Personality and media : shaping modern war narratives

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes Shaping Modern Narratives during the Russian-Ukrainian war, asserting that modern media often use enemy images that can influence event perception and public opinion formation, while also serving as a powerful tool for manipulating public opinion and mobilizing support. It is noted that during the war, communication is often accompanied by high emotional intensity - fear and hatred, despair and hope intertwine in people's interactions, creating complex emotional patterns.

It is emphasized that in the face of modern warfare, journalists play an important role in providing information about future conflicts, and their task is to convey objective and accurate data about the political situation, escalation between countries, and potential threats to the audience. Journalists must be prepared to take risks, but at the same time, remain true to their professional principles; their work helps society understand complex events and the impact of war on the world. It is important to support the independence of journalism and respect those who risk their lives to bring us the truth about war, as journalism is a tool that can help people learn the truth about war, protect human rights, and make the world more just.

Journalism plays an important role in the modern world, serving as a source of information, a tool for power control, and a platform for dialogue. In the context of modern wars, the role of journalism multiplies, as journalists must be prepared for new challenges and work to ensure that society receives accurate and objective information. Journalism before a war can help prevent conflicts if it actively seeks peaceful solutions. The study of communication strategies during wartime helps to understand how public sentiments are formed and change, which is particularly important for politicians, military personnel, and sociologists.

KEYWORDS: Shaping Modern War Narratives, personality, media, communication strategies, manipulating public opinion

Formulation of the problem. The formation of contemporary narratives during the Russian-Ukrainian war is an important topic for research—modern media often use enemy images that can influence the perception of events and the formation of public opinion. For example, research shows that Russian media often use terms and images that emphasize Ukraine's "aggression" and "hostility" – this may include the use of words like "nationalists" or "Banderites" to describe Ukrainian forces, while Ukrainian media may use images of "occupiers" and "terrorists" to describe Russian troops. These communicative reflections can cause an aberration of public opinion and sustain enmity between nations, while it is particularly important to be aware of how media can shape our perceptions and how we can critically approach the information we receive (Udupa , 2020).

On June 11, 2024, the 18th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI), prepared by the international analytical center Institute for Economics and Peace, was presented in London, showing that the world is at a crossroads. Without coordinated efforts, there is a risk of a surge in serious conflicts. Peacefulness in 97 countries deteriorated more than in any year since the Global Peace Index was created in 2008. Conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine were the main causes of the global decline in peacefulness, as the number of battle-related deaths reached 162,000 in 2023.

The global economic impact of violence increased to $19.1 trillion in 2023, accounting for 13.5% of the world's GDP. Militarization recorded the largest annual deterioration since the establishment of the GPI, with 108 countries becoming more militarized. 110 million people are refugees or internally displaced persons due to violent conflict, and 16 countries are currently hosting over half a million refugees. There are currently 56 conflicts, the highest number since World War II. They have become more international, with 92 countries involved in conflicts beyond their borders, the highest number since the GPI was established. The increase in the number of minor conflicts raises the likelihood of more serious conflicts in the future. For example, in 2019, Ethiopia, Ukraine, and the Gaza Strip were identified as minor conflicts (Global Peace, 2024).

In 2024, the world witnessed a staggering surge in conflicts. It is estimated that in 2024, at least 233,000 people died in conflicts. The number of people who died in conflicts in 2024 increased by 30 percent compared to the previous year: from 179,099 deaths in 2023 to 233,597 in 2024. The war in Ukraine was the deadliest in 2024: 67,000 deaths were recorded, while 35,000 deaths were recorded in the Palestinian territories of Gaza and the West Bank (Taylor, 2024).

For the first time since World War II, a full-scale conventional war has been ongoing in Europe for over 2.5 years, involving all types of weapons except nuclear ones. In particular, Russia is using chemical weapons against the Ukrainian Defense Forces. For the first time in human history, Russia has occupied a nuclear power plant in the Ukrainian city of Enerhodar, and since October 2022, it has carried out over 1000 strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities, putting other Ukrainian nuclear power plants at risk of accidents. For the first time in human history, Russian military are hunting civilians in frontline areas of Ukraine using FPV drones.

Naturally, all these wars have different causes, but the 21st century has clearly demonstrated the role of mass media both in inciting military events and in seeking their resolution. It is precisely in the 21st century that the so-called hybrid warfare emerges, takes shape, and is implemented. It is hybrid in part because the media play a significant role in it – in this sense, the journalist becomes not just someone

who attempts to objectively cover military conflicts and wars, but a direct participant in the military confrontation – according to the well-known Ukrainian proverb, "The pen is mightier than the sword." In addition to the above, it is important to note that journalism is not just a profession, but also a right to freedom of speech and access to information, which are among the fundamental and essential human rights, and in the context of modern wars, this right becomes even more important. It is also important to consider that journalists are not just people who tell the story – they are also its witnesses and play an undeniable role in documenting events (Torok ,2024).

The creation of an enemy image has deep historical roots: in different eras and cultures, leaders and media have used this technique to mobilize the population and strengthen their power: in ancient times, neighbors were declared barbarians, in the Middle Ages – heretics and witches, in the 20th century – political opponents and ideological adversaries. The media often choose and emphasize those facts that confirm their point of view and help create a negative image of the enemy – this may include ignoring positive aspects or distorting real events. The use of vivid and emotionally charged words and images helps to enhance the negative perception of the enemy: words such as "terrorists," "aggressors," or "barbarians" evoke strong emotional reactions in the audience and contribute to the formation of the enemy's image. The image of the enemy is present in various media formats, including news publications, television, cinema, literature, and social networks, and each of these formats has its own characteristics and ways of presenting the image of the enemy (Black , 2021).

Television actively uses visual techniques to create the image of the enemy: caricatures, documentaries, and news reports play an important role in shaping the negative perception of the opponent, and television programs often use dramatic effects and emotionally charged images to enhance their impact on the viewer. Cinema and literature also contribute to the creation of the enemy's image: films and books can portray the enemy as a villain or antagonist, whose actions and motives evoke condemnation and hatred in the audience—these works of art help shape cultural and social stereotypes about enemies (Vuorinen, 2012).

Social networks have become a tool for creating and spreading the image of the enemy, as users actively share information—fear and hatred, despair and hope intertwine in people's communication, creating complex emotional patterns. With the development of digital technologies and social networks, communication during wartime has taken on a new character—they allow for the instant dissemination of information, organizing actions and demonstrations, as well as expressing public opinion; however, they also become a platform for spreading propaganda, which intensifies communicative reflections. In wartime, interpersonal communication undergoes significant changes—people begin to value personal contacts and communication with loved ones more, yet military conflicts can also destroy social bonds, as users actively share information, photos, and videos that support or enhance the negative perception of the opponent. Virtual communities and groups can form around a common goal—the fight against the enemy (Marín, 2024).

110 million people are refugees or internally displaced persons due to violent conflict, and 16 countries are currently hosting over half a million refugees. There are currently 56 conflicts, the highest number since World War II. They have become more international, with 92 countries involved in conflicts beyond their borders, the highest number since the GPI was established. The increase in the number of

minor conflicts raises the likelihood of more serious conflicts in the future. For example, in 2019, Ethiopia, Ukraine, and the Gaza Strip were identified as minor conflicts (Global Peace, 2024).

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Many works have been dedicated to the study of the contextual relationship between war and media, often emphasizing the functional use of media for the purpose of war propaganda. For example, J. Kril and H. Lasswell described how media channels were used by the Allies during World War I. H. S. Joquet, W. O'Donnell, and F. Taylor researched the manipulative potential of media during the era of Nazi Germany. E. des Forges, M. Price, and M. Thompson analyzed media abuses during the Rwandan and Yugoslav civil wars. The features of media use in hybrid wars have been highlighted in numerous publications by scholars, including H. Z. Parvar and K. Payne, V. Bratik and H. Pocheptsov, V. Luts and V. Horbulin, V. Gulai and S. Dubov, B. Parakhonsky and H. Yavorska, O. Yizhak and Yu. Merzlyuk, S. Plokhiy and M. Bouromensky, and others.

The purpose of the article.

The purpose of the article is to study the Shaping Modern War Narratives and the image of the enemy in modern media.

Presentation of the main material.

The creation of an enemy image has deep historical roots: in different eras and cultures, leaders and media have used this technique to mobilize the population and strengthen their power: in ancient times, neighbors were declared barbarians, in the Middle Ages — heretics and witches, in the 20th century — political opponents and ideological adversaries. The media often choose and emphasize those facts that confirm their point of view and help create a negative image of the enemy — this may include ignoring positive aspects or distorting real events. The use of vivid and emotionally charged words and images helps to strengthen.

The image of the enemy in modern media during wartime is a powerful tool for manipulating public opinion and mobilizing support – let us present several striking facts that illustrate how this image is formed and used: selective presentation of information and emotionally charged words and images, visual techniques and data falsification, social media as a weapon and psychological influence, the use of memes and humor, mobilization through digital platforms and emotional loading, the evolution of media and the speed of information dissemination, fake news, disinformation, and the "echo chamber" effect. These facts underscore the importance of critically approaching information, analyzing sources, and understanding the motives of those behind media messages—only in this way can one resist manipulation and form an objective perception of what is happening (Maheo, 2020).

During wartime, communication is often accompanied by high emotional intensity—fear and hatred, despair and hope intertwine in people's interactions, creating complex emotional patterns. With the development of digital technologies and social networks, communication during the war has taken on a new character—social networks allow for the instant dissemination of information, the organization of events and demonstrations, as well as the expression of public opinion; however, they also become a platform for spreading propaganda, which intensifies communicative reflections. In the context of war, interpersonal communication undergoes significant changes – people begin to value personal contacts

and communication with loved ones more, and seek support and empathy within their circle of friends and family ("Social Media", 2024;Sugihartono , 2024)

Communicative reflections during wartime include mechanisms of psychological defense, and people use an arsenal of strategies to cope with the stress caused by war—this may include rationalization and denial, projection, and other mechanisms that help maintain psychological balance. Understanding these reflections helps to gain a deeper awareness of the impact of military conflicts on public consciousness and interpersonal relationships, as well as to find ways to improve communication and overcome barriers caused by war. Fear and hatred are among the most powerful emotions that influence communication during war: fear for one's life and the lives of loved ones drives people to seek information and support, which can increase dependence on media and official sources of information, while hatred for the enemy, fueled by propaganda and media, contributes to the intensification of aggressive sentiments and rhetoric. Despair and hope are opposite emotions that also affect communication: despair can lead to apathy and a loss of interest in communication, while hope promotes mobilization and active seeking of support. Communication strategies in wartime are often aimed at maintaining hope and strengthening the spirit of resistance ("Communication", 2020).

Communication in such conditions is often aimed at creating an image of the enemy, justifying military actions, and strengthening national identity. Through media and official channels, information is presented in a way that enhances patriotic sentiments and justifies aggression. With the development of digital technologies and social networks, communication during wartime has taken on a new character—generally speaking, social networks play an important role in wartime communication, providing a platform for sharing information and opinions, allowing citizens to participate in the information space, share their experiences, and mobilize for support or protest. Rationalization involves seeking logical explanations and justifications for what is happening, while denial and projection are other important mechanisms of psychological defense: denial allows ignoring unpleasant and traumatic aspects of reality, and projection involves attributing one's own negative emotions and qualities to other people or groups. Maintaining the image of the enemy allows directing public attention to an external threat, distracting it from internal problems and uniting the population around a common goal.

Focusing on external threats and the image of the enemy distracts attention from internal problems and conflicts, hindering constructive dialogue and the search for solutions, as society's resources and attention are directed towards fighting the external enemy. It is important to critically approach information, analyze sources, and understand the motives of those behind media messages, as only in this way can an objective perception of the current situation be formed. The Russian-Ukrainian war has become a catalyst for deep changes in the communicative practices of both countries—media on both sides actively create and maintain images of the enemy: in the Russian press, Ukrainians are depicted as fascists and radicals, while Ukrainian media portray Russians as aggressors and occupiers. Propaganda plays a key role in shaping public opinion, dividing people into "us" and "them," and social networks have become a platform for the instant spread of information and disinformation, creating an atmosphere of distrust and fear.

In times of war, the information space becomes a battleground for the minds and hearts of people— social networks play an important role in organizing events and demonstrations. Hostile rhetoric

intensifies aggressive sentiments in society, while disinformation undermines trust in official sources of information. Information warfare is becoming an integral part of military conflict, people seek information that confirms their beliefs and views, and political leaders use the media to strengthen their power, while patriotism and nationalism are heightened during the war (Lahmann , 2020).

War intensifies social tension, and communication strategies are aimed at maintaining psychological balance. Patriotic sentiments are heightened in conditions of military conflict, and the image of the enemy helps mobilize the population for struggle. Caricatures and posters are used to demonize the opponent, and political leaders use media to justify their actions—Ukrainians are often depicted as fascists, radicals, and extremists in Russian media, which evokes strong negative emotions in the audience. Ukrainian media, in turn, portray Russians as aggressors, occupiers, and bearers of hostile ideology. Media focus on facts that support their viewpoint, ignoring or distorting other aspects. Emotionally charged words and phrases, such as "terrorists," "aggressors," or "fascists," enhance the negative perception of the opponent. Visual images, such as caricatures and photographs, play an important role in forming memorable and grotesque images of the enemy.

The image of the enemy helps divert attention from internal problems and consolidate society around an external threat, strengthening patriotic sentiments and reinforcing national identity. Information warfare becomes an integral part of military conflict, media manipulation is used to create desired images and perceptions, justifying military actions and violence. Ukrainophobia, as a phenomenon of social life, has deep historical roots and is often used for political and propaganda purposes. It has a long history that goes back to periods when Ukrainian culture and identity were subjected to repression and marginalization. During the Soviet era, the Ukrainian language and culture were often suppressed, and any manifestations of national identity were perceived as a threat to the unity of the state (Ononiwu, 2023).

Ukrainophobia can create distrust between different groups – this can lead to discrimination and violence against Ukrainians, as well as hinder constructive dialogue and the search for solutions. Modern warfare has an informational component, where all these processes are most clearly manifested today. From the perspective of individual propagandists, this activity aimed at devaluing humanity is carried out to the fullest extent – fear and hatred, despair and hope intertwine in people's communication, creating complex emotional patterns. With the development of digital technologies and social networks, communication during the war has taken on a new character—social networks allow for the instant dissemination of information, the organization of events and demonstrations, as well as the expression of public opinion; however, they also become a platform for the spread of propaganda, which intensifies communicative reflections. The sacralization of the Russian people and their command is carried out by asserting that the Russian people are heralds, saviors of the world, and guardians of traditional values, and that if there is Putin, there is Russia (Plokhy , 2023).

In the modern information war, the demonization of the enemy is particularly pronounced in Russian propaganda: enemies are depicted as soulless and cruel beings that threaten the security and well-being of the country. This allows for justifying aggressive actions and mobilizing the population to fight against an external threat. The phenomenon of dehumanization is largely associated with military traditions that trace their origins back to World War I, when the enemy was depicted in a caricatured

manner. The image of the enemy has ancient traditions, including in journalism, and it can be associated with many areas of human activity, including racial, Semitic, gender, and so on, although the main context and trigger here are undoubtedly military (Skladanowski, 2022).

The media play an important role in creating and promoting images of heroes – journalism during wartime not only informs society about ongoing events but also brings to the forefront the stories of people who demonstrate exceptional courage and selflessness. Stories about heroes have a strong psychological impact on society – they help people cope with the anxiety and fear caused by war, instill hope, and help maintain morale and inspire others to acts of bravery. Heroes become symbols of resilience and strength, inspiring others to take action and provide support. It should also be noted that in wartime, propaganda often uses images of heroes to mobilize the population and strengthen patriotic sentiments. State and independent media spread stories about military personnel and civilians who perform feats to support the fighting spirit and strengthen national identity. Journalists play a key role in documenting heroic deeds – they record and convey information about events, which helps preserve the memory of heroism for future generations, and it also helps prevent the distortion of history and maintain truthful coverage of the war (Ishchuk et al., 2024).

Probably, the Russian-Ukrainian war can activate disintegration processes and bring to the fore the articulation of projects for the collapse and disintegration of the Russian Federation into separate national-state formations, starting with the most depressed regions – Yakutia and Sokha, Tuva and Buryatia, Kalmykia and Sakhalin, the Far East, etc. The dehumanization of the Russian Federation may lead to the possibility of a civil war, considering the recent attempt at a coup in the Russian Federation, the unexpected seizure of Voronezh and Rostov, as well as the increase in xenophobia within Russia. Xenophobic motives are also involved here, considering the presence of anti-Semitic, anti-Caucasian, and anti-elite expectations and sentiments. As is known, the traditional Russian rebellion was initiated and inspired by ethnic non-Russians – among them Kindrat Bulavin, Felix Yusupov, Grigory Rasputin, the October Revolution was also carried out by individuals of Hungarian, Latvian, and Czech descent, the majority of the Politburo consisted of citizens of Jewish descent, including, and probably, Yevgeny Prigozhin. The antisemitic sentiment and periodic escalation of the modern global community are also hard to overlook, especially in the context of the Israeli-Lebanese wars (Levi Hana, 2023).

Among the examples of the humanization of modern society is the unprecedented humanitarian aid provided to more than 6 million Ukrainian refugees in Europe. At the latest PACE meeting on October 13, 2024, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution recognizing the Russian regime as terrorist and called on the world to provide our country with weapons for defense. It is worth mentioning the extensive secular, as well as charitable, philanthropic, and volunteer activities of the Catholic organization Caritas and many other church and religious organizations – these are examples of the humanization of the modern international agenda (Sutch, 2023).

Most likely, Samuel Huntington turned out to be largely right in his famous historical-philosophical treatise "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order," especially in the chapter "Russia and its near abroad," where he proposed three possible scenarios for Russian-Ukrainian relations, including the direct armed conflict between the countries that actually occurred. In the case of the Russian-Ukrainian war, one predominantly Orthodox Slavic country attacked another predominantly

similar country, and the ferocity, boundless hatred, and aggression of geopolitical neighbors who have become fierce and deadly enemies is astonishing.

Conclusions. In the face of modern warfare, journalists play an important role in providing information about upcoming conflicts, and their task is to convey objective and accurate data about the political situation, escalation between countries, and potential threats to the audience. Journalists must be prepared to take risks while remaining true to their professional principles; their work helps society understand complex events and the impact of war on the world. It is important to support the independence of journalism and respect those who risk their lives to bring us the truth about war, as journalism is a tool that can help people learn the truth about war, protect human rights, and make the world a fairer place.

Journalism plays an important role in the modern world, serving as a source of information, a tool for power control, and a platform for dialogue. In the context of modern wars, the role of journalism increases manifold, as journalists must be prepared for new challenges and work to ensure that society receives accurate and objective information. An important role of journalism is conflict prevention: journalism before war can help prevent conflicts if it actively seeks peaceful solutions.

The study of communication strategies during wartime helps to understand how public sentiments are formed and changed, which is particularly important for politicians, military personnel, and sociologists. For successful information warfare, it is necessary to develop effective communication strategies based on the study of existing practices and methods—understanding the emotional aspects of communication during war allows for the development of psychological support programs for the affected. In the context of information warfare, it is important to raise the level of media literacy among the population so that people can critically evaluate the information they receive. An important aspect is the study of ethical norms and the responsibility of the media and social media users for the dissemination of information in wartime. Communication reflections during war have global significance, as information about conflicts spreads rapidly around the world, influencing international relations and public opinion.

The topic of the influence of personality and media on the formation of contemporary war narratives is extremely interesting and relevant for further research. Here are a few perspectives that may be useful for expanding this field:

· social networks and their impact on public opinion (for this, it would be possible to investigate how social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram contribute to the formation and dissemination of war narratives and apply an analysis of the algorithms used by these platforms to spread content),

· the role of personal bloggers and influencers (it is advisable to research the impact of individuals on shaping public opinion regarding conflicts and military actions and to study which specific topics are covered by bloggers and how their personal opinions influence narratives),

·traditional media vs. digital media (one can compare the ways of presenting information about wars in traditional media (newspapers, television) and digital media (online news, social networks) and analyze how the perception of events changes depending on the source of information),

· fakes and misinformation (it seems possible to explore how fake news and misinformation affect the perception of war and develop strategies to detect and counter fake news)

Psychological impact on society (it seems appropriate to study how the constant flow of information about the war affects people's mental state and to explore ways that can help society adapt to the psychological burden).

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