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## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN THE FORMATION OF VISUAL NARRATIVES, COMMEMORATION OF WAR AND GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY**

***Abstract.** The article discusses the role of information technologies in shaping visual narratives, commemorating war, and representing national identity. It highlights the use of graphic art and digital media in the context of war, focusing on how visual representations, including posters and online content, help reinforce national identity, preserve historical memory, and resist propaganda. Additionally, the paper explores how such strategies are integral to decolonization efforts, emphasizing the importance of visual narratives in both cultural preservation and political messaging.*

***Key words:** visual narratives, national identity, propaganda, commemorative art, graphic representation, information technologies, decolonization, Ukraine, cultural heritage, digital media, war commemoration*

***Чемерис Г. Інформаційні технології у формуванні візуальних наративів, увічненні війни і графічному представленні національної ідентичності.** Стаття розглядає роль інформаційних технологій у формуванні візуальних наративів, увічненні війни та графічному представленні національної ідентичності. Окремо акцентується на використанні графічного мистецтва та цифрових медіа в контексті війни, зокрема на тому, як візуальні зображення, включаючи плакати та онлайн-контент, допомагають зміцнювати національну ідентичність, зберігати історичну пам'ять та протистояти пропаганді. Досліджується також роль таких стратегій у процесах деколонізації та їх значення для політичних повідомлень.*

***Ключові слова:** візуальні наративи, національна ідентичність, пропаганда, комеморативне мистецтво, графічне представлення, інформаційні технології, деколонізація, Україна, культурна спадщина, цифрові медіа, комеморація війни.*

**The current state of the problem.** Visual art, from medieval iconography to contemporary propaganda materials, has been a powerful tool for creating and reinforcing anti-Semitic stereotypes. Through manipulation of color, symbolism, imagery, and emotional expression, these visual manifestations shaped public opinion, reinforcing cultural prejudices and constructing hostile attitudes that persisted for centuries.

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, visual narratives, storytelling, and graphic representation have played a crucial role in public space, serving as the primary means of swift and clear communication. This highlights the importance of analyzing the media landscape in the context of cultural and national identity politics. The aggressor's forces, during the occupation of Ukrainian territories, used Russian pop culture to spread their influence, replacing destroyed Ukrainian visual communication with enemy monuments, murals, art objects, and billboards (Ращевська & Чемерис, 2022).

The war has become a key factor influencing the development of Ukrainian visual strategies. In the context of military aggression and information warfare, art has taken on new significance as a tool for national communication and mobilization. Military and historical motifs dominate creative projects, symbolizing resistance, resilience, and national solidarity. As a result, heroic scenes, military symbols, and imagery that reinforce unity and national pride are frequently depicted.

The cultural context shaped by external threats necessitates the creation of counter-narratives to combat enemy propaganda. These counter-narratives include themes of decolonization and the rejection of former imperial symbols, actively used in information warfare. In response to the destruction and damage to cultural landmarks, projects have emerged that reflect the lost heritage and call for its preservation.

It is worth noting that since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Western community has framed the Ukrainian situation as a war for decolonization: T. Barkavi (2022), A. Warbrug & E. Blufstein (2022), B. Olivier (2019), M. Eppinger (2022), M. Malksoo (2022). This perspective necessitates the study of the restructuring of cultural influences, achieved through the cultivation of national identity and Ukrainian consciousness, including through the use of national figures as archetypes.

A number of scholars explore important aspects related to the use of information technologies in the formation of visual narratives, the

commemoration of war, and the graphic representation of national identity. One such researcher is K. Tilmans (2010) from the University of Amsterdam, who focuses on the role of visual narratives in the formation of national identities after significant social changes or wars. Her works analyze the use of monuments, memorials, and other visual artifacts in the context of war commemoration, as well as how information technologies and digital platforms are transforming these processes. J. Young (1994), a professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, studies memory of trauma and the use of visual means in memorial practices, particularly in the context of the Holocaust and other conflicts. His works also explore how visual narratives can preserve national identity in different cultural contexts. Douglas W. Blum's (2007) study «National Identity and Globalization» examines the influence of globalization on national identity in post-Soviet Eurasia. Through fieldwork in post-Soviet Eurasia, Blum investigates how youth cultures are influenced by global forces. He suggests that while these societies adopt certain global aspects, they also preserve and emphasize traditional values.

The study reveals how nations respond to globalization's challenges by integrating global elements into their national identities while maintaining uniqueness. Utilizing discourse analysis and field interviews, the research provides insights into identity formation and the adaptation of local cultures in a globalized world. L. Marks (2020) from Simon Fraser University specializes in media art and the theory of visual narratives, examining how cultural and national identities are reflected through digital and multimedia practices. She explores how technologies are changing the approaches to creating identities in the modern world. A number of previous studies (Лубко & Шаров, 2019; Шаров, 2023; Chemerys, 2023; Chemerys, 2024; Chemerys et al., 2021) have focused on this issue, highlighting technologies for manipulating digital images, specifically the creation and use of deepfakes, which have a direct impact on public consciousness, particularly in the contexts of media, politics, security, and social relations. These scholars provide valuable insights into the study of visual narratives, the graphic representation of national identity, and memorial practices, particularly in the context of war and social change. Their works help to reveal how visual images and modern media technologies can shape national narratives, influence public consciousness, and ultimately serve as powerful tools in information wars and cultural processes (Chemerys et al., 2021b).

Thus, a timely and relevant aspect is the study of the media reality shaped by the occupiers and propagandists in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. By analyzing specific visual narratives in the information space, particularly in the context of decolonization processes, we can identify and decode enemy myths, information and psychological operations (including through modern information technologies) within Ukrainian cultural policy. This understanding directs efforts towards preserving and comprehending Ukrainian culture and history. Awareness of the nuances in constructing media reality through visual narratives, storytelling, and graphic representation is crucial for information decolonization and for the reintegration of citizens in occupied territories.

**The article aims** to explore the role of information technologies in shaping visual narratives, commemorating war, and representing national identity through graphic means.

**Outline of the main material.** The dismantling of Russian propaganda in national and global information spaces and the development of a national grand narrative in visual communication for defending Ukraine have sparked processes of national identity within civil society. This has led to significant legislative measures to protect national identity and support national cultural products. However, the complexity of implementing these processes, particularly in studying visual narratives, graphic representation, and promoting national identity discourse, requires in-depth analysis, scientific reflection, and practical recommendations. Institutional support is critical, but the focus should be on gaining public support through «decolonization of thought» a process activated through social and communication mechanisms.

It is important to note that even before the full-scale invasion, Russian propaganda hindered decolonization efforts through disinformation, manipulating public opinion with deceptive tactics. This underscores the importance of studying visual narratives in the context of decolonization not only for their value in national identity but also for their impact on security and defense, especially during wartime.

The Ukrainian approach to visualizing national identity through art is based on the use of symbols, images, and historical motifs that highlight the country's uniqueness and cultural heritage. Key elements include ethnic symbols and folk ornamentation, adding deep cultural meaning to visual representations. For example, symbols like the trident, wheat, and national

patterns are important for national self-identification and are frequently seen in modern Ukrainian art.

Posters, graphics, illustrations, and public art objects are actively used to foster patriotism and preserve historical memory. Visual narratives reflect the collective experience of the Ukrainian people, particularly related to revolutionary events and armed conflicts, which have shaped the unique character of national identity. The use of vivid and clear imagery enhances emotional perception, emphasizing national unity and the struggle for independence.

In the contemporary digital age, information technologies play a crucial role in shaping visual narratives, particularly in the context of war, national identity, and commemoration. The integration of these technologies into the creation and dissemination of visual content has transformed how societies construct and understand their collective histories, identities, and experiences.

Visual narratives, whether in the form of posters, social media graphics, or digital art, have long been instrumental in shaping national consciousness and responding to cultural and political challenges. With the rise of information technologies, these visual tools have become more powerful, allowing for the rapid creation and global distribution of images that can deeply influence public opinion and shape societal values.

One of the key areas where information technologies are playing a significant role is in the commemoration of war. Visual storytelling has long been used as a means of remembering and honoring those who have fought in conflicts, preserving historical events, and reinforcing national identity. In the age of digital media, this process has expanded to include virtual memorials, digital art installations, and online campaigns, all of which are easily accessible and can be widely shared. These digital spaces allow individuals and communities to reflect on their shared histories, commemorate sacrifices, and maintain a collective memory of war, which is crucial for fostering national unity and pride.

Graphic representations of national identity are another critical aspect of contemporary visual culture. National symbols, such as flags, coats of arms, and iconic historical figures, are frequently used to convey a sense of pride and belonging. With the advent of digital tools, these symbols can now be manipulated, reimagined, and distributed on a global scale, enabling more diverse and dynamic representations of national identity. For example, in

Ukraine, visual representations of the national struggle for independence, including symbols like the trident (the national emblem) and national folklore, are often employed in both physical and digital forms to assert cultural sovereignty and unity, particularly during times of conflict. Moreover, the use of graphic design and visual art has become a significant tool in resistance movements and the decolonization process. By creating visual content that challenges dominant narratives and rejects imperialistic symbols, artists are actively participating in the reshaping of national identity. Digital platforms amplify the impact of these graphic works, allowing them to reach a global audience and incite meaningful discussions about power, identity, and sovereignty.

However, the use of information technologies in shaping visual narratives also presents challenges. The proliferation of deepfakes and manipulated imagery has created new threats to the authenticity of visual representations. These technologies allow for the creation of highly convincing fake visuals that can be used to spread disinformation, manipulate public opinion, and distort historical memory. Therefore, the need for digital literacy, critical thinking, and the development of technologies to detect and counteract such manipulations is crucial in maintaining the integrity of visual narratives.

Conclusion, results and perspectives. Commemorative art plays a crucial role in shaping national identity, as it not only preserves the memory of the past but also creates a symbolic space for collective self-identification through visual strategies. During wartime, such strategies are especially significant: they enhance patriotism, unite society, and strengthen collective resilience. In modern Ukraine, visual imagery, particularly posters, placards, and other graphic works, have become important symbols of endurance and solidarity. These images carry deep cultural meaning, emphasizing the unity of the Ukrainian people in the fight for independence and sovereignty. Graphic art, therefore, serves as a tool for national memory: it records and transmits to future generations the collective experience, emotions of grief and pride, and hope for a better future. Unique symbols and archetypes help maintain morale, strengthen national consciousness, and enhance the country's international reputation by demonstrating its resilience and invincibility.

Future research should focus on analyzing visual narratives, exploring how commemorative art functions in the digital space, particularly on social media, which allows for the rapid dissemination of images and significant

influence on public consciousness. Additionally, it is important to examine the decolonization aspect of contemporary Ukrainian graphic art, specifically how its images and symbols contribute to the formation of a new national identity, free from imperial ideologies.

A useful step in this direction would be the development of methodological recommendations for artists and designers who wish to participate in preserving national memory. These guidelines would help artists better understand approaches, symbolism, and techniques that allow them to effectively convey ideas of national identity in their works. Conducting international comparative studies would also be valuable to identify both universal and unique features of Ukrainian commemorative art in a global context, especially in countries that also use graphic art to preserve and shape national memory.

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