Volunteering for the nation

Volunteering as a tool of nation branding during the Eurovision Song Contest 2017 in Ukraine

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Abstract

There have been a lot of studies dedicated to investigating nation branding as a set of political discourses and practices deploying analysis of objects of symbolic nature: logotypes, brand books, slogans and commercials. The present thesis aims to study nation branding as a form of communicative labour through investigating volunteering as a form of media work that is used as a tool of the nation branding campaign in Ukraine during the Eurovision Song Contest in 2017. By using the theoretical concepts of nation branding, values and motivations of free labour in media industries, the thesis analyses the role of volunteers in the nation branding campaign during ESC 2017, volunteering as a specific form of media work and the motivation tools employed by the organisers and volunteers themselves to make sense of their involvement in the event. The analysis suggests that the roles assigned to volunteers as bearers of the nation brand are of great importance but the volunteers’ understanding of this process is rather confused and blurred. Another point highlighted in the thesis is how is volunteering was organised in terms of training and motivation on the side of organisers and what kind of motivations were of the crucial significance to volunteers themselves.

Keywords: volunteering, nation branding, media industry, media worker, free labour, motivation.
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Introduction

The feeling I got, when landed in Kyiv in May 2017 to start the research field trip together with the professors and the fellow-students from Södertörn University, was quite unexpected: the city looked so familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. It was green and full of fragrance of blooming chestnut and magnolia trees as it always has been this time of the year. But what was different is the special festive mood and atmosphere which filled out all the streets and squares of the capital. Ukraine is hosting the Eurovision Song Contest for the second time these days after Jamala’s victory in Stockholm in spring 2016, and therefore was trying to “put on” its most attractive looks and “outfits”. The changes were extremely eye-catching: colourful billboards with the Eurovision slogan “Celebrate Diversity” and ”Welcome to Ukraine” with this year’s logotype: traditional Ukrainian necklace where every bead has its own design and colour. At least half of the main street, Khreschatyk, was occupied with the largest fan zone of the city – Eurovillage – with the huge screens to broadcast the competition live, a number of souvenir shops selling all types of Eurovision branded items. An ambitious slogan read “Everything starts in Kyiv”. The atmosphere leaved no doubts regarding the message Ukraine wanted to transmit to the visitors: it is an open, safe, hospitable country and it was ready to host the event at the highest possible standard.

To complete the picture, different languages were heard everywhere and there was no doubt that these people were guests of the city and fans of the Eurovision who had come from all over Europe to become a part of one of the largest TV show of our days.

Among all buzz, music, and festivities groups of young people wearing dark-blue Eurovision-branded T-shirts, baseball caps and large nametags stating “Volunteer” were very visible among the idly walking crowd of tourists. One could immediately spot that they were here to work and help people: they are assisting security guards at the Eurovillage entrance, gave directions at the metro stations, helped out to sell tickets and did numerous other tasks. They all looked very engaged and preoccupied with the importance of the moment and their job: they are not just giving directions to the foreign guests. Their mission was much more important than that: they were representing a country like real ambassadors do.

The idea of branding a country or a nation (comparable to commercial branding of companies or products) is a relatively new phenomenon which has entered popular discourse quite recently. Since the mid-1990s there has been a significant growth of nation branding
campaigns especially among young countries of post-communist block trying to find their identity and place amid other nation states (Kaneva, 2012). The praxis of nation branding includes a variety of tools like commercials on CNN, BBC, Euronews, Eurosport, publications in The Economist, The Financial Times, advertisement in the in-flight magazines of all major airlines and eye-catching billboards and slogans (Kaneva, 2012). Apart from that, the manifestations of nation strengths have extended to the major sporting and media events such as World Cup, Olympic Games and Eurovision. Eurovision as platform for nation branding campaigns is not a unique phenomenon and was already used by other states (like Estonia in 2002) to attract attention of foreign actors, change perception of the countries outside its national borders.

The opportunity to host Eurovision 2017 in Kyiv couldn’t have been a better opportunity for Ukraine to present and declare its intentions, values and desires to the world. This study investigates the communication processes that underpin the execution of the nation branding campaign in Ukraine during the Eurovision Song Contest 2017 and aims to show that this process is more complex and less straightforward then it is thought to be. It is done by analysing volunteering at ESC 2017 in two different perspectives: as a tool of nation branding and as a form of media work. This approach brings new insights into using low level work in branding a country and sheds light on volunteering as a rightful part of media industries and therefore provides new knowledge to two subfields of media and communication studies.

Investigation of nation branding in Ukraine from this perspective is worth studying for several reasons. First of all, Ukraine as a young independent post-Soviet country, which is trying to find its place among other nations using nation building practices, is an interesting case in its own right. Secondly, despite reach and extensive previous research in the field of nation branding, existing studies focus on analysis and discussions of governmental initiatives, discourses, textual analysis of slogans, promotional videos and brand books. In other words previous research is pretty much grounded on the so called “high level” decisions and practices. Thus, engagement and participation of low level workers such as volunteers in contributing to the cause of nation building is rather overlooked in the literature. Thirdly, the category of volunteering as a form of media work is not acknowledged enough. There has been previous research on unpaid internships, precarious working conditions, free digital labour in social media that are somewhat similar to volunteering (Hesmondhalh, 2002). But
there has been no previous analysis of volunteering as a media and communication work in a nation branding context.

Therefore, studying volunteer work in the context on nation branding in Ukraine contributes new knowledge to how the nation branding campaigns are organised apart from production of brand books and slogans and to volunteering in terms of being an integral part of media industries.

The material used in the thesis is a qualitative analysis of the interviews with the volunteers themselves and the people responsible for recruiting and training them. It was gathered during the field trip to Ukraine in May 2017.

The outline of the thesis consists of context and previous research were the specific topic of this study is put in the context of Ukrainian realities; previous research consists of two integral parts: previous research on nation branding and previous research on work and labour in media industries; the theoretical part investigates the concept of nation branding, different types of values as well as volunteering in mega events and motivation of the volunteers. Methodological chapter describes the method of producing material and the approach to its analysis. When analysing the material the main attention is devoted to explain the role of volunteers in the nation branding campaign, their understanding of nation branding concepts and the motivation aspects that underpinned the volunteering as form of work.
2. Statement of purpose

The overarching purpose of this thesis is to analyse nation branding from the perspective of low-level workers, namely the volunteers during Eurovision Song Contest 2017, in order to form a better understanding of nation branding as a form of communicative labour. In this sense, the thesis also seeks to make a contribution to previous research, through situating volunteering as a specific form of media work, similar to other forms of so-called free labour in the media industries.

Research questions

1. What role did the volunteers play in the nation branding campaign during the ESC 2017?
2. How did the volunteering as a form of media work was organised and experienced by the volunteers during the ESC 2017?
3. How was volunteering motivated by the volunteers themselves and by the organisers during ESC 2017?
3. Context and previous research

3.1. Nation branding in Ukraine

Ukraine, like many post-Soviet countries in Eastern Europe, after gaining its independence in August 1991 faced the challenge of changing its communist past. Nation branding activities are among the tools to be used for that purpose. The metaphor that perfectly fits into the social and political discourses of that historical period is “transition” (Kaneva, 2012). The transition is understood in terms of moving from the state economy to free markets, from authoritarian regime to liberal democracies, from restricted media systems to free ones. In other words, the discourses of nation branding in Ukraine were characterised by the struggle of ideology and identities. The ideology struggle is represented by trying to “describe the meaning of the past and determine the direction of the future”, whereas the identity struggle went between “shameful” and “desired” (Kaneva, 2012, p. 6). These conflicting discourses are constantly renegotiated in political, economic and cultural terms, where the nation branding provided a platform for such a renegotiation.

Ukraine is an interesting case in terms of studying its nation branding efforts and activities which possesses several peculiar features: extreme eagerness to prove its European identity and belonging to Europe both geographically and culturally, complex situation around the conflict with Russia on annexing the Crimean peninsula and war on the East of Ukraine, struggling between previously “faceless” or unrecognisable country’s image and the current picture of the “country in war” or “unsafe country” which prevails the media, tensions between inward and outward directions of the nation branding campaigns.

The national identity struggles in Ukraine during its post-Soviet period are significantly highlighted by strong desire to “return to Europe” which formally means to be accepted to the EU and other European institutions. Therefore, the nation branding campaigns try to emphasize the Ukrainian “Europeanness”. The term “Europeanness” and its meaning in the Ukrainian context is worth further elaboration. Dariya Orlova (2010, cited in Horbyk, 2017, p. 148) in her research regarding the Ukrainian public discourses states that “Europe is largely referred as embodiment of normality and development, advanced social and political practices”. So, the term “Europe” and the eagerness of returning to Europe in the numerous nation branding campaigns can be connoted as a “movement forwards, progress and improvement and an idyllic picture of successful urban modernity. […] and as values of Enlightenment”(Horbyk, 2017, p 150).
Another feature which highlights the nation branding discourses in Ukraine is the constant anxiety over the invisibility of the country on the international arena, despite the eventual nation branding campaign on the BBC and CNN. In May 2013 Kyiv Weekly, a Ukrainian English-language business magazine published an article which clearly points at the lack of positive image of Ukraine abroad: it is perceived as “faceless” and “brandless” state on the international arena. The author of the article claims that “the average European cannot imagine a Ukrainian because he has not seen one. Or, if they have any idea, it is a negative image of a nation of bandits, prostitutes and migrant workers” (Stolyarchuk, 2013, p.3). To complete the picture, the cover page of the magazine illustrated a man in a suit and a tie holding his faceless, egg-shaped head in his hands (Bolin, Ståhlberg, 2016). There are two main problems expressed in this article. The first anxiety is a desire for recognition and desire to shake off the negative perception of the country. The second one is the lack of “domestic sense of community” within the country which is constantly divided between west and east, or pro-Russian and pro-European supporters.

Despite a number of branding campaigns (such as “Ukraine for snow lovers”, “Ukraine beautifully Yours”, “Ukraine: All about U”), initiated by the Ministries of Tourism and Foreign Affairs and executed by privately owned branding consultancies, Ukraine still remained largely unnoticed. The reasons are often seen in lack of clear strategy within often changing government authorities, corrupted system and politicians’ unwillingness to work regularly on Ukraine’s image. This takes us to the point where the discourses of inward and outward directed branding efforts come into play and where the role of separate branding consultancies in establishing the market and convincing officials about the necessity of branding Ukraine shouldn’t be underestimated.

It is obvious that nation branding activities aim to showcase the country, commoditize national identities and “sell” its image and reputation abroad in order to attract business investments, tourists, and international projects. In other words, nation branding activities have purposeful outward direction. The abovementioned statement is confirmed by previous research (Kaneva, 2012 Aronszyk, 2013, Bolin&Ståhlberg, 2016). However, even though branding is based on competition and comparison among nations, it is also directed “inwards towards the nation itself, aimed at creating a stronger, more coherent sense of the national self and building self-esteem” (Valaskivi, 2013).
The tension between inward and outward directions in the nation branding discourse has some specific features in Ukrainian realities. To begin with, one of the first nation branding consultancies, namely, CFC which was established by professionals educated in the US and UK universities, tried to literally “put Ukraine on the map” of Europe. Having noticed that the weather forecast on Euronews channel doesn’t show any of the Ukrainian cities, the CFC founders submitted their proposal to include at least Kyiv in the map. The proposal was accepted by the Euronews after a while. Another example is creating the brand book as a part of the campaign “Ukraine inspires” which was not intended for the wider audience. “The large 20-by-80 centimetres printed product was aimed to lie on the desks of government and corporate offices as an inspiration on how to think about brand Ukraine” (Bolin, Ståhlberg, 2015, p 3074). Even the abovementioned article picturing a “faceless country” is mainly directed towards a “Ukrainian leader with international ambitions” and a domestic audience of branders and decision-makers (Bolin, Ståhlberg, 2015, p 3074). So, there is an obvious conclusion that the aim of particular messages and efforts of some branding consultants were to convince the government officials to support branding activities which could consequently contribute to creation of the market for the nation branding campaigns.

Finally, the war with Russia on the East which started in spring 2014 shortly after the Euromaidan adds another perspective to the nation branding discourse and practices in Ukraine. Arguably, an interesting observation is expressed by Katya Vlaskivi (2013) regarding the branding projects in crisis periods:

“In the times of deep crisis, all measures and practices are articulated in terms of overcoming the difficulties caused by the crisis. The branding project is a social imaginary that brings together the aims of the government, perceptions and contradictions of the national and transnational fans, aspiration of the media”.

Through changing practices and circulation a nation brand becomes much more than marketing measures directed towards other countries. It becomes a part of the social imaginary in the construction of national identity (Vlaskivi, 2013).

If the main anxiety of the Ukrainian authorities was that Ukraine is not visible or recognisable enough, after the outbreak of the war with Russia “other anxieties prevailed” (Bolin, Ståhlberg, 2016, p. 277)
In the face of the severe political and economic crisis that swept Ukraine as a result of Euromaidan, occupation of Crimea in March 2014 and the war on the East “efforts to brand Ukraine naturally came to standstill” (Bolin, Ståhlberg, 2016, p. 277). Ukraine decided not to participate in the major sporting and entertainment events (Eurovision Song Contest 2015 and Eurobasket 2015). But in spring 2016 Ukraine won the Eurovision Song Contest for the second time and was supposed to host the event in Kyiv in May 2017. The Eurovision Song Contest which attracts plenty of attention both nationally and internationally (journalists, tourists, Eurovision fans), turned out be a perfect opportunity and platform to improve the international image of Ukraine.
3.2 Previous research on nation branding

The explosion of nation branding campaigns in the 1990s (especially among post-socialistic countries) has led to the increased number of publications and extensive research in this field. According to Kaneva (2012) three approaches can be distinguished when analysing the previous research in the field of nation branding: the technical-economic, the political, and the cultural. The technical-economic approach applies “administrative research” (Lazarsfeld, 1941, cited in Kaneva, 2011) which is conducted by people with the direct interest in the activity, who were directly involved in the branding campaigns and their evaluation. Another group of researches is comprised by academic consultants who mainly represent universities and business schools.

The political approach is based on international relations, international communication and public diplomacy. The concept of public diplomacy often interchanges with the nation branding in the realm of political approach to nation branding. Peter van Ham (2001, cited in Kaneva, 2012) argues that nation branding is rapidly replacing traditional diplomacy and that contemporary politicians need to engage in “competitive marketing” to “brand a niche” for their state.

The third approach to nation-branding research lies in the field of media, communications and cultural studies (Kaneva, 2012). Within this approach two “counter-arguments” can be distinguished: essentialist and constructivist. The essentialist approach is focused on citizens and their “production of distorted images of national identities”. On the contrary the constructivist one is concerned with “commodification of national identities”. The following study has employed the third approach defined by Kaneva and therefore investigates nation branding from the media and communications perspective.

There has been quite a lot of research within the field of media and communication studies that employed the critical perspective to the nation branding phenomenon. The volume edited by Kaneva (2012) “Branding Post-Communist Nations” comprises the works of Jansen, Surowiec, Volcic, Imre whose primarily goal was to analyse the nation branding efforts of Estonia, Bulgaria, Poland, Slovenia and Romania after the collapse of communism. The cases of these countries are especially interesting for several reasons: the end of Cold War and the transformation of international system, ideological vacuum after communism and deep economic recession provided a rich material for further investigation. Since the phenomenon
of nation branding is connected to marketization and globalization, critical analysis of the branding efforts in post-communist countries provides some valuable information on dealing with the abovementioned challenges.

Varga (2013) argues that contemporary phenomenon can be analysed in terms of a cultural policy which is an inner-oriented cultural-political measure that targets the citizens of the state. This statement is in contrast to the generally accepted one that nation branding targets the external markets in order to map the country as a nation between nations and communicate a specific image of the national identity, to attract tourists and investors, increase exports.

Further research brings this tension between inward and outward directions of nation branding to the next level. It is claimed that “nation branding appears to be a specific form of imagining the nation only in a limited sense: as a “commoditized version of nation building” (Bolin and Ståhlberg, 2016). In other words, the majority of nation branding efforts are outward-directed, aimed at non-domestic audience, which is resulted in the fact that very few actors in the business of nation branding consider building “social solidarity among populations”. Similar arguments are presented in the works of other scholars. For example Jansen (2008) cites Vincent Mosco that argues that “branding not only explains nations to the world but also reinterprets national identity in market terms and provides new narratives for domestic consumption”.

However, despite rich and profound previous research conducted in the field of nation branding in connection to media and communication studies, there is very little known about the role and function of the mundane low-level workers (such as volunteers) in the nation branding activities and campaigns. On the one hand, the majority of research is mainly focused on state initiatives, investigation of PR-campaigns’ results and effects, textual analysis of slogans, TV commercials and brand-books. On the other hand, it discusses power struggles around nation branding activities (including budgets, companies who execute the campaign) etc. So this study focuses on role of the low-level workers (on the example of volunteers) in the nation branding efforts in the context of Ukrainian current events.
3.3 Previous research on work and labour in media industries

The central issues constantly discussed in the field of work and labour in media industry are relation between creativity and independence of media workers, unfavourable and precarious working conditions, unpaid internships of self-exploitation character, aspirational labour and “free labour” on the social media websites. Recent research in this field is represented by the studies of Hesmondhalgh (2002, 2014), Deuze (2007), Huws (2010) who has addressed the issues of how creative work transforms in response to quickly developed technologies and trends of neoliberal economy such as individualizations and globalization.

Hesmondhalgh (2002) describes the work and labour in media industries as a “complex professional period of cultural production”. A lot of professions have undergone a profound change during the past 20-25 years, and the work of media industry workers (journalists, reporters, etc) is not an exception. Arthur and Rousseau (1996), cited in Hesmondhalgh (2002) use the term “boundaryless career” in reference to media workers. The reason for that is moving between various employers, one-off projects, which are separately financed. Despite the claims about “creativity” and “independence” of work in media and cultural production, the following patterns of employment conditions are characteristic for this industry: tendency to hold multiple jobs, predominance of self-employed or freelance workers, irregular working hours, short-term contracts, little job protection, uncertain career prospects, unequal payment and growing workforce (Hesmondhalgh 2002, p. 254).

The aspects stated above emphasise the precarious working conditions in media industry, which can be explained by “permanent oversupply of artistic labour, which takes the form of “vast reservoirs of non-professional cultural workers and the mobility of creative professionals between fields” (Hesmondhalgh 2002, p. 254). Nevertheless the workforce in media industries is constantly growing, which may seem quite a surprising fact. Menger (1999, cited in Hesmondhalgh 2002) explains that by strong sense of calling, desire of potential fulfilment (love-of-labour work), taking the risk without being fully aware of the failure risk or unfavourable working conditions, non-monetary or psychological rewards, sense of sociality and community, self-realisation, potentially high degrees of recognition.

U. Huws (2010) takes the this discussion further and explains that even when the workers are engaged in repetitive work which does not require much mental effort, there is a commonly
shared perception that work in media industry has elements of “really free labour”. This creates the source of genuine satisfaction and an additional motive to perform this kind of work.

Corrigan (2015) argues that reasons that motivate people to give their work for free are united around three main processes. Firstly, these are non-monetary motivations of interns and digital creative labourers. Secondly, he highlights the temporal logic, which means that unpaid positions are considered as a future-oriented investment. Thirdly, exploitation and self-exploitation may seem as a free choice.

Another prominent feature of contemporary job market in media industries is the growing number of internships (often unpaid) in order to get into the desired media industry. This puts young people who cannot afford to work for free in a very disadvantaged position and gives the priority to people born in the highly educated and wealthy families. Andrew Roos (2000) argues that “the value of art and culture have had a paradoxical effect, in that they potentially lay the basis for people’s willingness to work cheaply, and even for free”.

The result of the survey presented in Hesmondhalgh’s and Percival’s (2014) article provides a summary of two quite divided set of opinions regarding the unpaid internships in the film industry. The first one expresses the favour to unpaid work as means to get skills for further professional development, creative satisfaction, getting a “foot in the door” or getting important contacts and building a network, gaining experience of a higher grade. The second set of opinions suggest that unpaid internships devalued the work of professionals, imposed barriers to enter the industry for those without independent income, contributed to unfairness within the production.

So, we can conclude that attractiveness of promising and exciting jobs can lead to self-exploitation, where workers push themselves to the limit to establish contacts or reputation needed to pursue highly desired work.

B. Duffy (2015) defines “aspirational labour” as forward-looking, carefully orchestrated, and entrepreneurial form of creative labour production. Aspirational labourers try to mark themselves as creative producers who will be one day compensated for their talents – either directly or through employment in the culture industries. Duffy (2015) identifies three main features or “aspirations” shared by people involved in such kind of work and production
circuit: authenticity and celebration of "realness", the instrumentality of affective relationships, entrepreneurial brand devotion.

The discourse of “authenticity” and “realness” has been flourishing during the last decade especially with the development of new technologies since it enables the consumer-audience participation in the cultural production. The authenticity idea was especially picked up by fashion bloggers who are often presented as “real world” style. Being a fashion or a beauty blogger, for instance serves the purpose of being recognizable on the market, create new possibilities for networking (where work and non-work time blend). Duffy (2015) concludes that authenticity seems to be a “productive myth that enables aspirational labourers to carve out a space at the margins of traditional industries and professions, while downplaying their existing social and economic capital”:

The second aim aspirational labours pursue (especially true for those who create and manage some kind of online community: blog, Facebook page, etc) is “building affective relationships with members of the community” (Duffy, 2015). In this case building a relationship often means increasing the number of followers, likes, improve rankings, posting specific content based on the preferences of the readers/follower: the bigger number of followers the better. It brings us to the point where we can conclude that the feedback from the audience is a very valuable source for the aspirational labourers, and that the number of followers/comments is coded as a success.

Third, aspirational labour is closely connected with building self-brand as a conscious impression management strategy that deploys cultural meanings and images drawn from narrative and visual codes of the mainstream culture” (Duffy, 2015). Aspirational workers understand the self-branding and devotion to a brand as being compulsory to market themselves to their audiences and advertisers, to attract attention of the advertisers and present a consistent brand identity across the media platforms.

Carrigan (2015) draws a parallel between unpaid internships, aspirational labour and free digital labour. He identifies digital labour as symbolic work of graphic designers, online, journalists, transmedia storytellers. But digital workers are not limited just to the abovementioned professions, since all media consumers become countless “prosumers” (they consume media content and produce media content at the same time). It is general knowledge today that all the clicks, searches, purchases and posts produce marketing data which is stored
and sold to big corporations and advertisers. These activities are considered as labour due to the commercial appropriation and monetization of prosumers’ content.

To conclude, aspirational labourers actively deploy the motto “do what you love” and have aspirations to get a career where labour and leisure can coexist in balance and harmony. They strive for future oriented reward system. Corrigan (2015) uses the term “hope labour” which describes the online media participants as those who perform work in hopes that “future employment opportunities may follow”. These patterns show that in the neoliberal economy the risks are shifted from the central organizations onto individuals.
3.4 Previous research on volunteering.

Volunteering is often defined as a commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain. Volunteering has always been an important feature of most societies but the influence volunteering has upon individual development and addressing social needs nowadays has never been greater. Therefore, volunteering occupies a prominent place in the public agenda and is worth further research.

*There are a few approaches to make a typology and classification of volunteering.*

According to Rochester (2010, p. 10) there are three perspectives on volunteering which differs on their approach to motivation of volunteers, areas and fields where they participate, organizational structure that provide volunteer opportunities and the roles volunteers undertake. The first approach is characterised as a dominant paradigm (often supported by practitioners and policy makers). According to it the main motivation of volunteers is an altruistic act, when they give their time like a gift and help those people who are less fortunate. The area of activity is very broad but the main focus is on people with disabilities, health or mental problems, people living in poor conditions. In the majority of cases large structured organizations (charities, hospitals and schools) are in charge of these volunteer activities. Volunteers are recruited, selected and trained by the skilled management of these organizations. Most often there are pre-defined tasks and roles to be undertaken by volunteers.

However, the dominant paradigm with its focus on altruistic help to less fortunate is becoming less comprehensive nowadays since it doesn’t take into account activists movements. Therefore, another approach to identifying volunteer action has emerged – civil society paradigm which has its roots in political science and sociology.

The main motivation of volunteers according to this paradigm is “self-help and mutual help and ability of people to work together to meet shared needs and address common problems” (Rochester 2010) rather than altruistic help. They are less likely to be involved in giving social care, but extend their activities to offering mutual support in self-help groups or organizing campaigns to force the changes in such areas of public life as transport,
environment, etc. In terms of organizational context, the associations involved are totally based on work and volunteers and self-groups, rather than non-profit agencies with paid staff. This kind of volunteering can be defined more like activism than unpaid help.

The third view on volunteering can be described as a “volunteering as a serious leisure”. Such terms as “amateur” and “hobbyist” are sometimes used pejoratively in collocation with voluntary actions. However the approach to volunteering as a “serious leisure” has been discussed in a number of publications (Stebbins & Graham, 2004).

Rochester (2010) suggests two approaches to understanding the motivation of people to volunteer. They are physiological and sociological perspectives.

Philological approach is based on the idea that all people have the same basic psychological need. Mainly these needs are to acquire the understanding of the world through acquiring knowledge, need to express values and need to protect the self.

Therefore it is possible to assume that volunteering is a way to answer some need. Clary (1996: p.486, cited 2010) explains motivation as “internal force that move people to overcome obstacles and become involved in volunteer activity”. He presents six types of motivation that can be addressed through volunteering activities.

1. Values: volunteering offers a chance to express values of altruism and care for others.
2. Understanding: getting new learning experiences or using the skills which otherwise will remain unused.
3. Career: volunteering provides an opportunity to enhance career-related skills and experiences.
4. Social: volunteering is a means to meet new people and therefore enhance their social interaction.
5. Protective: volunteering can serve the purpose of escaping the negative feelings of being more fortunate than the others.

The sociological perspective doesn’t focus that much on the individual needs that the individual tries to satisfy through volunteering; its emphasis is on how people understand their own involvement in volunteering. This approach is different from the psychological one in terms that it allows the social context to help to explain why people volunteer. On the other
hand psychological needs of people are also taken in the account even when using sociological approach.

After this short overview of the volunteering typologies and motivations of volunteering which are generally accepted, I will investigate the role of the volunteering in Ukraine due to the specific case of this study.

3.4.1 Specific features of volunteering in Ukraine

The development of non-governmental sector in Ukraine is a crucial part of civil society organization and is an important requirement on the way of integration into EU structures. The role of NGOs in Ukraine is interesting and worth studying due to several factors: they are relatively new component of Ukrainian civil society; they are often created by politicians with intention to improve their image and in principle are capable of participating in policy processes.

The appearance and notion of the non-governmental organizations are not totally new in Ukraine. In the 18th and 19th centuries there already existed organizations formed by intellectual elites that were separate from the government. In the late 19th century they were represented by small discussion groups called “kruzhy”\(^1\) which were transformed into Masonic lodges later on. It is considered that early non-governmental organizations were stronger in the Western part of Ukraine and gained their expertise through contacts with neighbouring European countries.

The non-governmental sector shows steady growth especially after the Orange Revolution in 2004 and Euromaidan 2013. According to the Counterpart survey (Makoukh, 2017, p. 46) there are around 100 000 different NGOs in Ukraine (among which 85% are registered as civic organizations and 15% as charities). The spheres of their responsibility are (but not limited to) children and youth, resolving social issues, human rights, civic education and development of NGO sector. When it comes to people involved in the work of these organizations, more than half of the NGO organizations have 11-50 people as their members and only 25% of them consisted of over 100 people. It is not surprising that many NGO organizations relied in the past and continue to rely on volunteer work. Earlier research shows that students comprised over 50% of volunteer workforce (Makoukh, 2017).

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\(^1\) a form of social meetings and gatherings among representatives of proactive part of civil society to discuss current political and economic issues.
In the 1990s and early 2000s the primary source of funding for many Ukrainian NGOs came from abroad: USAID, the Soros Foundation, the United Nations, World Bank, Europe without Borders, Red Cross and numerous foreign governments. Arguably, the importance of the Ukrainian business sector has increased since 2005. However, the way how the financial donations are allocated and which sectors are supported has some specific features.

Firstly, due to the interwoven nature of business and political structures in Ukraine, business magnates such as Pinchuk, Akhmetov, Klychko establish foundations that support and finance a variety of social projects (HIV/AIDS, higher education opportunities, art exhibitions and cultural events). These activities are intended to improve the image of the NGO founders in Western circles and show respect towards corporate social responsibility principles.

What makes Ukrainian NGOs different is that they are created by people involved in governmental structures. This results in several implications. Firstly, these organizations are willing to fund only certain types of projects, those that are most suited to improving their image and on the contrary are reluctant to finance projects that can fulfil a “watch dog” function, such as observations during the elections. Secondly, they tend to create their own organizations and structures rather support or fund already existing NGOs, which confirms the assumption that these NGOs play a role of image improvement tools.

In the context of this research, it was remarkable to notice that the process of “NGOzation” touched the process how the volunteering during the Eurovision Song Contest 2017 was organised: the volunteers were partly recruited and trained through the National Television Channel (mainly those who worked on the arena, Eurovillage and with the delegations), partly – through an NGO “Volonter” (created by Volodymyr Klychko, who is the head of the Kyiv City Council at the same time).

As it was mentioned earlier the non-governmental organizations rely on the work of volunteers heavily. This leads us to the discussion of the concept of “volunteering” in Ukraine and the role volunteering plays in addressing social issues.

Rochester (2010) tries to explain volunteering by looking at the level of welfare development in different countries. Previous research shows the correlation between state-society relationships and the extent of development of volunteer sector. The 4-regime model
presents that a liberal regime which does not extend its remit into further welfare protection which results in voluntary solutions of social and welfare issues (Rochester, 2010).

In Ukraine, as a country with the post-Soviet past, the development and growth of volunteering is closely connected to the liberalization of political and economic systems and transition from “forced” volunteering in Soviet time to the free choice of people to participate in solving urgent issues, contribute their time and effort to the burning issues of the society. Even though the volunteering rates in Ukraine are still comparatively low, there is a steady growth in this area which is especially noticeable after the Euromaidan and during the war on Donbass since 2014. Dmytro Doroshko (the head of the NGO “Volonter”) in his interview supports the abovementioned statement.

“When we started to recruit the volunteers for the Euro-2012, we had to go to the universities and agitate young people to become volunteers. The situation has changed after the Revolution in 2014. These days a lot of young people become volunteers during the Eurovision to do something useful for the country”. (personal communication, May 2017).

So, it is possible to consider volunteering in Ukraine as a concept in its own right which is closely related to patriotic feeling.

One of the main areas where volunteers are involved is arranging necessary equipment, food, clothes for people on the East of Ukraine. But the volunteer involvement is not limited to that. For example, one of the biggest projects NGO “Volonter” is executing now is called “Let’s build the future together” aiming at building proactive civil society in the so called “grey zones” on the border with Donbass. The programme is implemented in cooperation with UNICEF and provides a series of educational seminars and events in media literacy and project management for young people.

“We work with the leaders of the youth organizations in the adjacent regions to the territory of the conflict because we understand that the whole situation became possible because the civil society was not active in the East of Ukraine.” (Dmytro Doroshok, personal communication, May 2017)

Another example of volunteer activity is “GoGlobal” and “GoCamp” initiatives organised by Mustafa Nayem, one of the activists of Euromaidan. The main goal of this NGO is managing a number of residential camps where children from all over Ukraine (especially from suburbs
and countryside areas) whose parents cannot afford to enrol them to language course can learn English. The “Go Global” works with both Ukrainian volunteers and volunteers from abroad who come over to Ukraine and teach English.

In summer 2017, GoGlobal brought 1,000 foreign volunteers to more than 600 schools, to teach 100,000 pupils all over the country. These camps focused on one of four areas: steam (science, technology, engineering, art and maths); civic education; leadership and careers; sports and fitness (Kyrylenko, 2017)

“We want our volunteers to teach children how to become leaders, how to think critically and how to be tolerant and compassionate towards others. It is the next generation of Ukrainians who will have to overhaul the country. If we want to change the world, we have to inspire the kids” (Mustafa Nayem cited in Kyrylenko, 2017).

In December 2014, ”GfK Ukraine”, a well-known company in the field of marketing and sociology, conducted the survey which showed that 62% of Ukrainians considered that volunteers had played an extremely important role in the political process in Ukraine, 85% thought that volunteers had helped to establish peace and was an integral part of the civil society (Kozachuk, 2015).

To conclude, volunteering in Ukraine has developed rapidly especially after the Euromaidan which became a driving force of a number of changes in Ukrainian society. Nowadays, the main focus of volunteering is support of eastern regions, contribution to building proper civil society and media literacy in Ukraine.

Therefore this thesis is focused on the volunteering during the Eurovision Song Contest, held in Ukraine in May, 2017. Volunteers have always played a significant role in organising various sports and cultural events, and Eurovision is not an exception. However, according to the previous research, volunteers are not considered as media workers and their role in media industries remains a rather overlooked area. Since the majority of the research in the field of work and labour is more focused on unpaid internships, aspirational labour, free digital labour and precarious working conditions of people involved in symbolic production.
4. Defining the field: theoretical concepts of nation branding, values and volunteering

Since the aim of this study is to investigate volunteering as a tool of nation branding campaigns and as a form of media work, the theoretical part of the thesis discusses the nation branding as concept, different types of values (namely use, exchange, sign and brand value), reasons which underpin motivation to volunteer (especially during the mega events).

4.1 Nation branding as a concept

The notion of brand has undergone a series of transformations throughout the history. At first brands were associated with producers, served as a mark of quality and made the commodity easy to identify. Nowadays the notion of brand is used in relation to countries and nations.

Kaneva (2012, p.10) explains this as result of globalization accompanied with the “rise of global promotional culture” which “interpellates” us as consuming subjects first, rather than as citizens, and transforms all social relations into relations of value and exchange. This means that the “lines between production and consumption, between economy and culture, between the material and symbolic have been blurred and subsumed within the structures of information capitalism”. Following Kaneva (2012) further, “branding is a neoliberal tool that creates value through the commodification of affective attachments” (p. 10). Bolin and Ståhlberg (2016, p. 275) argue that ”if previously the nation was constructed as a collective community in relation to political legitimacy and citizenship, it is today imagined as a competitive entity in a global economy”. Therefore nation is seen as a commodity itself and nation branding serves to highlight its specific features to make it recognizable and identifiable among other nation states.

W. Olins (2002, p. 243) in his article gives another reason why the notion of brand trespasses the realm of corporate business and is increasingly often used as nation brand. He states that “the reason why nations continue both explicitly and implicitly to shape and reshape their identities, or brand and rebrand themselves is because their reality changes and they need to project this real change symbolically, to all the audiences, internal and external, with whom they relate”. This statement brings us to necessity to distinguish between identity and brand since they are not synonyms. Varga (2013, p. 834) states that “both ethnic and civic understandings of national identity are intrinsically connected. “Ethnic” understanding of the national identity refers to non-voluntary historical and linguistic determination of a common
origin that people regard as a contingent version of their national identity. The “civic” understanding derives from the sense of group membership due to collective commitment to a set of laws and principles”. In other words, national identity is a set of historical, linguistic and civic aspects that evoke the feeling of belonging among the citizens of the country. Nation branding is a set of cultural and political measures that shape collective identity and “determine the range of exemplary models that are available for individuals to construct their identities” (Varga, 2013, p. 841). Kaneva (2012, p 32) agrees with this statement and digs even deeper into its meaning: “instead of people defining themselves, nation branding is outsourced to domestic and foreign corporations, enabling the later to determine national identity. Nation branding uses those features of identity that increase country’s marketability.”

Following this take “nation branding” as defined by Aronczyk (2013) is “creation and communication of national identity using tools and techniques from the world of corporate brand management”. So national branding can be understood as a combination of inward and outward directed techniques in order to communicate certain priorities and values to achieve a variety of purposes. Firstly, one of the aims of national branding is to make the country competitive in tourism, foreign investments, import and export trade and skills labour. Secondly, it strives for communicating the legitimacy and authority in diplomacy to ensure inclusion of the country into international institutions and organizations. Nation branding can be considered as a part of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy as defined by J. Pamment (2013) is “communication of international actor’s policies to citizens of foreign countries” (p. 5). The actors who the public diplomacy aims for are foreign ministries, non-governmental and civil society organizations, journalists and media institutions. “Today public diplomacy is an instrument used by states to understand cultures, attitudes and behaviour, to build and manage relationships, to influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values” (Pamment, 2013 p. 6).

Thirdly, nation branding focuses on fostering domestic consensus among its citizens around the values and priorities communicated by the branding campaigns to create the patriotic feeling.

Here I will use some space to discuss the difference and relation between brand and branding. Brands originally referred to producers, they served as a trade mark that guarantees quality and makes a product easily identifiable to producer, inventor or a particular physical space.
Contemporary understanding of brand mainly refers to the “context of consumption”. (Arvidsson, 2005, p. 244) It means a specific way of using the object. “Brands supply a virtual context that facilitates or enables the production of a particular kind of common”. (Arvidsson, 2005, p. 244). Since the late 1980-s brands are not just the commodities they represent but it the reputation of the brands, its visibility and intangible qualities they represent (Jansen, 2008).

On the contrary, branding is a process of creating a brand using a variety of techniques: advertisement, product placement, co-branding. Among the others tools, branding physical space and creating branded communities occupy a significant place. So the two terms have different meanings but they are obviously interconnected: brands are created in the process of branding and brand management. So the ultimate goal of the branding process is to create brand value.

4.2 Brand value

“Brand value is an important immaterial asset of the contemporary capitalism”, argues Arvidsson (2005) in his article.

Trying to connect the notions of brand and production, Arvidsson (2005) states that “brands are built on the immaterial labour of consumers: their ability to create an ethical surplus (a social bond, a shared experience, a common identity). This labour is generally free in the sense that it is both unpaid and more or less autonomous”.

Today, we talk more and more often about “brand value” which is some kind of symbolic or sign value and is constructed with the help of brand management and advertising of all forms. However, the basis for the brand value lies in the meaning-making activity of consumers. Arvidsson (2005) argues that “humans create an ethical surplus – a social relation, a shared meaning, an emotional involvement that can be understood as the direct basis of its economic value”.

Taking this discussion further to understand the meaning of the brand value Arvidsson (2005) states that “brand value represents the present value of predictable future earnings generated by the brand [...] Building brand equity is about fostering a number of possible attachments around the brand, be these experiences, emotions, attitudes, lifestyles and mostly important,
perhaps, loyalty. From a managerial perspective brand value represents the monetary value of what a brand can mean to consumers. Brands are monetizable symbolic values.”

Based on the abovementioned statement there arises the question: who actually produces these immaterial assets. Of course, on the one hand brands are built through advertising, marketing and staged events. However, the recent research (Bengtson and Östberg, 2004, Arvidsson, 2005) has led to the conclusion that brands’ assets and value are “produced by consumers themselves” or that “value of brands derives from the productive practice of consumers”.

The concept “immaterial labour” often functions in the wide sense of the term. It utilizes a common ability to interact and socialise, and a common symbolic framework, a set of shared knowledge and competences to produce a social relation. Lazzarato (1997, cited in Arvidsson, 2005) calls it “an ethical surplus. It produces a social relation, a shared meaning, or a sense of belonging”. It confirms again that temporary consumers are not just passive victims and observers but they are actively engaged in the social construction of the value of brands. “In short, consumption produces a common in the form of a community, a shared identity or even a short “lived” experience”. (Arvidsson, 2005, p 242).

There are several ways to stage brand management. Physical space is one of them. It is associated with the use of architecture and design to provide a particular movement, interaction, produce a certain ambience and experience. Branding through physical space is heavily used by such brands as Disney, McDonald’s, Starbucks. Another option is to invest into the construction of branded communities. They presuppose a sort of common interaction, “producing a dimension of trust or authenticity to be added to the brand”. An important part of this type of brand management consists of building physical and virtual spaces, where consumers are free to produce the set of social relations and participate in the creation of a collectively shared experience. The main function of these “brand platforms” is to create particular immaterial use-values: an experience, a shared emotion, a sense of community.

It is obvious that value of non-tangible commodities depends heavily on the belief in the commodities’ specific value by customers because no tangible or comprehensible material was used to create them. Thus, the system of believes that surrounds the production of non-material commodities is important for understanding the production process.
Belief, as an integral part in the field of production is discussed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977, cited in Bolin, 2011).

“Among the makers of the work of art, we must finally include the public which helps to make its value by appropriating it materially (collectors) or symbolically (audiences, readers), and by objectively or subjectively identifying part of its own value with these appropriations. In short, what 'makes reputations' is not, as provincial Rastignacs naively think, this or that 'influential' person, this or that institution, review, magazine, academy, coterie, dealer or publisher; it is not even the whole set of what are sometimes called 'personalities of the world of arts and letters'; it is the field of production, understood as the system of objective relations between these agents or institutions and as the site of the struggles for the monopoly of the power to consecrate, in which the value of works of art and belief in that value are continuously generated." (P. Bourdieu, 1977/1993, p. 265)

Taking this discussion further, Bolin (2011, p 17) argues that “production of belief is also the production of value”. Production of cultural objects is always justified in one way or another according to some belief system.

4.3 Use and exchange value

Taking the discussion about values further, it is necessary also to mention other types of values: such as use, exchange and sign values. Bolin (2011) in his book which deals with the concept of value in media defines value as “amount of some commodity, medium for exchange, which is considered to be an equivalent for something else, the material or monetary worth of a thing” (p.16).

Following Bolin (2011) further, the “thing is given a value and also becomes the value it has been given or valued”. In other words, the value is produced and constructed socially through humans’ interpretation of things and phenomena around them. Moreover, the result of the interpretation and social construction will depend not only on measures and criteria of valorisation, but on the socially and historically defined space. Therefore, it is obvious that despite the agreed criteria for judgement and evaluation everyone will arrive to a different evaluative conclusion at the end. What makes the process of valorisation the most valid is the open struggle over determining and interpretation of value. So, one can conclude that value is always the result of an activity.
The notions of use and exchange values are discussed primarily in the volume of Karl Marx (1867/1976 cited in Bolin, 2011) “Capital” and are closely connected to commodification, production and consumption circuit. In his profound work Marx distinguished between different kinds of production and different kinds of consumption. According to Marx, commodities have use value, which means a certain commodity can satisfy certain human needs. In addition to use value, every commodity has an exchange value or the price of the commodity on the market. The production-consumption circuit is closed at the moment the commodity is sold and bought at the market. Following this logic, in the process of consumption of the commodity its use and exchange values are destroyed.

According to Marx (1867/1976 cited in Bolin, 2011) there are several production-consumption relationships. The first one is productive consumption which is a consumption of raw materials and workers’ labour in the process of production the commodity. The result of the productive consumption is the exchange value of the commodity produced. When implying productive consumption into the field of media, Bolin (2011, p. 36) concludes that “audiences are the raw material that the media industries package in the form of statistics and sell to advertisers. […] In this process the audience enters into a new production-consumption circuit and is “consumed” by the advertising industry. Another argument to support this conclusion was uttered by Smythe (1977, cited in Bolin, 2011): “what audiences actually do when they watch television is work for the television companies, adding human labour to the raw material, thus producing surplus value for the television companies”.

Another type of the production-consumption relationship is reproductive consumption. It means consumption various goods (food and clothes, for example) by workers’ to reproduce their work capacity as well as maintenance of machines and other means of production in good shape and working condition.

The third type is an unproductive consumption, which means that products produced in the result of consumption do not always have a market and cannot be sold. For example, these are the production of identities, culture, constructed identities through consumption of work of media industry.
4.4 Sign value

Since the late 1960-s there has been a significant change in the understanding of the production-consumption circuit. Baudrillard (1970/1998 cited in Bolin) in a series of his works highlight that symbolic value becomes more and more important for the circulation of commodities in society. This way in addition to use and exchange values, the sign value of commodities is added. Baudrillard (1972/1981 cited in Bolin, 2011) explains that “if the use value is the quality of the good or the commodity, and the exchange value is the price set on the market for a commodity, then sign value is that value that gives status when it is consumed or spent”. This highlights the importance of sings and symbols in the production of commodities. It is important to consider sign value which closely involved in the production of social difference, for instance. Besides that, sign value is also a value in its own right, it fulfils needs and gives pleasure of various kinds.

Sign value is somehow connected to the specific role of audience in consuming radio or TV programs, for instance. Even though Smythe (1977, cited in Bolin, 2011) claims that viewers, listeners and readers are “working” when interpret media text and produce meanings, identities and culture, this type of work doesn’t produce a new commodity which can be sold on the market. Bolin (2011) argues that “they are rather working in a field that aims at another end product – social difference and sign value [..]. The labour in both factories is centred on signifying practices – practices that at times are drawn into the production-consumption circuit of the media and culture industries”.
4.5 The work of media use and consumption

Since this study is based on the notions of work and labour it is worth elaborating more on these concepts.

Bolin (2011, p 80) distinguishes subjective, textual and social work. All media users are involved in subjective work, which means construction of meanings, ideas and reflections from media use. When these ideas and thought are communicated to others there appears a collective construction of meaning, and the work produced becomes social. Production of amateur videos, blogs, narratives, is example of textual work conducted by media users. In the pre-digital are media users “work” could basically result in cultural consumption and therefore produce the difference. However, in the modern age of digital technologies media users can easily start producing their own content due to the cheap and available means of production and distribution. Bolin (2011) argues that “social work and communication on social networking sites does indeed contribute to the media user’s identity and the meaning produced in consumption through value judgements that previously in the pre-digital era were the media user’s own, but in the digital economy become appropriated as “free labour” by the media and culture industries”. This free labour is not just unpaid by the media industries, but it is also happily submitted by the media users.

Fuchs (2013) provides three logics that show the interconnectedness of acceleration processes between economy, politics and culture. Thus, acceleration of money tends to require politics to react to these changes more quickly in form of accelerated decisions; the acceleration of culture means the intensification of experiences, makes society and everyday life more complex; finally, the acceleration of economy results in more and more quickly produced commodities. As a result individuals are encouraged to consume more commodities and to select from even more commodities than ever before. That brings to the logical conclusion that the more productive is the individual the more commodities can be produced per one unit of time. That statement highly increases the importance of technologies and knowledge in production. Therefore, intensification of production and consumption in the modern mediatized environment results in flexible but very intensive working hours, precarious working conditions with high insecurity and unsafely. The peculiarities of work in the world saturated with media are that unpaid labour (labour in social media websites) becomes “liquid” and commodity producing. Under commodity production is understood content,
profiles that contain personal data, social relations. All this data is stored, assessed and commoditized and used for targeted advertisement.

4.6 Volunteering during mega events

Mega events are usually studied from the perspective of tourist’s attractiveness, image-making and developmental roles. Almost all huge events like Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, and World Cups rely on the contribution of volunteers and would be difficult to operate logistically or operationally without volunteer workforce. Yet, quite little research has been done to investigate the labour and motivation of volunteers during such events; therefore the following thesis makes a relevant contribution to the broader understanding of this rather overlooked area.

The article of Choong-Ki Leea (2014, p.37) studies volunteering during Expo 2012 in Korea and provides a very comprehensible analysis of volunteer motivations. These motivations are opportunity to socialize, obtain material rewards, enhance the local community status, connect with personal hobbies and interests, and express altruism. Besides that volunteer motivations highly influence satisfaction with sports mega-events.

Among the motivations are altruism, extrinsic motivation (a type of a tangible reward such as monetary reward or social recognition and networks). Intrinsic (internal) motivation “refers to behaviour that involves engaging in an activity for the satisfaction or enjoyment inherent in performing the activity. Event organizers place much emphasis on the importance of intrinsically rewarding motives, such as the enjoyment of the activity of volunteering, interacting socially with other volunteers and event participants, and contributing to the larger social good” (Choong-Ki Lee 2014 p. 38).

Patriotism is another motivation to become a volunteer. Patriotism can be even seen as an analogous concept to nationalism. “Individuals perceive their selves as part of the nation and the nation as part of themselves; in other words, the individual self and the nation are united into one psychological entity. Their sense of belonging to one nation, a feeling they share with a group of people, regardless of one’s status is their national identity. Expo had been actively promoted by the Korean government as a national mega-event, volunteers may have perceived volunteering in the Expo as an important civic responsibility” (Choong-Ki Lee (2014, p.40).
Lockstone and Baum (2009) analyse the work of volunteers on the example of Commonwealth Games 2006 in Melbourne. This article investigates the manner in which the community in the host city is informed about volunteers and volunteering over the “full chronological cycle of the event, from initial volunteer recruitment through to the euphoria of the event itself and its aftermath” (Lockstone and Baum 2009, p. 39). The authors find similarities between volunteering and serious leisure activity because people tend to offer their services as volunteers based on their interest in the event. Another recent feature of volunteering in mega events is “project-based leisure”: short-term, infrequent, includes tasks of rather complicated nature. When researching the role and influence of media on volunteering Lockstone and Baum (2009) come to the conclusion that “a person’s propensity to get involved in volunteering is influenced by the images they hold of volunteering” (p. 41). When studying the role of media the researches distinguished several stages: initial euphoria and volunteer recruitment, discovering roles and responsibilities, event itself and post-event euphoria (Lockstone and Baum 2009). They state that media contributes and emphasises the scope of recruiting and training of the volunteers and assigned importance and contribution to this process. The aspect of “euphoria” will be of special interest in this study since it mirrors very accurately the way volunteering during ESC was organised in Ukraine.

This brings us to the necessity to look more closely to the concept of community and the motivations that drive people to participate in them, especially to give one’s time and efforts on the unpaid basis. There have been studies performed to explore the motivators of contributing one’s knowledge and time to a community. Zwass (2010) argues that “knowledge-contribution behaviour was found to be stimulated by both perceived sociability (notably social interactivity) and perceived system usability (ease of use in particular), surfacing again the importance of social factors. The leading factors motivating contributors were found to be seeking fun, satisfaction of ideological needs and values, and learning”

Zwass (2010) provides a list of motivations that drive people to co-creation or contributing their work for free (p.29):

- Altruistic desire to contribute
- Passion for a task
- Inner need to reciprocate in view of the contributions by others
- Enjoyment, state of flow, playfulness
- Self-expression, speaking the truth as one sees it
- Identity construction—co-creators can derive their sense of identity from the co-creating communities and projects
- Forming personal relationships
- Community norms
- Learning through co-creation from and with others
- Satisfying one’s affiliation needs
- Self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Thymotic strivings — desire for social standing, recognition, and renown
- Acquiring social capital and peer recognition
- Career advancement
- Nonmonetary rewards

K. Fast, H. Örnebring and M. Karlsson (2016) provide seven metaphors of free labour that add exchange value to goods and services: The Slave, The Carer, The Hobbyist, The Volunteer, The Apprentice, The Prospector, The Patsy. The two categories that are of special interest in the scope of this study are the Hobbyist and the Volunteer.

According to the authors the Hobbyist is “driven by emotions, his labour is kind of an affective labour that manipulates the feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement or passion”. The main reward of the Hobbyist is being “paid in fun”. The Volunteer shares the characteristics of the Hobbyist but The Volunteer is ready to do even unpleasant tasks to achieve an altruistic goal. This metaphor of unpaid labourer often works for the passion of fandom, for a “good cause”. But in this context “fandom” can be easily substituted by “brandom” as voluntary is often capitalized to and generates exchange value for media organizations.

Thus, to keep the motivation of the voluntary workers, community commitment is widely employed across various fields. Zwass (2014) argues that people involved in co-creation are “positively affected by information resulting from member interactions, pointing again to the importance of organizing congenial information space for community members”.

This feeling of community is most often built with the help of mediated techniques: groups and communities in social media, blogs etc. It is worth mentioning that creating the community is important not only on the level of the separate brand but not less important on the level of the country and the nation. E. Castello (2016) concludes that:
The scope for creating an ‘imagined community’ is clear from studies on television (and more recently) on the Internet. Thus the availability or otherwise of the technology is available (TV and the distribution network) to push a given idea of the nation (Catalonia, Scotland, The United Kingdom, France, etc.) has implications regarding the scope for articulating a national consciousness. The concept was applied throughout the 20th Century to ‘national consciousness’ maps in Europe’s Nation States regarding the output of State broadcasting corporations (the BBC, RAI, TVE, etc.). The creation and distribution of a given national ‘imaginary’ was based on the construction of a given national ‘imagined community’ that highlighted certain traits (language, history, heroes, symbols and so on) and ignored others.

Therefore, there is a logic conclusion that the concepts of creating a brand value as a social construction which obviously needs social interaction and participation is closely connected to notion of free or unpaid labour (which on the one hand is happily given due to the motivations discussed above) and on the other hand is used to add the surplus value to the brand.
4. Method and material

The relation between values and community on the example of volunteering in Ukraine during the Eurovision Song Contest in connection to nation branding discourses, as the main focus of this thesis, was studied using a variety of material (e.g. personal interviews, training programme for volunteers, photos from the volunteer training, promotional booklet issued by Tourism Department of Kyiv City State Department just before the Eurovision). Thus, the method used to elicit the values and motivations and their correlation to the community feeling is qualitative analysis of the interviews and textual analysis of printed materials. The relevance of the qualitative method of analysis is justified by being developed within ethnographic studies (which was the case of gathering the material during the field trip to Kyiv) and according to Jensen (2002):

“While relevant, interview methodologies depend on the respondents’ introspection, retrospection, and verbal recollection of their actions, which necessarily reproduce events from a current perspective. Particularly in research on the concrete contexts of media use, a weighing of the strengths of observation and interviewing, depending on the purpose of study, is thus of the essence” (p. 161).

The qualitative interviews which constitute the core of the empirical material are characterised by “probe for the special and shared meanings that members of the group develop, the kinds of activities that group members typically do, and the reasons why they do it” (Horbyk, 2017, p. 112). This statement reflects the character of the interviews conducted for this study in a very precise manner, since their aim was to get the descriptions and interpretation of meaning of the surrounding event.

Textual analysis of the training programme and the promotional booklet was conducted on the denotative/connotative level. Following S. Hall’s (1980) theory of encoding/decoding the text can be interpreted at various levels. Thus, he distinguishes denotative meaning which prefers to its actual or literal meaning and the connotative meaning is formed by cultural and historical contexts, the viewer’s experience and knowledge of those contexts. When decoding the text, the meaning of it derives from the recipient’s attitude, social position and experience. This contributes to the more nuanced understanding of the text function and the phenomena they represent. Thus, these methods of analysis together with the theoretical concepts will be used to analyse the empirical material and draw conclusions to answer the research questions.
5.1 Method of producing material

At the early stage of preparation to the field trip to Kyiv, it was decided to find the respondents for the interviews using social media platforms as well as my personal contacts. The active process of finding and choosing the interviewees commenced at the beginning of April 2017, when the National Television Channel finished the recruitment and the future volunteers got confirmation of their participation. The information about the search of interview respondents was posted into 3 open Facebook group connected with the Eurovision: “Eurovision Ukraine 2017”, “Eurovision club Ukraine” and “Volunteer ambassador Kyiv” in Ukrainian with the short description of the project and its purposes. The members of the groups were encouraged to send a private message or an email in case they were interested in being interviewed for the project as well as to share the information with those who might be interested. As the result, 6 people contacted me via the private message during the following 2 days. Besides this they suggested their fellow-volunteers who were potentially interested in sharing their experience with us. As anticipated, the list of 10 respondents and the schedule of the interviews were ready approximately a week before the field trip.

The manager of volunteers at the National Television Channel, Yaroslava Kaminska, was contacted through the press centre of the NTCU and the permission to conduct the interview was asked beforehand. The interview was finally agreed when the research group was already in Ukraine and was conducted on Eurovision arena site.

The programme of the volunteers training as well the photos from the actual training was provided by one of the trainers, who gave the interview afterwards as well. The promotional booklets were available on all the fun zones and were collected during the field trip.
5.2 Description of material

The main part of the empirical material consists of 9 interviews (the interviewees’ occupations and functions during the Eurovision can be seen the table below).

All the interviews were conducted during the field trip to Kyiv on the 6th – 14th of May 2017, the week when the Eurovision semi-finals and final concert actually took place in Ukraine.

As it can be seen from the table below, the interviews included people who performed different functions and tasks during the Eurovision song contest (from the key persona in charge of principal decisions to ordinary people who actually performed the mundane tasks). The reason behind that was to get a full and comprehensive picture of how the volunteering was organised and ensure diversity of opinions and thought.

Thus, the interviews with the volunteer manager at the National Television Channel and the coordinator of the Kyiv City Host volunteers aimed to capture the internal processes, discussions and views on recruiting, training and creating and maintaining the shared community feeling among the volunteers, various tasks assigned to them. Interviews with the people involved in trainings were supposed to give valuable insights about the training materials, aims, various tasks, approaches to handle unpredictable situations, and instruments volunteers were given to represent the country and to act as ambassadors of the city and the country. These interviews served the purpose of supplementing the interviews with volunteers which deepened the research overall.

Finally, the interviews with the volunteers themselves (including junior volunteer-coordinators, who were responsible for managing groups of 3-5 people) was my primary focus since the aim of the project was to find how low-level workers work with nation branding concepts. The interviews intended to understand how these people view their interaction, how they construct meaning and interpret what they are doing.

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<th>Interviewee/Informant</th>
<th>Position/function during the ESC</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informant 1</td>
<td>volunteer manager, employed by the National television channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 2</td>
<td>coordinator of the Kyiv City Host volunteers, co-founder of the NGO “Volonter”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 1</td>
<td>senior volunteer, teacher of English as a foreign language at Taras Shevchenko State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 2</td>
<td>senior volunteer, project manager at the IT company</td>
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</table>
The interviews were semi-structured and took place at various places: such as the National Exhibition Centre in Kyiv, which served as an arena during the Eurovision Song Contest week, at the working place of one the volunteer coordinators and the local Kyiv cafes. The semi-structured approach was preferred in order not to limit the respondents in describing their motivation or figuring out the meaning of the events that went around.

Before starting an interview the interviewees were given a short overview of project aims and the reasons the material is gathered.

A short interview questionnaire was used for each of these interviews; respondents were also encouraged to express their thoughts and views as well as some factual information about the questions in concern. 8 out the 9 interviews were conducted in English, 1 interview was conducted in Ukrainian, which was translated into English at a later stage. All interviews were taped and then transcribed. Interview transcriptions were used to quote the respondents as precisely as possible when making the analysis of the material to interpret and unpack the condensed meaning of their words.

The programme of the volunteers training represents an A4 printed guide book, which includes the aim and the learning outcomes of the training, short overview of the history of Eurovision, understanding the needs of the guests and meeting their expectations, communication with people from different cultures and speaking various languages, dealing with emergency situation and the role of the volunteer as an ambassador of the country. The programme is printed in Ukrainian, so my translation from Ukrainian into English was used to cite some parts of it.

The promotional booklet depicts the embankment of the Dnipro River at night and a slogan in capital letters “Kyiv – safe and nice”. The main focus of the booklet is to persuade the visors that Kyiv is a safe destination to travel as well as provides safety tips for the visitors.
5.3 Method of analysing material

During the field trip the interviews went on until the saturation of the material was reached or in other words until no new categories or themes emerged. The first stage of the analysis was transcribing of the interviews. On the second stage the themes and subthemes were developed from the material. So the recurring themes were then put into categories. After that the meaning of the categories was analysed with the help of qualitative method and matched with the concepts of the theory chosen for this study.

Textual analysis was used to analyse the volunteer training programme and the attention was paid mainly to how it teaches the volunteers to communicate with the foreign guests and which tools to choose to create a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere. The subtheme in focus was, of course, the volunteer as an ambassador and what kind of messages about the image of Ukraine volunteers were supposed to transmit to the visitors.

The promotional booklet was studied from the perspective of the main message and the facts about Kyiv that the Tourism Department wanted the foreigners to know. Another aspect is how the booklet combats the myths about Kyiv (in terms of safety), promotes the city’s attractiveness. Later on the comparative analysis is used to find similarities and discrepancies between what kind of messages Kyiv City Administration wanted to address in terms of nation branding and what kind of address it found in the volunteer training programme.

As it was mentioned before the material was gathered during the field trip which had an anthropological and observational character. So my own observations and perception on how volunteering was organised are also used in the analysis.
6. Analysis

6.1 Volunteering as a part of nation branding campaign

Eurovision Song Contest is considered as a large-scale cultural event (mega event) which has a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance (Lockstone & Baum, 2009). Such events are often used in destination development and image building. The mega events of such kind are “justified, in terms of the public expenditure that is required to host them, on the basis of their long-term benefits that can be found in new event and urban infrastructure, urban renewal, enhanced international reputation, increased tourist visitation and related benefits (Lockstone & Baum, 2009). So, hosting mega events are extremely advantageous for the host country in terms of attracting tourists from the around the world and making profit on souvenirs and famous sights, investing into the development of the host city infrastructure, but using this event for the nation branding activities.

Eurovision Song Contest as a platform for nation branding has been analysed in the previous research by Paul Jordan (2013), Göran Bolin and Per Ståhlberg (2010, 2015, 2016). Estonia was the first former Soviet republic which started a nation branding project in connection to Eurovision Song Contest 2002 (Jordan, 2014). Branding campaign managed by a British company Interband with the slogan “Welcome to Estonia: Positively Transforming” was characterised by competition for power of various political elites which tried to gain legitimacy for their claims for power, othering from the Soviet past and trying to emprise its Nordic identity as well as highlighting Estonia’s rightful place in Europe.

There is no doubt that the actors involved in preparation of Eurovision 2017 in Ukraine understood the unique opportunity to influence the perception of the country abroad which was shaped by Russian propaganda to a very large extend and imagined as an “unsafe”, “corrupted” or “country in war” in Europe. The preparation stage of the event was further complicated by a number of factors coming both from inside Ukraine and fuelled by propagandist media entries. The biggest anxiety was weather Ukraine is able to host the event at all to due to political instability and deep economic crisis and its capability to meet high requirements and standards of such a big show. Secondly, the tensions which complicated the matters further went around the Eurovision contestant from Russia, Yulia Samoilova, who was denied the entry to Ukraine due to the violation of Ukrainian border legislation.
Despite these circumstances Ukrainian political elite was determined to use the show which is watched by the whole Europe that Ukraine is a predictable and reliable partner that follows the path of positive transformations after Euromaidan.

The goals set for the nation branding campaign this time were somewhat different from those campaigns staged and orchestrated earlier (like “Ukraine: Beautifully Yours” and Ukraine: All about U”). If before, the core idea was to increase awareness about Ukraine in general for the foreign audience and showcase its great touristic destinations and delicious cuisine, the branding efforts undertaken in 2017 were focused on highlighting Ukraine’s belonging to Europe, openness to new ideas, positive changes and freedom, and what is the most important Ukraine is a safe and hospitable country or in other words to “commodify” the country in some sense and increase its marketability.

To implement these goals into practice all the range of traditional tools of branding were employed: two PR agencies “Banda” and “Republique” designed the Eurovision logotype, which pictured a traditional Ukrainian necklace, where every bead had a unique design. The aim of the logotype was to bring together traditional and modern by using a very traditional piece of national costume and assign new features to it. The creators of the logotype tried to make this traditional symbol understood for new audience (meaning European audience). The central message of the whole event was “Celebrate Diversity”. It bears the meaning of inclusiveness, joining together to celebrate both common ground and unique differences.

Besides using traditional tools to brand the event and Ukraine at the same time, the organisers of the campaign took the advantage of volunteering which was an integral part of this media event to make sure that low-level workers (volunteers) play the role of communicative labour. This kind of approach to the nation branding campaign is quite an uncommon practice since it involves a type of irregular workforce to promote the country. This way the approach trespasses the usual meaning of volunteer work as a work given for free out some intrinsic/extrinsic motivations. It shows that volunteering is evolving as a tool of the nation branding activity and is not just limited to giving directions, helping out with the seat numbers on the arena, helping security guards at the security points, and helping to register journalists in the press centre. They actually do a much bigger and crucial job, than one might think at first. So, despite the fact that volunteers did very ordinary and mundane tasks they were the bearers of the country’s brand in some sense. It is their communication and articulation of messages about the country that mattered.
The opening lines of the announcement that encouraged people to fill in the volunteer application form were: “you will be able to practice English and other foreign languages, get special training and coaching, loyalty program, initiation ceremony, uniform and the Eurovision 2017 volunteer certificate; teamwork experience at the international project, new knowledge, skills, contacts, as well as unforgettable impressions and the opportunity to contribute to shaping the image of Ukraine”.

So the roles the volunteers were supposed to play as a part and tool of nation branding efforts and the values they were supposed to uplift can be defined and divided in several categories.

First of all, the volunteers were supposed to **make guests welcome, comfortable and safe in the city**. To meet this expectation and make the volunteers capable to function in that role was one of the primary goals of the training the volunteers undertook before the event. It was perceived by the majority of the informants as being focused a lot on interpersonal communication. One of the volunteers explains his experience of the training as follows:

“*During the training we focused on how to meet strangers, how to greet them, establish rapport, maintain conversation, what types of questions to ask, how to deal with challenging situations. We role played different situation, if something happens with the guest, missing people, missing children. Or someone feels bad suddenly: what to do, what to say and whom to call*” (personal communication, May 2017).

One chapter of the training program is dedicated to greeting techniques. It lines out 5 important things to remember when greeting someone: create the feeling that the visitor is welcome and volunteers are hospitable, establish and maintain an eye contact when greeting a guest, pay attention to the body language and get to know what kind of body language gestures are inappropriate, smile a lot, speak slowly and clearly.

To ensure the safety of the visitors during the Eurovision, on top of involving extra police personnel (who also did an English language course to be able to communicate with the foreign guests), all the volunteers had to do a first aid training provided by the Red Cross Ukraine. As it was mentioned by Y. Kaminska, volunteer manager, all people working on the arena (including volunteers) got instructions regarding safety rules, emergency exits and evacuation. All these measures pointed out on a very careful preparation to urgent situations and volunteers were expected not the last role in that.
Another important tool of promoting and communicating the nation brand in terms of safety was the promotional booklet produced by Tourism department of Kyiv City State Administration which was distributed in all fan zones of the city. Its headline read “KYIV – Safe and Nice”. There is no doubt that the target audience were foreign visitors: tourists, fans and journalists since the booklet was issued in English.

The first page of the booklet provides arguments why Kyiv is a safe place: “despite the armed conflict in the Eastern part of Ukraine”.

- Kyiv is a safe destination;
- Kyiv is the ancient historical and cultural cite, a green city, a city of fun and pleasure;
- Kyiv is the most affordable city in Europe.

The second page is designed as frequently asked questions, where one of the questions was “What is the guarantee of my safety when staying in Kyiv?” The answers were the following: there are no military conflicts in or near Kyiv, there are no acts of terrorism in Kyiv, there are no political unrests in Kyiv. The final persuading argument was that there 9963 police staff and special units in Kyiv that is more than in any city of Ukraine.

Then there is provided a graph were the levels of crime and the level of worries being mugged or robbed in Kyiv are compared to London and New York. It can be seen from the graph that the level of crime in Kyiv is just 43% compared to 56% and 53% in London and New York respectively.
Secondly, the volunteers were supposed to **show that Ukraine (Kyiv especially) has a lot to offer due to its rich historical and cultural heritage.** The principal goal was to increase awareness among the Eurovision fans that apart from the Eurovision itself, there are a number of unique and worth-seen sights; some of them were even included into the UNESCO world heritage list (like St. Sophia Cathedral, for example). Simultaneously with the festivities related to the song contest, plenty of other entertaining/educational activities were hold. On one hand, there were exhibitions and workshops of traditional Ukrainian arts and crafts, dances, costumes and paintings trying to show the distinctive features of Ukrainian culture and local flavour and therefore promote Ukraine as a pleasant and affordable holiday destination. On the other hand, the installations depicting the victims of the armed conflict and presenting the war from the perspective of the soldiers and the witnesses aimed to present a true picture of those events to the visitors.
The role assigned to volunteers in this case was to be knowledgeable about what is going on in the city and to “show Kyiv in its best way, with its best face”.

First of all it is about helping tourists from different countries and from Ukraine, give them information about Eurovision, about our country and about Kyiv. If they want to know something about our history and culture we can tell them.” (personal communication, May 2017)

One of the informants also rises a commonly shared concern that Ukraine and Kyiv are unfamiliar for many Europeans which reflects precisely the issues discussed on the national level (namely the article of Stolyarchuk in Kyiv Weekly, where he describes Ukraine as “faceless” and “brandless” country).

“Kiev is not so famous as Paris or other big European cities. But it is important to show that we also have great things here. (personal communication, May 2017)”

Another volunteer explains the importance of the event for the country as follows:

“It is important to show that our city is really good. We have many theatres and museums and there are a lot of things to do here. And you can spend a lot of time walking in the streets, and it is a beautiful city. It is important when they [foreign visitors] come back to their home countries they will tell how great Kyiv is and recommend it to others to come over here for the holiday or something”. (personal communication, May 2017).

In other words the interviewee wants to highlight that Ukraine is much more than war, conflict and unsafety.

On the other hand, despite the intention to show Kyiv as tourist friendly and attractive city, the people in charge of the training didn’t provide any printed materials/booklets that volunteers could use when addressing visitors’ questions. The informant’s answers about some specific information or techniques what should be told about the city are quite blurred and vague.

We discussed some of the points (about Kyiv) but it was not like a sheet of paper with information. We discussed in groups what it means to be the ambassador of the country and how to be a great volunteer. We also spoke about Steven Kovi and his “Bank of skills”, about different types of visitor and different types of cultures. (personal communication, May 2017).
As far as produced material shows there was an intention that volunteers were supposed to highlight Kyiv’s attractions and beauty, but there is an obvious lack of coordination and common goal between the training and the intentions of the organisers.

Thirdly, volunteers’ role was to promote that Ukraine is an open, diverse and hospitable country. Having considered the fact that the Eurovision’s slogan 2017 was “Celebrate Diversity”, it is reasonable to investigate in which way the volunteers understood it and how they relate the meaning of the slogan to representing the country.

The discussion of the slogan interpretation showed explicitly the complexity of the communication process and absence of interconnection between the nation branding goals and the training.

The volunteers were supposed and actually were the integral part and a tool of promotion the country but they were not fully aware of that. This unawareness was especially visible when during the interviews the meaning of the slogan was discussed.

Most of the interviewees where totally confused; they expressed different thoughts and interpreted the meaning in a number of various ways.

When we asked the volunteers to elaborate on the slogan’s meaning the answers were the following:

“The meaning of the slogan is very deep. Ukraine is a big and diverse country. The country comprises different nationalities, languages, etc. But at the same time it is a united country”. (personal communication, May 2017)

Another volunteers answered: The concept of diversity is well-known in Ukraine since we have a lot of nationalities. During the training we even highlighted what percentage of other nationalities we have in Ukraine. For example, the number of Russians, Belarusian’s, Turkish people who live in Ukraine. (personal communication, May 2017)

The volunteer trainer went more into details and explained how they actually worked with the understanding of the slogan:

“First we did a Eurovision quiz, they were supposed to get the answers and then we discussed. And then I gave them the history of the slogan and we discussed how they understand celebrate diversity. The common answer is that people from different cultures
and different background are welcome to Ukraine. It is an advantage to celebrate diversity. We have an opportunity to learn from different cultures and we can share our own”. (personal communication, May 2017).

Another point which is worth further elaboration is the aim of the nation branding campaign that Ukraine is a peaceful country despite the conflict in Donbass.

On one hand, some informants express explicitly their task in changing negative association that a lot of foreigners have of Ukraine as an unsafe country. “We want peace; we want to show that... a lot of people think that all of Ukraine is a war or a horror. But it is not. Eurovision is a chance to show that we have a normal life here”. (personal communication, May 2017).

The question about the addressing the on-going conflict on the East of Ukraine sought to research the volunteers’ impact and role on explaining to the visitors the current situation in the country. Surprisingly enough, this question didn’t seem to be discussed in full length during the training and no practical tools or ideas were given on how to combat the myths or propaganda about Ukraine during the last 3 years.

All the informants and the trainers were unanimous that the question of addressing the conflict was completely overlooked at the preparation stage.

The recurring comments regarding this issue were that the volunteers “should not go in to political questions”, or “should not touch political questions”, to talk about diversity in a positive way and to create stereotypes” or “If someone asks we can answer, but only in a few words. Not go in so deep in to this” (personal communication, May 2017).

Dmytro Doroshok, the manager of Kyiv City Host volunteers, gives his opinion on this:

“Now we are in a complicated situation when we host the Eurovision in Kyiv, but at the same time there is conflict in the East of Ukraine. So we had to balance between these two realities. When we trained the volunteers, we tried to separate these two situations; we try not to talk about this that much. People in general do not ask questions about that. And I don’t think that we should have conversation about politics at all with the guests. First of all, volunteers are so young and they don’t have the competency to talk about these things” (personal communication, May 2017).
Yaroslava Kaminska goes further and argues why the tools to handle the question about the conflict were not considered.

“I think it is not needed. We are actually quite far from the conflict. We had the training on the antiterrorist measures which was provided by our security department. We had the training on the evacuation from the arena. All the volunteers should know the evacuation exits. The security measures a pretty high here, so all the volunteers have to understand that they should help the visitors if any emergency situation will appear” (personal communication, May 2017).

To conclude, the volunteers were meant to play an important role in communicating the nation brand of Ukraine. They were supposed to make the visitors stay in Kyiv pleasant and comfortable, show that negative media publicity has nothing to do with the reality and prove that Kyiv is a safe place to visit. On the contrary some questions related to the war conflict on the East and specific tools of representing the city were not addresses enough or even not all.

6.2 Volunteers as a form of media work: organization and experience

Further I will describe and analyse some important features of how the volunteering was organised in terms of recruiting and training and experienced by the volunteers themselves. The discussion is based on the interviews with the volunteer managers and volunteers as well as my own observations from the field trip.

An important feature of organisational aspect of volunteering is that they consisted of two parts: volunteers recruited by the National Television Channel of Ukraine (these were the people who worked on the arena, official fan zones and with the delegations) and Kyiv City Host Volunteers working on the streets of Kyiv.

The first stage of getting the whole process started was planning and mapping out the strategy. The person responsible for recruiting the volunteers on behalf of NTCU was Yaroslava Kaminska who worked previously as an accommodations manager during Junior Eurovision 2012.

According to Y. Kaminska the whole process started in October 2016 when the decisions regarding the number of volunteers, their tasks and working shifts were made. An important
part of the preparation stage was the consultations with the people managing volunteers during Eurovision 2016 and 2015.

The recruitment started in the middle of December 2016 and lasted until middle of February, 2017, which resulted in 12000 applications in total. 4 chief team leaders were appointed to look through the applications and conduct the interviews with the successful candidates. The application for the volunteer position was not any different from the actual job application: it required description of experience, knowledge of foreign languages and motivation.

The interviews with the successful applicants started in March 2017 and the main focus in the selection process was put on the level of English (additional languages were a plus), ability to work as a part of the team and to function efficiently in complicated and unpredictable situations. The volunteers assigned to assist the delegations had to speak the language of the delegation. All in all, 900 people were selected to volunteer during the event. Besides that, there was a back-up team (50 people) who were supposed to cover for regular volunteers in case of sickness, plan changes or similar circumstances. According to Yaroslava Kamniska, even though the majority of volunteers were students, they got application from people of different ages (18 to 60 years old). Moreover, the applicants were not only Ukrainians, but partly foreigners (Australia, Sweden) and partly members of Ukrainian diaspora. According to Yaroslava’s observations the willingness to volunteer was built on two main aspects: fan affinity to Eurovision and on patriotic feeling for Ukraine. In some way, this patriotic feeling was not only used as a motivation factor but also in order to foster domestic consensus regarding the events going on.

The tasks assigned to volunteers are quite varied and included working with the security guards on the entrance to the arena, helping with finding the seats on the arena itself, working in the fan zones (such as Eurovillage and Euroclub), in the press and accreditation centres, logistics and even in the show production and with the delegations. Involving volunteers in the production is rather unusual, but in Ukrainian context the volunteers involved in the production functioned mainly as interpreters. They ensured smooth communication between the European contractors and the Ukrainian team. The volunteer show production team was responsible for the interval opening artists and the host (picking them up at the entrance, obtaining an accreditation card and escorting to the dressing room). There was even the volunteer media team in charge of managing the Facebook page. They were taking photos of volunteers at different locations and posted them in the closed Facebook group. The media
team was arranged of two reasons: first to prevent volunteers from making selfies during the event, second to capture the memorable moment and share these moments with other volunteers to create the feeling of one big family.

The process of recruiting the Kyiv City Host volunteers was arranged separately. According to Dmytro Doroshok, the manager of Kyiv City Host volunteers and the managing partner of the NGO “Volonter”, the recruitment of city volunteers was nearly a last minute decision of the Kyiv City Council and started only in April 2017. The recruitment was executed by approaching the universities and making advertisement to speed up the process. As a result they got 500 applications out of which 300 people were selected. D. Doroshok explains such a delay in recruitment by the lack of coordination between the NTCU and Kyiv City Council.

The responsibilities assigned to Kyiv City Host volunteers were somewhat different: they were primarily responsible for working near the transportation points, the main city squares (Sofiivska, Kontraktova, Maidan), all the major tourists attractions (museums, art galleries) and fan zones.

Despite the differences in recruitment and managing organizations all the volunteers got the same training which was conducted by British Council Ukraine in cooperation with the British organization “People First”. It is an interesting fact, that while all the integral parts of the branding and PR campaigns (slogan and logotype, brand book) were produced and executed by the Ukrainian companies, the training programme and the training itself were outsourced. Y. Kaminska mentioned that “this kind of training was organised in 2010 during Summer Olympic Games in London. This year it was adapted to the Eurovision volunteers. During the training the volunteers obtained the skills how to be an ambassador of the country and Kiev. They were trained to help visitors, to be polite, ask what the visitor needs”. Extra one-day training was conducted for those volunteers who worked with the commentators and at the back stage.

The training programme was the main instrument of communication process and a tool of getting the volunteers ready for their mission. In fact, the programme was focused a lot on interpersonal communication and customer service skills: meeting visitors’ needs, being helpful to name a few. People conducting the training were the volunteers themselves. Among them were the university and school teachers; some of them has been volunteering in different organizations and events on regular basis.
The programme prepared by British Council Ukraine consists of 7 parts: what is volunteering, understanding your guests; meeting the expectations of your guests; confident communication, dealing with difficult and unpredictable situations; the role of the volunteer.

The most interesting part of the programme in the scope of this study is chapter 6 “The role of the ambassador”. An opening sentence of the introduction to this chapter highlights the importance of their mission: “You represent your country every day and every time you work with the visitor/guest”. Further on, there are reflection questions which volunteers were supposed to work on groups and write down their thoughts: what are the essential qualities of an excellent volunteer-ambassador, what can you do to become a true ambassador of your country.

Taking into consideration that there were 900 volunteers recruited by NTCU and 300 people volunteering for Kyiv City administration an internal management system was introduced.

There were 5 chief team leaders who coordinated their own teams: volunteers of the press centre and accreditation centre; a group of volunteers working with the delegations; volunteers of the fan zones; logistic and information; security and medical volunteers.

To make this system work each chief team leader had junior team leaders who were chosen from more experienced volunteers (some of them volunteered back in 2012 during the European football championship). Each junior team leader was responsible for the group of 5-8 volunteers and it was their task to oversee that each and every person from the group worked at the assigned place, followed the working shifts, there was food and water on the locations.

When it comes to how the volunteers perceive their own participation and engagement in the event, it turned out to be two-fold. This experience is most often described as “work” done with enthusiasm and pleasure and as being “the ambassadors” of the country.

So, the first description on how the volunteers understand and experience what they are doing is “work with fun”. The shifts they were supposed to work depended heavily on the location they were assigned to: Kyiv City Host volunteers worked 5-6-hour shifts; people working on the arena as stewards, for example, had to work 12 hours some days and to cover both morning shows and night shows.
The volunteer describes her working conditions:

“It is like five hours shift. But our schedules are not so strict, and if we have some big events we can stay longer than five hours. We start at 11 in the morning, but sometimes we need to start earlier or later... the schedule depends on the location”. (personal communication, May 2017)

Another volunteer added: “of course we are very multifunctional here. The tasks are very varied: sometimes it is needed to collect the glasses and sometimes to carry boxes. but it is fun to be a volunteer anyway”. (personal communication, May 2017)

Volunteers were provided with the Eurovision-branded clothes: T-shirts, baseball caps, rain jackets, transportation cards, food and water during their work shifts and a certificate at the end of the event, but of course they were not paid.

As one of the volunteers concludes: “You don’t get paid for this, but you get some stuff that can replace money... People, atmosphere are more valuable than money”.

Wearing the same uniform was meant not just to help the visitors to distinguish the volunteers in the crowd; it was a sign of belonging to a special community or a “branded community”.

The second most articulated experience was the feeling of “is being the ambassador of the country” or “representing the country”. In other words, volunteers commoditised themselves as “ambassadors” which is somewhat close to Kaneva’s (2012) “commodification of national identities”. But in this case there were not national identities, but uncompensated labour that was commoditised and involved in brand value creation.

This kind of perception is closely related to production of immaterial or symbolic commodities since according to the perception of volunteers working with the foreign guests and being exposed to them symbolically meant to represent the country and the city.

Volunteers understood their “ambassador mission” as doing useful and important things for the visitors, that’s why the “helping out” and “making the guests comfortable” are mentioned very often. Apart from that, they mention the important qualities needed to become a great ambassador.
“I think flexibility and respect for other cultures; to be well-educated, to have good manners and be communicative is what matters. Another important thing is a great desire to help. When working on the location we have to be proactive and ask the questions “How can help you?” or “Is there anything I can assist you with today?” (personal communication, May 2017).

Another informant when elaborating on his experience of being a volunteer highlights the importance of the event itself for Ukraine and his own role in representation of the country:

“I think that our victory at the Eurovision last year was the chance to be heard by the whole world. Thousands of visitors are coming over here these days. I am very proud to be the volunteer and represent my Motherland. I experience this job (volunteering) as an opportunity to show that Ukrainians are very open-minded and hospitable people. I hope this is the kind of impression our foreign guest will bring back home” (personal communication, May 2017).

Since the basis of every brand is the meaning-making activity, the volunteers by understanding their performance as “representational”, “useful”, “helpful” add the surplus value to the nation brand of Ukraine and execute the brand value in the concrete places of the city. They experience their work as an important contribution to how the visitors will perceive the country and what conclusion they make after the Eurovision.

6.3 Motivation as driving force

Previous research on studying volunteering during mega events, such as Eurovision, determines the following factors that motive people to become engaged in the volunteering activity: opportunity to socialize, obtain material rewards, enhance the local community status, connect with personal hobbies and interests, and express altruism. Besides that volunteer motivations highly influence satisfaction with sports mega-events.

Following this take, the next chapter analyses the driving force behind the volunteers’ engagement

As it was discussed in the earlier chapters, brand platforms aim to create the feeling of connectedness through common experience, shared emotion and a sense of community among the consumers of the brand.
Creating shared experience and a sense of community among the volunteers during the Eurovision Song Contest was of a special importance for the management team since the volunteers were meant to perform the role of ambassadors of the country and be those people who basically “carried” the nation brand of Ukraine as a safe, hospitable and reliable country.

Yaroslava Kaminska mentioned in her interview that motivation was the first thing they paid attention to in the process of selection. She stresses also on responsibility because “if the volunteers are not doing their task responsibly they somehow harm the others”.

The shared meaning and the sense of belonging to the community was reproduced on three different but closely interconnected levels: on the level of the volunteers, level of the event and the level of the nation.

Further in the analysis we will look closer into the tools and practices used to create the “community feeling”.

As one of the volunteers rightfully points out in the interview:

The volunteer team is becoming a big family. We call each other a lot, communicate on social media. We spend time after work together, and we visit each other’s locations. We are a big family. (personal communication, May 2017).

Obviously creating enthusiasm, feeling of belonging to something bigger (e.g the team of volunteers or the event itself) was an important part of the organisers efforts to make the volunteering a successful component of the Eurovision Song Contest.

To achieve this aim the organisers used a few tools. To start with, on the 25th of April 2017 900 volunteers, who were to devote two weeks of their life to one of the biggest music events in Europe, were gathered on the main square of Kyiv for the official and honourable ceremony. To make it even more official, the mayor of Kyiv, Vitaliy Klychko, delivered a welcoming and inspiring speech in front of the volunteers. He thanked them for their devotion and desire to make Kyiv the city which foreign guest will remember forever. He also highlighted everyone’s responsibility for the impressions guests will get after spending time in Kyiv. “But I am sure, they will be only positive ones” – he concluded in his final word. Following Klycko’s speech, the event-manager of Eurovision and Kyrylo Voronin and Ruslana Lyzhychko wished the volunteers the best of luck in their job and hundreds of blue balloons flew into the sky.
To sum up, the festive atmosphere created at the ceremony was important for several reasons: firstly, involvement of the Head of Kyiv City Administration and other officials highlighted the importance of the volunteers’ job and their role as a face of the country for the international image of Ukraine and fostering its nation brand. Secondly, it contributed to the feeling of community within the volunteer team, emphasising engagement with an important common course.

Second activity, which contributed to the shared experience and community feeling, was the **training** all the volunteers got before starting their job. The aim of program used during the training reads:

*This programme will help to achieve our key common cause, perfection in the volunteering, during the Eurovision Song Contest 2017 and after its completion in Ukraine. You, as a volunteer, will improve your communication skills and develop confidence working with different people who will attend events and places of interest in Ukraine. The programme will help to become the ambassador of your city and your country – mindful, able to communicate clearly and take care of safety (my translation).*
Obviously the training included various practical assignments to prepare the volunteers for their role: from greeting visitors and knowing how to respond to their needs to calling the police and ambulance if needed. But that was not the only purpose the training since it included a number of brainstorming activities. For example, what skills are needed to be a great volunteer, the meaning of the slogan “Celebrate diversity”, advantages of volunteering for a person doing the volunteering job, for the country and the city and the guests of the Eurovision.

Fig. 2 One of the training brainstorming exercises “Skills to be a great volunteer”.
Despite the focus on practical skills, as one of the volunteers’ trainers reasonably admitted in the interview: “One of the most important aims of the training is to create a feeling that they (volunteers) are a part of the team. In other words it is a team building activity in many ways... to keep up volunteers’ enthusiasm and excitement” (personal communication, May 2017).

To enhance the feeling of belonging to the “volunteer family” a couple of “field” activities were used as an integral part of the training. The first one was a group game where each volunteer team was given the list of 30 historical places in Kyiv and there were supposed to walk around the city and make photos of these historical landmarks.

“It was a competition against the other groups. We had to make some scene... if the historical monument was from a war time, for example, we had to make like a scene of us fighting or something. It was like a game and a way of illustrating the meaning of the monuments. It was for us to get acquainted with these different places, so that we know our city and each other better” (personal communication, May, 2017).

The third tool used to create the feeling of the community among the volunteers was a closed Facebook group, initiated by the National Television Channel where they tried to gather all the volunteers at one place, create a virtual space were they could make friends, share their experience. There was even a special media team which took photos of volunteers while
working and posted them on Facebook. The manager of the volunteers at the NTU Yaroslava Kaminska said in her interview:

“We also have the volunteer media team. Two volunteers are specially assigned to make photos and videos of the volunteers during their work. It is not allowed for the volunteers to shoot photos and videos. They should work, they should not take autographs and make selfies with celebrities. It is not allowed to post the photos of the event in the social media. We have a Facebook page and they (media volunteers) are moderating this page and posting the photos” (personal communication, May 2017).

When answering the question about how the NTU, as the organiser of the event keeps up and fuels the enthusiasm for the unpaid work Y. Kaminska also refers to the ceremony of initiation.

We also have the initiation of the volunteers. We gathered all the volunteers together with the Kiev Host city volunteers and the Kiev City Mayer said some words for them. And it was really inspiring and cool and we are planning to award them with the certificate at the end of their work. We really need to thank them for all the hard work they did (personal communication, May 2017).
To create the feeling that the volunteers are not just a part of the big volunteer team but they are a part of the whole event, the organisers used branded clothes the volunteers wore during their working shifts (dark-blue T-shirts, baseball caps, rain jackets) with the Eurovision logo and slogan.

During the interviews the volunteers when answering the question about their motivation to participate answered that they wanted to be a part of something bigger.
IH: you said that you wanted to be a volunteer to be part of something bigger. Do you feel that you are a part of something?

“Because I feel like special when I walk on the streets wearing my uniform. People are watching, staring and sometimes they ask for help and they understand that I am one of the people that can assist them. So, it’s cool. I am inside this celebration and event” (personal communication, May 2017).

When volunteers talked about their motivation to participate they often mentioned that being a volunteer is good for their CV and they will get a certificate at the end of the event, or in other words, being a volunteer might pay off in future. The returns young people hope to get are: better opportunities at labour market after graduation, increasing and strengthening their network.

One of the volunteers, who studies at the university at the moment comments:

“It’s a great opportunity to express myself and talk to people. It’s a great experience that will be very useful for me in the future. I learn about communication and organisation. It improves me, as a human but also strengthens my position on the labour market. And I am also applying for an American university and then you need to show experiences from volunteering” (personal communication, May 2017)

The abovementioned reasons to do work for free is very closely connected to the “aspirational” labour in media industries where young graduates are prepared to do unpaid work to “get the foot into industry”, “get to know right people” and “get hands-on experience”. Both of them consider unpaid work as a future-oriented investment.

Meeting new people and making friends while volunteering is the second biggest argument for the volunteering and obviously it creates value for the volunteers in terms of social capital and networking.

Thirdly most often mentioned personal motivation was “living for the emotions” and “being able to be close to the celebrities during the event”

“The performance itself, the emotions it evokes, the grand look of the arena and this happy and festive mood – that is what makes me engaged in this event” – resumed one of the informants.
For some people volunteering during ESC volunteering itself was a hobby or a way to spend their leisure time. Almost every volunteer we interviewed mentioned that Eurovision is not the only occasion that they took part in this role. So, it seems that volunteering is becoming a “serious leisure” for many young people these days in Ukraine. The majority of informants strongly identified themselves with the Eurovision and but also with the general volunteer movement that heavily increased in Ukraine after Euromaidan.

“Nowadays it is really common to be a volunteer in such kind of festivals. And Ukraine is really ready for this, may be it is somehow connected to the situation in the Eastern Ukraine. Volunteering as a special movement developed around 4 years ago. So be a volunteer is very common and normal in Ukraine these days” (personal communication, May 2017).

During the interviews one the most often repeated motivations to become a volunteer was to help Ukraine in these difficult times. A lot of volunteers mention the word “patriotism” several times.

One of the volunteers mentions: “these days my friends and I become volunteers during the Eurovision to do something useful for the country” (personal communication, May 2017).

Yaroslava Kaminska confirms that apart from traditional motivations (as participate in big international event) there were people who explicitly uttered their will to volunteer based on their desire to help.

“Some of them participate because they want to help Ukraine to host the contest. This is a kind of patriotic feeling; they want to do their best for Ukraine”.

She went on explaining that this year even Ukrainians leaving outside Ukraine (Canada, Australia, Denmark and other countries) sent their applications and were ready to devote 2 weeks to volunteering in Ukraine. Kaminska mentions that it wouldn’t have happened if not for the patriotic feeling.
Conclusion

Since the aim of the nation branding campaigns is “commodification” of national identities and distinguished features of the specific country, the ultimate goal of the Eurovision branding campaign 2017 in Ukraine was to convey the positive image of Ukraine in terms of adherence to European values and belonging to Europe geographically and culturally; confirmation of being a reliable partner able to host events of international importance; encounter negative publicity and show that Ukraine has a lot to offer as a holiday and tourist destination and, of course it is a safe, hospitable and diverse country.

The branding campaign employed all the traditional communicative techniques (PR campaign, brand book, slogan, etc) to convey its message. But apart from that an irregular work force in the face of 1200 volunteers was used as a form of communicative labour.

In this case volunteering adds value to the nation brand of Ukraine. Individuals perceive their selves as part of the nation and the nation as part of themselves. It also serves not only the purpose of nation branding, but of nation building in some way. The volunteers express a very strong sense of belonging to a nation and helping the country during the interviews.

Volunteers as a part of the branding camping were also a kind of “symbolic value”: they were supposed to symbolize Ukraine’s openness, hospitality and diversity by providing excellent service, being knowledgeable about Kyiv’s places of interest, polite and helpful.

The volunteers themselves perceive their tasks as “representing Ukraine”, “being the ambassador” of the country. At the same time they describe quite concrete responsibilities and tasks they perform. Therefore I would suggest that during branding campaigns commodification is not limited to selling some unique features of the country, in this case the volunteers’ ideas, believes and patriotic feelings became the commodity which resulted in production of brand value. Volunteers were engaged in producing different types of values: values of intrinsic character for themselves (in terms of social capital: being able to socialize with others and establish contact with other people), material values for the organisers of the event by actually performing their tasks. When creating the value for the country volunteers were engaged in productive consumption-production circuit where they consumed the information provided during the training and the messages produced and constructed by the brand management in the form of slogans and advertisement.
On the other hand there were some aspects which caused confusion among the volunteers. For example, they didn’t recall any strong emphasis on how exactly they should represent the country provided during the training or there is no common understanding of the Eurovision’s slogan among them.

Another finding is that the theme of war conflict was avoided at the training stage and no specific instruments were given to deal with such questions. This leads to the conclusion that the nation branding campaign during the Eurovision Song Contest had a project-based character which resulted in the lack of coordination between different actors involved. The clearer understanding of their role and function could have contributed even more to fostering the image of Ukraine.

The way volunteering was organised during the ESC 2017 confirms that nation branding is field of social practices and discourses. These practices are formed by institutional and individual actors. The results of this thesis suggest a broader perspective on volunteering as a rightful actor of the nation branding communication process and as useful instrument for further branding campaigns.

Since the volunteers didn’t get any type of compensation, obviously, there were other driving forces behind their will. The importance of right motivation was understood by the organisers, so different types of instruments and activities were used to create the feeling of belonging, connectedness and community: closed Facebook groups, teambuilding activities during the training.

So the results of this study contributes to the previous research by broadening the perspective of what tools can be understood and considered as a part of the nation branding campaign which raises the question or investigating other actors that can be involved in this process apart from volunteers.

By studying volunteering in the context of nation branding and media events suggests an insight on the changing role of the common understanding of volunteer work. More research on volunteering as a form of media labour would provide deeper knowledge on this phenomenon.
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