносин як такого, а про появу нового важіля акторства у вже наявній розгалуженій системі універсальних кодів медіа, дослідження яких окремо один від одного даватиме нерепрезентативні результати.

**Ключові слова:** Кіберспорт, Відеоігри, Міжнародна політична комунікація, Універсальні коди медіа, Універсальний код кінематографу, Репрезентація.