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NARRATIVES OF RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA IN THE UKRAINIAN MEDIA SPACE IN THE CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN VALUES

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ABSTRACT

Russian propaganda significantly influences the Ukrainian media landscape, actively fueling ethnic and political tensions. Through various media channels, it propagates a negative narrative regarding European integration, aiming to instill a sense of threat to national security and cultural identity. Therefore, the promotion and implementation of European values are crucial for Ukraine, as they serve as a strategic defense against Russian propaganda. European principles such as democracy, rule of law, freedom of speech, human rights and tolerance are fundamental for ensuring stability and progress within Ukrainian society.

So the purpose of the study is the identification of Russian propaganda narratives in the Ukrainian media space within the context of implementation of European values and providing their typology. This article explores the influence of Russian narratives on the views and perceptions of Ukrainian society regarding European values, as well as possible response strategies of the Ukrainian media to the spread of Russian propaganda narratives are being researched. Furthermore, the data gathered from research on Russian propaganda gives author the opportunity to develop own typology of narratives of Russian propaganda.

Also the main tools, themes and motives of Russian propaganda are revealed in the article. In paper it is made an attempt to assess of the influence of Russian narratives on the views and perceptions of Ukrainian society regarding European values and to compare the influence of Russian propaganda at the Ukrainian and European levels.

Thus, enhancing the public's media literacy and implementing the European values within society are vital components of Ukraine's national security and long-term development, particularly in the context of information warfare. Overlooking the impact of propaganda narratives on the public will result in significant setbacks in communication and information dissemination. Hence, it is imperative to devise strategies to combat such propaganda narratives and foster among the citizens a sense of critical thinking and the importance of verifying information, particularly during times of societal crisis.

Keywords: propaganda narratives, Russian propaganda, European values, media space, typology of Russian propaganda narratives

НАРАТИВИ РОСІЙСЬКОЇ ПРОПАГАНДИ В УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ МЕДІЙНОМУ ПРОСТОРІ У КОНТЕКСТІ УТВЕРДЖЕННЯ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИХ ЦІННОСТЕЙ

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Російська пропаганда значно впливає на українське медійне середовище, активно підкріплюючи етнічні та політичні напруження. Через різноманітні медійні канали вона поширює негативний наратив щодо європейської інтеграції з метою викликати відчуття загрози національній безпеці та культурній ідентичності. Тому просування та впровадження європейських цінностей є важливими для України, оскільки вони служать стратегічним захистом від російської пропаганди. Європейські принципи, такі як демократія, правова держава, свобода слова, права людини та толерантність, є фундаментальними для забезпечення стабільності та прогресу в українському суспільстві.

Тому, метою цього дослідження є ідентифікація наративів російської пропаганди в українському медійному просторі в контексті впровадження європейських цінностей та їхньої типологізації. Ця стаття досліджує вплив російських наративів на уявлення та сприйняття українського суспільства щодо європейських цінностей, а також у матеріалі виділяються можливі стратегії реагування українських медіа на поширення наративів російської пропаганди. Крім того, дані зібрані в результаті дослідження матеріалів російської пропаганди, дають автору можливість розробити власну типологію російських пропагандистських наративів.

Також у статті розкрито основні інструменти, теми та мотиви російської пропаганди. У роботі проводиться спроба оцінити вплив російських наративів на уявлення та сприйняття українського суспільства щодо європейських цінностей і порівняти вплив російської пропаганди на українському та європейському рівнях.

Таким чином, підвищення медійної грамотності громадян і впровадження європейських цінностей у суспільне життя є важливими складовими національної безпеки та довгострокового розвитку України, особливо у контексті інформаційної війни. Ігнорування впливу пропагандистських наративів на громадськість призведе до значних проблем у комунікації та поширенні інформації. Тому надзвичайно важливо розробляти стратегії протидії таким пропагандистським повідомленням і сприяти розвитку у громадян критичного мислення й усвідомленню важливості перевірки інформації, особливо у періоди соціальних криз.

Ключові слова: пропагандистські наративи, російська пропаганда, європейські цінності, медіапростір, типологія російських пропагандистських наративів

Relevance of research. The military aggression of Russia against Ukraine once again emphasizes the relevance of studying propaganda as a form of communication. Today, reality can be convincingly constructed in the media space like never before, utilizing modern technologies and skilfully employed methods. When discussing the narratives of Russian propaganda in the Ukrainian media space, it is essential to review the

current state of the media landscape in Ukraine in the context of the influence of Russian propaganda.

Problem statement and analysis of previous researches and publications. Today we have a number of research works by both Ukrainian and foreign researchers dedicated to the study of propaganda narratives in the media space. However, the aspect of the contemporary stage of development of Russian propaganda narratives in the Ukrainian media space within the context of implementation of European values remains underexplored, with the perspective of providing their typology.

The classic interpretation of the concept of propaganda can be found in works of E. Bernays (Bernays & Miller, 2005), H. Lasswell (Lasswell, 1927), J. Garth and V. O'Donnell (Garth & O'Donnell, 2012). Particular attention to the influence of Russian propaganda in the media space is paid by L. Bidochko, O. Pivtorak and P. Khudish (Bidochko, Pivtorak & Khudish, 2023). Modern propaganda narratives in the context of military confrontation are the subject of research of H. Pocheptsov (Pocheptsov, 2022), S. Bykov (Bykov, 2022). When preparing the typology, the author used the analysis of sources of Russian propaganda (including materials from Russian online media, materials from television channels, Telegram channels, etc.).

The purpose of the study is the identification of Russian propaganda narratives in the Ukrainian media space within the context of implementation of European values and providing their typology.

The methods and techniques of researches. The research on narratives of Russian propaganda in the Ukrainian media space within the context of implementation of European values was conducted using methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization, analytical and comparative analyses. Additionally, a socio-communicative approach was applied, which gave an opportunity to analyse and interpret the data from the perspective of the planned impact on society by the object of study, as well as the characterization of society's reaction to this influence.

Presentation of the main material. Providing a general overview of the modern media landscape in Ukraine, it is worth separately noting the diversification of media resources. The media space of Ukraine is characterized by the variety and accessibility of various media sources, including radio, television, print press, online platforms, and social networks. Another important feature is the development of digital technologies, driven by the increasing use of the Internet and social media. This fact contributes to the active dissemination of information and enables citizens to be active participants in the media dialogue. It is also noteworthy that the Ukrainian media space is characterized by a high degree of independence and professionalism of some media in Ukraine, making them factors that contribute to the strengthening of civil society.

However, an undeniable feature of the current state of the media landscape in Ukraine is that it is, in one way or another, influenced by Russian propaganda. Primarily, this involves numerous manipulations and disinformation that Russian propaganda actively employs to create manipulative narratives regarding the situation in Ukraine, especially in the context of events in 2022-2023. Additionally, Russian media resources adopt a specific approach to presenting information, aimed at shaping a particular worldview and influencing public opinion in Ukraine. This occurs through the use of social media to spread disinformation and create the impression of widespread support for certain ideas among the Ukrainian population.

To minimize the impact of Russian propaganda, it is essential to consider adequate responses from Ukrainian media. Primarily, this may involve fact-checking and exposing disinformation. Some Ukrainian media actively engage in these practices, striving to provide citizens with accurate information. Also, undoubtedly, the creation of content with an alternative point of view is important, which will arouse the viewers' interest and provide different perspectives on on-going events. Some media actively involve experts and civic activists to comment on and analyse events, offering viewers diverse viewpoints.

It can be noted that the media space in Ukraine remains an arena of active struggle

between various informational influences. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of developing media literacy and supporting independent media to ensure access to objective information, free exchange of ideas in society, as well as resilience to misinformation and the promotion of European values. So, the relevance of the proposed research topic is determined by a range of factors, with the main ones including:

- Geopolitical position of Ukraine: Our country is situated at the intersection of Russian and European influences, making it particularly vulnerable to the clash of ideas and values. Russian propaganda is used to strengthen influence and create dissonance within society.

- European integration as a strategic goal of state development: Ukraine's aspiration for European integration is a strategic goal, attracting active interest from Russian propaganda, which seeks to discredit this direction and undermine citizens' trust in European values.

- Confrontation in the conditions of information warfare: Modern information warfare involves the collision of different narratives and influential forces. Researching the narratives of Russian propaganda helps uncover the methods and strategies of hostile influence.

- The importance of shaping civic identity: Attempts to form civic identity in Ukraine and strengthen support for European values encounter informational resistance from Russian propaganda, demanding in-depth study and understanding.

- Impact on civil society: Researching the narratives of Russian propaganda in the context of European values helps understand how these narratives can influence the opinions and beliefs of citizens, shaping their behaviour and electoral preferences.

The overall relevance lies in the necessity to uncover the mechanisms of Russian propaganda and identify opportunities and strategies to strengthen trust in European values within Ukrainian society. This research has the potential for significant impact on the development of information security, civic awareness, and democracy in Ukraine.

Defining the key concepts of the study. The implementation of democratic values into the public and societal consciousness of our society is a necessary condition for the further development of a genuine European democracy. The fundamental values of the European Union are enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. In particular, Article 2 of this Treaty specifies that *"The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail."* (Consolidated versions of the Treaty on EU and the Treaty on the functioning of the EU).

In the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, it is defined that the Union must exist on the principles of dignity (basic rights to life and physical and spiritual protection of the individual), freedom (freedom of thought and religion, protection of freedom, security, and privacy), equality (equal opportunities, non-discrimination, respect for all forms of diversity), solidarity (labour rights, health protection, and environmental protection), respect for the rights of citizens (political and civil rights and freedoms), and justice (the right to fair judicial protection, presumption of innocence, etc.) (Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union).

To successfully progress on the path of further democratization of our society, joint efforts of its various groups are necessary. In this process, it is undeniable that the basic European values of democracy and the rule of law must be gradually implemented into the social and public consciousness. As a result, a new value system for Ukrainian society will be formed, leading to the cultivation of a high level of democratic political culture in our state.

For a comprehensive research of the topic, it is worthwhile to briefly operationalize the concept of 'propaganda'. Propaganda is the systematic dissemination of information

with the aim of shaping specific beliefs, views, or actions in people's consciousness. Propaganda can be political, ideological, religious, etc. The definition of propaganda, based on the Latin word 'propagare' (to spread), indicates the systematic spread of information to influence people's consciousness and shape specific beliefs, views, or actions. This process can relate to various spheres, including politics, ideology, religion, and other aspects of society. According to H. Lasswell, propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols (Lasswell, 1927: 627). According to the classic definition by E. Bernays, propaganda is the conscious and purposeful use of public communications to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of people (Bernays & Miller, 2005).

The definition of propaganda as the conscious and purposeful use of public communications to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of people highlights key aspects of this concept (conscious use of public communications, purposeful influence, and impact on thoughts, feelings, and actions). Overall, the definition emphasizes the strategic and manipulative nature of propaganda as a means of influencing society through mass media and other communication channels. Propaganda can be seen as a directed application of communication technologies to shape public opinion. This definition underscores the technological nature of propaganda and its influence on the formation of collective beliefs and opinions in society. Propaganda is a systematic attempt to alter the perception, emotions, or behaviour of people through symbols and communication (Garth & O'Donnell, 2012). Such a definition focuses on portraying propaganda specifically as a systematic process of using symbols and communication to influence the perception, emotions, and behaviour of a group of people.

In the media, propaganda is typically used for a wide range of purposes, including:

- Shaping public opinion in favour of a particular political force or position.
- Destabilizing social stability.
- Supporting military actions.
- Justifying crimes against humanity.
- Undermining trust in state and social institutions.

Based on various definitions of the concept of propaganda and its goals, it can be said that it is a mass communication tool used to disseminate specific information or ideas with the aim of influencing public opinion, beliefs, and behaviour. It can be used for various purposes, including supporting political preferences, shaping stereotypes, manipulating public emotions, and creating a certain perception of events or issues. Propaganda can be an effective tool of influence, but it is important to understand that the countermeasure to propaganda will always be a critical evaluation of the information and sources it presents, leading to the preservation of objectivity and a healthy civic discourse.

Resistance to propaganda and disinformation has become an extremely important component of the modern information environment and the continuation of its further development, democratization, and freedom. The toolkit of these methods of influence can have a negative effect on public consciousness, undermining basic democratic values, causing conflicts, and fostering distrust in the media and state institutions. Ensuring media literacy, developing critical thinking, and supporting independent sources of information are integral elements of the strategy to counteract these phenomena. Only through joint efforts by the government and the public can information integrity be ensured and the foundations of a free society preserved.

In modern media, propaganda is becoming increasingly effective. This is associated with several factors, including the development of social networks and other media platforms that allow propagandists to quickly disseminate the information they need among a large number of people. Additionally, modern convergent media are often more emotional due to a wide range of data transmission possibilities (not only in the form of text but also in video or audio formats), making their audience more susceptible to propaganda. In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that propaganda has a countless number of powerful tools to influence the public. Propagandists use various techniques to achieve

their goals, often leading to dire consequences. In today's media, propaganda is becoming increasingly effective, making it essential to pay attention to the study of this issue.

The main tools, themes and motives of Russian propaganda. Analysing the tools of Russian propaganda in the context of their reproduction in Ukrainian media resources, it is important to highlight the main ones. First and foremost, there is disinformation and information manipulation. Russian propaganda uses a combination of facts and fabricated information to create distorted narratives. At the same time, some Ukrainian media resources utilize unverified information or unreliable sources, which can lead to the spread of disinformation and its reconstitution in Ukrainian media.

Russian propagandists also frequently resort to the use of alternative facts and various conspiracy theories, providing alternative interpretations of events to create a negative impression of actions or events. Under such circumstances, centres of disinformation may emerge in Ukrainian media due to insufficiently careful fact-checking or the use of unfounded theories. It is worth noting separately the use of psychological methods of influence by Russian propaganda, including the use of emotional impact and psychological techniques aimed at influencing the moods of the audience.

A specific characteristic instrument of Russian propaganda is the creation of political or ethnically tense narratives, where the emphasis is placed on differences and conflicts during the information dissemination process, creating an image of internal discord in society. Some Ukrainian media may unconsciously reinforce or use sharp topics to attract attention, leading to deepening social discords.

Russian propagandists also often resort to the imitation of objectivity, attempting to incorporate truthful and objective elements into their narratives. Therefore, the analysis of the reproduction of Russian propaganda tools in Ukrainian media resources is critical for understanding the dynamics of information warfare and developing strategies to detect and counteract manipulations and disinformation.

In the context of our research topic, it is crucial to identify the main themes and motifs traced in Russian media materials. Analysing materials of Russian propaganda, the following key narratives can be highlighted:

1. Discrediting European values. The main motif here is the portrayal of European values as immoral, hostile, and incompatible with traditional values. This narrative is used in topics such as criticizing the expansion of LGBTQ rights, gender equality, sexual freedom, etc.

2. Presenting Ukraine as a potentially fragile and unstable state. In this context, attempts are made to create an image of Ukraine as a country plagued by chaos, disorder, corruption, and constant political conflicts. This motif is exploited in topics that emphasize internal problems, inefficiency of governance, support for separatist movements, etc.

3. Depicting Russia as a defender of rights and traditions. The key motif here is to create an image of Russia as perhaps the sole defender of rights, especially in the sphere of national and religious identity. This narrative is used in topics where events are portrayed from the perspective of 'defending Orthodoxy' and protecting traditional values.

4. Discrediting the activities of the European Union and the so-called collective West. The main motif here is to reinforce the belief in the negative impact of EU activities and Western countries on the internal affairs of other nations. Such issues are exploited in materials dedicated to condemning sanctions, as well as those emphasizing the inefficiency and political instability in EU countries.

5. Fomenting ethnic and religious conflicts. In this context, support is provided for existing ethnic and religious conflicts in various regions, as well as provoking the emergence of new ones. This narrative works well in materials covering cultural differences and highlighting religious tensions.

6. Formation of the image of Russia as a global leader. The primary motif here is to enhance Russia's prestige on the international stage and acknowledge its significant role in global events. This motif is exploited in topics that emphasize international achievements, participation in solving global issues, portraying Russia as an alternative centre of power.

Thus, these themes and motifs are key components of the narrative created by Russian propaganda aimed at influencing the perceptions of citizens and shaping their views on events in Ukraine and the world.

Typology of Russian propaganda narratives actively used in the Ukrainian media space. The narratives used by the Russian Federation in its propaganda messages create, for an audience that uncritically accepts them, essentially an alternative branch of reality. Narratives are commonly defined as mental structures that help understand how our thinking works and how it is structured. This concept originates from literary studies, where it was used to describe the structure of a narrative. In a broad sense, it is a network of cause-and-effect relationships (Pocheptsov, 2022). From the beginning, narratives were intended to be a tool for reflection, interpretation, and understanding of the situation. When used in propaganda, they become a powerful instrument of influence on both individual and mass consciousness. Propagandist narratives attribute reasons for military actions to justify aggression in the eyes of both their own people and the international community.

In terms of content and functions assigned to them, the narratives of Russian propaganda actively used in the media space can be divided into the following groups: those explaining and justifying the reasons for Russia's aggression against Ukraine; those constructing an alternative picture of the course of military actions favourable to propagandists; those constructing possible scenarios for the development of the conflict and potential consequences for all parties involved. These narratives are outlined by the author of the research and structured as a typology based on the analysis of sources of Russian propaganda (including materials from Russian online media, materials from television channels, Telegram channels, etc.).

Considering that one of the functions of propaganda narratives is to explain the reasons for what is happening, we can identify the first group of similar narratives that justify the reasons for Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

- 'Ukrainians and Russians are one nation that should be united in the Russian world'. Within this narrative, the myth of 'brotherly nations' and a shared historical origin is exploited.

- Ukraine is not an independent state. In messages of this nature, there is active discourse about the 'artificial nature of Ukrainian statehood' and the 'lack of real sovereignty'; an image of Ukraine is persistently created as a 'puppet of the West', a 'small, corrupt, and poor country incapable of independently solving its problems'.

- 'The Great Patriotic War continues; fascism in Ukraine has not been defeated'. In such propagandist messages, themes about the 'Nazi regime in Ukraine', neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups influencing the current government, etc., are exploited.

- 'Protection of the Russian-speaking population'. This narrative relies on the notion of the prevalence of Russophobic sentiments and aggressive anti-Russian positions on the territory of Ukraine. Slogans supporting and advocating for the population of Donbas have been actively used since 2014. It is worth noting that this narrative gradually loses its popularity compared to the period from 2014 to 2021. The propagandist message about a 'civil war in Ukraine' has also lost its relevance compared to 2014, as it does not evoke trust even among the pro-Russian audience. However, propagandists continue to refer to it, explaining the beginning of full-scale invasion by the necessity to intervene in a 'fratricidal war in a neighbouring country'.

- 'Russia's intervention was forced, provoked, and preventive'. Within this narrative, the image of a common enemy (NATO/United West) is exploited, claiming that they 'provoked Russia's aggression against Ukraine', resulting in an actual conflict between NATO and Russia on the territory of Ukraine.

The second group of propaganda narratives aims to construct an alternative picture of the course of military actions favourable to propagandists.

- 'The West is not united; it is divided'. This narrative attempts to create an impression of disunity and ambiguity in condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine.

In the resulting picture, the opposition of 'Russia versus the entire civilized world' is absent, and the familiar division into two camps, 'us vs. them', emerges.

- 'Russian war crimes are fake'. In messages of this nature, there is active discussion about the use of advanced technologies to 'discredit' Russian military personnel and create 'fake' photo and video evidence of crimes they allegedly commit. In this case, Russian propagandists, following their usual pattern, accuse the other side of constantly creating such fabrications themselves.

- 'Ukrainians commit war crimes'. In similar propaganda messages, themes of 'neo-Nazi groups', 'Banderites', etc., are exploited, portraying them as violators of 'all international principles of warfare and treatment of prisoners of war'. This leads to the emergence of another propagandist narrative.

- 'Russians are provoked into cruelty'. Within this narrative, there is an exploitation of the idea that Russia was forced into starting the war, and now Russian military forces are compelled to respond with cruelty. In such messages, one can trace an interesting philosophical and ethical dilemma about the 'relativity of evil', where the audience is influenced to believe that unprecedented crimes committed by the Russian side may not be as horrifying when considering the circumstances that led to them.

- 'Sanctions against Russia are ineffective'. This narrative seeks to create an impression of the futility of the collective efforts of the West in economically exhausting the Russian Federation. It instils the belief that Russia will be able to continue its armed aggression for a long time without suffering economic losses from numerous sanction packages.

- Creating a negative image of Ukrainian refugees, whereby Russian propagandists attempt to demonstrate 'European fatigue from the Ukrainian issue' and argue that, as a result, the West will cease support for Ukraine in the near future.

The third group of narratives includes those that outline possible conflict development scenarios and potential consequences for all parties involved.

- 'Ukraine is losing the war'. In messages of this kind, a worldview is constructed where Russia achieves all the goals set at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, inflicting a complete and devastating defeat on Ukraine. The image of a 'victorious state' is very popular and in demand among the pro-Russian audience, so it is actively exploited by propaganda in both socio-political spheres and in artistic representations of mass culture.

- 'Ukraine does not want peace'. Within this narrative, Russian propaganda attempts to create an image of Ukraine as an aggressor country that initially independently provoked Russia's attack and now refuses numerous peace negotiation proposals from the Russian side.

- 'The West is trying to capture Russia but faces defeat'. This propagandist narrative relies on the image of an imaginary enemy that has long harboured plans to spread its influence over Russia but, thanks to 'successful preventive strikes', has experienced failure.

- 'The West will abandon Ukraine'. In similar propaganda messages, themes of the high cost of supporting Ukraine for European countries, tiredness from the war in Ukraine, and the presence of Ukrainian refugees in Europe are exploited. This is expected to lead to Ukraine being left alone in confrontation with the Russian Federation.

- 'The Western development vector chosen by Ukraine will inevitably lead to defeat and failure'. This narrative seeks to emphasize the fallacy of the Western path of development for Ukraine and create an idea of an incorrect civilizational choice made by Ukraine in favour of European integration.

It is worth emphasizing that when using propaganda narratives in the context of information-psychological warfare; their goal is to construct an illusory reality, the truth of which will not be doubted by the target audience. The use of propaganda narratives by the Russian side also aims to delegitimize the Ukrainian government and the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the eyes of Russian citizens and the international community.

Assessment of the influence of Russian narratives on the views and perceptions of Ukrainian society regarding European values. Assessing the

impact of Russian narratives on the views and perceptions of Ukrainian society regarding European values, it is important to start with the creation of a negative image of such values. Russian narratives effectively contrast European values with traditional Ukrainian ones, which can lead to a certain level of resentment within the society and doubts about the importance of integration into European structures.

Furthermore, Russian narratives draw attention to potential negative consequences of European integration, instilling fears and resentment in parts of the society. This may result in societal division and opposition to reforms associated with European integration.

Russian narratives may attempt to undermine belief in the idea that European integration will bring real success and an improvement in the quality of life, thereby pushing for doubt in achieving success in Europe. Such efforts could lead, at the very least, to passive attitudes towards reforms and a loss of support among citizens.

Russian propaganda narratives may also use negative examples from European Union countries to condemn the actions of this union, creating a negative image of the EU. This can lead to scepticism and a lack of support from the population for participation in European integration processes.

In general, Russian propagandist narratives aim to undermine trust in European institutions and are directed at discrediting the activities and image of European structures. This may raise doubts about trust in the mechanisms of European governance and regulation. The overall assessment of the impact of Russian narratives on Ukrainian society indicates potential negative consequences, such as unrest, loss of trust, and decreased support for integration processes. However, it is important to consider the role of narrators from Ukrainian information resources and civil organizations in countering this influence through information literacy and objectivity.

Comparison of the influence of Russian propaganda at the Ukrainian and European levels. We propose to compare the impact of Russian propaganda at the Ukrainian and European levels based on several criteria: target audiences, propaganda themes, media resources, forms of influence, international reactions, as well as the degree of influence.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of the Impact of Russian Propaganda on the Ukrainian and European Levels (Based on author's own research)

Criteria / Region	Ukraine	Europe
Target audiences	Russian propaganda is aimed at the internal audience, particularly the Russian-speaking population and a portion of the Russified population in Ukraine.	Russian propaganda seeks to influence various groups in European countries by spreading disinformation and creating division within society.
Topic of propaganda	The emphasis is on fuelling interethnic conflicts, discrediting the authorities, and suppressing Ukrainian national identity.	In the European context, Russian propaganda focuses on hindering the unity of the European Union, undermining the authority of its measures, and suppressing internal movements for democracy and human rights.
Media resources	Russian propaganda in Ukraine uses Russian-language television channels (before they were banned), internet resources, and social media.	In Europe, Russian propaganda uses international television channels, social media, and also contributes to the creation of influencers and media agencies.
Forms of influence	Russian propaganda in Ukraine actively employs psychological	In Europe, Russian propaganda also makes use of information

	methods of influence, emphasizing emotional aspects and creating the impression of a threat.	attacks, but more often, it is directed towards influencing political processes, dividing society, and provoking conflicts.
Reaction at the international level	Ukraine is conducting an information war and actively directs efforts to counter Russian propaganda through its own media resources and international partnerships.	Countries of the European Union also respond to Russian propaganda, but due to the diversity of cultures and political systems, the response varies and depends on each specific country.
Degree of influence	In Ukraine, Russian propaganda has a significant impact, particularly on certain social groups and regions with historical ties to Russia.	In Europe, the impact of Russian propaganda is diverse and depends on the level of awareness and societal response, as well as the actions of national governments.

The comparative analysis indicates that Russian propaganda adopts a specific approach towards Ukraine and Europe, employing different strategies and methods of influence depending on the specific context. While in Ukraine, it emphasizes internal conflicts, in Europe, it unfolds as an instrument influencing political and social processes.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that in the media space of some countries, the narratives of Russian propaganda are fully broadcasted and gain certain trust from the public. This is particularly true for the so-called Global South countries (which include low- or middle-income countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean basin, such as India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Turkey; Ghana, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa; Brazil, Argentina, etc.). Media in the Global South often feature discussions about Russian aggression, paradoxically with almost no mention of Ukraine. The focus is often on trade wars, Western colonialism, globalization, sanctions, and other broad geopolitical issues. Russia simply adapts these general themes to fit its propaganda goals and adds narratives about the confrontation between Russia and NATO. As a result, there is a high risk that the significance of Ukraine and its role as a subject of geopolitics and international relations is diminished or negated (Bidochko, Pivtorak & Khudish, 2023).

As noted by S. Bykov, in order to win the war for Ukrainian identity, the state must define a strategic narrative and support the creation of Ukrainian myths. This is because today the narrative is a component of the national security sector even more than a component of culture. The strategic narrative protects the people from the influence of hostile propaganda by identifying and rejecting hostile ideas similar to how the body rejects foreign objects (Bykov, 2022). It is also worth noting that the absurdity of Russian propaganda narratives does not mean their ineffectiveness, especially when it comes to the target audience, which is within the relevant information field and lacks the skill or need to critically analyse the information received.

The results and discussions: Response strategies of the Ukrainian media to the spread of Russian propaganda narratives. Such powerful and destructive influence of Russian propaganda narratives undoubtedly requires an adequate response, including from domestic media. Among the main strategies of Ukrainian media in response to the spread of Russian narratives, the following can be mentioned:

- Fact-checking and information verification: Media actively conduct fact-checking and information verification before publication, providing viewers and readers with credible and verified information. The main goal here is to reduce the spread of disinformation and manipulations.
- Creation of alternative narratives: Media develop their own narratives and

stories that emphasize the positive aspects of European integration and respond to specific theses of Russian narratives. The key aim is to create alternatives for viewers and readers, allowing them to consider events from different perspectives.

- Expert opinions and analysis: Involvement of highly qualified experts to analyse and comment on events helps viewers understand the context and events from a broader perspective. The goal may be to provide an objective and professional assessment of events.

- Utilizing social networks and online platforms: Active use of social networks to spread viral content created to counter Russian narratives. The main goal here is to attract more attention from viewers and readers to alternative perspectives.

- Engaging the public through interactive elements, discussions, and surveys that allow expressing opinions and feelings, aiming to create a sense of community and activity, supporting interaction and exchange of ideas.

- Media literacy campaigns: Conducting educational events, campaigns, and webinars aimed at increasing the level of media literacy among viewers. The key goal is to ensure that the audience can critically evaluate information and distinguish facts from misinformation.

- Collaboration with international media and experts to create objective and diverse materials, helping to avoid ethnic or political confrontation and aiming to provide a broad view of events and their objectivity.

These strategies are aimed at strengthening internal information security, increasing the media literacy of citizens, and creating alternative narratives to reduce the impact of Russian propaganda on Ukrainian society.

In order to create a trustworthy alternative to Russian propaganda narratives, it is necessary to consider how transparent and objective Ukrainian media sources are, especially in the context of advocating European values. A crucial criterion here is unquestionably transparency of ownership and funding. Most Ukrainian media pay attention to ensuring transparency in ownership and funding sources. However, there may be cases of insufficient transparency that could impact objectivity. A significant portion of Ukrainian media strives to avoid the influence of owners or political groups on editorial policies, although instances of interference or pressure may exist.

Clear requirements in terms of journalistic standards are imposed on journalistic content and reporting. Media outlets present various perspectives and analyse diverse aspects of European values. However, at times, there may be biases in covering certain topics or influencing the audience's opinion through headline choices. Some media actively involve experts from various fields for comments and analysis. However, there may be cases of selecting experts who are not entirely objective and already have predefined views on the topic. Some media also collaborate with international partners and agencies, contributing to objectivity and providing access to different perspectives. Interaction with viewers/readers is extremely important in this context. Media actively engage with the audience through comments, social media, and surveys. This promotes understanding and consideration of the peculiarities of the viewership. A necessary condition is the media's willingness to take responsibility for mistakes and correct them. Many media acknowledge their mistakes and take measures to rectify them. However, there are cases where this process may be insufficiently effective.

In general, Ukrainian media operate in an environment where official censorship is absent. However, examples of individual cases of pressure and restrictions can be found. Moreover, the martial law in the country imposes additional limitations on the public disclosure of certain types of information. While Ukrainian media sources demonstrate a high degree of transparency and objectivity, an important task is the continuous improvement of journalistic ethics standards and ensuring independence from political and corporate interference.

Providing a characterization of the narratives of Russian propaganda in the Ukrainian media space in the context of affirming European values, it is advisable to express the following recommendations for strengthening media resilience and supporting European values in Ukrainian society:

1. Development of media literacy:
 - Introduction of educational programs and initiatives on media literacy at various levels of education.
 - Conducting campaigns to raise citizens' awareness in recognizing disinformation and fakes, etc.
2. Stimulating critical thinking:
 - Inclusion of elements of critical thinking development in educational programs at various levels of education.
 - Support for projects and events aimed at developing analytical skills in citizens.
3. Financial support for independent media:
 - Ensuring financial stability and support for independent media organizations and projects.
 - Development of grant programs for the development of quality information production.
4. Support for the development of objective media:
 - Establishment of mechanisms for independent monitoring of media resources regarding their objectivity and absence of influence from external factors.
 - Support for initiatives that promote objectivity and diversity in the information space.
5. Interaction with international partners:
 - Expansion of cooperation with international media organizations and partners for the exchange of experiences and best practices.
 - Participation in international initiatives aimed at strengthening media resilience and protecting information security.
6. Creation of platforms for public discussion:
 - Organization of open debates, forums, and other platforms for public discussion of key issues.
 - Support for civic initiatives and associations that facilitate open exchange of information and ideas.
7. Use of innovative technologies:
 - Implementation of modern technologies for detecting and combating disinformation.
 - Support for start-ups and projects aimed at using technology to enhance media literacy.
8. Involvement of youth and active segments of society:
 - Organization of educational and informational events aimed at young people.
 - Creation of spaces for active citizen participation in media and civic initiatives.

These recommendations are aimed at preserving and strengthening media literacy in Ukrainian society, as well as actively supporting European values through the development of critical thinking, media literacy, and an objective media environment. The ability to resist hostile propaganda is directly related to the implementation of European values in our society.

First and foremost, this is reflected in the key aspect of freedom of speech and information openness. European values emphasize the principles of freedom of speech and free access to information, and countering hostile propaganda involves exposing misinformation and ensuring access to diverse and objective information. Moreover, European values contribute to the development of civil society and the active participation of citizens in decision-making. Countering propaganda involves engaging the public in analysing media messages, exposing manipulations, and promoting critical thinking. An integral element of the system of European values is the support and protection of human and citizen rights. Resisting propaganda involves upholding the principles of equality and rejecting discrimination, which can be a propagandistic strategy. One of the fundamental European values is the support of democracy and the rule of law. Countering propaganda

involves supporting democratic institutions, exposing antidemocratic narratives, and protecting legal principles.

European values are also characterized by respect for cultural diversity and support for dialogue between different societal groups. Measures to counter propaganda involve fostering constructive dialogue and understanding different cultural contexts. Thus, countering hostile propaganda in Ukraine and supporting European values are interconnected through common goals in ensuring freedom, human rights, democracy, and cultural diversity. Protecting these values not only contributes to the country's internal development but also helps to curb the influence of hostile propaganda and strengthen information resilience.

Conclusions. Making conclusions about the role of Russian propaganda for modern Ukraine, it is worth noting that Russian propaganda plays an important role in the Ukrainian media space, directing its efforts towards fuelling ethnic and political conflicts. Using various media resources, it shapes a negative narrative regarding European integration, seeking to create an impression of threat to national security and culture. In this context, the implementation of European values is strategically important for Ukraine, considering the necessity of media resistance to Russian propaganda. European values, such as democracy, human rights, freedom of speech, tolerance, and the development of civil society, are the foundation of stability and development in Ukrainian society.

Strengthening media literacy is a strategic task for Ukraine, as it allows reducing the influence of Russian propaganda and ensuring citizens' access to objective and reliable information. It is important to develop media literacy, critical thinking, and support independent media to create a diverse and objective media space.

Ukrainian civil society plays a key role in countering Russian propaganda and promoting European values. Active citizen participation in civic initiatives, discussions, and support for media resilience is an important factor in ensuring national unity and development. Therefore, respect for and adherence to democratic values allow for the creation of a space of freedom, security, and justice based on democracy and the rule of law, placing the individual with their unique identity at the centre of this space.

Currently, we see that Ukraine demonstrates its commitment to democratic values not just in words but in deeds. Every day of Ukraine's struggle for survival is a fight for main democratic values - freedom, dignity, and the rule of law.

International cooperation with partners from Europe and other countries is important for exchanging experiences in combating propaganda and supporting media resilience. Involvement of international resources and support from external partners can strengthen internal measures to counter Russian propaganda.

The general conclusion is that strengthening media literacy among citizens and promoting European values in society are important aspects of national security and sustainable development of Ukraine in the conditions of information warfare and geopolitical challenges. Ignoring the influence that propaganda narratives exert on the respective audience will inevitably lead to losses on the information-communication front. Therefore, it is extremely important to develop strategies to counter such propaganda messages and cultivate in the population the need for critical reflection and information verification, especially during crisis periods in societal development.

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