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**MAPPING THE TERRAIN OF DIGITAL WARFARE:
A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA
DURING ARMED CONFLICTS**

108
— *In an increasingly interconnected world communication, the rise of social media has transformed the landscape of information dissemination and public discourse. Against the backdrop of heightened geopolitical tensions, especially during conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war, the internet has emerged as a powerful tool for both propaganda and counter-propaganda, influencing perceptions and behaviors on a global scale. This study undertakes a bibliometric analysis of the academic literature addressing Russian digital propaganda in times of war. The primary goals are twofold: first, to identify significant themes central to contemporary scholarly discussions and the interconnections among these themes; second, to ascertain which academic sources have garnered the highest citation counts and highlight the most recent scholarly contributions within this field. A total of 707 scientific publications were analyzed, sourced from the Journal Citation Reports (JCR). Employing bibliometric techniques, including citation analysis and thematic mapping, we delineate the landscape of research related to Russian digital propaganda during wartime. The findings reveal a multifaceted discourse, encompassing issues of misinformation, psychological effects, and national identity narratives. Additionally, the analysis identifies key scholarly sources that have shaped this dialogue and highlights emerging trends poised to guide future research. Overall, this study aims to enhance understanding of the intricate dynamics at play in Russian digital propaganda, thereby contributing valuable insights to scholars and practitioners alike. By systematically exploring this vital area of research, we hope to inform future inquiries and foster a more nuanced comprehension of the implications of digital propaganda in modern conflict scenarios.*

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Картографування території цифрової війни: бібліометричний аналіз російської пропаганди під час збройних конфліктів

У все більш взаємопов'язаній світовій комунікації розвиток соціальних медіа змінив ландшафт поширення інформації та публічного дискурсу. На тлі загострення геополітичної напруженості, особливо під час таких конфліктів, як російсько-українська війна, Інтернет став потужним інструментом як пропаганди, так і контрпропаганди, впливаючи на сприйняття та поведінку в глобальному масштабі. У цьому дослідженні проведено бібліометричний аналіз академічної літератури, присвяченої російській цифровій пропаганді в умовах війни. Основні цілі подвійні: по-перше, визначити важливі теми, що є центральними для сучасних наукових дискусій, і взаємозв'язки між цими темами; По-друге, з'ясувати, які академічні джерела отримали найбільшу кількість цитувань, і виділити найновіший науковий внесок у цій галузі. Загалом було проаналізовано 707 наукових публікацій, джерелами яких є *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)*. Використовуючи бібліометричні методи, включно з аналізом цитувань та тематичним картографуванням, ми окреслюємо ландшафт досліджень, пов'язаних із російською цифровою пропагандою під час війни. Результати дослідження розкривають багатогранний дискурс, що охоплює питання дезінформації, психологічних ефектів та наративів національної ідентичності. Крім того, аналіз визначає ключові наукові джерела, які сформували цей діалог, і висвітлює нові тенденції, які можуть спрямовувати майбутні дослідження. Загалом, це дослідження має на меті покращити розуміння складної динаміки, що відбувається в російській цифровій пропаганді, тим самим надаючи цінну інформацію як науковцям, так і практикам. Систематично вивчаючи цю важливу сферу досліджень, ми сподіваємося інформувати майбутні запити та сприяти більш тонкому розумінню наслідків цифрової пропаганди в сучасних сценаріях конфлікту.

Ключові слова: *цифрова пропаганда, соціальні мережі, російсько-український конфлікт, війна, бібліометричний аналіз.*

Introduction. The emergence of social media as a primary platform for information dissemination has revolutionized the landscape of digital communication, especially during times of conflict. In recent years, the ongoing war in Ukraine has exposed the extent to which state-sponsored propaganda can permeate digital spaces and shape public opinion. As such, the analysis of Russian digital propaganda, particularly in the context of the Ukraine conflict, has become a significant area of inquiry within the academic world. Understanding the dynamics of how this propaganda operates not only reveals the intentions behind Russia's communications strategies but also sheds light on broader implications for democracy, international relations, and the very nature of warfare in the digital age (Oates 2016; Bjola 2018; Astuti, Attaymini & Dewi 2022).

This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the scientific literature surrounding the «Debate on Russian Digital Propaganda in times of War.» Specifically, the objectives are twofold: first, to identify the key issues that are currently salient to the scientific community and the relationships between these topics; second, to determine which academic sources have received the most citations and which are the most recent contributions to the field. By systematically mapping the academic discourse surrounding Russian digital propaganda, this study hopes to elucidate the complex interactions within this vital area of research and offer insights into future directions.

The importance of such analysis is underscored by the rising necessity for digital literacy, especially as misinformation campaigns continue to proliferate in the post-truth era. The ability to discern, analyze, and counteract propaganda is increasingly critical in both scholarly and public contexts (Marigliano & Carley 2024; Hoskins & Shchelin 2023). As countries grapple with the implications of foreign influence operations on social media, an understanding of Russian digital propaganda can help inform policy decisions and countermeasures, thereby contributing to a more resilient democratic process.

The Impact of Social Media on Political Propaganda. The rapid proliferation of digital media has transformed traditional propaganda methods, enabling states to effectively control narratives and influence public sentiment on an unprecedented scale. For instance, the Internet Research Agency (IRA) has employed sophisticated methods such as bot-driven campaigns, trolling, and misinformation to reinforce pro-Russian narratives (Jensen Valeriano, & Maness 2020; Geissler et al. 2023). Social

media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram serve as fertile ground for disseminating political propaganda, allowing for broad reach and swift engagement with audiences. Research by Woolley and Howard (2016) underscores that these platforms can amplify both credible and misleading information, creating environments where propaganda can thrive unchallenged. Social media's ability to target specific demographics through algorithms allows propagandists to tailor their messages, increasing their persuasive power and effectiveness (Tucker et al. 2017). Such tactics raise ethical concerns about the manipulation of information and the potential erosion of public trust in democratic institutions (Bjola & Pamment 2016). In the face of these challenges, it is essential to adopt a systematic approach to analyzing the existing scholarship on Russian digital propaganda, particularly concerning its dialogue and counter-narratives amid the ongoing conflict. Furthermore, these digital platforms have facilitated the spread of misinformation and disinformation, mechanisms that are often wielded strategically by state and non-state actors to achieve political goals. For instance, Bimber and Gil de Zuñiga (2022) highlight how narratives can be constructed and propagated online, blurring the lines between truth and falsehood. This becomes especially concerning in the context of armed conflict, where the stakes are high, and the accurate portrayal of events is vital for public understanding and engagement. Researchers like Lewandowsky et al. (2012) have examined the cognitive biases and social dynamics that contribute to the acceptance and dissemination of false information, indicating that individuals are predisposed to engage with content that aligns with their preexisting beliefs, effectively creating echo chambers and reinforcing misinformation. The strategic use of social media for political propaganda has been especially pronounced during the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, where digital platforms have been instrumental in shaping narratives related to national identity, sovereignty, and legitimacy. Commentators have noted that Russian state-sponsored actors employ both overt and covert methods to propagate specific geopolitical narratives, positioning their actions as justified and moral in the context of conflict (Marigliano & Carley 2024). Thus, the analysis of the interplay between social media and propaganda highlights the urgent need for deeper scrutiny of these emerging dynamics, particularly as they pertain to political conflicts.

Pernicious Digital Dynamics in the Russia-Ukraine War. The pernicious digital dynamics witnessed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict illustrate the far-reaching impact of propaganda in digital spaces. One striking example is the use of deepfakes and manipulated images to mislead and distort perceptions of reality (Diamantis et al. 2021). As sophisticated technologies allow for increasingly convincing fabrications, the battlefield extends beyond physical confrontations to encompass digital realms where information can be weaponized with alarming efficacy. Moreover, the role of automated systems such as bots has been a hallmark of Russia's digital propaganda strategy. These bots can generate and amplify pro-Russian narratives at scale or seed discord and suspicion among individuals supportive of Ukraine (Geissler et al. 2023). This allows for real-time manipulation of online discussions and can create the illusion of widespread support for certain narratives, further complicating public understanding of the conflict.

112

— Additionally, the prevalent use of social media as a tool for crowd manipulation has implications beyond immediate propaganda. The phenomenon of «digital siege» has emerged, where collective efforts to shape narratives can lead to a supply-side oversaturation of alternative realities, creating confusion among users and diminishing the impact of credible sources (Bennett & Segerberg 2012). As a result, public trust in sources of information erodes, giving rise to nihilism concerning factual journalism and further entrenching polarized viewpoints.

The combination of these pernicious dynamics not only underscores the potential for social media to exacerbate conflicts but also raises ethical questions surrounding the responsibility of technology platforms to mitigate the spread of disinformation. As the Russia-Ukraine war unfolds, the implications of these tactics, if left unchecked, could have enduring consequences for global political stability, influencing future conflicts and the state of international relations. Thus, understanding the intersection of social media, propaganda, and warfare becomes indispensable for scholars, policymakers, and society at large.

In light of the pressing need for rigorous analysis, this paper seeks to fill the research gap by providing a clear mapping of the literature on Russian digital propaganda, drawing on insights from various scholarly contributions. By critically engaging with this body of work, we can better understand the motivations, techniques, and ethical implications of using digital media as a tool of propaganda in contemporary warfare. This

investigation not only reflects a deep dive into a pressing global issue but also lays the groundwork for future research on the broader implications of digital propaganda in international relations and public discourse.

Data collection and methods. To establish a research corpus regarding “Russian propaganda in armed conflicts” in digital communication, it was gathered all relevant publications that included keywords such as Russia, propaganda, war, and terms associated with the internet using the subject index of the ISI Web of Science (WoS) database, which encompasses the entire duration of the database. The search was conducted through the “Advanced Search Query Builder,” including all languages.

While it could have been explored alternative databases or sources, the WoS database was chosen for its provision of the most pertinent scientific literature, including journal articles, book chapters, standalone books, and conference contributions (proceedings). This extensive coverage allowed us to gather a comprehensive set of analytical materials that reflect a diverse array of scholarly perspectives on the post-truth phenomenon. Furthermore, the ISI Web of Science spans publications across various high-impact disciplines, enhancing our understanding of the different scientific methodologies related to our study .

113

The search for concepts linked to the topic of the study and the internet (including online, digital, and social media) was conducted in May 2025, yielding 770 results from the Web of Science Core database. The next phase involved filtering these findings by document types (articles, books, book chapters, and proceeding papers). It then was performed a manual review to ensure that all selected publications aligned with our research themes. This was crucial to avoid including documents where the topic this study was applied in contexts unrelated to the main focus in social sciences. Most of the excluded documents originated from fields such as biology, neurosciences, engineering, meteorology, and energy fuels . Ultimately, the selection was refined to a total of 707 results.

Using the tools offered by WoS, the publication years of the sample were analyzed and, as it can be seen in Figure 1, the first publications appear in 2012 and, most of them, are concentrated in the period 2021-2024 (although it may be expected that after 2024 the figure of this year will increase). It is reasonable to assume that, although the scientific community has previously addressed the conflict, which began in 2013 with the so-called Euromaidan, concern increased considerably when the

conflict escalated from 2021 onwards and led to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

Figure 1

Bar chart percentage of publications by year of publication. N= 707 (last 25 years)



Source: ISI Web of Science (Core collection).

114

Among all the publications, a large majority are included in Political Sciences (95), History (92), International Relations (70), Economics (70), Social Sciences Interdisciplinary (55), Business Finance (51), and Communication (50) (see Figure 2). The increase of the publications over the last three years together with the variety of fields addressing Russian propaganda in war and the “digital environment-related” articles on the topic is what justify a systematic and bibliometric research of the topic to better understand the approach of problem and its consequences.

Figure 2

Tree-Map of the top 10 Web of Sciences Categories



Source: ISI Web of Science (Core collection).

To achieve our objective, the VOSviewer software (version 1.6.16) was utilized, as suggested by van Eck & Waltman (2011). This software enables the construction and visualization of bibliometric networks, incorporating text mining functionalities. A term frequency analysis was conducted along with a co-citation analysis of the references cited. The primary goal of the term frequency analysis was to identify the most frequently occurring terms by creating a co-occurrence network. For the co-citation analysis, the focus was on generating a bibliographic co-citation network of the cited references. Through these analyses, it was aimed to illustrate the relationships among terms as well as the bibliographic coupling connections between publications whenever they co-occurred in specific articles, books, chapters, or conference proceedings.

After establishing the term co-occurrence network, we employed a community detection algorithm available in VOSviewer, identifying groups, or clusters, of closely linked items. Similarly, the tool facilitated the co-citation analysis of the cited references using the community detection algorithm applied to the generated bibliographic co-citation network.

Various techniques exist for extracting topics from scientific literature or bibliographic data, depending on the clustering algorithms and data modeling methods adopted (Velden et al., 2017). In this study the Leiden algorithm (Traag et al. 2019; van Eck et al. 2010) was implemented, which models the data as a direct citation network. Additionally, the Louvain algorithm (Blondel et al. 2008) was utilized in its enhanced version, both algorithms ensuring optimal solutions for topic extraction through effective data modeling. The data was grouped into clusters of topics and keywords that generally yielded similar results, provided the number of clusters remained manageable (Waltman et al. 2010).

To mitigate potential biases, such as the weight of older publications that have accrued more citations, a combined approach of co-citation and co-occurrence analyses was applied. This keyword analysis functioned as a control measure, as it is less susceptible to the citation concentration bias associated with publication timing.

Keywords Co-occurrence Analysis. Using a dataset retrieved from the Web of Sciences on May 2025, consisting of 707 scientific publications, a map was developed based on bibliographic data for a keyword co-occurrence analysis. The terms were selected from titles, abstracts, and specific keywords provided by the authors. A publication's title typically reflects the core idea of its authors, while the abstract summarizes the

results, significance, and methodology employed in the research. Given that these sections contain essential information and are presumed to be accurately written, they can be viewed as reliable representations of the publication's essence.

In this analysis, we designated 'all keywords' as the units of consideration and adopted a full counting method, meaning every co-occurrence link is treated equally. VOSviewer automatically suggested a minimum threshold of eight occurrences for a keyword, ultimately identifying 69 keywords that met this criterion out of a total of 3.108 keywords. Consequently, the total strength of co-occurrence links was calculated associated with each keyword, with the 69 keywords showing the highest link strength. The most prevalent terms identified, and their total link strength include: 'ukraine' (266), 'war' (213), 'russia' (193, 'russian-ukrainian war' (163), 'russo-ukrainian war' (144), 'media' (101), and 'social media' (88) (see Figure 3). Figure 3 illustrates the keywords map related to Russian propaganda during war conflicts in digital communication, being the conflict between Russia and Ukraine the core center. The proximity of two terms correlates with the frequency of their co-occurrences, while the size of each bubble indicates the frequency of a respective keyword. This frequency analysis of keywords enabled to uncover various approaches to the topic under examination.

116

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Figure 3 depicts the clustering outcomes, leading to the identification of the following five distinct clusters:

- Cluster 1 (red) encompasses the war conflict between Russia and Ukraine in relation to COVID-19 and the impact on the global economy with China as the leading nation and the volatility of the Bitcoin market.
- Cluster 2 (green) incorporates the words that directly join Russia to propaganda, social media, media, disinformation, fake news, information, hybrid word, and censorship. At the same time, that cluster is linked to the next one with the node "information warfare".
- Cluster 3 (blue) also includes the Russian-Ukraine war, but linked to another nation, Poland, and mainly related to the European Union policies and sanctions. In this community, the information warfare would be a topic that highlights the use of information to delegitimize European institutions.
- Cluster 4 (yellow) encompasses words like journalism, which connects it to the green cluster, and words linking the national identity with Russian propaganda, power, politics, conflict, and geopolitics.

to the creation of a second map based on bibliographic data. From the compilation of the references in the subject of study, the corresponding sources and authors for a co-citation analysis were identified, selecting cited references as the analytical units and employing a fractional counting method (Perianes-Rodriguez et al. 2016). This fractional counting approach assigns equal weight to each citation, irrespective of the number of authors, citations, or references involved.

The VOSviewer algorithm provided a total of 24,145 cited references, organized into 5 clusters with 349 links: 349 and a total strength of 207,00 (see figure 4).

Figure 4

Co-citation analysis cited references (N= 707)



Source: VOSviewer and ISI Web of Science (Core collection).
<https://tinyurl.com/2ar2f3e8>

118



Figure 4 depicts the clustering outcomes, leading to the identification of five distinct clusters that are explained in the next result sections. As can be seen in this co-citation cloud, the scientific communities appear much more dispersed than in the keyword figure, with only a few edges connecting the blue and red clusters to the rest of the communities in the center. This could be because, despite the fact that war has a long history since its origins, the scientific literature that has addressed it in relation to the digital environment tends to rely on citations from authors who provide more general or global analyses.

Co-citation analysis results. Financial markets and their responses to geopolitical events the Russia-Ukraine conflict (cluster red)

One of the most cited scientific references of Cluster 1 red, see figure 4) focus on how intra-day data highlights the immediate financial market reactions to geopolitical tensions, which can, in turn, be influenced by different narratives and propaganda from the involved parties (Adekoya et al. 2022). Among the studies addressing how markets respond to crises

like the Russia-Ukraine conflict, some provide methodologies to measure return and volatility spillovers between assets, essential for understanding how markets respond to crises like the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Such spillovers can indicate how narratives and propaganda impact investor sentiment and asset correlations (Diebold & Yilmaz 2009).

Particularly, there is an event study approach to analyze how G20+ stock markets reacted following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, considering it a «black-swan» event. This could reflect the influence of international news and propaganda shaping market perceptions and behaviors during sudden geopolitical shifts (Yousaf et al. 2022). Engle's work (2002) on dynamic conditional correlation helps in analyzing how asset correlation changes over time, particularly in response to shocks like the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This statistical tool can be valuable for understanding how information and propaganda about the conflict might affect market interdependencies. This study Wang et al. (2022) links geopolitical risks, specifically the war in Ukraine, to systemic risks in commodity markets. The systemic risks highlighted are often exacerbated by propaganda, influencing market volatility and investor behavior in response to conflict narratives. There are also studies focusing on how the Russia-Ukraine conflict impacts commodity market volatility, further illustrating how geopolitical events and the associated propaganda can influence market performance and investor strategy Fang & Shao (2022).

The impacts of the Russia-Ukraine conflict the identity and environmental damage perspectives (cluster blue). The most cited reference in cluster 2 (green) focuses on how language and identity intersect and evolve in a political context where Russian influence persists. The emphasis on identity transformation is crucial in the context of Russian propaganda, which often seeks to frame the narrative of national identity, particularly in regions with significant Russian-speaking populations. The narrative often hinges on portraying Russian speakers as oppressed or misunderstood, which can be manipulated to justify intervention or influence in Ukraine (Kulyk 2017). Rawtani et al. (2022) discusses the environmental consequences resulting from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. It details how warfare leads to significant environmental degradation, affecting water, air quality, and biodiversity. The connection to Russian propaganda lies in how environmental damage is framed in conflict discourse. Propaganda can downplay the ecological disasters caused by war, instead pointing

to external causes or attempting to cast responsibility elsewhere, thus influencing public perception both within and outside Ukraine.

Similar to the previous reference, the research of Pereira et al. (2022) delves into the broader environmental implications of the war, including impacts on ecosystems and human health. Their study can serve as a counter-narrative to any propaganda that minimizes the tangible repercussions of the conflict, as a healthy environment is often tied to national and cultural identity.

Misinformation, propaganda and the role of media in the Russia-Ukraine conflict (cluster green). Studies included in this cluster highlight the use of misinformation as a strategic tool in shaping public discourse during the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Yablokov discusses conspiracy theories as a specific form of misinformation disseminated through RT, while Szostek focuses on the broader implications of conflicting narratives in the media. A central theme is the erosion of trust in media and news sources. Yablokov (2015) shows how Russia uses conspiracy theories to foster skepticism toward Western media, while Szostek (2018) highlights the confusion and distrust that arise from competing narratives. This dynamic is exploited in conflict situations, where the credibility of information becomes a battleground itself, influencing public opinion and geopolitical stances.

120

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Both pieces address the concept of information warfare, which is particularly salient in the context of the Ukraine conflict. They illustrate how Russia employs propaganda and disinformation to manipulate perceptions, create a narrative that favors its agenda, and destabilize adversaries. The articles underscore the significant role that media, especially state-sponsored media like RT, plays in shaping narratives during conflicts. They investigate how these narratives are crafted and the ways in which they serve the interests of the state, particularly in terms of public diplomacy and international image management (Yablokov 2015; Szostek 2018).

Mental health, trauma and the importance of Cultural and Contextual Understanding (cluster yellow). All articles in the cluster address the psychological consequences of war, focusing on mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD that arise from conflict and displacement. The effects are noted not just in direct survivors of conflict (Damiano et al. 2022), but also in populations adjacent or distant from the war zone (Chudzicka-Czupala et al. (2023). Each study involves examining how

affected individuals cope with traumatic experiences, whether through personal strategies or societal support, reflecting the human response to distress in the face of violence and uncertainty. Murthy & Lakshminarayana (2006) stresses the necessity of understanding mental health in the context of cultural, geographic, and social factors, which can shape experiences and responses to trauma.

Several studies also acknowledge the role of media coverage of the conflict in causing psychological distress, illustrating how narrative control can impact mental health outcomes (Surzykiewicz et al. 2022).

Hybrid Warfare, Propaganda and geopolitical implications (cluster purple). These references collectively illustrate how Russian propaganda leverages narratives of nationalism, historical context, and information warfare to shape public perceptions and justify its actions in Ukraine. By attacking the credibility of independent sources and creating alternate narratives – which often understate or deny war crimes – the Russian government aims to sustain support domestically and mitigate international condemnation. Most of these references discuss the multi-faceted nature of hybrid warfare, particularly how information warfare and propaganda tactics play a crucial role in contemporary conflicts, notably in the case of Russia and Ukraine (Bină & Dragomir 2020; Manolea 2021).

Regarding the impacts of this hybrid war, Ghilès (2022) discusses how the war impacts European energy policies, illustrating the broader geopolitical repercussions of the conflict and how they should shape responses to Russian actions. Both the analysis of war crimes (Christopher 2022) and the historical context (Parshyn & Mereniuk 2022) reflect on the legal and ethical dimensions of conflict. Highlighting war crimes challenges narratives that seek to justify military actions, including those propagated by Russia. It is also worth noting Kuzio's examination of Russian nationalism ties into how historical narratives are constructed and utilized to legitimize actions against Ukraine. This highlights the ideological basis of the conflict, an essential component of Russian propaganda (Kuzio 2022).

Conclusions. Once the most representative topics in scientific production have been identified and the main scientific references addressing these themes, it can be confirmed that the concern in the academic community extends to various problems that affect the globalized society in certain countries, and with very complex consequences.

In examining the multifaceted nature of Russian propaganda in times of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it is evident that various themes converge to illustrate how information warfare operates in the contemporary digital landscape. The studies reviewed encapsulate different dimensions of this issue, ranging from the psychological impact on affected populations to the ideological narratives that shape public perception. Each theme reveals the strategic use of misinformation, historical context, and media manipulation as vital tools in sustaining state narratives that align with Russia's geopolitical aims.

122 — One of the most salient themes across the literature is the intricacy of information warfare utilized by Russia. Research highlights how state-controlled media and online platforms are exploited to disseminate propaganda that distorts reality and suppresses dissent. By promoting conspiracy theories and creating alternate narratives, Russian media seeks to undermine trust in Western sources while reinforcing nationalistic sentiments domestically. This systematic approach to reshaping perceptions not only influences public opinion in Russia but also aims to confuse and mislead international audiences. Consequently, the studies reinforce the necessity of understanding the methodologies employed in information warfare, particularly in an era where social media can amplify messages at an unprecedented scale.

The investigation into mental health repercussions serves to illuminate the profound human costs of the Russian-Ukraine conflict. Research indicates that individuals affected by warfare often experience elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which are routinely exacerbated by disinformation and media narratives. This psychological distress is not confined to those directly involved in the conflict; it reverberates through diasporas and neighboring countries, affecting broader populations. By focusing on the mental health dimensions of war, the literature underscores the imperative for humanitarian response systems to address psychological trauma, which is often sidelined in narratives that emphasize military strategy.

The examination of national identity, especially concerning the relationship between Russia and Ukraine, adds another layer to understanding the role of propaganda. Research has demonstrated that Russian nationalism is intricately woven into the justification of military actions against Ukraine, portraying the conflict as a defense of cultural and historical legitimacy. This narrative plays a significant role in fostering

internal support for the regime's actions and creates a polarizing effect that positions Russia as a victim of external aggression. By invoking concepts of national pride and historical grievances, the state crafts a unifying narrative that can mobilize public sentiment while dismissing the costs of war.

The geopolitical ramifications of the Ukraine conflict extend beyond immediate military encounters to encompass energy policies and international alliances. Studies have illustrated how the war has compelled a reevaluation of energy dependence in Europe and broader foreign policy strategies. Consequently, propaganda narratives that emphasize Russia's role as a stable supplier are often countered by discourse that highlights the urgent need for energy security and diversification. This dynamic illustrates that propaganda is not merely a domestic tool; it has significant implications for international relations and diplomatic negotiations, pushing the boundaries of conventional warfare into the digital and economic realms.

Cultural narratives informed by historical contexts further enrich the discourse surrounding the conflict. Historical claims about territorial ownership, identity, and past grievances are manipulated in real-time to justify contemporary actions. As explored in the literature, understanding these historical contexts is crucial for unpacking the narratives that fuel conflicts. The ongoing mobilization of history not only shapes internal perceptions but also frames the external response to Russian aggression, complicating international stances toward intervention and support.

While this study has provided a comprehensive overview of the role of propaganda in the context of the Russian-Ukraine conflict, there are limitations to consider. Much of the existing literature hinges on qualitative analyses and case studies, which, while insightful, may lack generalizability across different contexts or future conflicts involving other states or actors. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of digital media technologies poses challenges for capturing the full scope of information warfare strategies. New platforms and communication channels constantly emerge, requiring ongoing research to stay abreast of changing dynamics.

Despite these limitations, this study is significant for the scientific community as it highlights the complex interplay between war, propaganda, and the digital space. By synthesizing findings from diverse fields – ranging from psychology to international relations – it opens avenues for interdisciplinary research that can further explore the implications of hybrid warfare. Future lines of research could investigate how emerging

technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, might influence propaganda methods. Furthermore, longitudinal studies examining the long-term psychological effects of conflicts on civilian populations will be essential in shaping effective humanitarian responses.

In summary, these studies collectively emphasize various aspects of the human and environmental costs of the Russia-Ukraine conflict while illustrating the broader context in which Russian propaganda operates. By addressing identity, environmental degradation, and psychological health in the wake of war, they contribute to a deeper understanding of the motivations behind propaganda and its impact on society.

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