Which Types of Events and Discourses Can Shape Interest in Your Country: a case study of Ukraine

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I focus my attention on two processes that involved Ukraine in 2019:

1 The mini-serials Chernobyl HBO describes historical events of the nuclear tragedy of Chernobyl in 1986;

2 The process of impeachment in the U.S started after Trump's phone conversation with the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, was published as a transcript on September 25th.

To evaluate the public interest, I used Google Trends to see how people were searching globally for such topics as "Chernobyl", "Trump impeachment", "Volodymyr Zelensky" and "Ukraine". The attention to "Chernobyl" was strong and long-lasting, between April 28th and September 8th and reached 100/100 points of interest. In contrast, "Trump impeachment" got a significantly lower score of interest 72/100, although it lasted four months as well. People were googling for "Volodymyr Zelensky" in May (after the Ukrainian elections); and "Ukraine" was fluctuating all the time with the peak in September (26/100).

To check if it was a planned media effect interest, I applied the MediaCloud tool and analysed the same keywords for Global Media outlets coverage. The results were skewed towards the impeachment. Chernobyl received scarce attention in the outlets.

My analysis indicates that cultural and political discourses generate different attention to Ukraine. These discourses are supported by different audiences, general public search was different from the news agenda. However, cultural appeal conflate Ukraine and the subject of the TV-show, as some individuals who searched for Chernobyl, ended up with "do I need a visa for Ukraine" request.

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