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#### European Philosophical Thought as a Methodological Foundation for the Study of Ukrainian Online Media in the Sphere of Public Procurement Transparency

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The article examines European philosophical and socio-communicative approaches that provide the theoretical foundation for studying transparency in public procurement in the context of Ukrainian online media activity. **The aim** of the article is to assess the applicability of a philosophical-methodological framework for interpreting the role of online media in Ukraine (as a factor in ensuring transparency in public procurement) by analyzing the concepts of publicity, power, communication, and social space as articulated by European philosophers. **The research methods** include an analysis of works by members of the Frankfurt School (such as Habermas, Marcuse), as well as contemporary European critical thinkers (including Foucault, Arendt, Žižek, Bourdieu, Lefebvre, Schutz, Berger, and Luckmann), who address the concepts of publicity, power, communicative action, social space, and critical cognition. These ideas enable the development of a methodological approach that, through the conceptualization of “measure” (as a philosophical category combining quantity and quality), facilitates an examination of how effectively Ukrainian online media fulfil their potential as a factor in ensuring transparency in public procurement. The review encompasses 13 sources, including monographs, classic philosophical works, articles, and open-access publications from 1964 to 2024. Empirical data from Ukrainian media organizations (such as Dozorro, IMI, and MDF) are used to illustrate specific media practices. **The findings** demonstrate that philosophical concepts of publicity and communication allow for interpreting online media not only as tools for information dissemination but also as integral components of the societal mechanism for public oversight, with a defined social function that shapes their role in ensuring the transparency of budgetary processes.

**Keywords:** public procurement, online media, transparency, philosophy of communication, Frankfurt School, publicity, social practice

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# Європейська філософська думка як методологічне підґрунтя дослідження українських онлайн-медіа у сфері прозорості публічних закупівель

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У статті оглянуто європейські філософські та соціально-комунікаційні підходи, які формулюють теоретичну основу для дослідження прозорості публічних закупівель в контексті діяльності онлайн-медіа в Україні. **Мета** статті – з’ясувати прідатність філософсько-методологічної бази для інтерпретації діяльності онлайн-медіа в Україні (як чинника забезпечення прозорості публічних закупівель) через аналіз концептів публічності, влади, комунікації та соціального простору у працях європейських філософів. **Методи** дослідження: аналіз праць представників Франкфуртської школи (Габермаса, Маркузе), а також філософів сучасної європейської критичної думки (Фуко, Арендт, Жижек, Бурдье, Лефевр, Шюц, Бергер і Лукман), у яких розглядаються концепти публічності, влади, комунікаційній дії, соціального простору та критичного пізнання. Ці ідеї уможливлюють розробку методологічного підходу, який дає змогу через концептуалізацію «міри» (як філософської категорії, що поєднує кількість і якість) дослідити, наскільки онлайн-медіа в Україні реалізують свій потенціал бути чинником прозорості публічних закупівель. Огляд охоплює 13 джерел: монографії, класичні філософські праці, статті, а також публікації у відкритому доступі за 1964–2024 рр. Допоміжну функцію в аргументації виконують емпіричні матеріали українських медійних організацій (зокрема Dozorro, IMI, MDF), які ілюструють конкретні аспекти медійної практики. У **результаті** показано, що філософські концепції публічності й комунікації дають змогу інтерпретувати онлайн-медіа не лише як інструмент інформування, а як складову частину суспільного механізму публічного контролю з чітко окресленою соціальною функцією, що визначає їх участь у забезпеченні прозорості бюджетних процесів.

**Ключові слова:** публічні закупівлі, онлайн-медіа, прозорість, філософія комунікації, Франкфуртська школа, публічність, соціальна практика

The functioning of online media as a factor in ensuring the transparency of public procurement requires not only empirical observation and quantitative content analysis but also theoretical reflection within the framework of the humanities. This issue gains particular relevance when transparency is viewed not merely as a technical or normative characteristic of access to information, but as a complex philosophical category emerging at the intersection of social interaction, power relations, communicative rationality, and cultural production.

Public procurement, as a sphere of government activity, functions not only as a system for resource allocation but also as a sphere of heightened societal attention, where media act as a social institution of oversight and accountability. The need for a literature review stems from the fact that existing studies on media in the context of public procurement predominantly focus on practical aspects – such as investigative journalism, access to public information, and the operation of anti-corruption platforms. However, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis that would allow for interpreting the activities of online media from a broader philosophical perspective – as a socio-

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communicative practice where the potential of transparency as an ethical and political category is either fulfilled or not.

The review of philosophical literature is intended to fill this gap by establishing a theoretical framework for the subsequent empirical analysis of Ukrainian online media. The attempt to conceptualize the role of Ukrainian online media as a factor in the transparency of public procurement has necessitated an engagement with foundational European philosophical and socio-communicative theories.

*The aim of the article* is to determine the suitability of a philosophical-methodological framework for interpreting the activities of online media in Ukraine (as a factor in ensuring transparency in public procurement) through an analysis of the concepts of publicity, power, communication, and social space in the works of European philosophers. This review seeks to systematize the conceptual approaches that form the theoretical foundation for analyzing the potential of media in ensuring transparency. It also proposes the conceptualization of the notion of “measure” (as a unity of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of a social phenomenon) to assess this potential. The objectives of this review are as follows:

- To formulate a methodological basis for analyzing media content, editorial practices, and interactions with institutions and audiences;
- To explore how the concepts of publicity, transparency, power, communication, knowledge, and space are interpreted in philosophy and social theory;
- To identify conceptual frameworks that enable an assessment of whether online media are capable of serving as a factor of transparency in the sphere of public procurement.

In this context, the works of key philosophers – such as Habermas, Foucault, Arendt, Marcuse, Žižek, Bourdieu, Lefebvre, Schutz, Berger, and Luckmann – are examined to determine how their ideas can be applied to interpreting the functioning of online media as a complex social institution. The selection of philosophical sources underpinning this review is not arbitrary. All the referenced thinkers address the issues of publicity, knowledge, power, social space, and communication as defining factors in the organization of modern society. These concepts provide a foundation for a philosophical understanding of the activities of online media in the context of public procurement transparency.

Habermas (1991) conceptualizes the public sphere as an environment where public opinion is formed through communicative action, offering a framework to understand how media can serve as an arena for public oversight of power, which is crucial for developing a methodology for their interpretation.

Marcuse (1964), along with other representatives of the Frankfurt School, critiques the mechanisms of ideological production in mass culture, enabling an examination of the limitations of online media autonomy in the context of the commercialization of the information space, thus accounting for these constraints in the methodological evaluation of their activities.

Foucault (1971) introduces the concept of discourse as a form of power-knowledge, providing a tool to analyze how public procurement is articulated in the media and which meanings dominate in this discourse, thereby offering an approach to interpreting media content.

Arendt (1967) views political action and publicity as a space of emergence, which helps assess the extent to which media create conditions for public participation in political life – an essential aspect of their role as a factor in transparency.

Bourdieu (1996) focuses on journalism as a field with its own rules and capitals, enabling an analysis of media editorial practices as forms of institutionalized struggle for influence, thus providing a methodological framework for studying media institutions.

Lefebvre (1991) introduces the concept of social space as a product of configurations of power and materiality, allowing us to conceptualize online media as a space of structured interaction between institutions and audiences, which impacts their capacity to ensure transparency.



Žižek (2006) critiques transparency as an ideological demand of late capitalism, allowing for a nuanced understanding that avoids oversimplified notions of “openness” as an unequivocal value and highlights contradictions in the realization of transparency, thereby enriching the research methodology.

Schutz (1964), alongside Berger and Luckmann (1966), develops an approach to communication as the social construction of reality, providing a methodological basis for analyzing how media shape perceptions of public procurement as either a public good or, conversely, a tool for manipulation. All the referenced authors represent key directions in critical philosophy, phenomenology, and social theory, offering a conceptual toolkit for analyzing online media as a space where the public function of journalism is realized. This review not only confirms the existence of a philosophical foundation for further research but also outlines methodological guidelines for analyzing the extent to which media fulfill their societal role in ensuring transparency in public procurement in Ukraine.

## Method

The literature review presented in this article establishes a philosophical-methodological foundation for analyzing online media as a factor in ensuring the transparency of public procurement in Ukraine. The focus is not merely on compiling a list of sources but on constructing a cohesive corpus of philosophical and socio-communicative approaches that enable the interpretation of transparency as a dynamic, contextually determined social practice. The review encompasses 13 sources, including classic monographs, scholarly works, lectures, and contemporary analytical materials from Ukrainian media organizations (Dozorro, IMI, MDF), all of which are publicly accessible. These sources were selected not as a representative sample of all philosophical thought on communication but as a conceptually rich foundation for analyzing the issue under study.

The corpus of sources is not exhaustive but is deliberately limited and structured. Its methodological sufficiency lies in the fact that all selected texts represent critical reflections on publicity, communication, power, knowledge, social space, and the institutional functioning of media. These texts enable the development of a conceptual framework for analyzing the category of “factor” in relation to how effectively online media fulfill their societal role in overseeing public finances. This targeted selection does not claim comprehensiveness but ensures the necessary theoretical focus: it allows concentration on concepts directly relevant to analyzing online media as a factor of transparency within the sphere of public procurement. Chronologically, the review spans from 1964 to 2024. The earlier boundary is set by the publication of Herbert Marcuse’s work (Marcuse, 1964), which was one of the first efforts to critically analyze mass culture, one-dimensional thinking, and the information environment as a form of power. Unlike the works of Immanuel Kant (representing classical German idealism) or Edmund Husserl (representing phenomenology), which establish the epistemological foundation of European philosophy, the texts of the Frankfurt School (Marcuse, 1964; Habermas, 1991) are directed toward the social realities of the 20th and 21st centuries, with their media, capitalism, ideology, and technology. The focus on philosophical concepts that shed light on contemporary mechanisms of communication enables an analytical understanding of the functioning of online media as an institution of public oversight and accountability.

The search for sources was conducted through a combination of academic databases and open-access knowledge platforms. The primary platforms included Google Scholar, Internet Archive, SpringerLink, JSTOR, MIT Press, ResearchGate, and the official websites of analytical centers (Dozorro, MDF, IMI). The search strategies employed were twofold.

On the one hand, name-based queries were used, such as “Habermas public sphere,” “Foucault discourse,” and “Žižek transparency criticism,” which allowed to quickly identify the core of philosophical argumentation. Concurrently, a categorical strategy was employed based on keywords relevant to the research topic: “public procurement,” “online media,” “transparency,” “publicity,”



“social practice,” “critical theory,” “media oversight,” “factor,” and “philosophy of communication.” These queries were applied in both Ukrainian and English-language information spaces, allowing for an examination of local discourse specifics while engaging with the global academic context.

The selection of results was guided by several criteria: first, the source’s alignment with the conceptual framework developed in this study (e.g., whether publicity is treated as a process rather than a state); second, the degree of scholarly legitimacy of the source (preference was given to texts published by academic publishers, university archives, or reputable professional platforms); and third, conceptual relevance – whether the source offers ideas that can be methodologically integrated into the analysis of online media in the context of public procurement.

Artificial intelligence (GPT-4) was used as a supplementary tool to refine bibliographic details, verify the relevance of sources, and format the bibliography in APA style. For translating quotes from English and other foreign-language sources into Ukrainian, the DeepL machine translation tool was employed, followed by mandatory authorial editing and cross-checking with the original to ensure accuracy in conveying meaning. However, challenges arose during the search and use of AI tools: for instance, an initial reference to Slavoj Žižek’s “The Parallax View” proved to be invalid, though the text was later located in another reliable source via Google Scholar. This underscores the need for critical evaluation of AI-generated results (including machine translations) and the mandatory manual verification of each bibliographic element and translation accuracy. Thus, AI was integrated not as a substitute for research but as a tool for refining, processing textual information, and accelerating certain technical processes within the meta-search.

Ultimately, the method for selecting and analytically processing sources is grounded in principles of academic integrity, conceptual relevance, and theoretical depth. It enables the creation of not only a bibliographic foundation for the review but also a philosophical framework for the study, in which each author, concept, and source plays a functional role in understanding how online media in Ukraine can serve as a factor of the transparency of public procurement and to what “measure” this potential is realized.

## Results and Discussions

The conducted literature review enables the formulation of key conceptual guidelines necessary for a philosophical understanding of the role of online media in ensuring the transparency of public procurement. The examined philosophical approaches not only provide a general framework but also establish an analytical apparatus that allows us to define the concept of “factor” as a philosophical category relevant to the context of Ukrainian online media, laying the groundwork for assessing the “measure” of their impact.

The content and analytical function of the key ideas that form the methodological foundation of this study are reviewed (*an overview of these ideas, the philosophers who advocated them, and their proposed applications to the analysis of online media are included in the Appendix*).

Jürgen Habermas, in his monograph “The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere” (Habermas, 1989), conceptualizes the public sphere as a special space where public opinion is formed through rational communication among independent citizens. His theory provides a methodological tool for analyzing media as a potential arena for such discourse. He emphasizes that this space has undergone profound historical changes: the influence of the market, politics, and mass culture has altered the conditions under which public discussion occurs. These changes have significantly impacted the functioning of the press, a key element of the public sphere. He states, “From mere institutions for the publication of news, newspapers also became bearers and leaders of public opinion, as well as instruments in the arsenal of party politics. For the internal organization of the newspaper enterprise, this resulted in the emergence of a new function between the collection and publication of news – the editorial function. For the publisher, it meant a shift from



being a news merchant to a dealer in public opinion" (Habermas, 1989, p. 182). This transition illustrates the loss of the media's original function of pure information dissemination. In such transformed conditions, maintaining the potential for rational discourse becomes increasingly challenging. Consequently, creating and sustaining meaningful, reasoned discussions on socially significant topics becomes a complex process requiring ever greater effort. This transformation also affects the potential role of online media (as successors to the press) in the public sphere. On the one hand, they remain significant players in shaping societal perceptions of transparency. On the other hand, their ability to act as a factor in transparency is not guaranteed and depends on a range of conditions: access to editorial resources, internal professional culture, regulatory frameworks, and the level of media literacy of audiences. In this context, transparency emerges not as a predetermined quality but as a communicative process in which media can serve as a factor – provided their content, editorial practices, and operational contexts genuinely foster the formation of public oversight.

This perspective on media as an institution that constructs social reality necessitates engagement with the ideas of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, whose works provide a methodological foundation for understanding the perception of media messages. In "The Social Construction of Reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), they argue that societal knowledge is formed through repeated actions, social practices, and linguistic acts, which stabilize perceptions of the world. They state that "the reality of everyday life continues to appear as an intersubjective world, a world I share with others," adding, "we share a common sense of its reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 37). This suggests that "reality" in society is the result of a collective interpretive process in which language and the form of information presentation play a decisive role. Within the framework of this study, where online media are examined as a factor of the transparency of public procurement, this implies that the significance of the topic depends not only on its presence in news content but also on how it is presented: the depth, consistency, attention to context, and implications. Superficial, inconsistent, or passive presentations can devalue a topic, even if it holds genuine societal importance, as they fail to form a stable perception of its significance in the audience's consciousness.

Alfred Schütz, in his work "The Well-Informed Citizen" (Schütz, 1964), highlights that media shape the structures of everyday knowledge, which either limit or expand citizens' ability to participate in societal life. His concept serves as a methodological tool for assessing how media influence public awareness. He emphasizes that "knowledge is socially distributed, and the mechanism of this distribution can be made the subject of a sociological discipline," further noting the intersubjective nature of knowledge, which is "transmitted to us as a pre-organized stock of problems with means for their solution, procedural norms, etc." (Schütz, 1964, p. 121). In this sense, transparency is not just access to information but a construction of significance that depends on genre, agenda, rhetorical strategies, and trust in the source. It shapes social knowledge that either empowers individuals to participate in societal processes or, conversely, diminishes their roles in political life.

Pierre Bourdieu, in his work "On Television" (Bourdieu, 1998), argues that information in the media is never completely neutral – its selection and presentation depend on the journalist's position within the field of power, as well as the structure of symbolic, economic, and social capitals that shape editorial decisions and audience expectations. His field theory provides a methodological tool for analyzing institutional factors that influence the media. As he notes, "If I want to know what a given journalist is going to say or write, or will find obvious or unthinkable, normal or negligible, I must know the position the journalist occupies in this space. I also need to know the specific power of the media outlet in question" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 41).

In the context of Ukrainian online media, this implies that coverage of public procurement is neither uniform nor universal: it is shaped by resources, political contexts, and financial dependencies. This is supported by empirical data: in 2023, the number of criminal proceedings in the



sphere of public procurement rose to 779 (compared to 343 in 2021), yet only 41 of them – 5% – were initiated based on appeals from the monitoring online media outlet DOZORRO (Pylypenko & Nesterov, 2024). At the same time, according to a study by the Media Development Foundation, independent local media show only marginal increases in attention to analytical topics regarding budgetary expenditures, despite audience interest in such content (Media Development Foundation, 2024). Meanwhile, 95% of these outlets operate on grant funding, which secures them greater editorial autonomy to cover sensitive topics. Conversely, regional media that do not rely on donor funding are often financially tied to local authorities, who are the primary procurers in public procurement. As evidenced by the IMI's study "Covert Advertising in Regional Media", 60% of political covert advertising (referred to as "dzhynsa" in Ukrainian media discourse) in regional media is commissioned by local authorities. This creates a clear conflict of interest and potentially hinders critical reporting of procurement-related topics (Institute of Mass Information, 2024).

Thus, the media's treatment of public procurement is neither inherent nor guaranteed; its representation varies according to the political, economic, and editorial contexts.

Transparency, in this sense, should be regarded not just as access to a certain array of information but as the incorporation of the topic into socially significant discourses that media are capable of sustaining, reproducing, deepening, and reiterating. In his lecture "L'ordre du discours" (Foucault, 1971), Michel Foucault draws attention to the inequalities among discourses that exist in any society: not all topics have an equal opportunity to be heard, preserved, reiterated, and maintained in circulation. His concept of discourse as power-knowledge is key to the methodology for analyzing how media shape (or fail to shape) the public significance of topics. Some statements vanish without a trace, while others gain stability and further development. As Foucault notes, "In societies, there is very often a certain gap between discourses: those that are 'uttered' throughout the days and those that pass along with the very act of their utterance; and discourses [...] that still have to be uttered" (Foucault, 1971, p. 10). This implies that the mere mention of public procurement in the media does not guarantee its public significance: for the topic to gain weight, it must be incorporated into an ongoing discursive circulation, meaning it must have the opportunity to be continued, interpreted, and reiterated in new contexts.

This approach allows us to view transparency not as a technical category but as a discursive one, linked to power, legitimacy, and long-term presence in the information field. Hannah Arendt, in her article "Truth and Politics," writes: "What is at stake is not truth as such, but factual reality itself, and this is indeed a political problem of the first order. And since factual truth, though less open to controversy than philosophical truth and obviously accessible to everyone, often meets a similar fate when brought into the public realm – opposed not by lies or deliberate falsifications but by opinion – perhaps it is worth raising again the old, supposedly outdated question of the antagonism between truth and opinion" (Arendt, 1967, p. 237). Her reflections on publicity and political action help us methodologically conceptualize how media can (or cannot) create a space for the emergence of factual truth. In this sense, media that consistently support the topic of public procurement serve not only as channels for data dissemination but also as institutions that endow the public topic with factual stability, protecting it from being overshadowed by opinion. They provide a space for repeatability and recognition, without which transparency remains episodic rather than a structural quality of the information environment. Thus, the issue concerns not merely the functional presence of the topic in news but its capacity to become a resilient part of societal reality – despite competing interpretations, fragmented attention, and political risks. Herein lies the paradox of contemporary publicity, where the significance of facts is determined not solely by their objective presence but by their ability to be recognized, reiterated, and accepted as meaningful.

This gap between the visible and the evident can be conceptualized through the notion of parallax, which Slavoj Žižek identifies as an analytical optic (Žižek, 2006). His approach provides



a methodological tool for analyzing the contradictory aspects of transparency. “The standard definition of parallax: the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background) caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight. The philosophical twist to be added, of course, is that the observed difference is not simply ‘subjective,’ due to the fact that the same object which exists ‘out there’ is seen from two different stances, or points of view” (Žižek, 2006, p. 17). In the context of media representations of public procurement, this means that transparency is not a fixed characteristic; rather, it emerges from the convergence of conflicting viewpoints: on the one hand, there are normative expectations regarding the role of media in accountability and participation; on the other, there are specific editorial decisions, political constraints, and market conditions. The concept of parallax allows us not just to acknowledge the differences between these perspectives but also to analyze them as objects of investigation. As Žižek asserts, “the notion of the parallax gap, far from posing an irreducible obstacle to dialectics, provides the key that allows us to discern its subversive core” (Žižek, 2006, p. 4). In this way, the instability between different visions creates opportunities for critical analysis—in our case, the study of how transparency arises from the interplay of institutional design, editorial strategy, and audience perception.

This logically leads us to the next part of the review—the critique of one-dimensionality, as developed by Herbert Marcuse. In his work “One-Dimensional Man” (Marcuse, 1964), Marcuse highlights that under conditions of mass consumption and the pervasive presence of information technologies, society gradually loses its capacity for critical thinking. His ideas are methodologically valuable for analyzing how media can either facilitate or hinder the critical reception of information. People increasingly perceive reality as a given, without questioning its underlying foundations: “Thus emerges a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 17). This phenomenon is particularly relevant to media, which, instead of providing analysis and investigation, increasingly limit themselves to reproducing “ready-made” content or presenting facts without context. As Marcuse notes, in these situations, mass communication media reduce even philosophy, religion, and art to a common denominator—namely, the commodity form: “The music of the soul is also the music of salesmanship. Exchange value, not truth value, is what counts” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 21). As a result, public procurement, despite being a socially significant topic, may remain “invisible” to the audience, even if information about it is formally available. Without context, interpretation, and an emphasis on societal significance, data lack the potential to generate critical reflection. In this regard, Marcuse’s observation that “intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 12) resonates deeply. This perspective encourages us to view transparency not as access to information but also as a social practice that requires critical participation from the media and the ability to challenge established discursive frameworks.

It is also important to consider the specific conditions under which editorial offices operate, including political, regional, and institutional factors. After all, the ability of the media to address public procurement as a societal problem depends not only on internal decisions but also on the broader social space, which, according to Henri Lefebvre, is self-constructed and politically determined. In this context, the concept of social space, developed by Henri Lefebvre, becomes particularly significant. In his work “The Production of Space” (Lefebvre, 1991), he argues that space is not merely a backdrop for social processes but is a product of the struggle for meaning, resources, and power. His theory of the production of space provides a methodological foundation for analyzing how spatial factors influence media activities. In this view, space serves not only as a physical environment but also as a site of symbolic influence, where knowledge, discourses, and media are formed and operate. As the researcher notes, “the transparency of space equates knowledge, information and communication” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 29), suggesting that the spatial



organization in society affects the accessibility and perception of what is considered “transparent” in the public sphere. This approach allows for a renewed perspective on the role of media in the regional dimension: online media do not simply report on procurement; they operate within a specific space that either facilitates or constrains their activity.

Given the philosophical and sociological foundations of transparency as a practice sensitive to specific contexts, it becomes crucial to account for local social conditions. This includes factors such as the level of editorial autonomy, the presence of civic initiatives, and access to open data for journalists and the public. Understanding these factors provides a basis for further analysis of media content in a macro-regional context, allowing us to trace dependencies between social space and the opportunities for media to fulfill their oversight role in the sphere of public finances.

## Conclusions

The conducted literature review has deepened our understanding of how the concepts, specifically, transparency, publicity, power, communication, knowledge, and social space are interpreted in contemporary European philosophical thought. By analyzing the works of Habermas, Foucault, Marcuse, Bourdieu, Arendt, Žižek, Lefebvre, Berger, Luckmann, and Schutz, we find that transparency emerges not as a technical characteristic or institutional condition but as a complex social construct, intricately tied to communicative practices, institutional constraints, power interactions, and audience trust.

Building on this theoretical foundation, we have developed conceptual frameworks to analyze online media as a potential factor of ensuring transparency in the sphere of public procurement. The referenced authors not only outline how public knowledge and the societal visibility of government processes are formed but also highlight the conditions under which media are capable (or incapable) of fulfilling their oversight function. Consequently, transparency in media is not guaranteed but depends on contextual factors: editorial strategies, the level of autonomy, access to data, and societal expectations regarding publicity.

These concepts also lay the groundwork for developing a methodological approach applicable to further empirical analysis. This approach entails not only identifying mentions of public procurement but also assessing the extent to which online media fulfill their societal function, i.e., determining the “measure” of their impact. This involves assessing the quality, depth, consistency, and systematic nature of content related to public expenditures. In this way, the review not only establishes theoretical foundations but also provides a clear philosophical basis for analyzing how effectively online media operate as mechanisms of democratic oversight in the public sphere and the “measure” of their effectiveness as a factor of transparency.

**Authors' contribution.** Viktoriya Shevchenko was responsible for the methodology and overall supervision of the study, while Ihor Darmostuk conducted the research, interpreted the results, and prepared the manuscript.

**Declaration of Generative Artificial Intelligence and Technologies Using Artificial Intelligence in the Writing Process.** All results presented in this article are original and obtained without the use of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence was not used to create, edit or write the text of this article. At the same time, individual AI-based tools, in particular GPT-4 and DeepL, were used as auxiliary tools – exclusively for clarifying bibliographic data, forming a bibliography in APA format and preliminary translation of citations with subsequent author editing. Each element was carefully checked manually. Information on the use of these tools is provided in the “Method” section. The authors bear full responsibility for the content and integrity of the published materials.



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## Appendix

### Overview of Key Philosophical Concepts and Their Applications

Philosopher (The main work discussed in the article)	Key concept(s)	Application to online media analysis and public procurement transparency (as interpreted in the article)
Jürgen Habermas ( <i>The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere</i> )	Public sphere, communicative action, transformation of the public sphere.	Online media as a potential arena for rational discourse and the formation of public opinion on public procurement. Transparency is viewed as a communicative



		<p>process. The ability of the media to be a factor of transparency depends on editorial resources, professional culture, regulatory frameworks, and the media literacy of the audience.</p>
Peter Berger, Thomas Lukeman ( <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> )	Social construction of reality, intersubjective world, everyday knowledge.	The significance of the topic of public procurement in the media depends not only on its presence but also on the quality of its presentation (depth, consistency, context, and consequences). A superficial or unsystematic presentation can devalue a socially important topic, preventing a stable understanding of its significance.
Alfred Schutz ( <i>The Well-Informed Citizen</i> )	Social Distribution of Knowledge, Structures of Everyday Knowledge, The Well-Informed Citizen.	Media shape the everyday knowledge of the audience and influence their awareness and ability to participate in public life. Transparency is perceived as a construction of meaning that depends on media genres, agendas, rhetoric, and trust in the source.
Pierre Bourdieu ( <i>On Television</i> )	Field theory (journalistic field), habitus, capitals (symbolic, economic, social).	Online media coverage of public procurement is neither neutral nor universal; it is determined by the journalist's position within the field, media resources, political contexts, and financial dependencies. Conflicts of interest (e.g., dependence of regional media on local authorities) can hinder critical reporting.
Michel Foucault ( <i>L'ordre du discours</i> )	Order of discourse, power-knowledge, inequality of discourses, practices of exclusion.	For the topic of public procurement to gain societal importance, it must be consistently integrated into media discourse, allowing for ongoing exploration and interpretation. Transparency is viewed as a discursive category linked to power, legitimacy, and a long-term presence in the information field.
Hannah Arendt ( <i>Truth and Politics</i> )	Factual truth vs. opinion, publicity as a space for emergence, political action.	Online media can create a space for the emergence of factual truth about public procurement, giving the topic factual stability and protecting it from being overshadowed



		by subjective opinions. This ensures repeatability and recognition of the topic, establishing transparency as a structural quality of the information environment.
Slavoj Žižek ( <i>The Parallax View</i> )	Parallax, parallax gap.	Transparency is not a stable characteristic but emerges from the convergence of conflicting points of view (normative expectations about media roles vs. editorial realities, political constraints, and market conditions). This instability and the gap between perspectives serve as an object of critical analysis.
Herbert Marcuse ( <i>One-Dimensional Man</i> )	One-dimensional man, one-dimensional thinking, critique of mass communication, commodity form.	Contemporary media can either facilitate or hinder critical perception of information about public procurement. There is a risk of reducing significant topics to a commodity form, to a superficial presentation without contextualization. Transparency requires critical media engagement and the ability to challenge established discursive frameworks.
Henri Lefebvre ( <i>The Production of Space</i> )	The social production of space, space as a social construct.	Social, political, and economic spaces (particularly at the regional level) affect the operations of online media and their ability to ensure transparency. Local conditions (editorial autonomy, civic initiatives, access to data) determine the media's ability to exercise oversight.

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