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Comparative Analysis of the Propaganda of Political Leaders of Nazi Germany during the World War II and Modern Russia during the Aggression Against Ukraine

Master's Final Degree Project

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Supervisor

Kaunas, 2024

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Summary

The modern world can no longer be imagined without a large number of interconnected and interdependent technological influences that implement the mechanism of certain decisions. The relevance of the topic is due to the fact that the influence of propaganda on human thinking in social media, manipulation and inducement to illegal behavior is a serious threat to both the information and national security of states, which requires detailed study for possible prediction and counteraction. During the work on the project, previous studies on this topic were analyzed. Similar issues were studied by: Wang, Guess, Lyons, Izuma, Haslam, Reicher, Eder, Hollander, Turowetz, Mitschke, Laurens, Ballot, Götz, Cotterill, Huynh, and others. However, the influence of propaganda in social media remains an insufficiently studied threat to the information security of the state, which does not allow it to be fully predicted or adequately counteracted. The first chapter provides a theoretical overview and analyze basic concepts such as misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, propaganda, conformism. For a better understanding of the nature of the influence of propaganda, the results of classical and modern psychological and sociological experiments and studies were studied: Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment, Asch's experiments on conformity, an experiment with Koltech students and reference groups, Götz's experiment with destruction Zhukov, a study among American Twitter users about the possibility of changing political preferences. After this, a generalized analytical scheme for the functioning of propaganda was developed. It has been established that the list of main elements of propaganda includes: uniting a group to activate conformal behavior, creating the illusion of an external threat and dehumanizing the enemy, persuasion in the form of a consistent shift in the scope of the morally permissible spectrum of public opinion, limitation of information space. The second chapter describes the methodology. Based on the proposed scheme, the third chapter carried out a comparative analysis of propaganda in the periods before and after the advent of social media, using the example of propaganda in Nazi Germany (mid-20th century) and in modern Russia (early 21st century). It is concluded that after the digitalization of society, the general scheme for constructing large-scale propaganda campaigns has remained the same, but the dissemination of information in the modern world is faster and reaches a larger audience, including in the international arena. Due to natural psychological and biological mechanisms, most people tend to be influenced by propaganda, despite access to various sources of information thanks to the development of the Internet and social media.

Santrauka

Šiuolaikinis pasaulis nebeįsivaizduojamas be daugybės tarpusavyje susijusių ir tarpusavyje priklausomų technologinių įtakų, įgyvendinančių tam tikrų sprendimų mechanizmą. Temos aktualumą lemia tai, kad propagandos įtaka žmogaus mąstymui socialinėje žiniasklaidoje, manipuliacijos ir neteisėto elgesio skatinimas yra rimta grėsmė tiek informacijai, tiek valstybių nacionaliniam saugumui, todėl būtina išsamiai ištirti galimą prognozavimą ir priešpriešą. Vykdant projektą buvo analizuojami ankstesni tyrimai šia tema. Panašius klausimus nagrinėjo: Wang, Guess, Lyons, Izuma, Haslam, Reicher, Ederis, Hollander, Turowetz, Mitschke, Laurens, Ballot, Götz, Cotterill, Huynh ir kt. Tačiau propagandos įtaka socialiniuose tinkluose tebėra nepakankamai ištirta grėsmė valstybės informaciniam saugumui, neleidžianti jos iki galo prognozuoti ar adekvačiai atremti. Pirmame skyriuje pateikiama teorinė apžvalga ir apibrėžiamos pagrindinės sąvokos, tokios kaip dezinformacija, klaidinga informacija, propaganda, konformizmas. Siekiant geriau suprasti propagandos įtakos prigimtį, buvo tiriami klasikinių ir šiuolaikinių psichologinių bei sociologinių eksperimentų ir studijų rezultatai: Zimbardo Stanfordo kalėjimo eksperimentas, Ascho eksperimentai apie konformiškumą, eksperimentas su Koltech studentais ir nuoroda. grupių, Götzo eksperimentas su destrukcija Žukovas, amerikiečių Twitter vartotojų tyrimas apie galimybę keisti politines nuostatas. Po to buvo sukurta apibendrinta analitinė propagandos veikimo schema. Nustatyta, kad į pagrindinių propagandos elementų sąrašą įtraukta: grupės suvienijimas konforminiam elgesiui suaktyvinti, sukurti išorinės grėsmės iliuziją ir nužmoginti priešą, įtikinėjimas nuosekliai keičiant moraliai leistino viešosios nuomonės spektro sritį, informacinės erdvės apribojimas. Antrame skyriuje aprašoma metodika. Remiantis pasiūlyta schema, trečiajame skyriuje atlikta lyginamoji propagandos analizė laikotarpiais prieš ir po socialinių tinklų atsiradimo, pasitelkiant propagandos nacistinėje Vokietijoje (XX amžiaus vidurys) ir šiuolaikinėje Rusijoje (XXI amžiaus pradžia) pavyzdį). Daroma išvada, kad skaitmenizavus visuomenę bendra plataus masto propagandinių kampanijų konstravimo schema išliko ta pati, tačiau informacijos sklaida šiuolaikiniame pasaulyje yra greitesnė ir pasiekia didesnę auditoriją, taip pat ir tarptautinėje arenoje. Dėl natūralių psichologinių ir biologinių mechanizmų dauguma žmonių yra linkę paveikti propagandos, nepaisant interneto ir socialinių tinklų plėtros prieiga prie įvairių informacijos šaltinių.

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Misinformation – dissemination of false information without the intent to cause any harm.

Disinformation – dissemination of false information with the aim of causing any harm.

Malinformation – dissemination of truthful information that is not intended for the public sphere with the purpose of causing harm.

Propaganda – dissemination of true or false information by certain individuals, groups, organizations, political forces, which is used to manipulate the opinions and actions of other people and groups.

Cyber troops – state-funded organizations that conduct activities aimed at the online dissemination of false and misleading content with the aim of destabilizing and manipulating populations and groups of people.

Troll farm (trolls from Olgino, Kremlinbots) – group of user provocateurs (so-called "trolls"), organized by the Internet Research Agency and funded by the government of the Russian Federation, who, for payment, write messages and comments under the news of online publications and/or on social networks for the purpose of spreading Russian propaganda.

Conformity – format of a person's behavior in which a change in beliefs, judgments, assessments, and behavior occurs in accordance with the norms and preferences of the reference social group.

Introduction

Social media has an impact on our lives, including beyond the digital world. The emergence of social media has led to a change in the key characteristics of the media, which have become more democratic and decentralized. Information power is no longer concentrated only in the hands of politicians and owners of large media publications. Anyone can create an account on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or another online platform, express their opinion and contribute to the spread of information.

Such changes have sharply increased the influence of society, public organizations, and public opinion on political and social processes. But in addition to the benefits that the development of the Internet and social media as part of it has brought to humanity, we also need to assess the emerging new risks. Many political actors saw in this an opportunity and even a necessity to exert manipulative information influence in order to form "beneficial" narratives in society. The digitalization of society has led to the creation of an ideal tool for influencing and destabilizing the population through the spread of propaganda and disinformation.

One example that proves this is the information boom during the COVID-19 pandemic: WHO Director Tedros Ghebreyesus (2020) emphasized the importance of combating not only the epidemic, but also the "infodemic" - an overabundance of information (both true and false) that makes it much more difficult to identify reliable and reliable sources and recommendations (WHO, 2020). Misinformation that spread so rapidly and massively on social media that the pandemic was caused by migrants and the development of 5G networks, the spread of anti-vaccine narratives and conspiracy theories about a secret government whose purpose is to control population growth have all contributed to the worsening of the critical situation in the country. time of outbreak (EUvsDisinfo, 2020).

Although examples of the spread of false information can be found in almost any area, propaganda in politics can have the most dangerous and widespread consequences not only for an individual, but for all of humanity as a whole. At the same time, it has been established that false information in the political sphere spreads more widely and faster; such news becomes more "viral" compared to disinformation in any other area (Guess and Lyons, 2020).

Active propaganda on the territory of the Russian Federation has led to the fact that almost 70% of the population of this country supports the war against Ukraine (the so-called "special military operation"), even after a year of large-scale hostilities and tragic losses on both sides (Russian Field, 2023a). Moreover, according to the Federation of American Scientists, Russia is supposedly the leader in the number of nuclear warhead inventors (Federation of American Scientists, 2023).

Propaganda is not a new concept; this method of influencing people has been used long before the advent of social media. For example, the Reich Ministry of Education and Propaganda played a significant role in promoting the ideas of Nazism in Europe. Joseph Goebbels, who served as Minister of Propaganda, already then effectively used manipulative techniques with which the government of Nazi Germany influenced the thinking and behavior of a huge number of people.

Of course, it looks tempting to explain all historical crimes, including those associated with attempts to exterminate entire peoples, simply by the presence of power in a dictator. But one cannot fail to take into account the prerequisites due to which such a person gained and maintains his power, the mechanisms of our psyche that dictate us to obey orders, commands or requests. To create strategies

to combat emerging threats, it is important to understand how and why it is possible - to instill in a person this or that information, to force a person to act contrary to his interests or universal morality, how a social group can influence an individual and what role what role social media play in this process.

The relevance of the topic and this study is confirmed by the global transnational nature of the development of social networks. According to forecasts, the volume of data that is created, transmitted and consumed by Internet users will reach 180 zettabytes within 2 years (Statista, 2023a). A significant part of this content is news and information posts that influence people, create a certain "picture of the world," and lead to changes both at the local and global levels. Considering the difficult political situation on the world stage, especially after the start of a full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2022, identifying mechanisms of information influence for the further search for new approaches and tools for preventing possible threats is now important.

The scientific novelty of the topic lies in the fact that despite the variety of social, psychological and neurobiological research, at the moment there is no universal comprehensive formula with which to describe the work of propaganda. In addition, previous studies have not taken into account the changes that the digitalization of society and the spread of social media have brought to modern information warfare.

Statement of the research problem. Contemporary events in the political arena around the world show the risks associated with today's increasing division and polarization of society. Social media has proven to be an ideal tool for interested actors to spread their influence. However, the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of subordination of individuals and social groups, including in the digital environment, hinders the development and implementation of effective means of combating the negative influence of propaganda and disinformation.

The hypothesis that will be tested in this work is that there is a basic mechanism for the functioning of propaganda (propaganda technologies), which was used before the digitalization of society and was adapted after the emergence of social media.

The aim of the project is a comparative interpretative analysis of political propaganda of the Nazi Germany during the World War II and modern Russia during the aggression against Ukraine.

Objectives of the research:
- Critical analysis of the main features and functioning of propaganda.
- Development of the analytical framework for the comparative analysis of political propaganda.
- Interpretative comparative analysis of the propaganda of political leaders of Nazi Germany during the World War II and modern Russia during the aggression against Ukraine.

The research methods. The main scientific methods that I used in this work are literature review, descriptive analysis, comparative analysis, synthesis, and generalization. The combination of these methods makes it possible to achieve the set goals and objectives of the project. An integrated research review approach was used to find relevant scientific articles and studies. Google Scholar, Scopus and other databases were applied for the search.

The structure of the project. In the first chapter of this work, I will analyze the various existing points of view on the main concepts that will be studied. Also, in the first chapter well-known 20th century

psychological experiments on conformity and obedience (Solomon Asch, Philip Zimbardo, Stanley Milgram and others), as well as modern interpretations of such experiments (Izuma, Adolphs, Götz and others) will be analyzed in the context of the new online information space social media to create a generalized analytical scheme for the functioning of propaganda (conceptual model). The second chapter will describe the research methods and methodology. Based on the conceptual model, Chapter 3 will conduct a comparative analysis of the recorded facts of propaganda that were disseminated by Nazi Germany and modern Russia in selected periods before and after the emergence of social media: World War II and Russia's war against Ukraine.

1. Theoretical overview

News was first read in newspapers, then listened to on the radio and watched on TV, now they are read, listened and watched on the Internet. In the 19th century, this new source of information played an increasingly larger role in our lives. Timely information can both contribute to the outbreak of war and, conversely, raise the fight for peace. British tycoon Alfred Harmsworth, whose newspapers fueled anti-German sentiment before World War I, was said to have "done more since the Kaiser than any man alive to bring about the war" (Eidelman, 2018).

1.1. Understanding propaganda

For further work, it is necessary to analyze such concepts as misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, fake news, propaganda, what are the similarities and differences between these phenomena. When we hear these terms, it is obvious that we are talking about the dissemination of some information, opinions, messages, theories or other content, usually through the media, but also through other sources of information. However, at the moment there is no consensus in the scientific community regarding what should be understood by these concepts and how to use them.

Most often, the concept of "Fake news" is understood as a false information that imitates media content (Wang, McKee, Torbica and Stuckler, 2019). This term was probably first used in 1925 in Harper's Magazine in the article "Fake News and the Public," which described how news sources were increasingly spreading fake news (Wang et al., 2019). Of course, with digitalization and the advent of social media, this phenomenon has the opportunity to grow on a scale and at a speed that was previously difficult to imagine.

Although some authors continue to use the term "fake news" in their works (Das and Ahmed, 2022; Vamanu, 2019) and in 2017 this combination of words even received the "Collins Dictionary Word of the Year" award (Vamanu, 2019), many researchers (Shahi, Dirkson and Majchrzak, 2021; Wang et al., 2019), as well as The Council of Europe and the UK Parliament in their reports, agree that this term does not accurately reflect the essence of the processes and can be perceived ambiguously (House of Commons of the UK Parliament, 2018; The Council of Europe, 2017).

Considered that it is more correct to use the terms "misinformation", "disinformation", and also "malinformation". According to the Council of Europe report "Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making," the main differences between these concepts are the reliability and purpose of disseminating this information (The Council of Europe, 2017).

Misinformation can be defined as the dissemination of false information without the intent to cause any harm (Das and Ahmed, 2022). Typically, the term misinformation is applied when false information is spread accidentally, unintentionally (Shahi et al., 2021), or does not have the direct purpose of ideologically influencing the target group.

One example of a massive manifestation of misinformation in social media is the publications of Macedonian teenagers in support of Trump during the 2016 presidential election (Guess and Lyons, 2020). Several dozen young people decided to make extra money from Facebook subscribers. To increase traffic to sites and make money through the Google AdSense service (a contextual advertising tool that allows you to get money when users view a target web page), they created fake

publications with bright, enticing, shocking "sensational" headlines. Since pro-Trump headlines generated the highest number of users during that period, such posts began to be used more often. This has led to more than a hundred pro-Trump websites popping up with false information.

At the same time, disinformation and malinformation are the dissemination of information with the purpose of causing harm. The difference between these two concepts is that in the case of disinformation, false information is disseminated, and in the case of malinformation, true information is disseminated, which is not intended for the public sphere. For example, classified information such as the location of military installations, or private confidential information.

Of course, the difficulty lies in determining the reliability of this or that information. Compared to traditional media, social media technologies have made this task even more difficult. Shahi (2021) proposes replacing the "reliability" criterion with the "verifiability" criterion to determine the falsity of information (Shahi et al., 2021).

Guess and Lyons (2020) also suggest that reliable information should be defined not only as information that can be verified, but also as information that is supported by reasonable evidence from experts or authorities. For example, the level of GDP growth established in official statistics (Guess and Lyons, 2020).

Also, information may be partially false to varying degrees, when only part of such information is untrue. Studies have shown that in cases where information is completely false or completely true, problems with establishing the facts usually do not arise. However, in the case of an ambiguous range of information evaluation, when false information is wrapped in one or more real facts, or vice versa, a false statement is added to a true story, the process of fact checking becomes very difficult (Lim, 2018).

It is not always possible to determine the purpose for which information is disseminated. In such cases, it is proposed to use the broader term misinformation, implying a presumption of innocence (Wang et al., 2019). At the same time, any organized attempts to disseminate false information by political actors both within the country and abroad must be considered as disinformation (Guess and Lyons, 2020).

Unlike previous concepts, propaganda can be both false and true information that is used to humiliate and devalue opposing opinions. Propaganda is usually used in politics to convince people to support one or another political force (Guess and Lyons, 2020). But there is another opinion, according to which propaganda, in particular Russian propaganda, is used not so much for persuasion and promotion of some conventional "truth" (opinion, narrative) in support of a certain political force, but rather to put people in a state of "epistemic anarchy" is a state where they doubt what to believe and become unable to critically evaluate facts (Dawson and Innes, 2019). Disinformation can be part of a propaganda campaign, but propaganda uses a much broader range of tools and has a large, long-term perspective.

For example, one of the tools that Russia uses to spread propaganda is the "troll farm" organized by the Internet Research Agency (Guess and Lyons, 2020). Troll farm is a group of provocateur users (so-called "trolls") who, for a fee, while in specially equipped offices, write messages and comments under the news of online publications and/or on social networks in order to spread Russian propaganda. Other names are also sometimes used: trolls from Olgino, Kremlinbots, since the main

office of the Internet Research Agency is located in Olgino (district of St. Petersburg, Russia) and the organization's activities are funded by the government of the Russian Federation. Another common name for this and similar organizations is "cyber troops". Bradshaw and Howard (2018) define them as government-sponsored organizations whose activities involve the online distribution of false and other misleading content in order to manipulate people (Bradshaw and Howard, 2018a).

Although the troll factory became especially noticeable after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the existence of such an organization and its activities had been known for a long time. In the Forbes article "Putin's New Weapon In The Ukraine Propaganda War: Internet Trolls" (2014) already in 2014, the author describes his experience of communicating with trolls, and points out that each troll had to create 50 publications, tweets, and maintain 6 accounts on Facebook and 10 on Twitter every day (Forbes, 2014).

The troll factory is aimed not only at Ukraine, but also interferes in the information space of other countries to promote Russian interests and weaken, polarize and destabilize the population of other countries. For example, the escalation of the Black Lives Matter movement through the publication of videos of police violence, and the rallying of Americans against refugees through the publication of false statements that the government will take land from co-owners to give to migrants (Helmus et al., 2018). Or Russia's interference in the US elections in 2016 (Guess and Lyons, 2020), as a result of which Twitter had to recognize almost 4 thousand accounts as related to Russian propaganda activities and publish the corresponding information (Twitter, 2018). However, Facebook groups that were identified as sources of Russian propaganda and targeted US users included at least 15 million Americans (Helmus et al., 2018).

Propaganda campaigns also use bots-automated (highly automated) accounts, which combine human work and automated programs to varying degrees (Hindman and Barash, 2018). For example, a person creates content, which is then automatically distributed using such account programs. Automated accounts can imitate the actions of real users - follow, repost, like, etc. This helps increase the amount of content published and expand your reach. According to a study by scientists from Oxford University, about 45% of content on Twitter in Russia is distributed using such highly automated accounts (Woolley and Howard, 2017). A relatively small number of accounts (likely bots) have been found to disseminate the majority of disinformation content on social media (Guess and Lyons, 2020).

Recently, technologies related to artificial intelligence have been especially actively used to conduct propaganda campaigns on social media. Such artificially generated or altered images, videos, and audio recordings (deepfakes) greatly increase the potential for falsification of reality (Ofitsinsky, Isak and Slipetsky, 2023). Although the idea of manipulating altered audiovisual objects is not new and has been used before, the development of artificial intelligence technologies in this environment has aggravated the problems associated with the spread of disinformation, especially in the political sphere. For example, when during an experiment on the influence of deepfakes on the formation of political positions, participants were shown a video of a politician that had been altered using artificial intelligence, only 15% of participants expressed doubts about the authenticity of this video. Every year, deepfakes become more realistic, the process of creating them becomes easier, and their identification becomes more difficult (Pawelec, 2022). In this regard, some politicians are already raising the question of the need for regulatory regulation of the functioning of artificial intelligence.

Social ideological conformism - changing beliefs and behavior in accordance with the attitudes of the reference group - is one of the powerful tools of a totalitarian state in the fight against any opponents. The necessary internal cohesion is achieved through ideology. Bringing all human values to ideological uniformity gives rise to the development of conformism throughout society. The peculiarity of totalitarian states is that in them ideology is identified with power and is completely in the service of the existing regime (Mysovskikh, 2023). Often, ideology does not even seek to hide its essence, but, on the contrary, positions itself as a true worldview and replaces social reality. At the same time, the government invests all the resources necessary for its existence into ideological activity.

The subjects of manipulation can be various actors, such as politicians, elites, activists, interest groups, etc. Scientific publications offer different definitions that explain the concept of "elite," but in general it is a minority group that influences the majority and has decisive power. These can be both groups, actors who were elected through legal procedures (elections, voting), and those who received their power in another way. For example, financially influential corporations or groups that came to power through illegitimate, unprocedural means. Some representatives of such influence groups have psychopathic traits: for example, Adolf Hitler, who won the democratic elections (Szałek, 2013). The manipulative influence of such interested actors can lead to a decrease in democracy, restricting the freedom of large groups of people.

The result of the influence of propaganda and the purpose of such information campaigns may be to strengthen the division of society, polarize the population, and fuel extremist, radical sentiments and groups. Even simply discussing fake news reduces the public's trust in the media and also impairs people's ability to recognize truthful information (Guess and Lyons, 2020).

One example of the consequences of the influence of Russian propaganda, as a state with elements of a totalitarian regime, is support for a full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. This ideology is consolidated not only within Russian society, but also spreads in the international arena. Although other countries generally support Ukraine and condemn Russia's aggression, this position is not stable and may change. This is happening both because the population is tired of rising prices and the flow of refugees from Ukraine, and as a result of Russia's ideological information operations.

Paul and Matthews (2016) call the information influence tactics used by the Russian Federation "the firehose of falsehood": information is distributed quickly, using a huge amount of content and sources. At the same time, the information is half-truths, and often outright lies, and is presented inconsistently, using multiple repetitions of the same narratives. Such tactics are aimed, among other things, at confusing and shocking the population and creating so-called mental fatigue (Paul and Matthews, 2016). But one of the main tasks of such information campaigns remains manipulation and influence in order to subordinate significant groups of people to the interests of certain political actors.

It is worth noting that at the beginning of 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine, the Kremlin more than tripled its spending on media. In the first quarter, 17.4 billion rubles were spent, and almost ¾ of this amount was spent in March, immediately after the invasion of Russian troops (OECD, 2022). In total, in 2022, Russia spent 111.52 billion rubles on the media (Russian Federation Law № 390-FZ, 2021). But in 2023, this amount increased even more and 119.2

billion rubles were allocated for the media from the budget of the Russian Federation (Russian Federation Law № 466-FZ, 2022).
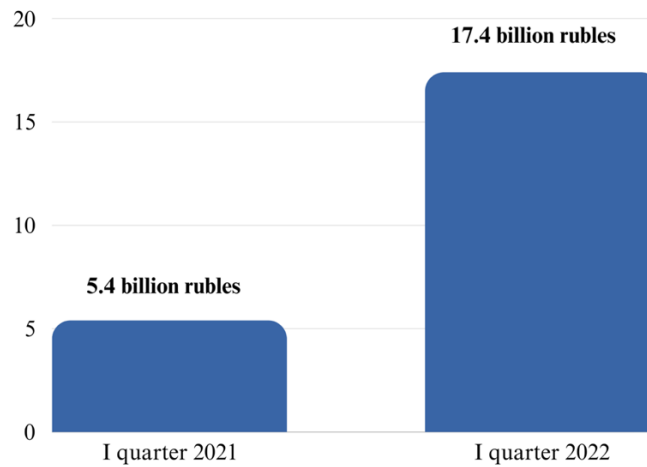
Fig. 1. Russia's media spending before and after the start of a full-scale war in Ukraine

The Kremlin's disinformation campaigns are successfully reaching a global audience: 52% of French residents believe at least one reason given by Russia for the attack on Ukraine (IFOP, 2022). About half of the population of Cyprus and Bulgaria (52% and 46% respectively) believe that Russia bears no responsibility at all for starting the war (Eurobarometer, 2022).

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit (2023), after one year of war, Russia has already been able to influence the position of some countries. Thus, Turkey, Colombia and Qatar adhered to a pro-Western position at the beginning of the war, but already in 2023 they switched to a neutral position. The number of Russia's allies increased from 29 to 35, Bolivia, Iran, Mali, South Africa, Uganda, Burkina Faso joined this group (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023).
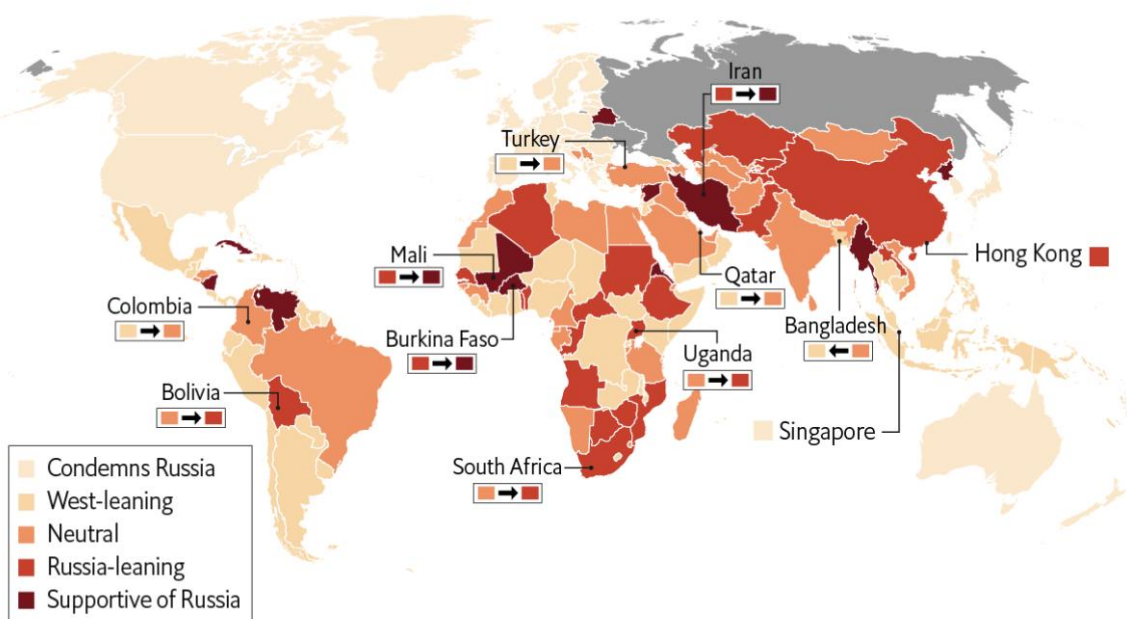
Fig. 2. Changing positions of countries regarding support for Russia during 1 year of war against Ukraine (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023)

The influence of Russian propaganda in the form of intimidation and manipulation is also manifested in the establishment by Ukraine's Western partners of restrictions on the use of weapons provided by them for attacks on the territory of the Russian Federation (Ofitsinsky et al., 2023). This could force the Kremlin to withdraw its troops from Ukraine. Instead, Ukrainian defense forces, during the summer counter-offensive in 2023, were forced to storm defense lines that had been built by the invaders for over a year.

Unfortunately, one of the consequences of this war, including the information war, is human casualties. According to The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as of September 2023, 9,614 deaths were confirmed among the civilian population of Ukraine alone, and another 17,535 people were injured. Also, in the period after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 until 2021, more than 14 thousand people died. However, the OHCHR (2023) clarified that the actual figures may be even higher (Statista, 2023b). Every day, Ukrainian soldiers die in battles at the front.

## 1.2. How and why propaganda works

Despite the large number of studies on the topic of propaganda, including propaganda in social media, at the moment insufficient attention is paid to the psychological and biological prerequisites and reasons for such an active impact of propaganda on large groups of people. It was established that there was no single concept with which to describe the general scheme of the functioning of propaganda.

Such a scheme or conceptual model can be developed based on the results of an analysis of psychological and social experiments that were conducted in the second half of the 20st century, as well as their modern analogues. In particular, for this objective I selected Milgram's obedience to authority experiments (1962), Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment (1971), Asch's experiments on conformity (1951), an experiment with Koltech students and reference groups (2013), Götz's experiment with the destruction of beetles (2023), a study among American Twitter users about the possibility of changing political preferences will be studied (2018). Also, in the context of the functioning of propaganda, the concepts of the Overton Window of Political Possibilities and the Echo Chamber were analyzed. Previous research in this direction was carried out by Haslam, Reicher, Götz, Mitschke, Eder, Hollander, Turowetz, Laurens, Ballot, Cotterill, Huynh, Izuma and others.

1.2.1. Group connections and propaganda

In the second half of the 20th century, many scientists tried to understand the phenomenon of Nazism and the prerequisites for its emergence. It was not clear what features of the human psyche allowed cruel ideas about the need to destroy entire nations to arise and spread so massively during the Second World War. Researchers conducted social and psychological experiments on the mechanisms of decision-making and manipulating people's behavior, trying to find out how independent a person is in making decisions. The results of these experiments are of interest even now, in the context of modern events and the development of digital technologies.

Humans, as social beings, have a high level of intragroup cooperation and intergroup competition (Haslam and Reicher, 2017; Dan, 2022). A person's individual decisions are largely determined by the behavior of the people around him. Conformal behavior is a special form of social influence in which an individual changes his beliefs, assessments and behavior in accordance with the norms of a certain social (reference) group (Klyucharev, Zubarev and Shestakova, 2014). Such features of human perception and reaction are one of the basic reasons why propaganda can be so effective.

Many scientists of our time have repeatedly analyzed the results of a series of experiments by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram (Haslam, Reicher, Götz, Hollander, Turowetz and others), who was one of the first to show that in certain circumstances an ordinary average person can deliberately harm another person, even if it goes beyond the boundaries of his moral values and reasonable necessity.

In the early 60s, Stanley Milgram conducted a series of experiments to study such characteristics of people as obedience and following orders. Representatives of various age and socio-economic groups of the population, people with different levels of education and different life experiences took part in the experiments.

Before the experiment began, the experimenter told the subject a cover story that the experiment was supposedly being conducted to study the effect of punishment stimuli on memory and learning. The design of the experiment consisted of the subject taking the role of "teacher" and reading lists of some pairs of words to a second person with the role of "student". The student had to remember these words and repeat them. For every "mistake", as well as lack of answer, the teacher had to apply punishment to the student - electric shock. In the first, classic version of the experiment, the teacher and student were in different rooms. To punish, the teacher pressed one of the toggle switches on special equipment, which, according to legend, supplied the student with an electric current of a certain voltage. At the same time, after each incorrect answer by the student, the teacher had to increase the voltage level. The last toggle switch showed the highest current discharge of 450 volts and had a warning sign about danger. During the experiment, the student gave incorrect answers, reported health problems, shouted and demanded that the experiment be stopped. After some time, the student stopped giving any signals, feigning loss of consciousness or death. Despite this, on average, 50% to 65% of subjects completed the experiment and used a toggle switch, which they believed gave the student electric shocks at a maximum voltage of 450 volts (Haslam and Reicher, 2017). Of course, in reality, nothing threatened the student, and during the experiment, it was not the properties of the "student's" memory that were studied, but the mechanisms of the "teacher's" subordination to the experimenter's demands and the stated experimental conditions (The Milgram Experiment, 1962).

There are different interpretations of the results of the Milgram experiments (1962) and explanations of the psychological decision-making processes of the subjects. Milgram himself and some of his followers adhered to the version of the "agent state", when a person, obeying the order of authority, is removed from responsibility and transfers responsibility for the consequences of his actions to another person (Götz, Mitschke and Eder, 2023; Orlov, 2022; Hollander and Turowetz, 2017).

However, during the experiment, the subjects were not just indifferent performers; they clearly showed emotional reactions and difficulty making decisions, which contradicts this approach.

To confirm that people have internal conflict when fulfilling demands that go beyond their moral standards, Götz et al. (2023) conducted an experiment similar in design to Milgram's experiment

(1962) but with additional control conditions. Participants in the experiment were told a cover story that during the experiment they would allegedly study "what destruction feels like". Participants had to destroy living and non-living objects in a special electric coffee grinder: coffee beans, dead beetles and live beetles. In fact, the coffee grinder had a special design, and the beetles fell into a compartment invisible to the participant (according to the authors, not a single beetle was harmed and was released into the wild after the experiment). As in Milgram's experiment (1962), if the participant refused to destroy the object, the experimenter gave several verbal nudges. Throughout the experiment, Tonic skin conductance levels (SCL) were measured for all participants.

71.0% of participants obeyed the experimental conditions, the experimenter's requirements and destroyed all living beetles. These participants showed a sustained increase in tonic SCL, demonstrating the presence of a stress response and internal conflict. The physiological arousal of participants who refused to destroy living beetles, as well as the state during the destruction of inanimate objects, did not change. Importantly, participants who destroyed live beetles reported high levels of agency and responsibility for killing beetles (Götz et al., 2023).

Repeatedly, people who committed crimes as part of groups and organizations (religious, political, etc.) tried to justify their actions with so-called "brainwashing," "mind control," or "mental slavery". And it has also been repeatedly proven that such statements are unscientific, and members of these groups and organizations do not lose their free will and make their own decisions (Introvigne, Folk, Frisk, Palmer and Richardson, 2018).

Thus, it can be argued that even in a situation where pressure and manipulation are applied, the person does not go into an offline obedience and following orders mode. Even during the Milgram experiment (1962) and the beetle killing experiment (2023), there were a significant number of subjects who at some point decided not to continue the experiment. However, given that most of the subjects went against their will and their moral values, there are probably certain mechanisms of the human psyche that, in a certain context, prompt a person to change his thinking, reaction, and behavior.

With the help of a common conceptual model it will be possible to conduct a comparative analysis of propaganda: before and after the emergence of social media. For comparative analysis we selected Adolf Hitler's speech, which he delivered to the German Parliament on January 30, 1939 in honor of his 6-year anniversary of coming to power, Putin's speeches on September 21, 2022 announcing partial mobilization, and on February 21, 2023 with an address to the Federal Assembly, and other cases of dissemination of propaganda which were used by the ruling party of Nazi Germany during the Second World War and by the government of modern Russia during the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014-2023.

When analyzing examples of propaganda in the Russian Federation, the main attention was paid to the use of social media as a tool for disseminating propaganda. This will allow us to assess which elements and characteristics of propaganda have changed with the advent of social media, and which do not depend on digitalization. In turn, such a comparative analysis will help in the future to better understand and develop strategies to combat the possible negative consequences of the influence of propaganda.

The approach to obedience with transfer of responsibility described above does not explain why a person decides to obey one subject - the experimenter, and ignore another - the student, who demands

to immediately stop the experiment (Haslam and Reicher, 2018). In modern society, a person is also most often faced with several different sources of information that provide different information and narratives. Especially such pluralism of information sources arose with the spread of access to the Internet and social media. Therefore, it is so important to understand the mechanism of preferring certain sources and information while simultaneously ignoring others.

According to another approach, the subject continues to comply with the experimental conditions not because of passive submission, but due to a sense of social identity (Haslam and Reicher, 2017). The experimenter in this case represents a group of scientists, emphasizes the importance of the experiment for science, so the subject identifies himself with this group and receives ideological justification for his actions. The authors of this version refer to the fact that subjects in Milgram's experiment (1962) are more likely to continue the experiment when the experimenter encourages them to cooperate for the sake of the experiment, but not when he gives a direct order. It was the participants' level of identification with the experimenter, rather than with the student, that showed a positive correlation ($r = 0.56$) with the maximum voltage level that participants applied in the teacher role. The more the participant identified with the experimenter (we), the more he proceeded to use higher voltage shocks (Haslam and Reicher, 2017). Thus, social identification with the experimenter ensures compliance with his destructive demands (Götz et al., 2023).

During an experiment, when addressing a subject, the experimenter often replaces "you" with "we," confirming the similarity and common goal. At first, the experimenter used the word "we" to mean "psychologists" (psychologists developed the theory), and he also used "we" to refer to those who are conducting this research. After this, the experimenter informed the subject that the results obtained during this experiment would be important for the entire community of psychologists, thus including the subject in this group. In the future, the word "we" is systematically used when the subject has doubts about the need to continue the experiment ("we" must continue), thus the experimenter included the subject in his group. The experimenter also excludes from the group formed with the subject the person who played the role of the student, pointing to him using the word "he" - although "he" does not want, "we" must continue (Laurens and Ballot, 2021).

In the context of such self-identification of the subject with the group (psychologists, people who conduct an important experiment), Milgram's experiment (1962) does not show obedience to an order, but the desire to achieve a certain common goal. Laurens and Ballot (2021) deny the existence of dualism in the interactions between subject and experimenter in an experiment. In the case of including participants in one group, both the one who says that "we must perform a certain action" and the one who performs this action are essentially different actors of the same process, but with different functions (Laurens and Ballot, 2021). Moreover, such joint action is characterized by role asymmetry (Götz et al., 2023).

This paradigm was later confirmed in the famous Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment (1971). During this experiment, 24 volunteers were randomly divided into 2 groups: "prisoners" and "guards". All participants were placed in specially created conditions simulating a "prison" (on the territory of the Department of Psychology at Stanford University). Although the experiment was designed to last 2 weeks and the "guards" were prohibited from using physical violence against the "prisoners," after 6 days Zimbardo stopped the experiment for ethical reasons due to the too high level of cruelty.

Among the "guards" in Zimbardo's Experiment (1971), there were 3 groups of people: "evaders" who personally did not apply punishment (did not commit murder), those who followed the rules and never refused to carry out orders, as well as "sadists" who enjoyed their dominant role and power over victims (Cotterill, 2023).

But even people who do not have sadistic tendencies, in the absence of the need to use cruelty, can commit acts that contradict their morality.

In his probably autobiographical essay "Shooting an Elephant" (1936), the famous English writer George Orwell describes the story of an English officer in British Burma (a British colony in southern Asia until 1948). The essay tells about a domestic elephant, which, during the period of musth (sexual arousal), broke the chain, crushed one local villager and ran away, and the main character went in search of him. After he found the elephant outside the village, it was obvious that the period of musth was over and the elephant was calm and did not pose a threat to others. There were no objective reasons to kill this elephant, especially considering possible claims from the owner. Also, the officer did not experience any internal desire to kill the animal. Despite this, it was only because of the presence of unarmed villagers who posed no danger to the officer that he shot the elephant: "I could feel their two thousand will press me forward, irresistibly" (Orwell, 1936). George Orwell later wrote his famous dystopian novel 1984.

One must agree with B. Cotterill, who believes that the role of the one who gives the commands is also certainly important (Cotterill, 2023). This is why sadists are often appointed to leadership positions, and because of this, they can cause the most damage and have the greatest influence on others as possible.

This practice worked during World War II (Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himler) and continues to be used today. For example, in 2022, Sergei Surovikin, also known as the "Syrian Butcher" and "General Armageddon" for his particular cruelty and love of massive missile attacks, was appointed commander-in-chief of Russian troops in the war on the territory of Ukraine. According to Human Rights Watch, this person is responsible for crimes against civilians in Syria, such as chemical attacks, the bombing of a hospital in Idlib, which killed many children, and others (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

In this case, two components can be distinguished: identification with the group (for example, an individual believes that science creates something significant and useful for society, therefore he identifies himself with a group of people representing science and its goals), and trust in the leader, the prototype of the group - to the experimental scientist in this case (Haslam and Reicher, 2018).

Although such trust also arises through intragroup identification (Haslam and Reicher, 2018), leaders often use additional common attributes to create this image of the "prototype" of the group, strengthen cohesion and their influence. For example, the Nazi salute (Deutscher Gruß, Hitlergruß) was part of Hitler's personality cult. And the common symbolic murder weapon for the private military company "Wagner" of Yevgeny Prigozhin (Russian Federation) was a sledgehammer, which members of the group repeatedly used for public executions (Youtube, 2022a).

American psychologist Solomon Asch (1951) studied how social group pressure can affect a person's judgment and behavior. In Solomon Asch's experiments on conformity (1951), subjects were placed in a room with other people who played the role of subjects but were actually in cahoots with the

experimenter. The present subject was told that the purpose of the experiment was to test visual perception. After this, participants were shown cards that showed 1 vertical line on the left and a group of 3 vertical lines on the right. Participants had to match their lengths and answer the question of which line from the group on the right had the same length as the line on the left. The correct answers were obvious, which was confirmed with the help of a control group. However, the participants in the experiment, who were in cahoots with the experimenter, after several correct answers began to unanimously voice the wrong answer. When influenced by the group's opinion, 66% of subjects answered incorrectly at least once and 40% of subjects answered every question incorrectly (Cotterill, 2023).

Some subjects attributed their behavior to a reluctance to engage in confrontation with the group, and some participants did not even realize that they had given the wrong answer (Paruzel-Czachura, Wojciechowska and Bostyn, 2023).

Around the same time that Zimbardo was conducting his Stanford Prison Experiment (1971), director Felix Sobolev was filming his popular science documentary "Me and Others" (1971) in Kyiv. For the filming of the film, different versions of the Asch experiment (1951) were adapted and recreated. Professor Valeria Mukhina, who took part in the preparation and filming of the film, later said that before the start of filming, everyone - both scientists and filmmakers - was in a complete illusion. Because of the Iron Curtain that separated the Soviet Union from the rest of the world and modern psychological science, people developed trust in the propaganda claim that Soviet behavior was fundamentally different from how people in the West behaved: "We knew nothing then. We didn't know what we were like. We thought we were independent [...] We were told we were free, and we thought we were free" (Shearman, 2022, p. 57). When starting work, the authors of the future film sincerely hoped, through experiments, to demonstrate how independent and independent the Soviet people had become. And how different they are from the conformists from America (Shearman, 2022).

But it turned out just the opposite. During the experiments, participants consistently showed high levels of conformity. For example, a portrait of a little-known Kyiv actor was hung in the audience and the subjects were asked to give a psychological description of the person depicted in the portrait. Moreover, if the experimenter told the subjects that the portrait depicted a very dangerous criminal, the subjects described him as an extremely negative person: cunning, withdrawn, hidden, mean-spirited, gloomy, angry, cruel, contempt for people. But if the experimenter told the subjects that the portrait depicted a great scientist, the description was the opposite: smart, active, gentle, kind, reliable, hardworking, loves children.

In another experiment, pyramids were placed in front of a group of children and asked to name their colors. Before the experiment began, as in Asch's experiment (1951), three of the four children were instructed to give the wrong answer. When the experimenter showed the children a black and a white pyramid, the child test subject repeated the incorrect answer after the other children and said that both pyramids were white. A similar experiment was conducted with salty and sweet porridge: the child who was given the salty porridge said that the porridge was sweet only because the other children had previously said that the porridge was sweet (Popular science documentary "Me and Others", 1971).

It is important to understand that conformity extends not only to decision making in objective tasks of determining length, color, etc., but can also play a key role in solving moral dilemmas. Considering

that a significant part of communication with a social group in the modern world takes place in the online space, in 2023 scientists conducted an experiment to determine whether conforming behavior would be involved if group representatives were not in the real world, but online. Moreover, the researchers were also faced with the task of finding out whether conformity extends not only to decision-making in objective tasks of determining length, color, etc., but also to solving moral dilemmas: can a person, under the influence of a group, change his attitude, position, ideas about violence against another person or even murder.

As a result of the experiment, it was confirmed that although a person's moral judgments are quite stable and not subject to change, it is group norms and narratives that are the key factor that contributes to changes in moral preferences. Moreover, the more complex the question, the more complex and ambiguous the moral dilemma, the more people focus on the opinion of the group. This statement also extends to the influence of a group in the online space, not just in the physical world (Paruzel-Czachura et al., 2023).

In a study with undergraduate students at McMaster University (2021), social media was found to have a profound impact on the worldview, opinion formation, and daily lives of users, even outside the online space (Huynh, Kostuch, Martorano, McMurray and Scimeca, 2021). Social approval in this case is a factor that reinforces such behavior, and deviation from the normative opinion of the group generates a neural response similar to the so-called reward prediction error (behavioral error) (Klyucharev et al., 2014). However, this mechanism is directly influenced by how an individual relates to a particular group. Our brain not only records the inconsistency of our choice or behavior with the choice or behavior of other people, but at the same time evaluates our attitude towards these people.

In another experiment, students at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) were asked to rate 174 T-shirt designs on a 14-point scale (2013). After the subjects made their choice, they were shown how the same design was rated by 2 groups: other Caltech students and prison inmates who have committed sexual offenses. The subjects' brain activation was measured using Magnetic Resonance Imaging. The study showed that the areas of the brain responsible for behavioral error were activated in subjects both during ratings mismatch with the preferred group - Caltech students, and during ratings matching with the undesirable group - sex offenders (Izuma and Adolphs, 2013).

Such signals from the nervous system act as a learning system, so it is not surprising that the responses of the subjects, when re-evaluating the designs of the same T-shirts after 5 minutes, changed towards the choice that the members of the preferred group had previously made. Moreover, the changes are long-term: the researchers repeated the experiment with the same subjects after 4 months. During the repeated experiment, the subjects did not remember how they rated the T-shirts before, nor how these T-shirts were rated by representatives of two groups - Caltech students and sex offenders. However, despite this, their ratings shifted towards the group of Caltech students (Izuma and Adolphs, 2013).

Thus, in this threefold relationship between an individual, another individual (group) and some object (decision, action), balance occurs if two of the three attitudes are negative or all are positive (Figure 3). For example, balance occurs if an individual has a negative attitude towards another individual and a negative attitude towards an object, while the other individual has a positive attitude towards the object.
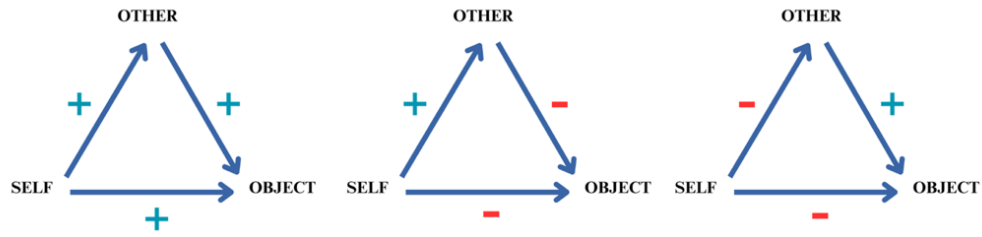
Fig. 3. Balanced Relationships

Otherwise, a cognitive imbalance arises (Figure 4), which the individual tries to eliminate by changing his attitude either to the object or to another individual (Izuma and Adolphs, 2013).
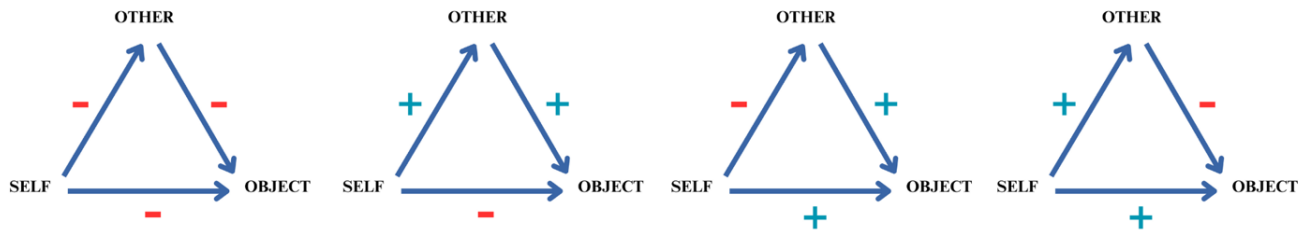
Fig. 4. Cognitive imbalance

When performing actions that contradict a person's moral beliefs, internal psychological discomfort arises. To get away from this internal conflict, a person changes his beliefs so that they correspond to his actions. In other words, according to the just world hypothesis, victims deserve their suffering (Cotterill, 2023).

1.2.2. Formation of external threat and enemy image

The image of the enemy is actively used in interstate relations. The purpose of creating such an image is the socio-political mobilization of the country's population with an aggressive foreign policy, as well as discrediting competing countries and creating a negative international image. Another goal is to shift intrastate conflicts to the background. The creation and actualization of "enemies of the country" in the minds of the population is used by the government to divert public attention from real existing problems in the state and to blame illusory enemies for these problems and failures (Kolesnikova, 2015). Displaying images of enemies who threaten the security and integrity of the state helps to transfer the population into a state of increased mobilization.

Since the image of the enemy is built on the subjective emotions and feelings of a person or group of people, this image is usually formed on the basis of the religious, cultural, social sphere, as well as on the basis of differences in political ideology between groups. In order for the information influence to cover and be understandable to all segments of the population, all social groups, those stereotypes are selected that reflect the worst qualities of the external (enemy) group. Usually, such narratives are artificial and illusory, even absurd, but this does not prevent propaganda from effectively performing its function and achieving its goal. As the stereotype of a group as an enemy is formed in society, members of this out-group lose their identity.

Typically, the characteristics that describe representatives of a "hostile" group are universal. To mobilize national hatred, the enemy must be dangerous, aggressive, vile, one that violates moral values and generally accepted standards.

In the process of forming the image of the enemy, two complementary parts can be distinguished. The first part is blaming the opposite side for the attack, for starting the conflict. In other words, the creation and/or exaggeration of a threat, the creation of the illusion that it is the opposite side (out-group) that is the cause and instigator of the conflict, and therefore the in-group has the need and moral right to "defend itself" (Kutsyk and Bezpalko, 2020).

The second part is to create a mental negative image. People tend to feel empathy for other people. Some scientists believe that certain limiting mechanisms are built into our psyche that prevent excessive aggression towards another person (Haslam and Loughnan, 2014).

Therefore, an important task at this stage is to dehumanize, that is, to create the idea of a lack of humanity, human nature among representatives of the outgroup (Andrighetto, 2015). When the presence of this quality is denied, people from another group are excluded from the moral community and cease to evoke empathy and compassion. Such people begin to be perceived as less than human. The main goals of dehumanization are to create prerequisites, provide an explanation, and generally make it possible to use violence against another person or group of people (Haslam and Loughnan, 2014).

Orlov defines dehumanization as the result and process of using in the media, social network, political-official or semi-official space such emotional and linguistic means of describing, naming conventional opponents and related events that remove moral condemnation for causing harm to them (opponents) and represent such harm as socially desirable and morally justified, necessary, and without alternative (Orlov, 2022). The use of such a technique is a necessary condition for legitimizing violence, aggression, and attracting as many people as possible.

Research has found a direct connection between the level of social dominance orientation and dehumanization of members of other groups. Thus, an orientation towards social dominance is associated with the dehumanization of immigrants, refugees, representatives of another race and nation, as well as, of course, representatives of the opposite side in military conflicts (Haslam and Loughnan, 2014).

When forming such an image of the enemy, various techniques can be used. For example, "demonizing" the enemy helps transform the struggle into a religious canonical confrontation between good and evil (Kutsyk and Bezpalko, 2020). This can be especially effective in a society where church and religion occupy an important place.

Using the example of propaganda disseminated by Russia against Ukraine, one can see another technique - association with the Nazis. The Kremlin justifies its power and status as a suprastate by the victory of the USSR over Nazi Germany during the Second World War and the creation of the image of the liberator of Europe. According to the position of the Russian government, this creates a historical right to impose its will on other states (Lozovyi, 2023).

As described above, in order to avoid internal conflict, under the just world hypothesis, people tend to believe that their victims deserve punishment. In this regard, it is typical for people of one nation

to dehumanize and deny the moral value of their historical enemies - representatives of other nations over whom victory was achieved in the past, if responsibility for this victory was assigned to representatives of the in-group (Haslam and Loughnan, 2014). Considering the role of Soviet Russia in the victory over Hitler's Nazi Germany, it becomes clear why the Nazis are perceived by Russians as something less than people, something that does not deserve or evoke sympathy and compassion.

By appealing to the events of World War II to create an image of the enemy, Russian propaganda is trying to impose an association of equivalence: Ukrainians during the war are presented as modern Nazis, and the policy pursued by the Ukrainian government is called "Ukrainian Nazism", as it is supposedly directed against Russia. Russia in this context acts as a fighter against the measure of "absolute evil" - Nazism (Lozovyi, 2023).

Also, a technique such as comparison with animals is often used for dehumanization. In this case, the state that is necessary to unblock aggression against the enemy arises on the basis of speciesism - the belief in the species superiority of humans over animals and plants.

To prove this, scientists used the well-known moral dilemma "trolley problem," which makes you think about the possibility of sacrificing some people to save more people. Although most people believed that it was wrong to sacrifice some people to save the majority, in the case of animals (hypothetical animals, the experiment was not carried out in reality), the study participants thought it was more acceptable to sacrifice some animals to save more animals. Thus, people consider it more acceptable to harm animals (as well as plants, inanimate objects) than other people (Caviola et al., 2021).

In chhapter 4 of the book "Species Traitor? Like an Animal: Critical Animal Studies Approaches to Borders, Displacement, and Othering" Merskin (2021) describes how migrants to the United States were compared to animals, and Jews in Italy during World War II were compared to dogs (Merskin, 2021, pp. 125-126).

Researchers attribute this to the perception of animals as beings of less moral value and less compassion than members of the human species. The research concluded that moral and ethical restrictions against causing harm to another individual are not absolute and insurmountable. Such constraints can be significantly reduced if one perceives the harmed entity as being morally less valuable (Caviola et al., 2021).

In the course of research, it was found that it is precisely the feeling of disgust towards representatives of the out-group that leads to increased dehumanization of them. Other emotions, such as sadness, do not cause such changes. This explains why enemies in military conflicts, opponents in political debates and other confrontations are often compared to something that a large number of people find disgusting: a cockroach, a worm, dirt, etc. And disgust, when combined with contempt and anger, contributes to the perception of members of other groups as less human. Interestingly, people who feel more connected to members of their own group also dehumanize members of other groups to a greater extent (Haslam and Loughnan, 2014). Thus, the higher the level of intragroup cooperation, the higher the level of intergroup aggression may be.

At the same time, the shortcomings and negative qualities of representatives of their group are perceived as "human" and forgivable. At the same time, the shortcomings of the outgroup are amplified and also dehumanized, reducing the moral value of the group. This effect is especially

enhanced when intragroup identity is under threat. In addition to the fact that dehumanization removes restrictions on violence and aggression, this process also impedes intergroup reconciliation (Haslam and Loughnan, 2014).

1.2.3. The process of persuasion and closed information space

After involvement in the group, social identification, the stage of persuasion, suggestion begins. Such influence, in order to persuade a person to take one position or another, to perform a certain action, should increase gradually. As shown in Milgram's experiment (1962), escalation, strengthening of narratives occurs gradually from smaller to larger. With a high probability, the participants in the experiment would not agree to immediately press the button that delivers the highest discharge of current. However, due to the fact that at the beginning of the experiment the voltage level was insignificant (only 15 volts - safe), followed by a gradual increase (15 volts step), after a certain number of steps, most of the subjects obeyed the experimenter and delivered the maximum current discharge (450 volts - potentially dangerous). This case demonstrates how every previous action and decision a person makes affects his next steps. As soon as we make one choice, the internal need to feel the consistency of our decisions is triggered.

As in the fairy tale-parable by Hans Christian Andersen "What the old man does is always right" (1861), which tells about a man who actually exchanged a horse for a bag of rotten apples. But in between, the man first exchanged a horse for a cow, a cow for a sheep, a sheep for a goose, a goose for a chicken, and only then a chicken for a bag of apples (Andersen, 1861).

In this context, Corvaglia (2023) also cites religious cults as an example, where participants are initially given simple tasks that do not cause strong conflicts in them, and after a while these participants are ready to perform any, even immoral, acts at the direction of the organizers (Corvaglia, 2023).

For example, to become a member of the Moonies (a religious movement in Seoul), a person must make four separate decisions, with small differences between the next and previous choices, but a significant difference between the first and last. First, a person must accept an invitation to a two-day seminar, then a seven-day, twelve-day seminar, and only after that does a person decide on membership. Without these and many other preliminary steps, it is unlikely that a person will make a decision that is fundamentally contrary to his interests, such as the mass suicide of members of the Peoples Temple religious cult in Johnstown, which resulted in the death of more than 900 people (Corvaglia, 2023).

Corvaglia (2023) also believes that in such a successively increasing chain of decisions and actions, procrastination plays a role in the sense that a person delays making the decision to retreat, change his behavior and because of this makes more and more decisions consistent with the course once taken.

The so-called "frog in boiling water syndrome" is triggered: if a frog is immediately thrown into hot water, the discomfort will be significant and the frog will jump out of the pan. But if you place a frog in cold water and increase the temperature gradually, the changes in the level of discomfort will be insignificant, the decision to change the situation will be postponed, and as a result the frog will be boiled in boiling water (in reality, the experiment was not carried out with healthy frogs).

About ten years ago, an article entitled "How to legalize anything" appeared on the Internet (Savchenko, 2019), which described a technology for changing the attitude of large masses of people to a problem that they previously preferred not to touch upon. Using the example of the phenomenon of cannibalism, the article describes a number of steps, after going through which the subject of manipulation clearly changes the attitude of the objects of manipulation towards it in accordance with his plans. With the help of these successive steps, it becomes possible to change the attitude of large groups of people to any topics, issues, ideas, actions that are considered absolutely unacceptable, to the level of everyday life, and to enshrine them at the legislative level (Savchenko, 2019). The author of this technology is presumably the American lawyer and political scientist Joseph Overton, so after his death the technology was called "Overton Window" or "Overton Window of Political Possibilities".

The Overton Window is the concept of having a framework for the acceptable range of opinions in public speech from the point of view of public morality (Savchenko, 2019). This technology is used not only to legalize in the public consciousness ideas that were not previously accepted by society, but much more often to form the necessary public consensus on less significant issues. This technology is also used in propaganda to manipulate public opinion, especially on issues that are controversial from a moral point of view (Nikishin, 2022).

As in the Milgram experiment (1962) and other examples described above, the Overton Window contains several successive steps with a gradual escalation towards greater legitimation of a particular phenomenon.

At the first stage, the task of the subject of manipulation (manipulator) is to transfer the question from the "Unthinkable" category to the "Radical" category. To do this, using the principle of freedom of speech, the topic begins to be discussed in certain circles, even if it was previously taboo. People close to science are especially suitable for this role, since there are no taboo topics for science and the discussion takes place on a theoretical plane. Also, involvement in science and the authority of persons gives relevance and significance to the problem under discussion. It is important to reach as many people as possible who will be involved in the problem being discussed. Also at this stage, two opposing camps are created in the media space: one group actively supports the idea, the second group is categorically against it. The main goal is to shift the attitude towards the subject of discussion from an extremely negative one to one that can be discussed, is acceptable for discussion, desacralize taboos and create an understanding that the issue is not clearly negative, "black", there are certain "gradations of gray".

At the second stage, it is necessary to change the attitude of society towards the subject of manipulation from "Radical" to "Acceptable". The media continues to be actively used for this purpose. Persons who refuse to discuss the problem are condemned. Therefore, even more people are involved in the discussion. An important action at this stage is the change of words: the main name is changed (sometimes repeatedly). This helps to distract the discussion from the essence, the content of the problem, and also prevent ideological opponents from constructive confrontation. At this stage, you create a precedent with a positive emotional and moral connotation. This precedent is beginning to be actively broadcast by all available media. The main goal is to partially remove the phenomenon from criminal liability, to make it partially acceptable and possible.

At the third stage, a transition is made from the "Acceptable" category to the "Sensible" category. To do this, the two opposing camps are made more radical, a "battle" over the problem is artificially created, staged discussions are organized, etc. Representatives of both camps act as inadequate people, psychopaths. The main narrative is the idea that the phenomenon under discussion has always existed and that this is normal. The goal is to attract as many people as possible to discuss the issue and create an attractive image of a certain "golden mean," moderation, and normality.

The next stage allows you to transfer the public position in relation to the issue from the "Sensible" category to the "Popular" category. Representatives of pop culture, musicians, actors, public figures, representatives of show business, politics and the media are invited to disseminate information. The topic begins to be actively broadcast at all levels of society and becomes self-reproducing. The positive characteristics of supporters of the issue under discussion begin to be voiced (even if these characteristics are in no way related to the issue): high moral standards, courage, honesty, etc. The goal is to create a positive image of supporters and further legitimize the phenomenon under discussion.

At the last stage there is a transition to the "Legalized" category. To do this, various techniques are used, built on the conformism inherent in people. For example, the results of sociological surveys are published, which show a high percentage of supporters of a phenomenon, issue, concept. Lobbying groups unite and promote their narratives. Politicians are increasingly talking about the need to legislate this issue. Despite the fact that there are still some people in society who resist and have the opposite position, the norms of society as a whole have already changed: opinions, rules, actions that until recently were not even allowed for discussion have become normal. A new dogma is being introduced into the public consciousness - using the example of cannibalism - "the prohibition of eating people is prohibited" (Savchenko, 2019).

UNTHINKABLE

Taboo!

Actions:
Discussion;
2 opposite camps

Target:
Remove the taboo
from discussion

RADICAL

"Not everything is so clear…"

Actions:
Renaming phenomena;
Positive precedent

Target:
The idea (phenomenon, action) is partially acceptable

ACCEPTABLE

In some cases this is acceptable.

Actions:
Radicalization of opposition camps;
Representatives of these camps are psychopaths

Target:
An attractive image of the "golden mean", moderation

SENSIBLE

It's always been like this and it's normal

Actions:
Discourse is transferred from scientific to all other spheres;
Positive characteristics of supporters are voiced

Target:
Positive image, tolerance, legitimation

POPULAR

It's popular; Supporters are cool guys

Actions:
Taking advantage of people's tendency to conform;
Condemnation of the opposition;
Consolidation in legislative acts

Target:
Changing the norms of society as a whole

LEGALIZED

It is forbidden to prohibit

Fig. 5. Changing public position: the Overton Window concept

It is important to understand that social media creates the ideal conditions for the successful implementation of this strategy. Thanks to the ability to quickly disseminate almost any information among wide groups of the population, the most fertile basis for manipulation is created. If previously the main source of information was traditional media, today every user is a content generator. The

very fact of widespread dissemination of certain information serves for Internet users as a criterion for the truth of this information (Nikishin, 2022).

Promotion of propaganda narratives through social media also occurs in stages: from attracting attention and generating interest to creating motivation for certain actions. By distributing content using the Overton Window technology, you can turn morally unacceptable phenomena into acceptable, normal ones, and legalize them in the minds of the target audience.

At the same time, at the initial stage, some social media users (including trolls, interested actors, etc.) begin to form interest in a certain topic among other users. This process can be manifested in the activity of such users in the online space (reactions, likes, comments), the use of slang, symbols, mottos. Information is disseminated widely. After this, users begin to immerse themselves more deeply in the ideology that is being imposed, the desire and understanding that this is acceptable is cultivated. Closed groups are also created, "privileges" appear, and motivation for radical actions and changes is created. It is important that all changes and stages occur and are implemented gradually (Nikishin, 2022).

Researchers from Yale University found that after a person reads fake news for the first time, the level of trust in this information increases. And the more often a person encounters such repeated information, the more trust increases, since people tend to believe what they have encountered before, which seems familiar. During an experiment, researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that publications that contain false information are distributed by Twitter users 70% more often than truthful publications. The effect of belief in repeated false information works even when information publications do not correspond to the person's original position or when such publications are labeled as false (Krawczyk and Wiśnicki, 2022).

Using the example of religious organizations, one can trace another pattern, such as the closedness of groups. Thanks to natural self-selection (doubters do not join or leave), dissent and opposition do not develop in the group, and a state of isolation from any external influence is created.

Features of the dissemination of information in social media, such as the speed of information exchange, the absence of spatio-temporal restrictions, the potential scale of the audience, and filtering of information, increase the impact of social media on the user. Messages on social media are distributed through the pages of other users, topic pages and groups that the user has chosen to follow or that match his interests. From a psychological point of view, the user perceives his page as a personal space, which a priori determines a higher level of trust in information received on social media than from other sources (Zolotar, 2019). Thus, with the help of media algorithms, the user is placed into certain ideological isolated boxes.

A decrease in social skills due to the transition from offline communication in real life to online communication in social media, according to some scientists, can lead to even greater misunderstanding between members of society, and therefore to increased isolation (Lieberman and Schroeder, 2020).

Excessive use of social media reduces life satisfaction, promotes anxiety, stress, depression and other negative psychological reactions, and contributes to isolation. This has been confirmed in many studies, for example, during a survey of 435 young people using the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (White-Gosselin and Poulin, 2022), an online survey of 598 Taiwanese students (Huang et al.,

2023), and daily interviews with respondents and checking their telephone logs for 7 days (Wang, Niiya, Mark, Reich and Warschauer, 2015).

However, there is also a belief that the causal relationship is going in the opposite direction: due to loneliness and social isolation, we are increasingly moving from the real to the digital world (Geirdal et al., 2021). The World Health Organization (2021) recognizes loneliness and social isolation as one of the priority public health problems (WHO, 2021). Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people feeling lonely has doubled and in a pan-European study on loneliness, an average of 35% of respondents reported feeling lonely (EU Science Hub, 2022).

According to Forsyth (2020), physical isolation during the pandemic has weakened the network and diversity of people's social connections. This forced people to unite online into information-closed ideological communities, such as opponents of protective masks and opponents of vaccination. Despite the availability of a large amount of facts about the mortality of the disease and the need to adhere to quarantine norms, members of such communities perceived only information that supported their already existing position and views (Forsyth, 2020).

Bruce K. Alexander's "Rat Park" experiment (1981) proved that isolation influences the formation of addiction. The author of the experiment divided the rats into 2 groups and placed one of these groups in ideal conditions where the rats could communicate and play. Rats from the second group were placed in standard laboratory cages. Rats from both groups had the opportunity to choose water laced with a drug or pure water. Rats from impoverished, isolated conditions preferred the drug and formed an addiction, while rats from the so-called rat park preferred clean water without the drug, but did not form an addiction (Corvaglia, 2023).

Probably, a similar adaptation mechanism is also triggered when choosing conformal and nonconformal behavior. In this case, the positive reinforcement from taking the drug is replaced by positive reinforcement from a sense of group identity and social approval. Therefore, people who already live in isolation, have a lack of social contacts, may be more susceptible to the influence of manipulation, indoctrination, including propaganda.

Polarization of society, including on important political and social issues, is often determined by political self-identification - support for one or another political party. In addition to the fact that such a model prevents the achievement of compromises on certain issues, it can also cause a decline in democracy in general.

Many researchers explain the presence of such opposing camps by the emergence of echo chambers. An echo chamber is an information distribution model in which the user receives information that reinforces their pre-existing opinions and is limited from information that confirms an opposing opinion (Bail et al., 2018).

The advent of social media has further increased the effect of echo chambers and created opposing opinions in society. According to initial forecasts, social media was supposed to solve this problem, as it provides the maximum amount of information and its sources, makes it possible to look at the problem from different angles and study the arguments of the opposing camp. However, due to people's desire to form connections with others like themselves, a person unconsciously creates closed information spaces around himself. Information and other users in such a space only reinforce this person's position. In addition, the lack of nonverbal cues, gestures, facial expressions (which are

used when communicating in the real world), as well as anonymity when communicating on social media, can exacerbate conflicting and rude behavior of users towards representatives of opposing opinions (Bail et al., 2018).

Today, the question remains open about what is the cause and what is the effect: do we form our preferences for content on social media depending on our political preferences, support for a political party, or do we support one or another political party depending on from the content we consume.

There are also two opposing hypotheses about how a person is influenced by the expansion of information diversity and the consumption of content that broadcasts differing opinions and arguments. Some researchers believe that intergroup contacts, the consumption of information with an opposing opinion that corrects existing inaccuracies, can have an impact on changing a person's position (Forsyth, 2020). Other researchers have found that when confronted with an opposing opinion, a person activates counterarguments to support his position, and thus, disagreements only intensify (Bail et al., 2018). Even when faced with facts that prove them wrong, people choose to manipulate these facts so as not to change their beliefs. At the same time, confirming one's beliefs gives the person a sense of control over the situation and activates the release of endorphins to reinforce the experience as positive (Dan, 2022).

It's also possible that a person's previous background matters (Bail et al., 2018). For example, in 2018, a large-scale study was conducted among American Twitter users about the possibility of changing political focus. Users who identified themselves as Republicans, using a Twitter bot, received 24 information posts from the Twitter accounts of representatives of the liberal camp (politicians, political parties, opinion leaders, non-governmental organizations, etc.). At the same time, users who identified themselves as Democrats received posts from Twitter accounts of representatives of the opposite camp - the conservative camp.

The results of this study showed that Democrats' views became even more liberal, but the changes were not statistically significant. But Republicans' positions became significantly more conservative: among "obedient" respondents who carefully studied posts with opposing opinions, their conservative views increased by 0.6 points on a seven-point scale (Bail et al., 2018). Thus, the experiment found that exposure to content with opposing political views could further increase the polarization of society.

The important aspect is that it is much easier to manage, control and manipulate such a close-knit closed group than an individual. Groupthink, based on conformism, forces people to accept the general position of the group and prevents them from rationally assessing existing facts. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, movements against face masks, quarantines, and vaccinations were widespread on social media, contributing to the spread of the disease and the intensification of the pandemic (Forsyth, 2020).

More than 66% of people prefer a particular social media because of their relatives or friends who have already chosen that social media. The same situation applies to the choice of thematic groups (Huynh et al., 2021). Thus, our offline connections directly influence the content we choose to consume through social media.

Although we often join thematic groups on social networks at the invitation of friends, such groups are built not only on interpersonal connections between group members, but mostly on the attitude

towards the main idea, the goals of the group, and self-identification with the group. Belonging to such a close-knit group of like-minded people gives you a feeling of security and support. At the same time, being in such a group has its price, since the possibility of having an opposing opinion or position is suppressed (Forsyth, 2020). Members' commitment to a group causes them to change their thoughts and beliefs in accordance with the group's position. This increases isolation within the group.

This effect is especially enhanced in the case of an external threat - if something threatens the goals and ideas of the group. For example, the government, which introduced mandatory quarantine measures during the pandemic, provided such an external catalyst for opponents of protective masks. Another factor that influences the formation of groupthink is stress. Stressful situations promote cohesion and interfere with critical analysis and rational thinking (Forsyth, 2020).

In addition to external factors, the cohesion and isolation of groups is also supported by internal group illusions. The illusion of morality causes group members to believe that there is some common, meaningful and morally worthy goal within their group. For example, opponents of restrictive measures during the pandemic believed that they were defending democratic freedom of movement. Using the illusion of invulnerability, a narrative is formed in the thinking of group members that their position is the only correct one in the existing context, even if it is an attack on another country. This increases the motivation of group members, but makes it impossible to reach compromises and change mindsets. The illusion of unanimity prevents the expression of opinions that contradict the general position of the group (Forsyth, 2020).

Being inside a group, people change their thinking and position in order to avoid internal conflict and not be excluded from the group. Group members use similar terminology, humor, consume and disseminate similar information (Huynh et al., 2021). This also subsequently influences choices and behavior in offline life.

Social media algorithms are aimed at showing users content that matches, rather than contradicts, their opinions: advertising posts, images, videos, texts. The user is shown pages of other users, groups, pages that are similar to the user's existing interests. This helps to capture the interest and attention of users, increasing their engagement, but also increases the manifestation of groupthink and information isolation. Users form groups with a particular position on a political, social, religious, or other issue (Huynh et al., 2021).

1.3. The emergence of social networks as a new tool for spreading propaganda

The advent of social media has become a turning point in the dissemination of information. Da Veiga (2019) defines social media as virtual communities of people where anyone can create a profile and manage a list of "friends" - other users (Da Veiga et al., 2019). The first social media site launched in 2003 and by 2004 had over a million monthly active users. This social media was called MySpace. Already in 2022, 8 out of 10 Western Europeans used social media (Statista, 2023c). In this work, instant messengers such as Telegram, Viber and others will also be considered as social media due to their functional similarity.

Since 2010, Facebook has been the leader among social media (Our World in Data, 2019). The number of users of Facebook (owned by Meta Platforms Corporation) continues to constantly grow: over the past 10 years in the European Union, the number of users of this social media has increased from 36.08% to 58.15% of the number of inhabitants (Eurostat, 2023). More than 37% of the world's

population uses Facebook, and in the first quarter of 2023, Facebook recorded 2.989 billion monthly active users (DataReportal, 2023).
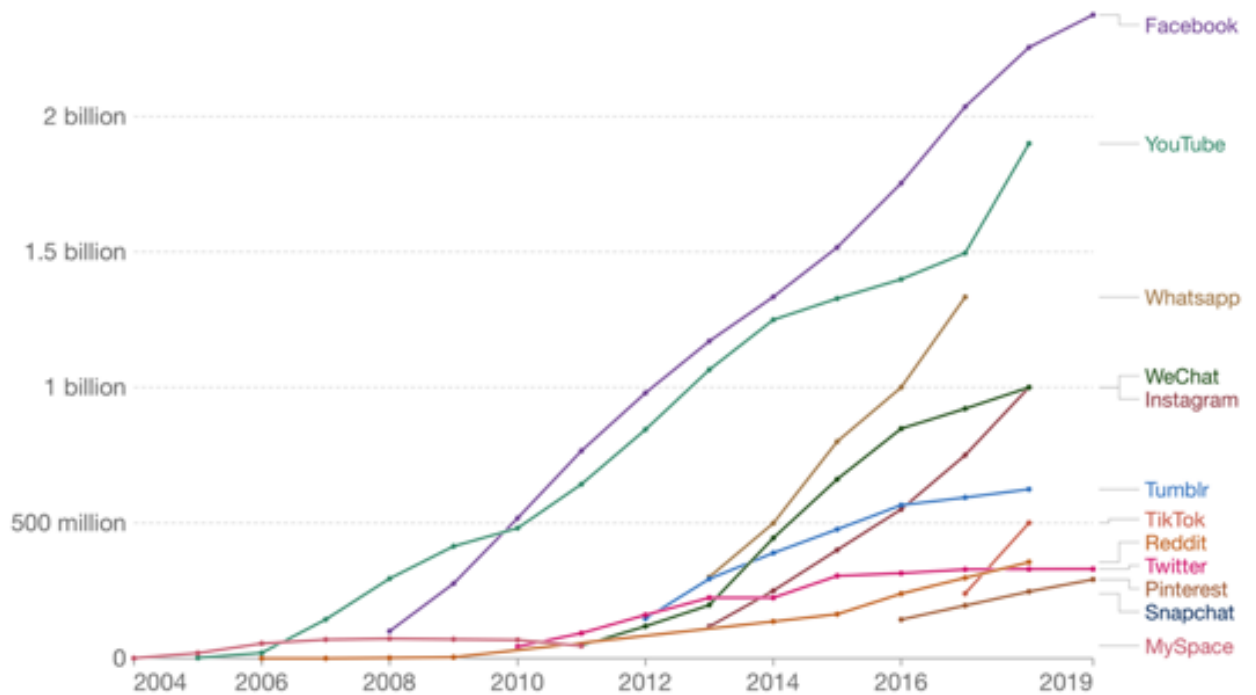

Fig. 6. Dynamics of changes in the number of users of social media platforms, 2004-2019 (Our World in Data, 2019)

The key feature of Facebook is its versatility. Other social media platforms specialize in certain types of content. For example, different video formats on TikTok and YouTube, photographs and short videos on Instagram, short text messages on Twitter. At the same time, Facebook combines all these features and gives its users the ability to share videos of different lengths and formats, photos and text posts, as well as exchange reactions and messages between users. Another feature of Facebook is its well-developed functionality for disseminating information and posts using paid targeted advertising - advertising aimed at a specific target audience.

Not only is the number of social media users increasing, but so is the time we spend online. Residents of some countries spend more than 5 hours on the Internet every day (OECD, 2019). More than half of this time—an average of 151 minutes per day—is spent on social media (Statista, 2023d). It is worth saying that social media has long ceased to be a tool for communication between students.

According to research from Oxford University (2017), social media is the main source of news for young people. With the help of social media, people form their opinions, political and social identities (Woolley and Howard, 2017).

Social media expands our capabilities: it gives us the opportunity to receive and share information around the world, express our opinions, join groups for collective action, relax and work without geographical restrictions. However, social media is increasingly being used as an incubator for propaganda.

Guess and Lyons (2020) point out that previous generations of media used a vertical model of influence, information dissemination: information was distributed top-down, from the government or other entity with influence, to the objects of propaganda influence - readers, listeners, viewers (Guess and Lyons 2020). As a rule, the subjects of influence were stable, and the ideology that they implanted was the same for an indefinite circle of people (Zolotar, 2019).

Unlike traditional media in the past, modern information sources such as social media have a horizontal structure with many players (Guess and Lyons 2020). Thus, according to some authors, an illusion of awareness is created, since the information consumer receives the same information from different users, from different sources (different social media, different groups, different users) (Zolotar, 2019).

One of the main factors for the rapid and widespread spread of propaganda is novelty and uniqueness. As research has shown, the number of subscribers, activity, and the presence of a verified account – all this does not have a significant impact. But content that contains new information, even if that information is false, spreads faster and to a wider audience (Guess and Lyons 2020).

Regarding social media as platforms for disseminating propaganda, Twitter and Facebook are studied most often, while platforms such as YouTube, Reddit, and Pinterest remain poorly studied (Guess and Lyons 2020). There is also not enough research on propaganda in instant messengers such as Telegram, Viber, WhatsApp, WeChat and others, although recently these chat applications are also used as social media for receiving and disseminating information, including news content (Bradshaw and Howard, 2018b).

For example, as a result of a study conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology commissioned by the European Union Advisory Mission in Ukraine (2023), it was found that as of September 2023, for Ukrainians, Telegram channels are the main source of information about current events: 44% of respondents chose this particular messenger. For the majority of the Ukrainian population, Telegram has become more popular even in comparison with traditional media such as television, radio and printed newspapers. However, for people aged 60+, television continues to occupy a leading position as the main source of information (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2023). Telegram also ranks second (after television) among the main sources of information about the war in Ukraine for Russians (Russian Field, 2023a).
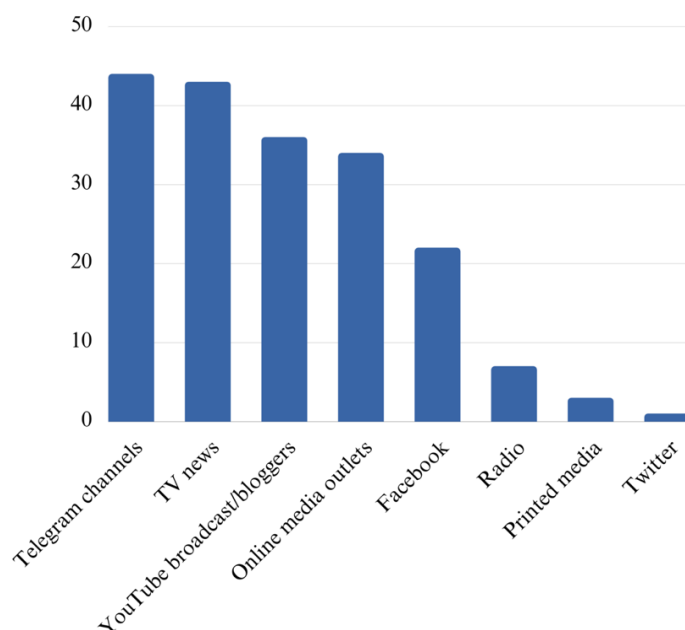
Fig. 7. News sources for Ukrainians in 2023

1.4. Generalized analytical scheme of the functioning of propaganda

People's tendency to conform is used as an effective tool in the online space, including during the dissemination of propaganda on social media. The influence of a group in matters of morality is especially dangerous, since, as history shows, with the help of such manipulations it is possible to significantly distort the perception of reality by the population of an entire country, even in matters of foreign policy.

Using the image of the enemy and the position of the victim in propaganda narratives helps to overcome internal conflict and legalize aggression against members of the out-group. Digitalization has also contributed to the process of dehumanization: the dehumanization of the enemy and oneself during violent video games can have an impact on a person's thinking, reactions and behavior in the real world.

Although the theory of mental programming has been proven to be false, it can be argued that man is limitedly rational. Often the choice is not made on the basis of calculating all the costs and benefits, but in one way or another depends on the emotional background, context, format and sequence of presentation of information, which is skillfully used to manipulate interested actors.

We can conclude that the global networkization of society, the phenomena of echo chambers, group polarization, etc. lead to the building of "ideological networks" in the Internet space - online communities that unite people around certain ideologies, and people regardless of their location. Such communities are created not only in the form of organizations that have a single leadership, a clear hierarchy of management, distribution of functional responsibilities of members of organizations, but also in the form of movements that do not have an institution of membership, a clear hierarchy of management, etc., but uniting individuals and their groups with a common ideology. Such groups determine user behavior both in the online world and in the real world.

Thus, the standard scheme of propaganda as a method of informational influence on the masses of people includes several interrelated elements. First of all, it is necessary to strengthen intragroup

connections to increase the likelihood of conformist behavior. This goal can be achieved with the help of a common historical past, a uniting important mission, idea, goal, but also with the help of a common external threat. Separately, we can highlight such an element as the formation of an external threat and the creation of an image of an enemy. In addition to the fact that this helps to further unite the in-group, such a move also puts the aggressor in the position of a victim and ideologically legalizes any unlawful actions towards the "enemy". At this stage, an important technique is to dehumanize the enemy to remove the psychological barrier to causing harm. Another element is sequential persuasion, which is discussed using the Overton Window concept as an example. And, of course, a contributing factor to the effectiveness of propaganda is the closed nature of information systems. This concept includes both external restrictions (censorship, website blocking, repression of dissent, the specifics of social media algorithms) and the tendency of people to form connections with ideologically similar people and receive information that corresponds to their previous beliefs.

PROPAGANDA

Strengthening cooperation to activate manifestations of conformism and groupthink

+

Transition to the victim position to legitimize aggression, strengthening intragroup ties

GROUP INFLUENCE

EXTERNAL ENEMY + DEHUMANI-ZATION

+

+

LIMITA-TION OF INFORMA-TION SPACE

SEQUENTIAL PERSUASION

Formation of a closed information space to eliminate alternative, opposition ideology

+

Consistently increasing influence to shift the boundaries of the morally permissible spectrum of public opinion, forming the necessary public position

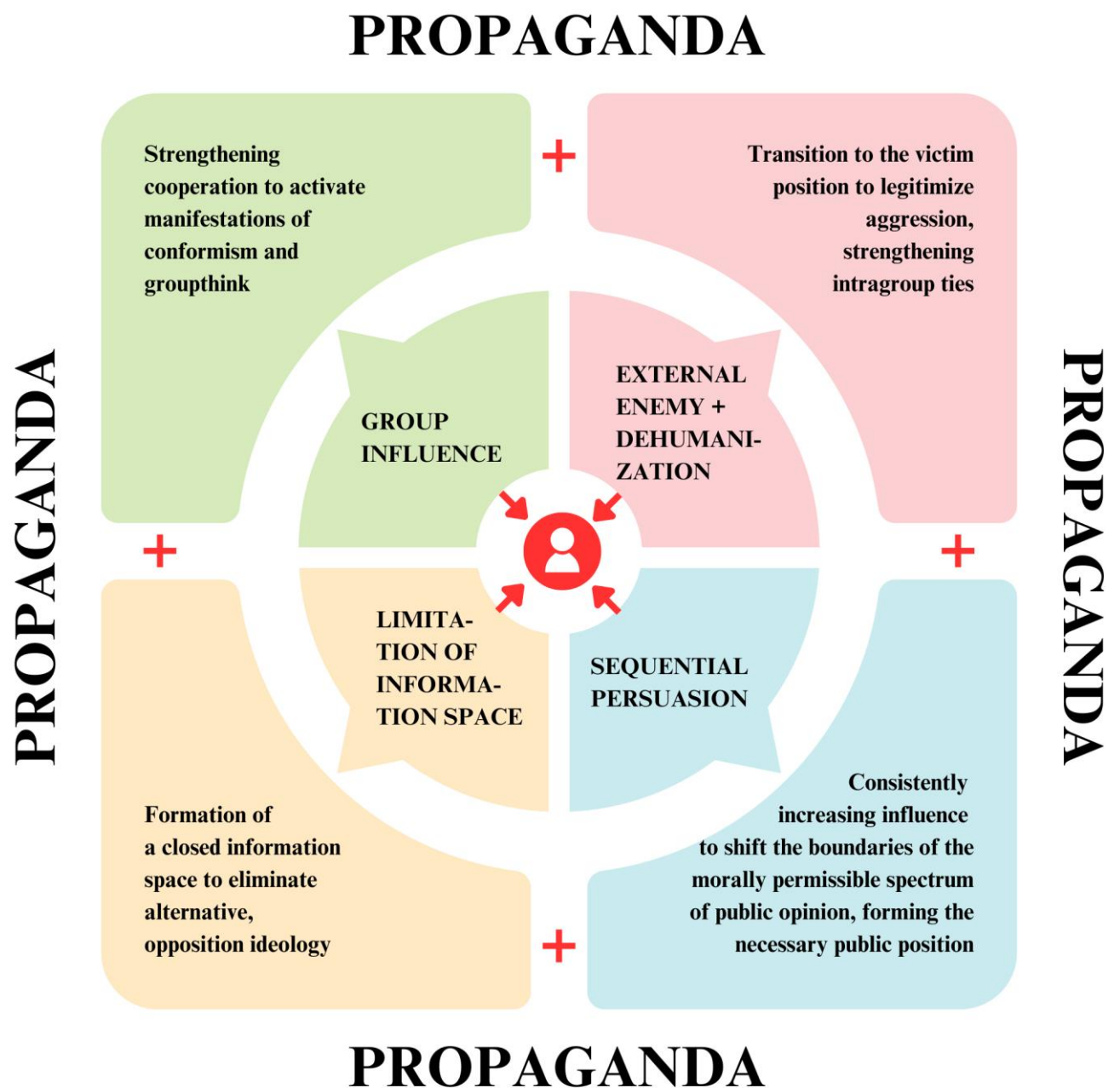**Fig. 8.** Generalized analytical scheme of the functioning of propaganda

The listed elements are not sequential, rather they are applied in parallel, but are present in most examples of systemic propaganda. This will be proven in the chapter 3 using the example of propaganda during Hitler's Germany in the XX and Putin's Russia in the XXI, respectively, before and after the emergence of social media as a source of information.

2. Methodology

The level of awareness of the threat to the information security of states from propaganda and other types of misinformation in social media differs significantly in countries of the world. However, research into the possibilities of information impacts using new media, including social networks, is carried out in many countries around the world, for example, the USA, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, the Russian Federation and other countries. Such research covers different scientific areas: national security; political, economic, legal, military, sociological, medical and psychological sciences, computer science and cybernetics, journalism and social communications, public administration and even art history and philology (Zolotar, 2019).

Since 2010, governments and political parties in some countries have spent more than half a billion dollars on research aimed at understanding the psychological, biological and social aspects of the control and manipulation of people's opinions on social media. Although in some cases such research is aimed at combating extremism, most interested parties use the research results to spread false information in their own interests, especially during complex and unstable social situations: military crises, political elections, disasters, epidemics (Bradshaw and Howard, 2018b).

This work will analyze the scientific works, previous studies by scientists such as Wang, Das, Ahmed, Vamanu, Shahi, Lim, da Veiga, Woolley, Bradshaw, Howard, Zolotar, Guess, Lyons, Helmus and others.

The main scientific methods I used in this work are descriptive and comparative analysis. The combination of these methods allows you to achieve the goals and objectives of the project.

To compare propaganda before and after the advent of social networks, it is necessary to first formulate a general framework for the functioning of propaganda. In the post-war years (second half of the 20th century), many scientific experiments were carried out that are of interest to this work. Using a descriptive analysis of the results of such experiments, their more modern analogues, as well as a literature review of relevant scientific works on this topic, a new general universal structure (conceptual model) will be created, with the help of which it will be possible to describe the functioning of propaganda and, using which it will be possible to compare the manifestation of propaganda in different countries and periods.

To develop a generalized analytical framework for the functioning of propaganda, I analyzed classical and modern experiments on the study of obedience, conformity and other aspects that will help understand the mechanism of the influence of propaganda on a person. The following experiments (studys) were used for analysis: Milgram's obedience to authority experiments (1962), Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment (1971), Asch's experiments on conformity (1951), an experiment with Koltech students and reference groups (2013), Götz's experiment with the destruction of beetles (2023), a study among American Twitter users about the possibility of changing political preferences will be studied (2018). Also, in the context of the functioning of propaganda, the concepts of the Overton Window of Political Possibilities and the Echo Chamber were considered. Previous research in this direction was carried out by Haslam, Reicher, Götz, Mitschke, Eder, Hollander, Turowetz, Laurens, Ballot, Cotterill, Huynh, Izuma and others.

Based on the analysis, the steps of dissemination and influence of propaganda were systematized and divided into 4 groups: group connections and propaganda; formation of external threat and enemy

image, the process of persuasion, closed information space. With the help of this, a generalized analytical scheme for the functioning of propaganda was proposed.

Based on examples of propaganda before and after the advent of social media, using comparative analysis method, it will be possible to draw conclusions about what changes social media have brought to the functioning of propaganda, as well as what has remained unchanged and does not depend on digitalization.

Propaganda was used in politics long before the advent of social media. One of the most destructive consequences of propaganda is the outbreak of World War II by Nazi Germany (1939-1945). Therefore, it is reasonable to include this period for the analysis. But also, of interest for analysis are some modern studies that allow us to study in more detail the human reaction to information influence (including the use of modern technological equipment), as well as modern manifestations of propaganda in the context of the use of social media as a new tool for disseminating information.

In order to understand the similarities and differences of propaganda before and after the emergence of social media, in chapter 3, using the propaganda scheme, I analyzed general trends and some examples of propaganda from Nazi Germany and modern Russia. For a comparative analysis, 2 main periods were selected accordingly: World War II (1939-1945) and Russia's war against Ukraine, which began in 2014 and continues now.

But I also evaluate some events that go beyond these time boundaries. Propaganda from political leaders in both Nazi Germany and modern Russia was spreading even before the aggressive military phase began. For example, such actions as the Night of Broken Glass or Kristallnacht in 1938, when pogroms and attacks on Jews occurred throughout Germany, or the publication of Dugin's book "Fundamentals of Geopolitics. The Geopolitical Future of Russia" in 1997, justifying the need to destroy Ukraine as a sovereign state.

As objects of analysis, I used Adolf Hitler's speech, which he delivered to the German Parliament on January 30, 1939 in honor of his 6-year anniversary of coming to power, Putin's speeches on September 21, 2022 announcing partial mobilization, and on February 21, 2023 with an address to the Federal Assembly, as well as other cases of dissemination of propaganda. When studying the Kremlin's propaganda, the main attention was paid to the use of social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, Telegram, etc. During the analysis, the works of Lanoszka, Orlov, Hrytsiuk, Dawson, Merskin and other researchers on this topic were used.

Also, in order to understand the trends in the influence of propaganda on public consciousness in russian federation, I analyzed statistical data that was collected by the Russian non-governmental research organization Yuri Levada Analytical Center (Levada Center), Research group Russian Field (Russian Field), Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) and other organizations for 2022-2023. For the objectivity of the analysis, statistical data were taken from different sources: both government organizations (VCIOM) and non-governmental organizations (Levada Center, Russian Field). Based on the results of the comparison, no significant discrepancies in the data depending on the source were identified.

Based on the analysis of examples of propaganda, publications on social media and statistical data, I systematized the various cases of use and impact of propaganda in the selected periods. This analysis allowed me to draw conclusions about the similarities and differences between the dissemination of

propaganda in the periods before and after the advent of social media. Also, such an analysis will be important for future research, as it will help in the development of effective strategies to combat propaganda.

3. Comparative analysis of the propaganda of Nazi Germany and modern Russia

The results of experiments that were conducted more than 50 years ago, as well as their modern, improved analogues, prove the tendency of a person to transform his thinking and adjust it to the opinion of the group with which such a person associates himself. Grouping, intragroup cooperation and intergroup competition are all natural social processes that have helped humanity survive as a species, and therefore are reliably fixed at the neurobiological level in every healthy person. Thanks to the use of such innate mechanisms of the human psyche, a well-built propaganda system always works effectively and has the necessary influence on the majority of people. However, there is a huge difference between promoting a healthy lifestyle to improve a country's demographic trends and promoting aggressive war to achieve the imperial ambitions of a minority.

The danger is not that propaganda changes the moral compass of the population in totalitarian societies, but that in every society the tools of propaganda can be used to manipulate the opinion of the majority, even if such a position would be contrary to the interests of the population. In the Russian Federation, despite the economic and human losses that the war against Ukraine brought, the increase in the number of citizens who live below the poverty line, the facts of war crimes and crimes against humanity (the massacre in Bucha, the bombing of the Mariupol Drama Theater with civilians, including children, artillery strikes on the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant, the explosion of the dam at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station, etc.), the dominant emotion of the majority of citizens in response to the military actions of the Russian army is "pride". Although almost a century ago, the position of the entire civilized world regarding war was already enshrined in the Decision of the International Military Tribunal during the Nuremberg Trials (1947) after World War II: "To initiate a war of aggression [...] is the supreme international crime [...] it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole" (Judgement, 1947, p. 25).

Digitalization allowed Russia, long before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, to launch the so-called hybrid war - a strategy aimed at subversion on the territory of another state to achieve political, economic and other goals without direct military battles or in addition to such battles. A major part of this hybrid war is cyber warfare - both direct cyber attacks and hidden threats in the form of propaganda on social media and espionage.

Some researchers believe that World War II is another example of hybrid warfare, as direct military combat was combined with other subversive activities, including active propaganda (Lanoszka, 2016). However, if during the Second World War propaganda played an accompanying, complementary role, then in the modern world in many aspects propaganda occupies a leading position.

Also, over the past few years, in scientific discourse, names such as "Russian fascism" or "ruscism" have been applied to the political regime in the Russian Federation, comparing modern Russia with Germany during the reign of Hitler. Orlov (2022) defines modern Russian fascism as a form of non-democratic political regime existing in the Russian Federation, the defining characteristics of which are the corporate-power monopoly of management approaches at the highest level of government, its personalization (functional isolation on one person, at least in making key decisions), intolerance to criticism of the regime, extensive mechanisms for monitoring the state of the information space, public opinion and historical memory (Orlov, 2022).

In May 2023, the Ukrainian parliament officially recognized the political regime of the Russian Federation as ruscism and condemned this ideology as totalitarian and misanthropic (Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine № 3078-IX, 2023).

The analysis materials in this chapter are grouped into the following four sections: "Group self-identification and conformal behavior" - in which I consider examples of the formation of intra-group connections and changes in thinking under the influence of society using the example of selected research objects; "Formation of external threat and enemy image" - which will show how the illusion of an external threat, formed by propaganda, creates favorable conditions for genocide; "The process of forming public opinion" - which shows the consistent transformation in people's behavior under the influence of propaganda; "Fight against dissent" - shows examples of the fight against the spread of opposing opinions in a totalitarian society.

3.1. Group self-identification and conformal behavior

Propaganda in modern Russia and propaganda in Nazi Germany are based not on rational-philosophical or religious doctrine, but on the heroic epic, the greatness of past achievements, and a common great goal. In other words, we are talking about the emotional foundations of worldview, a sense of the past. The past is described as both sacrificial and heroic. Such narratives help unite society into a single group around a common idea.

The legitimization of power in the Russian Federation is built on the fetish of the Second World War, which for Russian citizens was placed in the concept of the "sacred Great Patriotic War". This is where militaristic aesthetics comes from, which leads to the moral justification and, therefore, the demand for war. "We can repeat it!", "Grandfathers fought," "Victorious people" - with such slogans in the 21st century, Russian propaganda creates the illusion of having a historical legal right to use military force (Orlov, 2022, pp. 75, 85). 98% of Russians consider it important to preserve the memory of the Great Patriotic War, while respondents list only those events that illustrate the heroic deeds of the Soviet people. But they forget about the millions of prisoners in gulags (forced labor camps) and thousands of political executions in the Soviet Union (VCIOM, 2023a).

Ruscism as a concept of the "Russian world" is based on the ideas of the superiority of the Russian people, intolerance towards elements of the culture of other nations, ultra-nationalism, geopolitical instruments of influence, and military force. One of the foundations of ruscism was the theory of the Russian Orthodox Church about God's chosenness, the special mission of Russians, as well as the concept of Eurasianism (Hrytsiuk, 2023). Popular Russian public figure Alexander Dugin (1997) actively promotes the ideas of ruscism and "new Eurasianism" - a geopolitical philosophical idea about the unique role of Russia and the need to unite most of Eurasia under the rule of the Russian state on the basis of the "historical and cultural community" of the countries' populations (Dugin, 1997). Some researchers believe that the beliefs that Dugin (1997) described in his book influenced the foreign policy of the Russian Federation (Pavlenko, 2023).

Russian propaganda has placed ideas of superiority and great power deep into the consciousness of Russian citizens. Over the past 10 years, Russians' perception of the world order has changed dramatically. In 2013, less than 1% of residents believed that society in Russia was organized fairly. The ranking of the fairest states was led by Australia (13%), Austria (7%) and the USA (6%). In 2023, 21% of Russians chose Russia as the country with the fairest social structure. China (11%) and

Belarus (6%) are in second and third place in the ranking. The rating of the USA and Australia dropped to 2%, and less than 1% voted for Austria (VCIOM, 2023b).

The absolute majority of Russians in 2023 believe that the Kremlin's current foreign policy is the country's successful defense of its interests "regardless of whether the governments of other countries like it or not" (59%). 18% of the population support the idea of hegemony of the Russian Federation in the international geopolitical arena and believe that Russia should behave like a "great power" and dictate its will to other states (VCIOM, 2023c). Every second Russian believes that the Russian Federation is already a "great power" (51%), and another third believes that Russia will become great in the next 15-20 years (VCIOM, 2023d). 80% of Russians believe that Russia should become a guarantor of "peace and stability" throughout the countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union. Ten years ago, only 65% of the population chose this option (VCIOM, 2023e).

Nine out of ten Russians consider themselves patriots. At the same time, 38% regard patriotism as protecting their country from any attacks and accusations, and 18% as a belief in the superiority of their country over other countries (VCIOM, 2023f).

According to the World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform in the Russian Federation, already in 2021, 86.04% of residents lived on less than 30 international dollars per day - a hypothetical currency taking into account differences in the cost of living in each country (World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform, 2021).
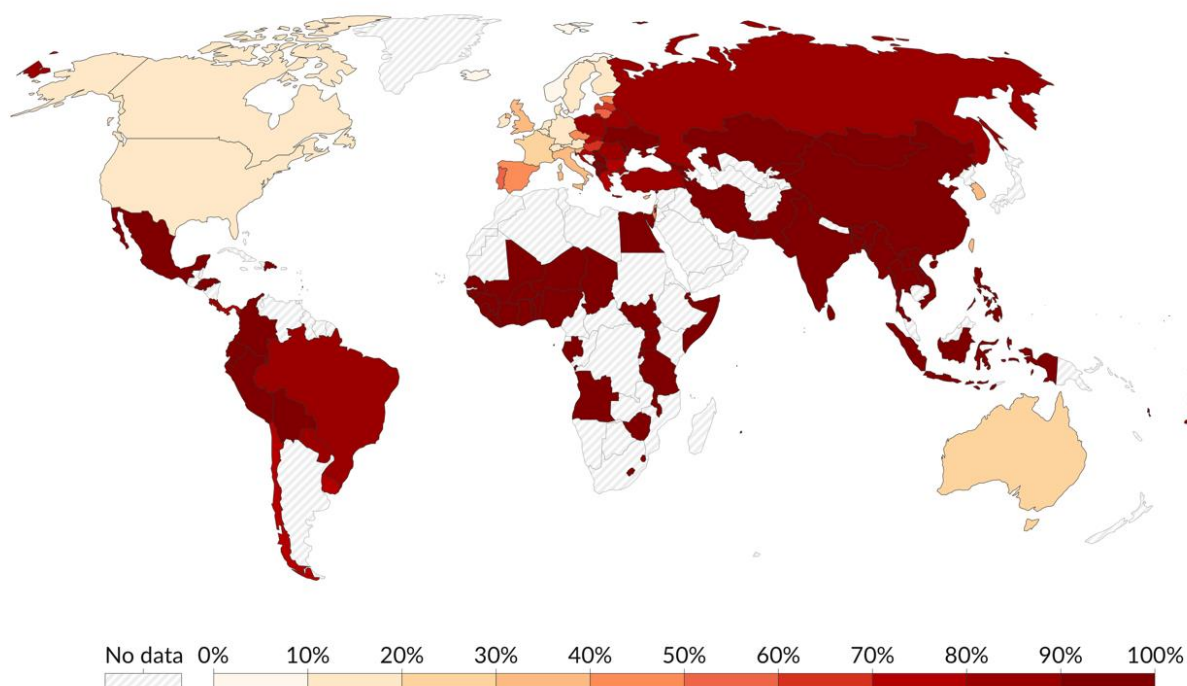
Fig. 9. Share of population living on less than $30 a day, 2021 (Our World in Data, 2021)

In the first quarter of 2022, almost 15% of the Russian population lived below the poverty line. The poverty line was set at 12 thousand 916 rubles, that is, 20.9 million people tried to survive on approximately 130 euros per month (Rosstat, 2022a). This figure is almost twice as high as before the full-scale war - in the fourth quarter of 2021, the number of citizens living below the poverty line was 12.4 million people (Rosstat, 2022b).

Despite these indicators, 59% of Russians assess the situation in the country positively (VCIOM, 2023g). Almost half of the respondents from the group of Russians who live below the poverty line are generally satisfied with the state of affairs in the country: 47% of respondents from the group of people who do not have enough money even for food, and 43% of respondents from the group of people who have enough money for food, but not enough money for clothes. In the group of people with high incomes, the level of satisfaction with the course chosen by the government reaches 92%. At the same time, the level of civil liberties (freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, assembly, choice) is assessed quite low - on average 5.8 points out of 10 (Russian Field, 2023b). But Putin's activities are approved by 74.6% of the population of the Russian Federation (VCIOM, 2023h).

It is important to understand that Russia is not an innovator of such propaganda techniques. The idea of strong, powerful state institutions, the idea of imperialism, the unification (annexation) of territories is a common feature of ruscism and German Nazism. In 1927, the collection "Problems of the Anschluss" was published in Germany, which raised the question of the belonging of certain territories to Germany (Pavlenko, 2023). The German government (like the Russian government now) created in people hope for some better life, a bright future. In particular, the Nazi government promised to revive German values, to lift Germany out of the state of economic depression in which the country was after defeat in the First World War and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Nazi Rise to Power).

In his public speeches, Hitler appealed to the heroic history of the country, spoke of the creation of "the great empire of the German people," the return of territories, divine blessing, and called for unification. In the Fuhrer's speech on January 30, 1939, which he delivered to the Reichstag in honor of his 6th anniversary of coming to power, Hitler said that the goals and tasks facing Germany "are so great", that this certainly requires the unification of all Germans to save the country (World Future Fund, 1939).

Just as Germany criticizes Anglo-Saxon countries, so Russian propaganda contrasts Russian society with the entire Western world and, with the help of this, unites Russians into a single group. Such manifestations of the development of society, such as the legalization of the rights of sexual minorities, drug addicts, etc., are shown in a negative sense and are used to unite within a group (within Russian society) and justify the fight against the "vicious Western civilization". At the same time, the basis of Russia's ideology is disdain for the sovereignty of other countries, self-affirmation through arbitrariness, violence, and aggressive hatred of those whose opinions differ from the cliches of Russian propaganda (Hrytsiuk, 2023).

Ruscism defends the legitimacy of Russian geopolitics, aimed at the occupation and annexation of the territories of other states based on local collaboration. In this way, ideas about the exclusivity of Russians and their exclusive "historical right" to determine the vectors of development, values, political and economic structure in their own geopolitical "spheres of influence" are formed (Hrytsiuk, 2023).

In propaganda, visual objects are of great importance, therefore symbolism is actively used as visual and informational "anchors" to unite into a group. According to the main German propagandist Joseph Goebbels, "Propaganda must label events and people with distinctive phrases or slogans" (Media campaign project "Joseph Goebbels"). German soldiers and party members wore swastika armbands (Kampfbinde). The Latin letters "Z" and "V" and the black and orange St. George's ribbon

became the symbol of the invasion of Russian troops into the territory of Ukraine. During the offensive in February 2022, Russian soldiers' military equipment was marked with these symbols.

Since the beginning of March 2022, social media accounts of the Russian Ministry of Defense began using stylizations and graphic interpretations of the letters "Z" and "V" in information posts about Russian military aggression against Ukraine. Subsequently, the symbols began to spread in propaganda materials, at rallies and other public events, and products in support of the war in Ukraine (Pavlenko, 2023). Now the symbol of ruscism - the letter "Z", which resembles an element of a swastika, has filled the online and offline space: these symbols can be seen on social media, on the streets of Russian cities and even in schools or kindergartens. Russian propaganda also uses the term "Operation Z" (Hrytsiuk, 2023).

The Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for criminal liability for propaganda of war (Article 436), propaganda of communist and nationalist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes (Article 436-1, added in 2014). In 2022, Article 436-2 was also added to the criminal code, which provides for liability for justifying war, including the production and distribution of materials that contain justification, recognition as lawful, denial of armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, glorification of participants (Criminal Code of Ukraine, 2001). Law of Ukraine № 2265-IX dated May 22, 2022 "On the prohibition of propaganda of the Russian Nazi totalitarian regime, armed aggression of the Russian Federation as a terrorist state against Ukraine, symbols of the military invasion of the Russian Nazi totalitarian regime in Ukraine" establishes that the use of the letters "Z" "V" as a symbol of the military invasion of Ukraine, in a certain context, is one of the types of propaganda of the Russian Nazi totalitarian regime (Law of Ukraine № 2265-IX, 2022).

European countries are also gradually introducing a ban on the use of the letter "Z" as a symbol of support for the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. In particular, these are countries such as Lithuania, the Czech Republic, the federal states of Bavaria and Lower Saxony in Germany (Pavlenko, 2023).

Despite the fact that the entire civilized world perceives the letter "Z" as the swastika of the 21st century - a symbol of support for the Putin regime and the full-scale invasion of Russia into the territory of Ukraine, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation and other voices of Russian propaganda use such symbols to glorify the military and consolidate the Russian society. Figure 10 shows some of the posters and banners that are distributed by the Russian Ministry of Defense.
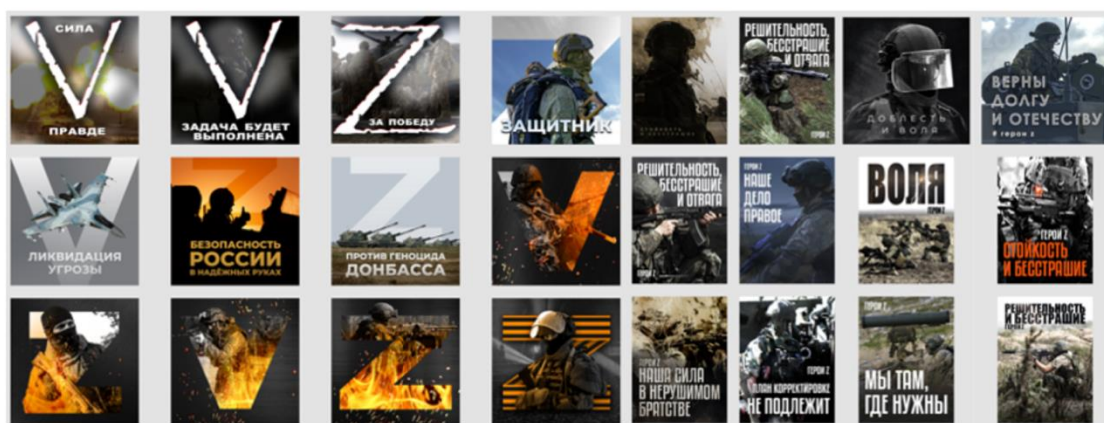

Fig. 10. Pro-war posters of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation

In addition to the use of symbols in such visual materials, various slogans are distributed that are aimed at uniting the group, for example: "Combat brotherhood", "Stronger together", "Heroes Z: Our strength is in unbreakable brotherhood", "Become our brother, take your place in service"; updating the general historical context: "Heroes Z: We will win again", "For the glory of our ancestors"; creating the illusion of a single great goal and the correctness of the position: "Strength is in truth", "Our cause is just", "For a matter of honor", "Loyal to duty and fatherland", "Loyalty and devotion are not just words", including such goals as will protect against external threats: "Defender", "Elimination of the threat", "The security of Russia is in good hands", "We do not start wars, we end them" (Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. Posters).

Such propaganda materials are distributed to a wide audience on social media by official structures such as the Ministry of Defense (Telegram, 2023a; Facebook, 2022), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Telegram, 2023b), as well as private groups and individuals (Facebook, 2023a; Vkontakte Page "Putin is God. We can repeat (1941-1945)").

To increase the sense of unity, governments introduce holidays with a specific ideological basis. For example, in the Third Reich, the Day of Remembrance of Heroes and the founding day of the Nazi Party were celebrated. In Russia, the celebration of National Unity Day was established (Telegram, 2023c).

Sociological surveys revealed an increase in the involvement of Russian citizens in patriotic events: in 2023, 56% of people took part in such events compared to 50% in 2018 (VCIOM, 2023i). The "sublime" feelings (admiration and pride) of Russians towards the triad of state symbols also intensified. For example, in 2023, 72% of the Russian population feel pride and admiration when they hear the national anthem, compared to 54% in 2013 (VCIOM, 2023j). The basis of the text and music for this anthem was taken from the anthem of the Soviet Union.

It is not only the symbols of their country that evoke "exalted" feelings among Russian citizens. The dominant emotion of Russians regarding the military actions of the Russian army in Ukraine in March 2022 is also pride in Russia - this option was chosen by 51% of respondents. Another 14% feel satisfaction and joy. Only 13% chose the options anger, indignation and shame (Levada Center, 2023a). Russians feel pride (56%) and admiration (14%) for the annexation of Crimea. Only 2% of respondents condemn Russia's actions to seize this territory (VCIOM, 2023k).

Simultaneously with the low level of development of the culture of private entrepreneurship and political activity both in Nazi Germany and in modern Russia, governments promoted the idea of collectivism (unification around a common idea, goal) as a social value and reduced the importance of the individuality factor (Orlov, 2022). With the help of the verbal code "we" in a huge number of propaganda materials, new members were included in the group and the sense of belonging to this group of its members was strengthened. This technique is used by politicians when promoting their ideas, including those that contradict the interests of the people themselves.

For example, in the speech of the President of the Russian Federation on September 21, 2022, announcing partial mobilization, Vladimir Putin used the words "we", "us" and similar words 38 times, which emphasize involvement in one social group. At the same time, Vladimir Putin actively opposed other groups (the West, NATO, Ukraine), creating images of external enemies (Putin, 2022). In Putin's message to the Federal Assembly of February 21, 2023, the word "we" was used 95 times,

the word "our" 93 times, and the word "us" 29 times (Putin, 2023). These speeches are actively distributed on all social media and receive millions of views (Youtube, 2023a; Youtube, 2022b).

Hitler, in his speech to the German parliament on January 30, 1939 (as in many other speeches he made), also used certain words and phrases to evoke in his listeners and the rest of the German population a feeling of unity with a social group. Hitler, like Putin, recalled the previous experience of his society (joint war, struggle), often repeated calls that should evoke a collective sense of pride in their country, as well as a universal desire to defend this country (World Future Fund, 1939). All this contributed to unification, strengthened the sense of nationalism, and inspired people to follow the interests of the group rather than rational logic and their own interests.

During a study of the work of social media accounts associated with the Internet Research Agency, which was already mentioned in the previous chapter as a Russian troll farm, it was found that only 20% of the information disseminated by these accounts is of the nature of disinformation. At the same time, 80% of the content that was published by these profiles was aimed at simulating common values and interests. This suggests that most of the time account operators were engaged in creating and strengthening social identity, and only 1 out of 5 posts contained propaganda content (Dawson and Innes, 2019).

More and more scholars are coming to the conclusion that the spread of the Nazi regime in Germany did not occur because people simply followed orders and could not disobey those orders. But precisely because they self-identified with a social group, they were followers of the "big idea" of this group and therefore enthusiastically embodied the bloody, criminal ideas of the political leadership, the Fuhrer, even in situations where they were not obliged to do so. Therefore, it is necessary to critically evaluate the claims of war criminals that they were hostages of the situation and were simply following orders or did not understand the consequences of their actions (Haslam and Reicher, 2017).

One example that confirms this is the actions of the 101st Reserve Battalion of the German Order Police (Ordnungspolizei) during the Holocaust in occupied Poland. The members of this battalion were ordinary German men. They were given the choice to execute the Jews or not. Despite having a choice and the opportunity not to participate in the killings, members of this battalion took part in the first mass executions, consisting of 489 people out of 500. Since 11 people from the battalion still made a different choice and remained unpunished, the remaining members were well aware of the freedom and safety of such choice. Despite this, by the end of the war, members of the 101st Battalion had personally executed 38,000 Jews and deported many more to the Treblinka concentration camp. This belies the idea that they committed their heinous crimes out of a need to obey an order and transfer responsibility to management (Cotterill, 2023).

By analogy with the "guards" in Zimbardo's Experiment (1971) and the members of the 101st police battalion, the part of Russian society that is loyal to the government and its actions can be divided into 2 subgroups of different sizes: fanatics (minority) and ordinary, ordinary citizens those who follow the group do not refuse to follow the commands and ideas of the government (the majority).

According to the results of a sociological survey conducted by Russian Field in February 2023, more than a quarter of Russians (27%) do not support concluding a peace agreement with Ukraine and at the same time support Putin's hypothetical decision on a new attack on Kiev. 83% of them are ready to provide or are already providing material and volunteer support to the Russian army. Almost half

of the supporters of escalation (44% of the group of supporters or 12% of the total sample) are extremely radical and speak out against the existence of Ukraine even in the status of a neutral state and a return to the borders of 2013 or 2021 (Russian Field, 2023a).

We should not underestimate the second, neutral, subgroup, since it is such people who can play a significant role in translating the ideas of the government into the real life of the entire society. With the help of such people, the inhumane, undemocratic political regime is legitimized, the antimorality imposed by propaganda is assimilated and taken for granted. It is the majority of citizens who provide not extraordinaryness, but absolute banality, that is, the normality of evil (Orlov, 2022).

More than half of Russians (52%) claim that they would not have canceled the "military operation" in the past, even if they had such an opportunity. Another 14% found it difficult to answer or refused to answer this question. The president's hypothetical decision to launch a new attack on Kyiv was supported by 59% (15% found it difficult to answer or refused to answer). But about the same number of respondents are ready to support Putin's potential decision to sign a peace agreement (66%). Even among neutral-minded members of Russian society, 89% fully trust the decisions made by the country's leadership in difficult situations (Russian Field, 2023a). The level of protest potential (the percentage of people who consider it possible to hold mass protests and defend their rights and freedoms) decreased in 2022 from 21% to 12% (VCIOM, 2023d).

A striking example of the thinking of a representative of the second subgroup from Nazi Germany is shown during the trial of one of the main organizers of the Holocaust and the person responsible for the so-called "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question" (the mass murder of Jews in Europe) - Adolf Eichmann (1961).

As Hannah Arendt describes in Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil, Eichmann, like a significant number of other Germans, including those who held leadership positions during Nazi Germany, was of this category - loyal by nature. As he himself stated, he never had any negative feelings towards his victims, and he never hid it. Eichmann did not even know the party program and had never read Mein Kampf. Eichmann did not admit his guilt in the murder of Jews, and indeed it was difficult to prove a single case in which Eichmann himself committed murder, but in fact, Eichmann's actions led to the murder of millions of people (Arendt, 1963).

Psychiatrists recognized Eichmann as a sane and normal person, an exemplary family man, and the priest described him as a person with positive thinking. But Eichmann was absolutely unaware of the social danger of the crimes he was committing. He claimed that he would only feel guilty if he did not carry out the order - that is, if he did not send millions of people to their deaths. If necessary, this person would be ready to kill his own father to achieve some higher goal (Arendt, 1963).

Citizens of Russian society do not even need an order - 79% of Russians are ready to voluntarily help Russian soldiers, and every second person is already engaged in such volunteer activities (VCIOM, 2023d). 7% of men in Russia plan to join the army after the announcement of the next wave of mobilization, without even waiting for the agenda (Russian Field, 2023a).

A manifestation of such conformist behavior is the lack of remorse for complicity. During the trials of Nazi criminals in post-war Germany, most of the defendants either received too lenient sentences, were acquitted, or were not put on trial at all, but continued to engage in their professional activities. For example, Felenz was found guilty of murdering 40 thousand Jews. A court in Germany sentenced

him to four years in prison, two of which he had already served while awaiting sentencing (Orlov, 2022).

Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, Ukrainian journalists and video bloggers Volodymyr Zolkin and Dmytro Karpenko have been conducting interviews with Russian military personnel who were captured on Ukrainian territory. Many of them admit that they did not find Nazis in Ukraine, but at the same time they do not express remorse for their actions and do not condemn Russia's policies. For example, Konstantin Barinov from the city of Kazan served in the Russian army under contract as a machine gunner and was captured on the territory of Ukraine in the Zaporozhye region. In an interview, he said that if, after returning to his homeland, he was called back into the army, he would agree with this, although he had no desire to kill people (Youtube, 2023b, video file: 15:56).

Deputy regiment commander Maxim Krishtop from the Krasnoyarsk Territory (RF), who was a Su-34 fighter-bomber pilot and was also captured on the territory of Ukraine (previously took part in the war in Syria), does not believe that the Russian attack on February 24, 2022 was vile and justifies these actions by saying that there was a "failure of diplomatic circles". In his opinion, there were certain contradictions that could have been resolved through negotiations, but Western countries intervened and did everything to prevent these negotiations from taking place. Krishtop explains this by saying that it is beneficial for Europe and the United States for a war to break out between the two countries, so that the Slavic peoples destroy each other (Youtube, 2023c, video file: 50:34). At the same time, Krishtop states that he personally has no antipathy or hatred towards Ukrainians and Ukraine (Youtube, 2023c, video file: 59:49).

The commander of the airborne assault company, Pyotr Kravtsov, went to fight because he received information from the media and believed that Russian-speaking segments of the population were being discriminated against in Ukraine. But even after Kravtsov realized the error of this information, he continued to fight because he was in a group of other military men and was engaged in carrying out tasks from the government (Youtube, 2022c, 4:46, 6:02). Kravtsov states that there is a civil war because he does not consider Ukraine a separate country from Russia (Youtube, 2022c, video file: 1:10). Kravtsov does not believe that Russia should be punished for the invasion of Ukraine (Youtube, 2022c, video file: 22:18).

Also, Russian prisoners of war, when asked by Ukrainian journalist Dmitry Gordon, answered that they did not understand what they were dragged into, but did not express any condemnation of their actions (Youtube, 2023d, video file: 50:48).

Most citizens of both Nazi Germany and modern Russia strive to be part of a group, part of society in their country. As described in the previous chapter, in order to eliminate internal psychological discomfort and achieve balance, a person is in a threefold relationship with the group (society to which the person has a positive attitude) and the actions that this society commits (starting war, massacres, war crimes and crimes against of humanity) strives to form a positive attitude towards such actions and justifies the ongoing processes. This helps the person to be in a psychologically comfortable state.

3.2. Formation of external threat and enemy image

The next component of the ideological basis of propaganda of Hitler's Germany and Putin's Russia are narratives about danger and an external enemy.

As Joseph Goebbels said: "Propaganda must facilitate the displacement of aggression by specifying the targets for hatred" (Media campaign project "Joseph Goebbels"). Germany placed in the role of enemy Jews, communists, social democrats, as well as everyone whom the country's government considered guilty of signing the Versailles Peace Treaty (1919). This treaty created unfavorable conditions for Germany both within the country and on the world geopolitical stage, so the Nazis called this category of enemies "November criminals" (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Nazi Rise to Power). Nazis dehumanize Jews and compare them to dogs and other animals (Merskin, 2021).

In almost every speech Hitler made, one can find manipulative narratives that instill fear and contempt for the enemy. For example, having studied the Fuhrer's speech of January 30, 1939, already described, we can conclude that he perpetuated a sense of danger in the minds of the deputies and other Germans and created the uncontested idea that the only correct solution is violence, even though this will lead to a new world war. To do this, Hitler turned to historical memory, recalled the millions of killed Germans, Germans taken prisoner "without any reason," 800 thousand children who died of hunger, persecution and terror. Hitler called France, England, America as hostile countries, as well as the names of the people allegedly responsible for the "attack," inciting war and creating a threat to German sovereignty: Churchill, Cooper, Ikes, etc. The climax of the speech is the call for "recognize your common enemy" and "annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe" (World Future Fund, 1939).

For Russia, Ukraine and the entire "collective West" - the USA and European countries (not only the governments of these countries, but also the population) became such enemies. The collision with reality refutes the greatness and exclusivity of the Russian nation, shows the technological and economic remains, the inconsistency of the ideals and socio-political structure of Russia with the generally accepted democratic principles of most developed countries. This naturally leads to the emergence of frustration, which becomes a source of aggression (Orlov, 2022). This explains why the collapse of the USSR and the political-geographical separation of Ukraine, as well as any achievements of European countries and the United States, become traumatic events for Russians. This is how hatred and hostility arise, and relations with other countries are broken.

Discriminatory linguistic designations are spreading in Russian society, such as: "Jews", "Pendos", "narrow-eyed", "Khokhols", "churks", "Gay Europeans", as well as "Estonians", "Moldovans", "Turks", "Jews" as common nouns with an offensive semantic connotation (negative personality traits, low level of intelligence, slowness, greed, etc.). There are also some folk sayings like: "The Little Russian is stupider than the crow, but the devil is more cunning," which are also distributed in educational institutions (Facebook, 2023b). Such everyday anti-Semitism, together with other circumstances, demonstrates a culture of limited recognition of dignity, a discriminatory attitude, packaged in a wrapper of protection of security, traditions and spirituality (Orlov, 2022).

Precisely defense, but not attack! For example, in his speech to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Putin talks about the growing threat, about NATO military bases, secret biological laboratories, about Kiev's attempts to obtain nuclear weapons and the supply of heavy military equipment to Ukraine from Western countries even before the start of a "special military operation".

Here are some classic quotes: "They started the war, and we used force and are using it to stop it"; "We protect people's lives, our home. And the goal of the West is unlimited power"; "We have a responsibility to protect our children"; "In the 30s of the last century, the West actually opened the way for the Nazis to power in Germany. And in our time, they began to make anti-Russia out of Ukraine"; "We are not at war with the people of Ukraine" (Putin, 2023; Youtube, 2023a).

Hitler followed similar tactics, presenting Germany as a victim of the West and the Jewish-Bolshevik threat, while simultaneously whitening the reputation of the Germans. In his speech of January 30, 1939, he says that the Germans have no social prejudices, "German people felt no hatred of England, America, or France," but these countries act against Germany and the German population, are a danger, and force them to defend themselves. Hitler argued that it was necessary to "save" Germany from the Jews (World Future Fund, 1939). Thus, Hitler, like Putin, justifies his criminal actions as the only possible and correct option. He shifts the blame for his decisions to the designated "enemies" who allegedly forced him to take such a step.

The position of the victim justifies and legitimizes aggression. From here, such memes as "an attack was being prepared on us," "preemptive strike," "we had no choice," and similar designations of the grounds for Russia's aggressive attack on Ukraine flow and show their "survivability" (Orlov, 2022, p. 95).

These feelings and emotions are effectively used by Putin's authoritarian regime to create fear and images of external "enemies". By actively introducing narratives into the consciousness of Russians about the constant presence of an external threat, the government is further consolidating Russian society around common goals and ideas, and is forming public opinion that is convenient for manipulation.

To resume geopolitical dominance, seize the territory of Ukraine, and justify its actions aimed at violating the territorial integrity of another state, the Russian government created a narrative about the "hostility" of Ukraine. This idea began to spread immediately after the collapse of the USSR: already in 1992-1993, during a sociological survey, many Russian residents supported the use of military force against Ukraine with the aim of annexing the Ukrainian Crimean Peninsula (Lozovyi, 2023, pp. 102-103).

In the book by Alexander Dugin "Fundamentals of Geopolitics. The Geopolitical Future of Russia", which was used as a textbook at the Academy of the Russian Military General Staff, openly stated that Ukrainian independence was unacceptable (Dugin, 1997).

When Putin came to power in 2000, the idea that the country was surrounded by enemies who posed a danger to the Russian nation began to be promoted even more actively in Russia. NATO, Western countries and, of course, Ukraine were presented as enemies. The situation worsened after the Orange Revolution occurred in Ukraine in 2004. As a result of this revolution, Viktor Yushchenko, whose policy was oriented towards the West, came to power in Ukraine instead of Viktor Yanukovych, who supported Russia. Russia's response was to spread the narrative that the "Kiev regime" is a puppet in the hands of the West and is being used to fight Russia. It was stated that Ukraine was implementing the "anti-Russia" project (Lozovyi, 2023, p. 103).

Euromaidan (Revolution of Dignity), which took place in Ukraine from November 2013 to February 2014, gave a clear understanding that the population of Ukraine strives for democratization of society, integration with civilized Europe, and not for a return to the control of the Russian dictatorship.

The Russian propaganda machine used this difference for its own purposes to justify the alleged existence of hatred towards Russia and Russophobia in Ukraine. Russia continued to actively promote ideas about the existence of some kind of Western plan to destroy Russia and use Ukraine to achieve this goal. This made it possible to begin active actions to seize the territory of Ukraine in 2014.

The image of the enemy began to take shape especially actively during the full-scale invasion of Ukrainian territory in February 2022. According to the Kremlin's narrative, the war in Ukraine is in some sense a resumption of the fighting against the Nazis during World War II. To demonize Ukrainians, Russian propaganda used the terms "Nazi" and "genocide" in a comprehensive disinformation campaign among the Russian military and the rest of the country's population. It was argued that the Russian army should carry out a liberation mission from Nazism in Ukraine and stop the "genocide", as during the Second World War (Lozovyi, 2023).

In order to create in society the illusion of a threat posed by an external enemy, corresponding narratives are disseminated in the media space. In the Russian Federation, Ukrainians are positioned as "passive collaborators of Nazi power", and it is argued that Ukraine needs to be "demilitarized and denazified" (Hrytsiuk, 2023, p. 10). Repeatedly, politicians and opinion leaders in Russia speak about the danger that comes from the Ukrainian side.

The terms "Nazi" and "fascist" used by Russians today are hate speech, it allows them (in their own opinion) to commit war crimes, automatically justifies aggressive war and legitimizes the murder and rape of civilians, including children (Belkin, Iurynets, Sopilko, 2022).

In March 2022, after it became known about the victims of massacres in Bucha and other cities in the Kiev region, an article "What should Russia do with Ukraine" appeared on the website of the largest Russian state news agency RIA News, which justifies the genocide of Ukrainians, calls for suppression, de-Ukrainization, de-Europeanization, denazification and ethnocide of the Ukrainian people.

According to this article, Ukrainian "Nazism" poses an even greater threat to the world and Russia than German Nazism during the reign of Hitler. The collective West is described as the designer, source and sponsor of Nazism. Ukraine's desire for independence and the European (Western, pro-American) path of development is regarded as "degradation". The author of the article, Timofey Sergeytsev, calls for the liquidation of not only the state government and military, but also a significant part of the "popular mass", the destruction of the sovereignty of Ukraine, ideological repression and strict censorship in the spheres of politics, culture and education. According to the author, Ukraine, as an "artificial anti-Russian construct," must be eliminated, the population must "survive the hardships of the war and learn the experience as a historical lesson and atonement for their guilt" (RIA News, 2022).

In October 2022, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council and former President Dmitry Medvedev stated in his Telegram channel that "The Ukrainian state in its current configuration with the Nazi political regime will pose a constant, direct and obvious threat to Russia. Therefore, in addition to protecting our people and protecting the country's borders, the goal of our future actions,

in my opinion, should be the complete dismantling of the political regime in Ukraine" (Telegram, 2022a).

At the same time, the head of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, made a publication where he said that Ukrainians were shelling Russian regions, killing children and the elderly. In his post, Kadyrov calls for "wiping out" Ukrainian cities (Telegram, 2022b).

In Russia, a standard dehumanizing linguistic list has taken hold to describe Ukrainians, which is used by Russian propaganda, including on social media. For example, Dmitry Medvedev in his Telegram channel on November 4, 2022 congratulated Russians on National Unity Day, and in his post used words and combinations of words in relation to Ukrainians such as "ukrofashists", "ukronazis", "a large pack of barking dogs from the Western kennels", "a motley pack of grunting pigs and narrow-minded ordinary people from the collapsed Western empire with saliva running down their chins from degeneration", etc. (Telegram, 2022c).

Such efforts by the Kremlin to create an image of the enemy are aimed at trying to ideologically justify the start of a full-scale war in Ukraine. Survey results show that it works. 88% of Russians believe that Nazi organizations operate in Ukraine and the vast majority of these respondents believe that such organizations are supported by the Ukrainian government (70%) and pose a threat to Russia and Russian citizens (76%) (VCIOM, 2022a). As stated, in 2023, almost 70% of the population of the Russian Federation supports the war against Ukraine (Russian Field, 2023a).
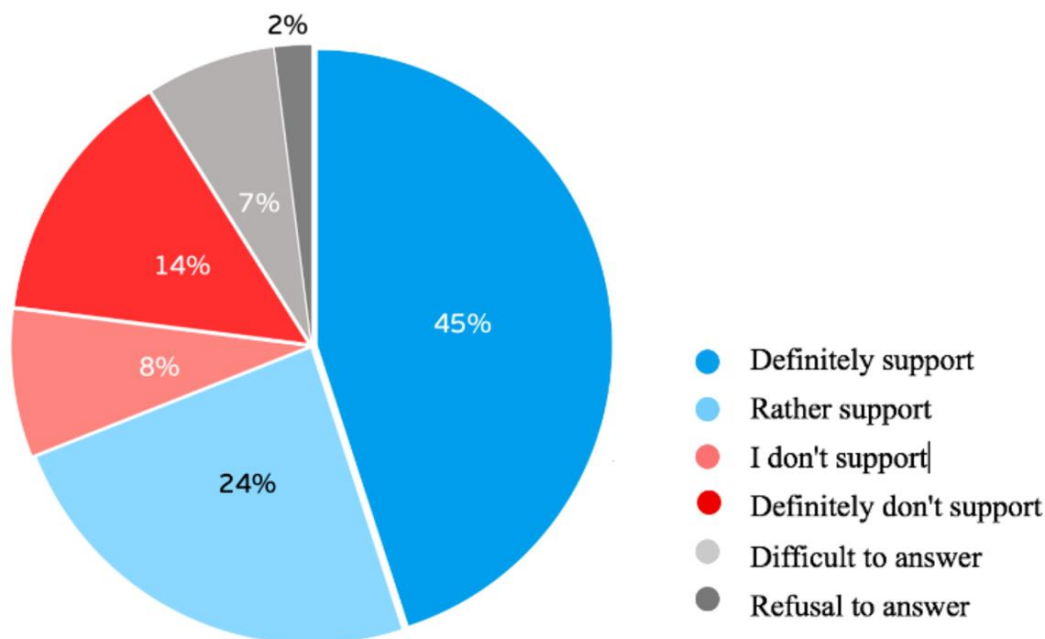

Fig. 11. Russian support for the war against Ukraine (Russian Field, 2023a)

Massive support among Russians for the actions of the Russian army in Ukraine is confirmed by another sociological survey conducted in October 2023 by the Levada Center analytical center, according to which 76% of the population approved the war against Ukraine. At the same time, when answering the question about the purpose of the so-called "special military operation," 72% of Russians chose options related to protection: to protect the Russian people, sovereignty, to protect the world, to free the world from Nazism, to protect themselves from Ukraine, Western countries, "they are the first attacked." 10% refer to "historical lands", "return our territories", "our people". Only 2%

believe that the reason for the attack is Russia's imperial ambitions and the seizure of new territories (Levada Center, 2023b).

Although in fact, Russia's war against Ukraine is, among other things, an aggressive one. The word "capture" is the most popular when answering the question about the events of the "military operation" that are most remembered: "capture of Mariupol", "capture of Solodar", "capture of Bakhmut". When asked about the conditions of a peace treaty with Ukraine acceptable to the Russian Federation, the majority of supporters of escalation choose the annexation of all regions of the South-East of Ukraine to Russia (80%) or the annexation of all of Ukraine except the Western regions to Russia (73%). The fewest respondents voted for the options of returning to the 2014 borders (10%) and recognizing only Crimea as part of Russia (7%) (Russian Field, 2023a).

Including in order to hinder Ukraine's integration into the European Union and NATO, Russia also creates a negative image of these organizations. For example, on the popular social media platform VKontakte among Russians, hundreds of anti-NATO groups have been created. The orientation of these groups is aimed not only at residents of Russia, but also at all countries of the post-Soviet space. Most of them are of the same type and have the goal of forming and monitoring public opinion (Kotsur, 2020).

Also, an array of anti-NATO information is contained on YouTube and dubious sites, which are a source of dissemination of fake and propaganda information about NATO. Numerous posts and comments with similar narratives were found on Instagram. Facebook is also dominated by official pages of Russian news channels and newspapers, created by bot farms that disseminate information from various dubious sites and blogger accounts. Cartoons and memes further reinforce anti-NATO propaganda (Kotsur, 2020).

In most narratives, the West appears as a collective collective ("collective West"), which only wishes evil in the Russian Federation. He is blamed for the collapse of the USSR, and for the war in Ukraine, and in general for all the troubles of Russia. At the same time, the absurdity and lack of evidence of such statements does not matter.

Even a well-founded rebuttal with specific facts does not change the collective mindset. For example, even in modern times, the story of the so-called "Dulles' Plan" ("Dulles Doctrine"), the US plan to dismember and destroy the USSR, continues to be exploited and actively disseminated among the population (Egorov, Zhdanov and Lukashin, 2023).

This propaganda narrative appeared in the early 90s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. "Dulles' Plan" is promoted by the Kremlin as a program document of the American post-war doctrine against the USSR for the implementation of information and psychological warfare aimed at destroying the national identity of "the most rebellious people on Earth", replacing values with false ones, erasing and perverting historical memory, "duping and fooling", while placing "the main emphasis on youth" (Morozov, 2022, p. 627).

It has been repeatedly confirmed that there is no evidence of the existence of the "Dulles' Plan"; in particular, there is no English-language source for it. As it turns out, the basis for this conspiracy theory of Russian propaganda was the spy novel "Eternal Call" by Anatoly Ivanov, published in 1976 (Panchenko, 2020). Despite this, many Russians consider the Dulles' Plan to be a reliable document.

In particular, it is often cited by prominent Russian politicians, journalists and writers as evidence of the "insidious plans of the United States for the cultural destruction of Russia".

Thus, the article entitled "The role of ideology in building an effective system for ensuring state information security in modern conditions" (2023) states that after the collapse of the USSR, the United States and its allies, in an effort to consolidate the destruction of their geopolitical rival, did not abandon plans for further division Russia. The West also continues an information campaign to impose alien values, morals and behavioral attitudes, and perverted approaches to family and raising children on Russia and its allies (Egorov et al., 2023).

Egorov et al. (2023) claim that technology companies such as Google, Apple, Meta (social media Facebook) and others are allegedly working to implement the US plan against modern Russia. These companies are used for espionage and information and psychological influence on the population of the Russian Federation. By exerting the required influence on a wide audience, they have become an effective tool for promoting the idea of the dominance of Western society (Egorov et al., 2023).

In 2015, one of the local courts in Russia even added the text "Dulles' Plan" to the "federal list of extremist materials" and banned the distribution of this text in the country (Panchenko, 2020).

Another favorite horror story that Russian propaganda uses to increase fear and hatred among the population are stories with biological laboratories and biological weapons. According to Russian sources, the CIA and other organizations use artificial intelligence to carry out large-scale biological attacks (Telegram, 2023d), the United States is a global biothreat (Telegram, 2023e), the work of American military biologists is aimed at on the formation of "artificially controlled epidemics" (Telegram, 2023f). Almost every such information post mentions Ukraine as one of the main sites for the production of American bio-weapons directed against the Russians.

Every second resident of Russia is confident in the existence of some secret "world government". Many of these respondents read that the goal of this government is absolute power, hegemony, control over the entire world and, of course, the conquest or destruction of Russia (42%) (VCIOM, 2023l).

One of the characteristic features of the Russian information campaign is that it primarily influences human emotions, which as a result should overshadow common sense. The Kremlin's goal is to create special national linguistic and conceptual pictures of the world. Fake news helps in the creation and expansion of national stereotypes, a number of associations, symbols (both at the level of names and at the level of attributed behavior), in this case, causing hatred towards Ukraine and other countries. Questioning Russia's responsibility and shifting responsibility for aggression and the outbreak of conflict to Ukraine and the "collective West" is also an important goal of the disinformation campaign.

This tactic brings results - in 2022, 56% of Russians recognized national unity in Russia. For comparison, in 2012 only 23% thought so. The main reason for the unification of the Russian people is the "special military operation" (war with Ukraine) and the attitude of Western countries towards the Russian Federation (28%). Only 2% of respondents chose a reason such as love for the country (VCIOM, 2022b).

3.3. The process of forming public opinion

"If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it" (Media campaign project "Joseph Goebbels"), - these words of Joseph Goebbels can describe one of the main mechanisms of propaganda, namely persuasion, which does not occur simultaneously, but gradually.

By the time Hitler started World War II, propaganda had been spreading in Germany for more than six years. In his January 1939 speech, the Fuhrer called this period years of preparation (World Future Fund, 1939).

Even before changes were made to the German legislative system aimed at limiting the rights of Jews (Nuremberg racial laws, etc.), the ruling party created a policy of tolerance for crimes against Jews and Gypsies. Actions such as the Night of Broken Glass or Kristallnacht in 1938 - when pogroms and attacks on Jews occurred throughout Germany - and many other crimes against non-Germans were not condemned but encouraged (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Nazi propaganda). Gradually, ideas about solving problems with unemployment and restoring the economy were transformed into one of the bloodiest and most destructive events of the 20th century - the Second World War.

The hybrid war that Russia has waged against Ukraine since the beginning of the 21st century has covered political, ideological, economic and other spheres. Special operations of varying intensity and direction were accompanied by the installation of agents of influence in management structures and law enforcement agencies, the creation of reconnaissance and sabotage groups in different regions of Ukraine, primarily in the south-east. Russian military instructors and FSB officers, acting according to their plan, coordinated the training and activity of illegal groups.

After the proclamation of the so-called "DPR" and "LPR," the military-political composition of these entities was formed under the complete control of Moscow, and those who allowed themselves to deviate from the "general line" died as a result of "accidents" (Hrytsiuk, 2023).

Over the past few decades, the Russian government has filled the information space of citizens with the necessary narratives. With the help of propaganda, a managed and controlled society was built, which is ready to agree to any actions of the country's political leadership, even to the start of an aggressive war and political repression against citizens (Orlov, 2022).

Information influence was carried out long before the start of a full-scale war. According to EUvsDisinfo (a European Union project aimed at neutralizing disinformation campaigns), in 2018, more than 46% of cases of disinformation spread by the Russian Federation directly related to Ukraine, were aimed at undermining Ukrainian society, as well as creating a hostile and threatening image of Ukraine (EUvsDisinfo, 2019).

For example, fake news was spread in the online media space that Ukrainian children are forced to play with a stuffed Hitler (StopFake, 2018a), the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate is becoming a Christian ISIS (StopFake, 2018b) Ukrainian students are forced to abandon relatives who live in Russia (EUvsDisinfo, 2018a), the Ukrainian army allows rich people from Western countries to hunt for money on residents of Donbass with a pro-Russian position (EUvsDisinfo, 2018b) and many others.

In addition, there have been repeated narratives that Ukraine is a Nazi state ruled by a pro-fascist elite (EUvsDisinfo, 2018c; EUvsDisinfo, 2018d). Not just Nazis, zombie Nazis who continue to fight even after being shot in the head (EUvsDisinfo, 2018e).

After the annexation of part of the Ukrainian territories in 2014, in July 2014, on the all-Russian federal television channel "Channel One," which is also broadcast on YouTube, an episode was released with an example of Russian propaganda, which became resonant and widely disseminated. In this issue, a certain Galina Pyshnyak spoke about an incident that, according to her, occurred after Ukrainian troops liberated the Ukrainian city of Slavyansk from the occupiers. Pyshnyak described in detail the public executions carried out by the Ukrainian military, including the torture and murder of a child: "They took a three-year-old child, a boy, a little boy in shorts and a T-shirt, like Jesus, was nailed to the bulletin board. One nailed, two held. [...] They held the mother and the mother watched all this as the child was bleeding, screaming, squealing. [...] The incisions were made so that the child would suffer" (Eidelman, 2018, p. 23).

A few days before this TV story, Alexandr Dugin published a similar story on his Facebook page (Facebook, 2014). This story was called "the crucified boy" and was widely replicated on social media around the world (Youtube, 2014, video file: 0:41).

Despite the fact that many both Ukrainian and foreign organizations published an absolute refutation of this story, Russian propaganda to some extent achieved its goal of forming among the population the "correct" (needed by the Russian government) attitude towards Ukrainians (StopFake, 2014; EUvsDisinfo, 2016; Center for Countering Disinformation, 2023).

However, even in this, Russia is not an innovator. This method was invented during the First World War. In 1915, an article was published that German soldiers crucified a young Canadian corporal, tortured him and brutally killed him. This story caused a wave of popular indignation and significantly accelerated the mobilization process. In 1925, after the end of the war, an investigation was carried out, which showed that the story was false and that no crucified Canadian boy existed (Youtube, 2022d, video file: 52:01).

According to the classic "Overton Window" theme, described in the previous chapter, in the Russian Federation, radical ideas were initially expressed in theoretical and scientific circles. One such example is the publication in 1997 of the book by Doctor of Philosophy, professor at Moscow State University Alexander Dugin "Fundamentals of Geopolitics. The Geopolitical Future of Russia", which became the ideological basis for the further political course of the Russian Federation. In this book, Dugin describes why the continued existence of an independent, sovereign Ukraine is unacceptable and threatens "the geopolitical security of Russia, tantamount to an invasion of its territory". Even 17 years before the events of 2014, which led to the annexation of Ukrainian Crimea, Dugin had already stated the need for control of this territory by Moscow (Dugin, 1997, p. 199).

Despite the enormous losses and tragedies that World War II brought, the idea that "we can repeat it" was imposed on Russian citizens. Taboos on ideas such as mass murder, genocide and even nuclear war were lifted. Even before the outbreak of hostilities in 2014 and a full-scale offensive in 2022, various options and developments were actively discussed in the Russian media. In February 2021, the press secretary of the Russian President Dmitry Peskov, during a briefing, announced the official position of the Kremlin, according to which: "Ukraine is part of the Russian world. Moscow does not welcome Kyiv's line of denying this community" (Focus, 2021). In 2023, the editor-in-chief of the

RT television channel (which is funded by the Russian government) Margarita Simonyan openly called on a huge audience to carry out a nuclear explosion at least on the territory of her state in order to scare enemies in this way (Youtube, 2023e, video file: 0:31). Even non-radical Russians adhere to the position that not everything is so simple and they do not know the whole truth.

After the taboo of some topics was removed, stories began to spread in the Russian media space through all channels that justify and even glorify criminal actions, show the benefits of such events: the construction of the Crimean bridge after the annexation of Crimea, possible benefits from the annexation of new territories, "exploits" of soldiers who take part in a "special military operation", "counter-terrorism activities", etc. Propaganda also works in the field of linguistics: the meanings of words change, some words are even forbidden to be pronounced. For example, after almost 2 years of hostilities, in Russia it is forbidden to use the word "war" in the context of events taking place in Ukraine. Such a mechanism helps the state to distract society from the essence of what is happening, to make such actions more permissible, normal, acceptable.

The population of Russia is shown radical propagandists such as Vladimir Solovyov, Olga Skabeeva, Margarita Simonyan. Compared to what these "journalists" say, less radical statements look adequate and sensible, even if they are also absurd.

In Russia, an alternative history is being created, based on emotions associated with imperialism, greatness, pride, but such a history is not based on facts. Propaganda so often repeated that "Crimea is the original Russian land, and Sevastopol is a Russian city," the annexation of Crimea is the restoration of historical justice (Putin, 2014, video file: 10:41), that by 2023 the majority of the Russian population would believe it. During a sociological survey conducted in the Russian Federation in 2023, 86% of respondents supported the annexation of Crimea by Russia (VCIOM, 2023k).

Although, as you know, Crimea is not "originally Russian". The Crimean Khanate was annexed by Russia at the end of the 18th century (Manifesto on the annexation of the Crimean Khanate to the Russian Empire, April 19, 1783), and before that the peninsula was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire for about 300 years. In 1954, Crimea was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated February 19, 1954, approved by USSR law of April 26, 1954). It is worth noting that at that time the peninsula was completely destroyed by war and mass deportations of Crimean Tatars. In August 1991, Ukraine (with Crimea as part of its territories) gained independence (Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine dated August 24, 1991). In the same year, on December 1, residents of Ukraine, including those who lived in Crimea, voted for the independence of Ukraine in a referendum.

Representatives of pop culture and pop culture are brought in to support the government's ideas. For example, on February 22, 2023, the Russian leadership held a pro-war rally and concert in Moscow called "Glory to the Defenders of the Fatherland" in honor of the anniversary of the "special operation". The concert was attended by more than 200 thousand people (Interfax, 2023). Many representatives of Russian show business perform at this and other concerts: Philip Kirkorov, Dmitry Dyuzhev, Nikolai Baskov, Grigory Leps, Polina Gagarina and others. Of course, social media is used. Moreover, information is published not only by official persons and organizations, but also by opinion leaders.

In February 2022, after the outbreak of a full-scale war, Russian pop singer Nikolai Baskov published a post in support of Russia on his Instagram account. Baskov claims that "Russia's operation is fully consistent with international law" and the goal is "the defense of Russia". This publication collected more than 357 thousand likes, and 6 million people subscribed to Baskov's Instagram page (Instagram, 2022).
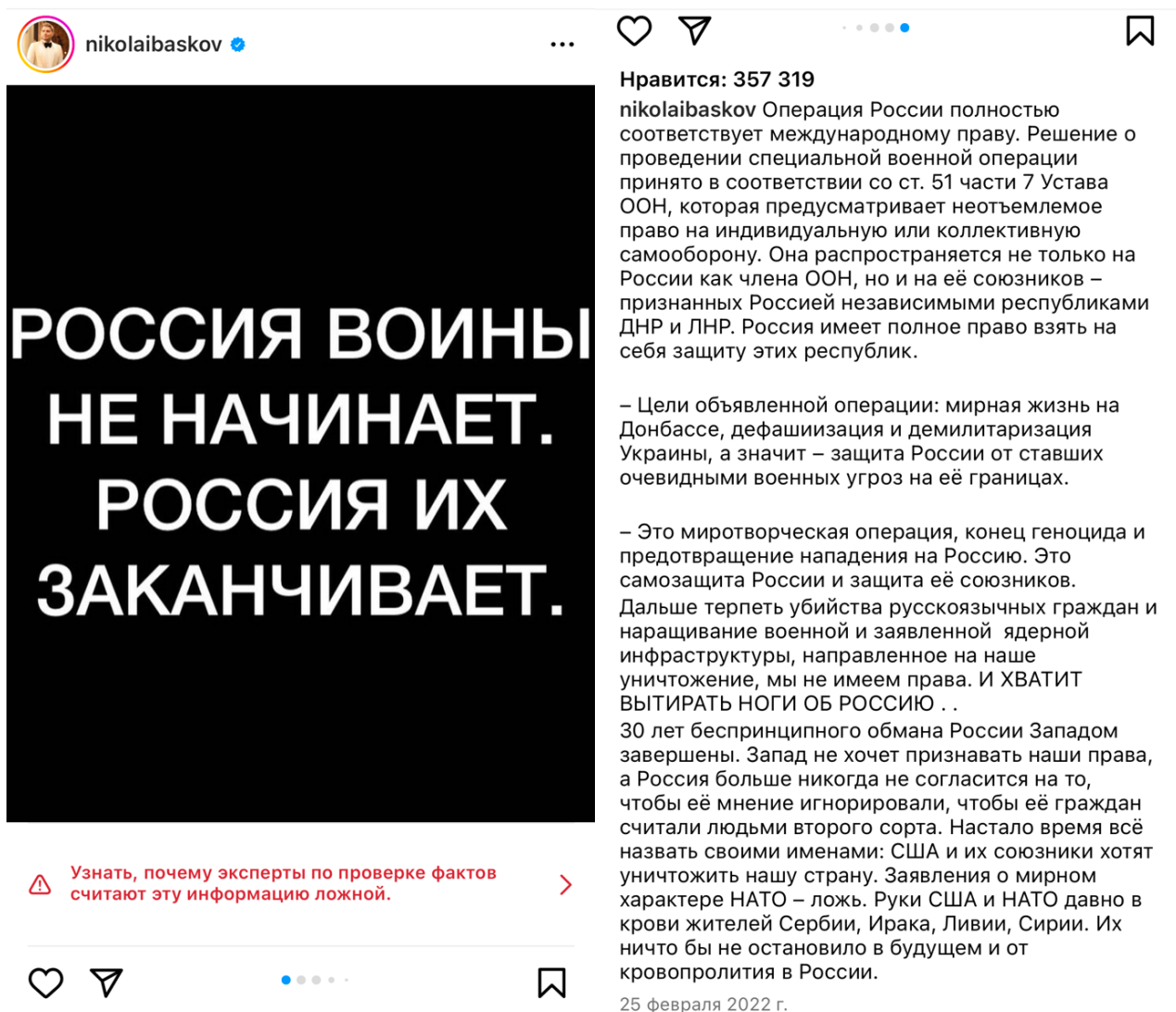

Fig. 12. Nikolai Baskov's Instagram post in support of the Russian army (Instagram, 2022)

Silence and a neutral position are also not welcome in Russia. Most Russian cultural figures supported the war. Those who did not do this, who openly opposed the war in Ukraine, were included in the list of "artists banned in Russia". This list includes the groups "DDT", "Bi-2", "Aquarium", singer Zemfira, Monetochka and others. Many of them had concerts cancelled, and many decided to move abroad (Ofitsinsky et al., 2023).

Based on the Federal Law "On Control over the Activities of Persons Under Foreign Influence", from December 1, 2022, due to vague and imprecise wording, virtually any Russian can receive the status of "foreign agent" (Russian Federation Law № 255-FZ, 2022) At the same time, the attitude of the majority of Russian society towards persons who have received this status is negative: 29.1% consider them corrupt traitors who serve another country and must be punished, another 21.1% of respondents

consider ionogens enemies of the people, spies, people without a homeland, confused people, etc. (Russian Field, 2023c).

Geopolitical processes, which only twenty years ago seemed impossible, utopian, absurd, in modern Russia are becoming popular among different segments of the population, among different age groups. For example, players from Russia recreated in the popular game Minecraft the battle for Ukrainian Soledar, which was captured by Russian troops during a full-scale invasion. A video of this game was broadcast on the Russian social media Vkontakte (The New York Times, 2023).

The effectiveness of the consistent work of the Kremlin propaganda can be traced by the dynamics of changes in the results of sociological surveys over different periods. For example, from 1999 to 2023, the number of Russians who believe that relations between Russia and Western countries will always be based on mistrust has increased by 21%. If in 2022 half of the respondents believed that rapprochement between Russia and NATO could meet Russia's interests, then this year only 11% of respondents think so (VCIOM, 2023m). In 2022, Russia reached a peak in the number of citizens who have a negative view of the United States: in 1991, 83% of Russians said they had a positive view of America, and a little more than 30 years later, only 14% of Russians have a good opinion of this country (VCIOM, 2022c). From 2021 to 2023, the number of Russians who consider the annexation of Crimea "definitely correct" increased by 10 points (VCIOM, 2023k).

The dynamics of thinking adaptation under the influence of propaganda during Hitler's Germany can be seen in the letters of a German soldier to his wife. At the time of writing these letters in 1941, the soldier was in Lithuania. In his first letters, the soldier expressed doubts about the justice of the orders to execute civilians, expressed sympathy for the Jewish population, and even described how he provided aid to starving Jews whenever possible. After 8 weeks, the soldier reported that his group had shot and killed 150 Jews, including women and children. In this letter, the soldier described his feelings of shame and regret, and asked that his daughter never be told about what happened. However, just 9 weeks after this, the soldier proudly spoke in letters about mass executions, shared details and even said that he filmed one of the executions in order to show it to his children (Cotterill, 2023). As Cotterill rightly wrote, no one is the villain of their own story, even if that means reconstructing reality in a fictitious and self-serving way.

With such support, the state government legalizes its actions. Changes are made to the constitution and other legislative acts, territories are annexed at the "official" level, and new mechanisms are created to combat opposition and dissent. A new morality, a new ideological norm is being created in society: instead of a ban on war, a ban on prohibiting and condemning war is introduced. In this context, one cannot help but recall a quote from George Orwell's (1949) utopian novel "1984" - "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength" (Orwell, 1949, p. 1). Russians are being created conditions under which they simultaneously begin to believe contradictory statements: the Ukrainian state does not exist, but the Ukrainian state is engaged in repression. There is no Ukrainian nation, but all Ukrainians are nationalists. There is no Ukrainian language, but in Donbass everyone was forced to speak Ukrainian (Ofitsinsky et al., 2023).

3.4. Fight against dissent

The closed nature of the Russian information space lies not only in the presence of echo chambers, the operation of which is described in the previous chapter. There is also a taboo on checking and

challenging propaganda constructs (including through censorship and repression), and on their connection with reality (Orlov, 2022).

The impossibility of expressing alternative views within a totalitarian society serves as fertile ground for the development of social conformity. In a totalitarian society, a single ideology prevails, which requires each member of society to absolutely accept it, which automatically means acceptance of the totalitarian regime. In a totalitarian state, the goal of ideology is precisely to create this acceptance by any means of indoctrination. Views that are in opposition to the official ideology are subject to all sorts of restrictions, including repressive actions by state security agencies. In a totalitarian state, there are no legitimate, from the point of view of such a state, possibilities of opposition to the ruling regime, and, therefore, an ideology opposite to the official one is, in principle, impossible. As a result, the existence of a systemic opposition is impossible in a totalitarian state (Mysovskikh, 2023).

In Nazi Germany, the only producer of the officially "correct" information line was the ruling party. Hitler gave a "factual account of the historical events", showing these historical events in a format that was beneficial to him. At the same time, the Fuhrer did not forget to accuse other sources of information and politicians of distorting and falsifying facts. This played a significant role in the outbreak of the Holocaust and World War II (World Future Fund, 1939).

As during the Third Reich, Russia also has a monopolistic propaganda system, which is characterized by zero tolerance for opposing views. Such Kremlin propaganda covers not only traditional media, but also mass communications, social media, educational institutions, government bodies, local governments (Orlov, 2022).

In 2022, Russia has one of the lowest freedom of expression index scores compared to other countries. For example, in Lithuania and the USA this indicator is at the level of 0.93, and in Canada – 0.95. At the same time, in Russia the freedom of expression index is only 0.16. This indicates the restrictions that are being created both for Russian citizens in the freedom to express their opinions, and for the media in disseminating various political points of view, information that contradicts the Kremlin's policies (Our World in Data, 2022).
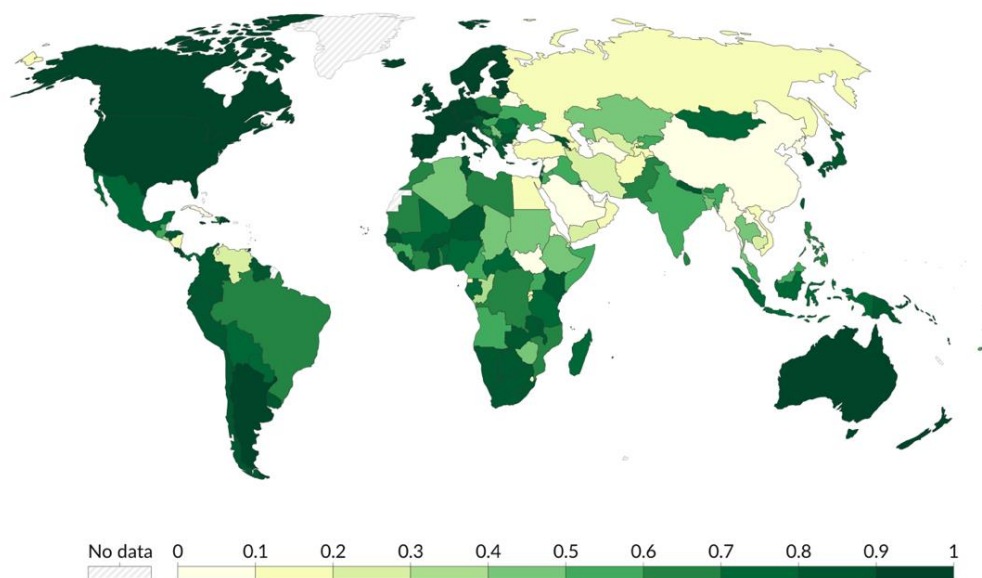

Fig. 13. Freedom of expression, 2022 (Our World in Data, 2022)

On March 4, 2022, the Russian Federation amended the criminal code and criminalized any dissemination of "false" (that is, one that does not correspond to the official line of the Kremlin) information about the armed forces of the Russian Federation, "discrediting" the Russian army and government agencies (Russian Federation Law № 32-FZ, 2022). Thus, total censorship was introduced in the country, which is supported by severe repression.

In April 2022, Russian artist Alexandra Skochilenko was detained by law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation for replacing 5 price tags in a local grocery supermarket with anti-war leaflets with inscriptions about the actions of the Russian army in Ukraine: "The Russian army bombed an art school in Mariupol. About 400 people were hiding there from shelling"; "My grandfather took part in the Great Patriotic War for 4 years not so that Russia would become a fascist state and attack Ukraine"; "Putin has been lying to us from TV screens for 20 years. The result of this lie is our willingness to justify war and senseless deaths"; "Russian conscripts are sent to Ukraine. The price of this war is the lives of our children"; "Stop the war! In the first three days, 4,300 Russian soldiers died. Why are they silent about this on television? In November 2023, one of the district courts of St. Petersburg sentenced Skochilenko to 7 years in prison (Website "Freedom for Sasha Skochilenko").

Fig. 14. The leaflet that became the basis for the imprisonment of Skochilenko
(Deutsche Welle, 2022)

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case, but a common practice in modern Russia: Igor Baryshnikov was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison for several posts on Facebook about the shelling of a maternity hospital in Mariupol (Ukraine) and the crimes of the Russian army in Ukrainian Bucha (OVD-Info, 2023a). Alexander Nozdrinov received a sentence of eight and a half years in prison for publishing on a telegram channel a photograph of a destroyed Ukrainian house with the caption "Ukrainian cities after the arrival of the liberators". The court sentenced Mikhail Zharikov to six years in prison for publications on social media in which he criticized the actions of the Russian military in Ukraine (OVD-Info, 2023b). According to the independent human rights media project OVD-Info, since February 24, 2022, 19,840 people have been detained in Russia for their anti-war stance.

Hundreds of court hearings on political criminal cases are held every week (OVD-Info. Independent human rights media project).

As for filtering information about the enemy, it is necessary to take into account that in confrontation - both military and non-military - each of the opposing sides cares about the high morale of the population and military personnel. One of the ways to filter information about the enemy is to hide his successes and

concealing the losses of one's own armed forces. This method of propaganda was known and used, in particular, by Nazi Germany, exaggerating the successes of the Wehrmacht and reducing or denying the successes of the Red Army (Belkin et al., 2022).

In the modern war against Ukraine, the Russian Federation completely inherits this technique. In particular, BBC journalists claim that Russian propaganda hides the real losses of its troops, significantly underestimating official data. The last time the Russian Ministry of Defense reported its losses was more than a year ago, and then the number of dead Russian soldiers, according to the ministry, was about 1.3 thousand (TASS, 2022). During the journalistic investigation, the names of 34,412 Russian military personnel who had already died on the territory of Ukraine during a "special military operation" were identified. At the same time, journalists believe that the real number of losses of the Russian army may be much higher (BBC, 2023).

The Kremlin blocks objectionable sources of information at the state level: soon after the start of a full-scale attack on Ukraine in 2022, social media and individual Internet pages Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Patreon, YouTube were recognized as extremist organizations and banned in the country (Roskomnadzor. Service for checking access restrictions to sites and (or) pages of Internet sites). Of course, in the modern world it is not difficult to bypass such blocks using a free VPN and gain access to alternative sources of information. But simultaneously with the actions of the state, the majority of the population prefers to remain in a closed information cocoon and adapt to the official ideology. For example, if back in 2021 the most popular journalist and blogger in Russia was Yuri Dud, then already in 2022, after he condemned the Kremlin's military aggression and supported Ukraine, his rating fell to a minimum among the Russian audience, and the leading positions were taken by the most active propagandists: Vladimir Solovyov, Olga Skabeeva and Evgeniy Poddubny (VCIOM, 2023n).

Of course, the influence of Kremlin propaganda is massive, but not comprehensive. In Russia one can also find manifestations of dissent that do not fit into the thinking of the majority. However, their influence on the political regime is very insignificant, at least in the short term (Orlov, 2022).

For example, during a sociological survey by Russian Field in February 2023, on average, only a quarter of respondents in the age group over 45 years old responded that they would cancel the decision to launch a "special operation" if they had such an opportunity in the past. However, in the 18-29 age group, almost half of respondents chose this option. Respondents who use television as their main source of information are more supportive of the war - only 23% voted for the theoretical abolition of the "special operation" in the past. Among those who more often receive news from YouTube and Telegram channels, 55% and 36%, respectively, would cancel the war (Russian Field, 2023a).

Even to the question of what patriotism is, Russian residents answer differently depending on their preferred source of information. Patriotism for TV viewers is about defending your country (41%) and confidence in the superiority of your country over others (31%). Internet users more often choose options such as working for the good of the country (58%) and telling the truth about their country (43%) (VCIOM, 2023f).

Russians in older age groups more often support the actions of the Russian armed forces in Ukraine: among respondents aged 55 years and older, 82% of respondents expressed support, in the group 40-54 years old - 77%, in the group 25-39 - 73% and in group 18-24 years old – 62%. At the same time, respondents who prefer television as a source of information are most supportive (88%). At the same time, respondents who receive information from social media and YouTube channels less often (compared to the previous group) support the war with 72% and 63%, respectively (Levada Center, 2023b).

The reaction not only of the Kremlin, but also of the rest of Russian society to dissent is indicative. According to the majority, people who speak out against the war - mainly young people - are themselves victims of propaganda. But the source of such information influence, they believe, is Western countries. "Enemies" of Russia use the Internet and social media for these purposes, with the help of which they "undermine the political course of young people, their attitude towards the country itself" (Alekseev, 2022). 9 out of 10 Russians believe that an information war is being waged against Russia (VCIOM, 2022d).

More and more Russians support policies aimed not at expanding economic and cultural ties, but, on the contrary, at moving away from Western countries, reducing ties and ending relations. In 1999, only 16% of the population had this position, but in 2022 this figure increased to 39% (VCIOM, 2022e).

Thus, both in Nazi Germany and in modern Russia, a redefinition of evil is taking place. Arendt attributed Eichmann's inability to think rationally during the investigation and trial not to stupidity, but to an absolute inability to evaluate the situation from a different point of view. Eichmann was not the personification of hatred, cruelty or madness. He personified the nature of Nazi evil within a closed system run by pathological criminals (Arendt, 1963). Evil and hatred became the basis of the new legal order. In the categories of elementary morality, what were considered instincts of decency ceased to be perceived as obvious.

Conclusions

As a result of theoretical analysis, it was found that propaganda is the dissemination of true, false or partially false information by certain individuals, groups, organizations, political forces and other interested actors, which is used to manipulate the opinions and actions of other people and groups. Propaganda can be used not only for persuasion, but also to put people in a state of "epistemic anarchy" - a state where they doubt what to believe. Due to this, people's ability to critically evaluate facts is reduced and such people (groups of people) become more susceptible to further manipulation. The subjects of propaganda can be various actors, such as politicians, elites, activists, interest groups, etc.

As a result of analyzing the results of sociological and psychological experiments conducted in the second half of the 20th century, as well as their modern, improved analogues, a generalized analytical scheme (conceptual model) of the functioning of propaganda was formulated. This scheme explains the psychological and biological prerequisites and reasons for such an active influence of propaganda on large groups of people. It was found that the propaganda scheme includes the following interrelated elements:

- Group influence: strengthening group connections to activate manifestations of conformism and groupthink;

- Formation of external threat and enemy image, dehumanization: transition to the victim position to legitimize aggression, strengthening intragroup ties;

- Sequential persuasion: consistently increasing influence to shift the boundaries of the morally permissible spectrum of public opinion, forming the necessary public position;

- Limitation of information space: formation of a closed information space to eliminate alternative, opposition ideology.

Propaganda was used long before the advent of the Internet, but after the global digitalization of society, social media has become a new effective tool for disseminating propaganda narratives. In recent years, cyber troops, troll farms, bots-automated (highly automated) accounts and deepfakes, including those created using artificial intelligence, have been actively used.

As the study of secondary data has shown, one of the most popular social networks is Facebook. Also, information, including for the purpose of propaganda, is disseminated via Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, Pinterest in and other social media. Recently, instant messengers have also been gaining popularity, their functional options approaching social networks. As the study showed, for the majority of Ukrainians Telegram has become more popular even in comparison with traditional media such as television, radio and printed newspapers.

The main difference between the methods of spreading propaganda is that traditional media such as television, newspapers, radio, etc. use a vertical model of dissemination of information (and influence): from the government or other actor with influence to the object of propaganda influence (readers, viewers, listeners). With this model, the ideological narratives that are disseminated are stable, focused on an indefinite number of people. In turn, modern social media use a horizontal model of information dissemination (influence). This structure with many actors allows you to create the illusion of awareness, since the information consumer receives the same information from

different users, from different sources (different social networks, different groups, different users). Social media also makes it possible to disseminate necessary information faster, without geographical barriers. Thanks to the functionality of social media, propaganda narratives can be both targeted at a wide audience and adapted to the specifics of certain target groups. Social media is more often used by members of the younger generation as the main source of information.

A comparative analysis between examples of propaganda by political leaders of Nazi Germany during the World War II and modern Russia during the aggression against Ukraine, carried out on the basis of a developed generalized analytical scheme, showed that despite the emergence of social media as a new tool for disseminating information, the main elements of systemic propaganda have not changed since the last century. By comparing propaganda in the periods before the advent of social media in Nazi Germany and after the advent of social media in modern Russia, it was established that states used the same strategy of manipulating people.

To enhance the manifestations of conformist behavior as a predictor of the effectiveness of propaganda, with the help of narratives about the heroic historical past and high common goals, conditions were created for unification into a group and increasing intra-group cohesion. Creating the illusion of an external threat, an external enemy, as well as the dehumanization of such an enemy, removed the block on aggression and legalized any actions imposed by propaganda. With the help of persuasion with a consistent, gradual shift of the "window" of what is acceptable on the scale of moral values, the necessary ideological guidelines were created in society. Repression and other actions aimed at eliminating dissent and ideological diversity helped keep people in a closed information space.

Thus, I can conclude that social media has made it possible to distribute propaganda cheaper, faster and to a wider audience. Russia shows the effectiveness of propaganda in the context of the war with Ukraine, even outside the country in the international arena. However, the basic elements of systemic propaganda have not changed. Using the example of a comparative analysis of propaganda in the periods before the advent of social media in Nazi Germany and after the advent of social media in modern Russia, it was found that states used the same strategy.

Given the psychological tendency of people to be influenced by propaganda, as well as the negative consequences in society that the spread of propaganda can create, it is now important to conduct further research aimed at preventing such consequences and better understanding the mechanisms of propaganda.

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