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## **“THE OTHER/ALIEN” IMAGE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN CONFRONTATION (2014–2021)**

The media war pursuance among different entities (states, non-governmental, economic and other structures) within a complex of measures to protect own, but willfully inflict the competing party's info sphere, and actions, initiated to get an information edge over a rival by causing harm to its information processes and systems, have been called the Information Warfare in modern political science.

Since the actual and formal USSR disintegration up to the present time, there has been a civilization confrontation of “friend-or-foe” between Ukraine and Russia, connected, on the one hand, with the historical desire of Ukraine for independence and, on the other, with Russia's efforts to restore the world hegemony lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the Russian strategy, Ukraine has a key place, that is without its full subordination to Russia the successful continuation of the Russian Federation aggressive foreign policy course, according to many politicians-practitioners and political scientists (Turchynov, 2016), is impossible. The main goal of the Russian aggression against Ukraine is to transform Ukraine into a Russia's satellite while maintaining Ukraine's formal political independence.

Since 2014, Russia has chosen special operations in the information and cyberdomains as main means of achieving its goal. These operations were to cover Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, to cause technical collapse in certain sectors of Ukraine's economy, and to transform the political elites of some Western countries and international organizations into loyal to Russia. In addition to these operations, indirect and direct confrontations were applied in the hope of provoking political, economic and social collapse in Ukraine. Under these circumstances, as a counter to armed aggression and with the careful support of Western institutions and some countries, Ukraine has launched reforms designed to prevent Russia's efforts to subjugate the Ukrainian nation.

The article aim is to research what communication and media technologies, information operations for the propagation of “the other/alien” images are used by the Russian Federation mass media against Ukraine.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Since the role of increasing daily information resources in human life and the level of improvement and application of ICTs growing and determining the modern way of life and thinking, it becomes obvious that the information security issue requires steady and bigger attention. Many scientists devoted their works to the study of national information security methodological bases. A special position is occupied by findings made by Ye. Bieliayev, M. Buslenko, S. Hryniayev, O. Danylian, O. Dzioban, H. Yemelianov, V. Lopatin, O. Pozdniakov, L. Serhiyenko, V. Tsyhankov, M. Chesnokov, O. Babkina, V. Bebyk, V. Bekh, V. Horbatenko, A. Duhin, O. Zaslavska and others. Moreover, D. Bell, A. Toffler, K. Boulding, Z. Brzezinski, J. Habermas, J. Galbraith, R. Aron, M. McLuhan and other researchers highlight theoretical and methodological fundamentals of mass communication studies, and information society concepts in their works.

American political scientist, Z. Brzezinski, analyzes the ideological and political confrontations between Russia and Ukraine, and notes in his book “The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives” that the origin of Ukraine as the independent state makes all the Russians to newly understand the character of their own political and ethnic identity. Moreover, the author states that this event led to the great political failure of the Russian state. Any attempts of Moscow to create the Eurasian Empire without Ukraine with its 52 million Slavic population are impossible because of Russia, which, being in splendid isolation, will be drawn into protracted conflicts with non-Slavic people, who rebelled in defense of their national and religious interests (Brzezinski, 2000).

Studying the recent sources and publications, we noticed that the issues of communicative strategies and manipulative technologies in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian hybrid war is relevant among both scientists and journalists, analysts and politicians. In particular, V. Horbulin, the director of the National Institute for Strategic Studies, believes that completely new technologies, which he calls a “war of meanings,” are being used against Ukraine (Horbulin, 2017). Additionally to it, A. Goyman focuses on the vitality of the Soviet mythology, its influence on the modern Ukrainians’ the consciousness through politics, culture and the information space of the Russian Federation (Goyman, 2015: 133–147). The ideological orientation of Russian myths and the historical basis of Russian speculations have been studied by V. Brekhunenko, who has also substantiated the grounds for objection to the distorted images of our past, purposefully imposed by Moscow (Brekunenko, 2017). Some scientists, G. Shutov (Shutov, 2014) and A. Saprykin (Saprykin, 2016) analyze the influence of Internet publications and information on social networks, which are actively used by the Putin regime to invade the Ukrainian information space and destabilize Ukrainian society (Nikolaienko, Vasylevych, Komarchuk, 2019).

The Russian-Ukrainian confrontation events of 2014–2021 have received various names in different sources, namely, network-centric, hybrid, cyber warfare, asymmetric warfare, undeclared information warfare of the Kremlin and others. Taking into consideration the subject of our study, we can combine these definitions under the general term “information warfare.”

While analyzing the information warfare constituent elements, Yu. Horban identifies the conduct of a psychological warfare. Its task is to manipulate the masses in order to implant hostile ideas and views into the public and individual consciousness; to disorient and misinform the masses; to weaken certain beliefs and customs; to intimidate its people with the image of an enemy; to intimidate the enemy with its power, etc. (Horban, 2015: 136–141). The main methods of conducting information and psychological warfare include propaganda, rumors spreading, provocations, disinformation, psychological pressure, diversification of social consciousness, etc.

When we use the term war, we primarily mean a modern war, the so-called fourth generation warfare (4GW) – a conflict that is characterized by the blurring of the distinction between direct war and politics, between the military and civilian population involved. A wide range of technologies is used for this type of war. It includes terrorist actions; targeted aggressive attacks on traditional cultural and historical values of the population; subtle psychological warfare, media manipulations, information warfare constant aggressive actions; pressure applying on the victim country; organizing pickets and non-violent disobedience campaigns using social networks and other Internet technologies; large-scale information, financial and military-technical assistance providing to gangs and the like.

However, K. Mackenzie, L. Friedman, A. Echchevaria, T. Benbow and others criticized the fourth generation war concept. They called the lack of a convincing methodology for classifying the stages of the development of wars and neglect of dialectical approaches as the disadvantages of the theory. The denial of the theory novelty became a separate remark, because all the methods (especially of a non-military nature) somehow had their examples in history, but it was proposed to return to the traditional study of war and its new forms from the point of view of the existing Trinitarian Clausewitz model (political motives, chance and enmity) (Andriyevskyy, 2017: 189–198).

We also use the concepts of “confrontation” and “conflict.” Using the concept “confrontation,” we mean specific aspect of a hostile or argumentative meeting or situation between opposing parties, which has many semantic shades. This is a confrontation between representatives of some society strata with conflicting views; having inability to come to a compromise solution; struggle of ideas, opposition of opposite tendencies in the society development. We interpret a conflict as a clash of opposing interests and views, tensions and an extreme aggravation of contradictions, leading to active actions, complications, struggles accompanied by complex collisions; a situation in which each side tries to take a position incompatible with the interests of the other side. These three terms – war, conflict, and confrontation – comprehensively characterize the hybrid processes and contradictions that have been going on for 7 years between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Propaganda is considered as the most common method, which involves disseminating and explaining any beliefs, ideas, doctrines, knowledge for the masses. For the first time, the role of propaganda was analyzed in the writings of H. Lasswell (Lasswell,

1929), who determined it as a special type of weapon affecting the enemy's moral (i.e. mental) state. The author specified overriding priorities of propaganda. They are to arouse hatred for the enemy; to maintain friendly relations with allies; to support good relations with neutral countries and, if possible, to seek to cooperate with them; to demoralize the enemy. For instance, I. Feskov distinguishes the next main methods of propaganda: to form the image of the victim from some person in the mass consciousness, to transfer responsibility and to attribute their own crimes to the enemy, to ignore facts and to brand anyone, who disagrees with the propaganda (Feskov, 2016: 66–77).

Results of the collaboration “Information Warfare as a Geopolitical Rivalry New Dimension” performed in 2018–2019 became the fundamental ground of the present study. The research Project indicated herein was performed by the Faculty of International Relations of Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University in collaboration with the Institute of Security Sciences of Krakow Pedagogical University of the National Education Commission (winners of the competition of joint Ukrainian-Polish research projects of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in 2018). The study will be interesting for the researchers of applied political science, media space, public relations.

### **PROPAGANDA OF “THE OTHER/ALIEN” IMAGE DURING THE INFORMATION WARFARE**

Any society information security means that the society and its individuals are able to realize constitutional rights without any obstacles. These rights are related to free access, creation and dissemination of information, as well as to the level of their protection from destructive information influence. To promote information security as much as possible, it is designed the information policy. It involves the state and its citizens' activities in the field of information production, dissemination, exchange, protection and use in the management processes. The greatest threat to the information security is caused by the hybrid warfare, i.e., a war, combining fundamentally different types and methods of its conduct, which are applied in a manner coordinated to achieve the goals. To use classic methods of combat operations, irregular armed formations, as well as other forms and methods of inflicting significant losses on the enemy, including manipulation, disinformation, hacking, and interference in the information space, gatekeeping and spindoctoring, are typical for hybrid warfare.

The mass communication system continuous development leads to wide possibilities of exercising some manipulative influence with the propagation of own ideas on the rival country population minds. Information warfare key methods, using by the Russian Federation against Ukraine involve both the propaganda and manipulation of the image of “the other,” “hostile,” and “alien.” Structural semantic opposition to the “Friend-or-Foe” is realized as follows: according to T. Kuznetsova, “Friend,” is “always ‘native’, ‘personal’, ‘safe’ [...], and ‘Foe’ is ‘hostile’, ‘dangerous’, ‘chaotic’.” A person always perceives the ‘Friend-or-Foe’ as an opposition” (Kuznetsova, 2007): the “Friend” is treated as “safe,” “reliable” (“Ukrainian military (security forces)” and “the ATO forces”) and the “Foe” – as “hostile,” “dangerous” (“terrorists,” “fighters”). Such texts create a discourse in which an average citizen functions. Moreover, they influence on the linguistic and con-

ceptual picture of his/her world, cause corresponding psycho-emotional and ideological-value reactions (Serhiichuk, 2015: 71–80). Thus, L. Smola states that within the Russian-Ukrainian information warfare, the “Friend-or-Foe” is a struggle between the so-called “*Ruskiy Mir*” (the ideology of restoring the Soviet system) and the post-Maidan Ukraine (with new political projects and post-colonial syndrome) (Smola, 2016: 48–53).

The Soviet tradition in the Russian contemporary media sphere is to cultivate the image of an external enemy, alien, or the other, in order to unite citizens and turn their actions into the necessary direction. The Russian media herein rely on such a mental trait as the dominance of emotionality over rationality (stories about the “oppression” of the Russians and Russian-speaking population in Ukraine, about “crucified boys,” etc.); they use the image of a warrior, generating the primordial archetype aimed at awakening cohesion while relying on the concept of justice. Focusing on mythologemes already existed in the collective memory (“American threat,” “threat of fascism,” “enemy of the people”), they form new mythologemes through media reports about the fascism developing in Ukraine, about attempts to recruit Russian citizens by foreign intelligence, in particular the CIA, charge of espionage for the benefit of other states, etc. (Kozyriatska, 2016: 239–244).

Information and strategic influence resources include a network of state and non-state media organizations, involved in the information dissemination and funded by the state. Western experts estimate that the Kremlin can spend about \$ 2.6 billion a year on media propaganda. Owing to the so-called Russian centers of science and culture as the basis of the international network of *Rosstrudnichestvo* (“Roscooperation” – Federal Agency on the CIS Affairs, Living Abroad Compatriots, and on International Humanitarian Cooperation), the Russian Federation authority does not only spread science and culture, but also creates the “fifth column” bowing to the Russian Federation (Korol, 2016: 19–27).

The Russian ITAR-TASS agency, as the headquarters of information provocation, and the Russia Today (RT), which positions itself as an “alternative to the Anglo-Saxon global information space,” or such news channels as CNN and the BBC, have become the main mouthpieces of Russian news. The RT is not considered as independent because, firstly, it is fully funded by the Russian government, and, secondly, it is included in the official list of key organizations of strategic importance for Russia (Tykhomyrova, 2019: 386–390). The Russian president’s representative has access to an open microphone on this channel when he feels the need to reject criticism of Russian politics as “Russophobia.” The channel is also available when Russian authorities want to disseminate biased messages and disinformation by inviting commentators as experts who are expected from an expert.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AGGRESSION AND PLACE OF “*RUSKIY MIR*” AND “*VATNYKY*” MYTHOLOGEMES IN IT**

The concept of “*Ruskiy Mir*” lays the basis for the information component of the preparation for the Russian Federation hybrid aggression against Ukraine. It appeared at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a clear narrative about protecting Russians and

the Russian-speaking population outside the Russian Federation. After Putin having come to power, the concept of the “Russkiy Mir” was further developed by involving the scientific community and the Russian Diaspora. The mass media as well as the scientific community of the post-Soviet republics, including Ukrainian scientists (Komarchuk, 2019), actively promoted this concept.

The Doctrine of the Information Security of the Russian Federation (2016) determines the following information threats to the “Russkiy Mir” from the part of the “alien/the other”:

- tendencies in foreign media to increase the volume of materials, containing a biased assessment of the Russian Federation state policy;
- Russian media outright discrimination abroad and barriers for Russian journalists to carry out their professional activities there;
- increasing information influence on the Russian population, primarily on the youth, with the purpose of the erosion of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values (*On the Strategy*, 2017).

The dissemination of the “Russkiy Mir” ideas is veiled in the Strategy of the Information Society Development in the Russian Federation for 2017–2030. It states that, in order to form the information space of knowledge, it is necessary to create conditions for the Russian culture and science popularization abroad, including counteracting attempts to distort and falsify historical and other facts. Additionally to it, such a Strategy is to establish stable cultural and educational ties with compatriots living abroad, foreign citizens and stateless persons, who speak Russian, including the use of information and communication technologies (*On the Strategy*, 2017).

According to a Polish researcher O. Wasiuta, “Russkiy Mir” (Wasiuta, 2019: 426–434) is the ideological basis for Russia’s justification of its aggression and terrorism, the basis of which is the statement that “Russia is not limited by the Russian Federation borders.” The “Russkiy mir” problem is not limited to the cultural support of the Russian-speaking Diaspora, but is in fact a cover for foreign, economic and military expansion. The first step to legitimizing direct political interference in another country’s internal affairs is to claim ideological issues. Firstly, there are demands for the Russian language “protection,” and “meeting the cultural needs” of the Russian-speaking population. Then, under the influence of the propaganda of the “Russkiy Mir” values, separatist movements become more active. The next step is direct military intervention, as it happened in the Crimea and the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. “Russkiy Mir” uses a variety of tools to implement its ideology: from creating influence in neighboring countries to limiting their sovereignty and establishing full control over their economic, political, information, religious structures and historical, cultural and linguistic policies. It is a soft power, a form of the state independence gradual elimination.

One of the “Russkiy Mir” founders states: “The Russkiy Mir is not only Russians, not only our compatriots in the CIS countries, emigrants, natives of Russia and their descendants. These are also foreign citizens who speak Russian, who study or teach it, all those, who are genuinely interested in Russia, who are concerned about its future. All the layers of the Russian world – multiethnic, multiconfessional, socially and ideologically heterogeneous, multicultural, and geographically segmented – are united through



an awareness of involvement in Russia. Forming the ‘Russkiy Mir’ as a global project, Russia is finding a new identity, new opportunities for the effective cooperation with the rest of the world, and additional impulses for its own development”... (Iumen Evfimiy).

The embodiment of the Russians, who perceive the information of the mass media without the necessary analytics, received the Internet meme “vatnyk.” In 2012, “vatnyk” became an offensive definition of a certain archetypal Russian representative supporting a totalitarian regime. At the end of November 2013, when the Dignity Revolution began in Ukraine, the word “vatnyk” was increasingly used in social networks of Ukraine and Lithuania (Wasiuta, Wasiuta, 2017). The term “vatnyk” is usually understood as a definition that means the “Russkiy Mir” ideology supporters, because of ridicule and humiliation. The “Vatnyk” is a person, who foolishly and blindly loves his/her homeland – Russia, lacking its irony and critical thinking, needs a king, law and order. If his/her position is not supported, then the image of the “enemy,” “alien,” “the other” is formed; that is why “vatnyks” often hate the United States, praise Stalin and Putin with devotion. In their view, Russia has won all the wars in the world history. The political picture for them is quite clear: Russia will rule the world again (Wasiuta, 2019).

According to “vatnyk,” “the other” does not like Russia, does not respect the Russian language, culture, traditions, always wants to destroy the Russian Federation, and opposes all the proposals and intentions. The creation of “the other” image was made against the background of the European Union and the NATO demonization, the European integration course defamation, and the organization of a whole flow of disinformation about these international institutions (the EU identification with the same-sex marriage, manipulation of religious issues, etc.) (Moskalchuk, 2015).

The myth about the existence of a single spiritual space (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus – “Holy Russ”), and the presence of shared historical memory led to the updating of the “Russkiy Mir” concept. The Russian Orthodox Church, experts from leading agencies are involved in this ideological project supporting in the media. In news programs and political talk shows, the next words-markers are used: “spiritual bonds,”<sup>1</sup> “sacredness,” and “fraternal people” (*Modern Kremlin mythology*) (Putin’s speech broadcast by Russian media is an example: “In Crimea everything is interconnected with our shared history and pride. Here is the ancient Chersonesus, where the Holy Prince Vladimir received the baptism. His spiritual feat – conversion into Orthodoxy – defined a common cultural, value, civilization foundation that unites the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. In the Crimea there are the graves of Russian soldiers, owing to their courage in 1783 Crimea was taken under the Russian state. Crimea means Sevastopol, a legendary city, a city of great fate, a fortress city and the birthplace of the Russian Black Sea Navy. Crimea means Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov Mound and Sapun Mountain. Each of these places is sacred to us; these are symbols of Russian military glory and unprecedented valor.”) (*Modern Kremlin mythology*) (Fragment of the Crimean Speech by Vladimir Putin).”

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<sup>1</sup> Spiritual bonds – the ideology in Russia, meaning “traditional values” for its population and having gained its popularity since 2012. The Russian President – V. V. Putin in his state of the federation address, has used the present ideology. In fact, it is used as an ideological basis for the Russian military expansion, having become the Internet meme among critics of Putinism and “racism, and the concept of “spiritual bonds” or “staples,” – a popular object of ridicules and gibes.

Among other things, this mythology involved the constant struggle with external enemies, which include, first and foremost, the United States (liberals, capitalists, the threat to Russia's way of life and world order), Europe (the threat to Russian culture and spirituality) and fascism (the dehumanized image of the defeated enemy, out for revenge) (Moskalchuk, 2015). Therefore, when Russian propaganda, pursuing Russian geopolitical goals, identified the Ukrainians with all these enemies, it had corresponding consequences. In particular, this explains the support of fake authorities by the part of the population on occupied territories, as well as the percentage of the South and East inhabitants believing in Russian propaganda and perceiving the part of their own people as "the other/alien."

Pushing the idea of the "other/alien" within Ukraine and on the media landscape of our country through the Russian mass media information messages is implemented easier over the inhabitants of the eastern regions, who consider themselves more "like" Russians than residents of any other region of Ukraine. This demonstrates the separation of a large mass of Ukrainian citizens from the Ukrainian cultural and mental sphere. Naturally, these people were influenced mostly by the Soviet mythology, turned into the Russian one with some modifications.

### **RUSSIAN MASS MEDIA COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA INSTRUMENTS FOR THE PROPAGANDA OF "THE OTHER/ALIEN" IMAGE**

Classic patterns of communication manipulative technologies of "the other/alien" propagation in Russian mass media on the Ukrainian media landscape include the substitution of historical events, distortion of facts, creation of virtual information environment, actualization of Ukraine's problems, specific interpretation of historical events, covered by officials, prominent public and cultural figures, and the release of propaganda films, etc. Thus, communication manipulative technologies of the Russian mass media have become the main mechanisms and methods of the Russia's information expansion realizing towards Ukraine.

The info sphere has appeared to be the most vulnerable in the security sector of Ukraine as it reflected problems at the legislative and institutional levels. These processes are carried out under the influence of communication manipulative technologies, in particular, directly or indirectly through the Internet resources of the Russian media. At the same time, the specificity of Internet resources as a tool of hybrid warfare is that the disseminated information (fakes, fake news, outright lies, and bots' comments) creates an atmosphere of some tension, enmity, and provokes disrespect to the events in Ukraine. In this case, Internet resources in general and social networks in particular do not only create their own content, but also form the background of messages in the media, which creates the necessary public opinion (Komarchuk, 2019).

A Ukrainian scientist P. Alexandrov (Alexandrov, 2019) stresses the relevance for the Ukrainian media researchers to study the propaganda forms and methods of the parties to the Syrian conflict, since they are most acute in the context of the information warfare that accompanies the fighting in the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk/Luhansk regions 2014–2019. In this information warfare the concepts of "mass casual-



ties,” “ruins” and “a suffering child” as well as other technologies of media influence that allow to press on pain points of public consciousness provoking such feelings as fear for “the self,” anger, resentment and hatred of “the other/alien.” Those, involved in the military propaganda, manipulation and black PR, do not only use these techniques, but they are also gradually becoming an integral part of journalists’ tools and all politically active Internet users. The author emphasizes that the application of these visual concepts should not be considered as a priori a negative and unethical phenomenon. They can, on the one hand, draw attention to an acute problem, contribute to its resolution, perform mobilization and consolidation functions, and, on the other, incite enmity and facilitate escalation of the conflict. The vector depends on the motives of those who use them.

The Russian Federation information resources acted as an integral part of the propaganda state machine without which any hybrid warfare would have been much more difficult. Here are some of the most common media technologies in the Russian-Ukrainian information warfare on modeling the image of the “the other” as a threat (Alexandrov, 2019):

- Use of “the other” tokens containing aggressive threat connotations. Since the onset of hostilities in temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk/Luhansk regions, communication strategies of the Ukrainian, Russian and pro-Russian media have become much more radical. The corresponding words are used to refer to the Ukrainian military in the media stories: “fascists,” “Nazis,” “sylovyky” (“security officers”), “karateli” (“punishers”), on the other side, the image of “the other/alien” is depicted as “ordinary workers,” “miners,” “toilers.” A series of studies on “how media cover the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk/Luhansk regions events” captures the high level of hatred language in Russian, Ukrainian, and especially separatists’ media. In 2017, the non-governmental organization “Donetsk Institute of Information” presented its results of the mass media monitoring on both sides of the demarcation line (*The language*, 2017).

**Graph 1. “The Other/Alien” Association Cloud in the Russian Mass Media Hate Speech Vocabulary**



Source: Own elaboration.

According to our research, 20% of all the information submitted to the media in the temporarily occupied territory of Donetsk region contains language with signs of hostility. It involves such words as “occupiers,” “junta,” “ukrofascists” (a dismissive slang term for Ukrainians), “Bandera,” “fifth column,” “geyropa” (a dismissive slang term for Europe that protects the rights of sexual minorities), “vyshyvata” (a dismissive slang term for pseudo-patriots of Ukraine), “executioners,” “murderers of Russian-speaking people,” etc.). All of them form the image of the enemy from the Ukrainian state as a whole and its citizens.

Under these data, the level of hate speech is much lower – 2% in the mass media and social networks in Ukraine-controlled territory of the Donetsk region. It mainly involves such terms as “terrorists,” “occupiers,” “vatnyky,” “separiy” (separatists), “Kremlin puppets,” “Racist,” “mordor,” “luhandon” (a dismissive slang term for temporarily occupied territories), “colorado” (a dismissive slang term for supporters and activists of terrorist groups).

**Graph 2. “The Other/Alien” Association Cloud in the Ukrainian Mass Media Hate Speech Vocabulary**



Source: Own elaboration.

- Visual images of the excessive force used by “the others.” The footage of the destruction of residential quarters, schools, hospitals, burned-out high-rise buildings accompanied almost every story about the confrontation in the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk/Luhansk regions during the active fighting in the summer of 2014. Outright manipulative technologies of fear were used as well. Both Russian and Ukrainian media often used the same footage of the destruction, respectively, to accuse Ukrainian military forces or pro-Russian separatists in the inadequate use of force. The well-known First Channel story about “a crucified boy” is an example. The story, released in prime time on July 12, 2014, told about the alleged abuse of a child by Ukrainian soldiers in Sloviansk. Then, according to the “heroine” of the story Halina,

soldiers crucified a three-year-old boy on a bulletin board, and his mother was tied to a tank and driven around the square in front of locals. This fake was exposed very quickly.

- Visual images of “the other’s” military equipment movements. Therefore, there were reports in the media and social networks that tanks were moving to Kyiv to disperse protesters on the Maidan. During the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk/Luhansk regions conflict, display of photographs and video footage of the movement of tank columns became regular. The image of the exploitation of foreign (Western) machinery, allegedly arriving in Ukraine, is demonstrative in the Russian media.
- Images of the prohibited or super-destructive weapon use. Examples of such weapons are cluster munitions, when Ukrainian and Russian sides blamed each other in their use. Russian mass media have also often accused Ukrainian security forces of using phosphorous bombs (this kind of weapons was especially demonized by the Soviet propaganda, so the relevant media virus has a basis in the minds of elderly people).
- Images of the “secret conspiracy.” Russian media are replicating reports of a Western conspiracy against Russia, of the NATO troops secretly fighting in the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk/Luhansk regions; that in fact the US is waging a war against Russia by the hands of Ukraine, and so on. In the Ukrainian media, and especially on social networks, the following messages were popular: allegations of a conspiracy between the Presidents of Ukraine and Russia; a secret agreement between Russia, the West and the Ukrainian top elite on the partition of Ukraine; the deliberate destruction of voluntary battalions by the Ukrainian authorities by sending them to the very hell, etc.

### **COMMUNICATION AND CONTENT INSTRUMENTS TO ENHANCE MANIPULATIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

Manipulative propaganda shock technologies must constantly be fueled not only with fresh media stories from the war zone, but also require a constant increase in the degree of cruelty of the materials. As it is well known from general psychology that, when the scenes of violence are viewed on a regular basis, the audience reacts less and less to the violence seen on the screen and gets less sensitive.

A Ukrainian researcher V. Korol identifies the trends inherent in the Kremlin’s communication and content aggression while promoting ideas of threats from “the other/alien” as well, namely:

- creation of constant tensions in relations of Russians with Ukrainians, and with other nations, resulting in the aggressive media sustainable energies originating in communication environments of citizens from different countries;
- use of cultural, artistic, educational, sports and other non-military spheres to instill the defined pro-Putin content accents in the minds of the Ukrainians, based on components such as history and messianism (including the religious component). Basic historical myths are the mythologized history of the so-called Ancient Rus’

and the myth of the common origin of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians; the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire civilizational greatness; state power and ability of the Russian people; individual victory over Hitler and the salvation of European civilization. The next element of the imperial identity reconstruction is the desire to fill the Russia's historical image with the spiritual, messianic content. For this purpose, the "Russkiy Mir" concept was introduced into the socio-political discourse at the turn of the millennium. This concept is formed because of a common language and culture, historical memory, faith and devotion to the current Russian state (Karpchuk, 2019: 31–33);

- branded Russian-language periodicals and its dominant status, maintaining in all, mainly, eastern and southern regions of Ukraine;
- neurolinguistic modeling techniques having application to segmented controversial groups of social networks; manipulative practices of the various types of brutality in Russian television programs and some Ukrainian channels (Korol, 2016: 19–27).

To shape Russia's "the other/alien" image according to communication channels, Experts from the Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament Studies (CACDS) suggest dividing schematically information operations (Badrak, 2016):

- carried out in the form of the information provocation (disinformation) involving non-governmental organizations or the media. In the course of the 2014 warfare waged by Russia, any disinformation, introduced through mass media, mainly state-owned ones, was used extensively;
- conducted by scientific or academic structures. The scope of scientific structures includes primarily the history correction and its rewriting. In times of peak confrontation, Russian scientists, authorized by special services, announced that the Ukrainian language does not exist as such. Like the Ukrainians that are considered as the part of the Russian people;
- performed by official structures, including the first persons of the state. Every year with certain periodicity towards Ukraine, there were political information actions with the conditional names as gas, sugar, cheese, meat, candy warfares;
- followed after provocations with the participation of force (army) structures. The Marine Corps, landing on a beach in Feodosiia in 2006, and Russian regular violations of air borders by fighter aircrafts have repeatedly threatened the lives of many people;
- originated after the provocations organized by specially trained population groups, often by foreigners. Any imitation of political unrest and rallies to create specific coverage and imposition of biased perception of events were the most widespread in the modern hybrid warfare;
- initiated by politicians or public figures of foreign states ("opinion leaders" for specific focus groups);
- held at the level of international organizations and international conferences. Russia has always used international organizations with cynicism to impose its position on various issues. The UN and OSCE tribunals in this regard often resembled real battlefields. It is worth mentioning the careful preparation and processing of tasks by Russian participants of such battles;

- involved peculiar communication channels – books, films, specially created TV shows, and using monuments and suitable images of the past;
- aimed at “Creating and promoting ratings.” Any digit manipulation has always been part of the information warfares. Thus, the information campaign, conducted on the seizure and annexation of the Crimea, artificially raised Putin’s rating almost to Stalin’s one. Namely, manipulating public opinion, modern sociology represented the nationwide support to the Russian leader as the indicator, rolled over up to 88%.

## CONCLUSIONS

While studying the issue of communication and media technologies using by Russian mass media to create and effectively promote the image of an enemy, alien, and the other during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which began in 2014, we have concluded the following:

- psychological warfare is an integral part of an information warfare, its task is to produce hostility in the minds of the population, to disorient and spread misinformation the masses; to weaken beliefs; to intimidate with the image of an enemy, the other, alien;
- Russian interventions into the domestic and international affairs of other countries, including Ukraine, are conducted through the concept of the “Russkiy Mir.” By the propaganda and manipulation of the “Russkiy Mir” ideas, the image of the adversary of this idea – “the other” is formed, who does not perceive everything with the designation “Russian” as a priori positive and better, and doubts the correctness of such a position, and therefore wishes evil to supporters of the “Russkiy Mir”;
- information operations and the most widespread media technologies in the Russian-Ukrainian information warfare aimed at modeling the image of “the other” as threats are defined as information operations conducted with the participation of non-governmental organizations or the media, scientific or academic structures, officials. They also include top officials, politicians, or public figures of foreign countries (“opinion leaders” for specific focus groups) at the level of international organizations and conferences. Operations, indicated herein, are accompanied by the provocations with the participation of force (army) structures or specially prepared population groups, often from foreign countries, or both of them, with the use of specific communication channels – books, films, specially created television programs, the use of monuments and favorable images of the past, etc.;
- “Russkiy mir” mythologemes are the basis for the dissemination of “Russkiy Mir” ideas within Ukraine and their main “conductors” are the so-called “vatnyky” (the population that blindly believes the manipulative propaganda media without noticing how they become weapons of “soft power” in favor of the other state).

We see the solution to the problem in effective counteraction to fakes, manipulations, and propaganda by restricting access to the media, disseminating disinformation, in a well-cut strategy of the state and reasonable information policy of the authorities to counteract the Kremlin’s information and military aggression.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate what communication and media technologies and information operations are used by the mass media of the Russian Federation in relation to Ukraine to propagate the image of the “other/alien”. The methodology chosen for the work combines the application of the following methods and approaches: network analysis, SWOT-analysis, system, integrated and civilization approaches, system analysis, method of systematization and classification, methods of analysis, synthesis, objectivity, generalizations, analogies, case study, etc. The article explores the use of communication, media and information-psychological technologies by the Russian mass media to create and effectively promote the image of an enemy, alien, the other during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which began in 2014. The authors insist that the “*Russkiy Mir*” idea is promoted through the propaganda and manipulation resulting in the image of the adversary of this idea – “the other.” The “*Russkiy Mir*” foe does not perceive everything with the designation “Russian” as a priori positive and better, doubt the correctness of such a position, and therefore wishes evil to the supporters of the “*Russkiy Mir*”. Information operations and the most widespread media technologies in the Russian-Ukrainian information warfare are analyzed to model the image of “the other” as a threat. Prospects for further scientific researches are connected with the study of new scientific concepts that is some network-centric warfare, hybrid warfare, cyberwarfare, asymmetric warfare, undeclared information warfare, and others.

**Keywords:** “*Russkiy Mir*”, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, propaganda, information and psychological operations, “the other/alien”, manipulation, etc.

**KORZYSTANIE Z OBRAZU „INNY/OBCY”  
W STRATEGICZNYCH KOMUNIKACJACH FEDERACJI ROSYJSKIEJ  
PODCZAS KONFRONTACJI ROSYJSKO-UKRAIŃSKIEJ (2014–2021)**

**STRESZCZENIE**

Celem pracy jest zbadanie, jakie technologie komunikacyjne, medialne oraz operacje informacyjne są wykorzystywane przez środki masowego przekazu Federacji Rosyjskiej w odniesieniu do Ukrainy do propagowania wizerunku „innego/obcego”. Wybrana metodologia pracy łączy w sobie zastosowanie następujących metod i podejść: analiza sieciowa, analiza SWOT, podejście systemowe, zintegrowane i cywilizacyjne, analiza systemowa, metoda systematyzacji i klasyfikacji, metody analizy, synteza, obiektywność, uogólnienia, analogie, case-study itp. Artykuł dotyczy wykorzystania technologii komunikacyjnych, medialnych i informacyjno-psychologicznych przez rosyjskie środki masowego przekazu do kreowania i efektywnej promocji wizerunku innego wroga, obcego w czasie konfliktu ukraińsko-rosyjskiego, który rozpoczął się w 2014 r. Autorzy twierdzą, że to poprzez propagandę i manipulację promuje się ideę „Roskiego miru” oraz tworzy się wizerunek przeciwnika tej idei – „innego”, który nie postrzega wszystkiego z określeniem „rosyjski” jako *a priori* pozytywny i lepszy, poddaje wątpliwości słuszność takiego stanowiska, a zatem życzy zła zwolennikom „Roskiego miru”. Operacje informacyjne i najbardziej rozpowszechnione technologie medialne w rosyjsko-ukraińskiej wojnie informacyjnej są analizowane w celu modelowania obrazu „innego” jako zagrożenia. Perspektywy dalszych badań naukowych wiążą się z badaniem nowych koncepcji naukowych, czyli wojny sieciocentrycznej, wojny hybrydowej, cyberwojennej, asymetrycznej, niezgłoszonej wojny informacyjnej i innych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** „Russkij mir”, Federacja Rosyjska, Ukraina, propaganda, operacje informacyjne i psychologiczne, „Inny/Obcy”, manipulacja