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### WHAT DOES THE ENEMY LOOK LIKE? UKRAINIANS' IMAGE OF THE ENEMY AFTER RUSSIA'S FULL-SCALE INVASION

*The article highlights the process of constructing the image of the enemy in Ukrainians after the beginning of the full-scale invasion by Russia on February 24, 2022. Even though the war has been going on for 2014 years, the full-scale invasion changed the image of the enemy: now it becomes specific from the general image of Russia, and the Russian people are added to the list of enemy subjects, in addition to the government and the army. Based on in-depth interviews conducted immediately after the beginning of the invasion, the main characteristics of the enemy image construction among Ukrainian citizens are analyzed. What kind of enemy can be reflected through the description of personal characteristics of the enemy and emotions that arise towards him. The central element in the perception of the enemy image is that the government, the military, and the population appear as not very powerful but, at the same time, dangerous enemies. Emotionally, two emotions are predominant in Ukrainians' perception of the enemy: hatred and disgust, which translates into a vision of future relations with Russia. The psychological processes of stereotyping the enemy, mirroring, dehumanization, and selective perception are present in forming the enemy image in the respondents. In addition, a psychological balance shows that the worse the enemy, the better "we" are, and the enemy itself is dangerous but one that can be overcome and defeated.*

**Keywords:** *image of the enemy, Russian-Ukrainian war, social representations, image construction.*

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### ЯК ВИГЛЯДАЄ ВОРОГ? УЯВЛЕННЯ УКРАЇНЦІВ ПРО ВОРОГА ПІСЛЯ ПОВНОМАСШТАБНОГО ВТОРГНЕННЯ РОСІЇ

*Висвітлено процес конструювання образу ворога в українців після початку повномасштабного вторгнення Росії 24 лютого 2022 р. Незважаючи на те, що війна триває з 2014 р., повномасштабне вторгнення змінює образ ворога: тепер із загального образу Росії він стає конкретним, а до переліку суб'єктів ворога, крім влади та армії, додається російський народ. На основі глибинних інтерв'ю, проведених одразу після початку повномасштабного вторгнення Росії в Україну, проаналізовано основні характеристики конструювання образу ворога серед громадян України. Який саме ворог може бути відображений через опис особистісних характеристик ворога та емоцій щодо нього. Центральним елементом у сприйнятті образу ворога є те, що влада, військові та населення постають як не дуже сильні, але водночас небезпечні вороги. В емоційному плані у сприйнятті ворога українцями переважають дві емоції: ненависть і відраза, що трансформується у бачення майбутніх відносин з Росією. У формуванні образу ворога в респондентів присутні психологічні процеси стереотипізації ворога, віддзеркалення, дегуманізації та вибіркового сприйняття. Крім того, наявний*

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41

*психологічний баланс, який показує, що чим гірший ворог, тим кращі "ми", а сам ворог є небезпечним, але таким, якого можна подолати та перемогти.*

**Ключові слова:** образ ворога, російсько-українська війна, соціальні уявлення, конструювання образу.

After the full-scale invasion began, the attitude of Ukrainians towards everything Russian deteriorated sharply. Similarly, the media and political actors began to say that Russian citizens are enemies with the Russian authorities. The attitude towards Russian citizens also deteriorated. In September 2014, 74% of respondents had a positive attitude towards Russian citizens [1], but after the full-scale invasion, the picture changed. According to August 2022, 81% of Ukrainian citizens have a negative attitude towards Russians<sup>1</sup>.

Despite the fact that the war against Ukraine began in 2014, the attitude towards Russia was ambiguous. The events of the Revolution of Dignity and the beginning of the Russian invasion launched the processes of disassociation from Russia, Russian cultural products, a boycott of Russian goods, calls to switch to the Ukrainian language, etc. The attitude of Ukrainians towards Russia is also changing in 2014. In 2013, 82% of Ukrainian citizens had a positive attitude toward Russia, and 10% had a negative attitude [1]. In 2015, after the beginning of the war, only 26% had a positive attitude, while the majority – 56% – had a negative attitude toward Russia [1]. However, this was recorded as the lowest figure because after that, the attitude towards Russia improved. As well as the attitude towards Russian information and cultural products remained positive for a large number of people. In 2019, 54% of Ukrainians had a positive attitude toward Russia, and 35% had a negative attitude [2]. Although, according to theories about intergroup conflicts, the situation should be the opposite [3].

One of the reasons may be the hybridity of the war. The primary means in hybrid warfare in the conduct of the conflict are non-military means. Military activities can take place during a hybrid war, but they are only one of the tools to achieve the goal of the war [4]. It is in such wars that there is a blurring of ideas about how the war is waged, who exactly is fighting, and what means are used to fight the war [5].

The war with Russia from the very beginning (in 2014) had signs of hybridity: the initiator of the war – Russia did not openly declare that it was a war against Ukraine; "little green men" without insignia were used to capture Crimea; titushky<sup>2</sup> were used to hold allegedly "local protests" in eastern Ukraine against European integration and for joining Russia, etc [6]. Also, after 2015, there were fewer military clashes in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Accordingly, the vast majority of the Ukrainian population did not feel the conflict. As a result, the image of the enemy was blurred and concentrated only around the generalized vision of Russia.

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<sup>1</sup> Seventeenth National Survey: Identity. Patriotism. Values (August 17-18, 2022). (2022). *Sociological group Rating*. URL: [https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/s\\_mnadcyate\\_zagalnonac\\_onalne\\_opituvannya\\_dentichn\\_st\\_patr\\_otizm\\_c\\_nnost\\_17-18\\_serpnya\\_2022.html](https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/s_mnadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvannya_dentichn_st_patr_otizm_c_nnost_17-18_serpnya_2022.html) [in Ukrainian]

<sup>2</sup> "Titushky" are marginalized mercenaries (in particular, those from sports or criminal backgrounds) who are used for provocations, violent actions, intimidation, disruption of political and public events, etc.

Now, during the full-scale invasion, there is a transition from a blurred, generalized image of the enemy to a specific one. **The article examines** the characteristics of the construction of the enemy image among Ukrainian citizens during a full-scale invasion and the features of this image. Understanding what the image of the enemy is and how it is formed is important because it gives an understanding of what this image is precisely at the level of citizens and not how it is depicted, for example, in the media, etc. Also, the image of the enemy affects the course of the conflict and the future.

***Intergroup conflicts, the image of the enemy and social representations.*** According to social identity theory, people tend to attribute positive qualities to the group to which they belong and to distinguish and attribute less positive characteristics to other groups [7]. Thus, there is a division into "us" and "them". However, the image of the other is different from the image of the enemy. "Enemy image is a belief held by a certain group that its security and basic values are directly and seriously threatened by some other group. An enemy image cannot consist only of feelings of dislike or antipathy; it always involves the possibility of violence and destruction. It is a matter of existence and survival" [8]. In fact, during the war, there is a clear division of groups into "us" – "them" and crystallization of the enemy image [9]. Intergroup conflicts cause the process of identification when the identity with one's own group is strengthened and, at the same time, differentiation from the other group is strengthened [10].

However, the image of the enemy in the present is relevant not only for soldiers on the battlefield but should be massive and ubiquitous among the group [11, p. 15]. During the war, the image of the enemy is necessary, without it there can be no battlefield [11]. Having an image of the enemy, society and the elite separate themselves from the enemy and attribute negative characteristics to it [12].

During the war, national identity is involved because, firstly, this identity is threatened by the enemy. Secondly, during the war, it is necessary to show that "we" have the right to this land, and others do not. That is, the border between us and the enemy is being built. The construction of the enemy contributes to the homogenization of society in terms of stereotyping the enemy but, at the same time, the distinction within the group as well. Because the question arises within society: who is ours, and who has the right to be ours? [13, p. 1–23].

The construction of the enemy image is not only based on a rational basis, as this process depends on personal experience, psychological dispositions and peculiarities of the culture and ideology of a particular group [14]. The very construction of the enemy image occurs through the psychological processes of stereotyping, selective perception, mirroring the enemy, dehumanization, biased attribution, and errors of attribution [15, p. 74]. In particular, dehumanization is the end point of constructing the enemy image [11]. Dehumanization comes in different forms: soft, which can exist in everyday life and can often be unconscious, and blatant, which is obvious and usually manifests itself in intergroup conflicts [16]. Here, we are talking about more blatant forms of dehumanization.

During the process of building the enemy image, the group becomes more human, while the enemy image becomes less human [11]. "Because the worse our enemy is, the more justified we feel in hating this enemy, and it is easier for us to rationalize actions against the

enemy" [17]. Violence becomes an acceptable action when the enemy is perceived as an inhuman threat. In addition, psychologically, there should be a balance, the more horrible the other group is, the better our group is [18].

Regarding the image of the enemy, it is essential to note that when a specific enemy is tangible, threats remain vague, and images of enemies are focused on vague (non-human) others. However, when war breaks out, vague images quickly become concrete [19].

The image of the enemy is mostly stable. Researchers say that deconstruction of the enemy image is vital for post-conflict settlement, and the problem is that this negative stereotype is resistant to change [20].

However, this image can change. For example, the case study of Estonian soldiers (during the First World War) shows that the images of others were dynamic and influenced by numerous factors, such as propaganda, patriotism (or lack thereof), and direct clashes [21]. Their image of the enemy was variable.

The study of the perception of the Turks by Greek children in Cyprus shows that children simultaneously reproduced the existing stereotypes but at the same time brought their own "part" of interpretations and visions to this reproduction [22].

The construction of the enemy image is influenced by various factors. This process is simultaneously influenced by external factors: the influence of the media, politicians, and the experience of others. However, at the same time, it is also influenced by the internal factors of the individual: their own experience, knowledge and perceptions that the individual brings to the construction of this image. To explain and understand this process of construction and the existence of the enemy image, I rely on the theory of social representations<sup>3</sup>. The theory of social representations is based on the idea that these representations are created through interaction and communication between individuals and groups in everyday life [23].

It is crucial for individuals to cope with new information in times of change, for example, when a new pandemic occurs, etc., so that their perception of the world "fits" into one picture [23]. Thus, perceptions organize and create the world around the individual.

According to one of Moscovici's definitions: "A social representation is a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual group history" [24, p. 13].

To study the construction of the enemy image, I use the structural approach of the theory of social representations. According to the approach developed by Abrik, social representations have a structure: core and periphery [25].

The core includes those thoughts, ideas, myths, etc., that are stable and enduring. Core beliefs are consensual for the group and do not depend on the context. These beliefs are

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<sup>3</sup> The founder of the theory of social representations is Serzh Moskovichi.

linked to group values, history and norms. The core defines the structure of the whole representation and gives meaning to this representation [25].

Peripheral beliefs are unstable, context-dependent and can vary from individual to individual. At certain moments, peripheral representations can become the core [25].

According to some researchers, and I agree with them, the combination of social representations theory and social identity theory goes hand in hand. Because perceptions are formed in a certain group that identifies itself separately from other groups. Therefore, it is necessary to combine these two theories to study the image of the enemy.

***The Method and the Research Design.*** To study the image of the enemy, a qualitative method of in-depth semi-structured interviews was chosen, which is often used as a tool to study social perceptions.

A total of 77 interviews were collected in March-June 2022. The respondents were Ukrainians, including 28 men and 50 women. The age of respondents was from 18 to 68 years. Some of the respondents were in Ukraine at the time of the interview, and some were abroad, as they were forced to leave because of the war or have been living outside Ukraine for some time.

The main criteria for selection were civilians, those who are not involved in the work in the Armed Forces or law enforcement agencies. Usually, people who are directly involved in the battlefield have a different kind of dehumanization and, accordingly, may have a different image of the enemy. In addition, the study involved representatives of those groups of the population who, at the time of the interview, felt the impact of the war to varying degrees: refugees from the occupied territories or from the territories that were under the threat of occupation, were subjected to shelling and suffered destruction, as well as residents of the territories that were not directly affected by the hostilities at the time of the survey.

Other indicators of background or status of respondents were not taken into account as criteria for selecting participants, given the availability of resources, as it was necessary to collect material quickly to capture an image of the enemy that reflected the perceptions that were formed immediately after the full-scale invasion, and my stay in Ukraine as a researcher also added to the complexity. Interviewees were selected using a snowball sampling method.

There were several blocks of questions in the interview. The first block was aimed at finding out the history of the respondents' "entry" into the war and included questions about whether the respondents believed that Russia would launch a full-scale invasion, what their actions were after the invasion, and whether they or their relatives were affected by the full-scale invasion. The second block was aimed at recreating the image of the enemy as respondents see it. They had to express their attitude towards the Russian government, army, and people. The third block of questions was about who is considered guilty and responsible and how they see the future with Russia.

The analysis of the interviews was carried out on the entire text of the interview using open coding. After coding, the elements that form the core were identified based on three inherent criteria: 1) the connection of the central elements with a large number of other central elements (peripheral elements of the perception have much fewer connections with other elements); 2) congruence (core elements are common among the group, i.e. inherent in

a large number of people in the group); 3) stability, which is manifested in the fact that regardless of the context, some elements remain incredibly active.

That is, in the analysis, the perceptions that form the core were selected to be those that had the most connections with each other, were spontaneously and frequently mentioned by respondents, shared by a large number of people in the group, as well as those that were repeated or revealed during the interview, regardless of the context of the question.

**Results.** Who is considered the enemy? Here, I considered spontaneous answers to the question "Who is the enemy of Ukraine in this war". The vast majority of respondents mentioned several subjects together: for example, the government and the army, the people and the government, etc. The most frequent answer was that the enemy is the people and the government, but the army was also mentioned by a significant number of respondents, although slightly less. Some respondents also mentioned the word Russia in their answers, but in most cases, it was clarified that Russia, for example, means all Russians.

It should be noted that on the periphery, there are such isolated mentions of enemies as Russia's allies, the fifth column and collaborators, Russian chauvinism or consciousness, internal problems of Ukraine, Belarusians, and uninvolved people or countries.

During the interviews, informants were asked to describe their attitude toward the Russian government, military and population separately using three adjectives. Respondents also had to comment on these definitions, which sometimes sounded not only as adjectives but also as nouns. It turned out that all the characteristics that prevail in the majority of respondents can be grouped in personal coordinates (Table 1). Describing the enemy, informants used characteristics of the cognitive, emotional, and moral spheres and assessed the subjectivity.

Table 1

Characteristics of the image of the enemy

	Cognitive sphere	Emotional sphere	Moral sphere	Subjectivity	Mental health condition
Government	Stupid, short-sighted, irrational	Cruel, aggressive	Non-humans without morals, maniacs, murderers	Overconfident	Sick, crazy, detached from reality, inadequate
Military	Stupid, fools	Evil and cruel	Demoralized, not human, animals, degenerates	Demotivated, weak	
Citizens	Stupid fools, unable to think critically (zombified, blind)	Violent, aggressive		Slaves, herd, endured, weak-willed, spineless, amorphous, passive, uninitiative	

Source: prepared by the author.

Analyzing the overall picture, one can see that the images of all hypostases of the enemy – the government, the military and the population in general – are aimed at presenting them, on the one hand, as not too powerful, but on the other, as dangerous. This construction is based on the combination of ideas about the weakness of the cognitive sphere (lack of rationality) with specific emotional characteristics (cruelty), which is also an example of the psychological process of selective perception. These characteristics are similarly represented in all groups. Other characteristics either characterize representatives of different groups differently or are not represented in each group.

**The image of the Russian authorities.** The image of the enemy formed in relation to representatives of different groups has its characteristics and is centred around different characteristics. The key feature of the image of the authorities is its emphasized irrationality:

*“And irrationality, because their actions (remark. the actions of the authorities) made even them and their state worse. They did not make them better”* (Respondent 63).

The vast majority of respondents did not expect a full-scale invasion and considered it illogical and irrational on the part of Russia:

*“I was more inclined to believe that there will be no (remark. full-scale invasion), and this rational side of weighing all the risks will prevail and not happen. Because, most likely, that sanctions... a forty million state that is ready to defend itself will suffer more losses, and, let's say, it would be more profitable for Russia and Putin to intimidate with this war, but not to start it. That is, informationally it created more advantages than the war itself”* (Respondent 12).

Compared to the images of the military and the population, the image of the authorities represents the strongest and most dangerous enemy, evidenced by its fullness of different definitions. When constructing the image, respondents take into account the high subjectivity (self-confidence) of the authorities, which is the source of decision-making:

*“People are so confident in their competence that they do not recognize anything around them... Self-confident shithheads”* (Respondent 10);

*“Rich, self-confident, who are not interested in the opinion of their people, well, especially the people of Ukraine. Who only work for themselves, satisfy their ambitions”* (Respondent 27).

At the same time, it is emphasized that decisions are made in isolation from reality:

*“How much to be detached from reality, because they live in their world...”* (Respondent 69);

*“I think these people are crazy. They are not educated. They do not know recognition. They are focused on themselves, their interests, they live in their world”* (Respondent 43).

To characterize this group, respondents even use signs of mental inadequacy, which emphasizes the danger that this enemy may pose:

*“I, for example, treat them (remark. to the authorities) as sick people”* (Respondent 75);

*“Well, Putin, for me, is the image of some crazy person”* (Respondent 56).

It also mentions their cruelty and lack of humanity:

*“Very ruthless, cruel and inhuman as much as possible”* (Respondent 7);

*“Separately to everyone, I believe that these are very bad people who want the death of children, people in general. They bring destruction. Fascists, ordinary fascists”* (Respondent 34);

*“For me, they are thieves, well, they are criminals. That is, they are not driven by something human, they are driven by the power itself”* (Respondent 40).

**The image of Russian society.** The image of the Russian population emphasizes, first of all, subjectlessness. Most of the features that denote its passivity and lack of will are concentrated here:

*“This can be called slave thinking, that is, like “who am I to influence my life, my standard of living, there is some master, he is the boss, he knows better, I will keep silent, because who am I?” Well, slave thinking”* (Respondent 40);

*“I was once at a sorting station where they collected garbage in different categories. There was paper, notebooks, newspapers, it was ground and it turned into such a mess. I associate Russian citizens with this porridge, because it is difficult to describe my attitude to them in another way, just porridge, which cannot express its position, which cannot form it, which does not want to do it, which lives in a shitty way, but it does not want to change it, some kind of political and economic impotence. For me, Russians are something so inert”* (Respondent 60).

There are also references to the cognitive characteristics of Russian society:

*“People... Indifference; how can I say, it's not narcissism, well, I'm talking more about the fact that, first of all, they think about themselves and, well, and here we can say about the low level of intelligence, as I think, in the general masses”* (Respondent 44).

In the image of the Russian people, there is also a description of them as zombified and cruel people:

*“Well, zombified, once. Then, perhaps, they are also aggressive, in their attempts to prove what we have here, that we are to blame, here. Well, this self-confidence is also present there. I mean, people believe that they are stronger than those around them”* (Respondent 2);

*“Russians, I think they are...cruel”* (Respondent 47);

*“But, unfortunately, there are a lot of people there who are these ruscists, in fact, they are, I don't know, too stupid or maybe just cruel, these are the people who help Russia, who prolong this war, support the government, support this little dictator of theirs”* (Respondent 69).

A sign of the construction of the image is that it does not contain assessments of the moral spectrum. If the authorities and the military are dehumanized as non-humans or animals, then the image of the population is dehumanized in a non-subjective version (herd, slaves):

*“Voiceless, that is, they have no voice, no influence on anything, they do not understand that there is power behind them, and they do not use it. A herd, just a herd. Wherever the leader says, they run”* (Respondent 5).

Respondents often pointed out that the government is a reflection of the people or that the government is inseparable from the people – saying that the Russians are to blame for having such power and for allowing or supporting Russia's war with Ukraine. Respondents



often said that Ukrainians can make changes if they do not like something and protest, while Russians are not. This is also an example of mirroring the enemy.

In addition, among those respondents who distinguished between "good" and "bad" Russians, most interviewees said that Russians are still guilty and should be held accountable. Of all the respondents, only a small number indicated that they found it difficult to answer or generally believed that Russians should not be responsible for the war:

*"Therefore, I am absolutely sure that every person who voted or did not vote in Russia is responsible for what is happening there now"* (Respondent 28);

*"This is a war of a country against a country, it is not Putin who declared war, it is not Putin who kills people. Each of them who lives there is responsible. And it cannot be that if Putin dies, they will say: "Oh, Putin did all this, and now we are good". No way! They all have to pay and bear responsibility, even if the government changes"* (Respondent 58).

This correlates with the data of a recent quantitative survey<sup>4</sup>, which shows that 78,9% consider the Russian people and the authorities equally responsible for the war.

**The image of the Russian military.** As for the image of the military, it is constructed in an attempt to reduce the threat of this enemy by emphasizing the weakness of professionalism and flaws of the subject (demotivation):

*"Well, they look to me more like, I don't know, I did not take part in hostilities and thank God, but they look to me more like an uncoordinated mass, poorly trained, without experience, and who have no will of their own"* (Respondent 64).

This should, to some extent, offset the influence of such dangerous components as cruelty and immorality:

*"They are very cruel in terms of – what they did to people is wrong. They killed non-military people... and they are actually fascism as it was in '41, in a worse form actually"* (Respondent 66);

*"They are torturers, they are murderers, cruel, aggressive and... well, these mockeries, these swastikas on the bodies, which... Well, I don't know what adjective to describe it, it's just... They are real torturers and murderers"* (Respondent 72).

There is also a mention of the cognitive abilities of Russian soldiers:

*"Maybe they are different, but the first thing that comes to mind is cruel, greedy and stupid"* (Respondent 61).

Additionally, some respondents noted that their image of the Russian army has changed from professional and strong to weak and disorganized:

*"I had quite a strong myth, and I think it was not only me: "Oh, my God, the second army of the world", and in the first days of the war, I really thought, if Kyiv is occupied, will I stay or should I leave? But over time, when I look at the pictures of these soldiers, who are exhibiting, well, people like people, well... And then somehow, when I find out about the*

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<sup>4</sup> The Majority of Ukrainians Do Not Consider Compatriots Who Remained in the Occupied Territories to Be Enemies – the Results of the SPA Survey. (2022, November 4). School for Policy Analysis NaUKMA. URL: <https://spa.ukma.edu.ua/analytics/bilshist-ukraintsiv-ne-vvazhaiut-vorohamy-spiivvitchyzykiv-iakilyshyllys-na-okupovanykh-terytoriiakh-rezultaty-opytuvannia-shpa> [in Ukrainian]

*problems they have with supply, logistics and so on... I think I succumbed to the belief that these are some strong, powerful, well, people like people”* (Respondent 62).

Despite the emotional attitude of hatred and disgust towards the image of the enemy, the majority of respondents noted that it is necessary to take prisoners of soldiers who surrendered. They mainly mentioned two reasons for this. The first is for exchange because Russian soldiers can be exchanged for Ukrainian soldiers and civilians taken prisoner.

*“To take prisoners. It is politically important, it is a potential exchange for those prisoners, our Ukrainian prisoners”* (Respondent 28).

The second reason is the observance of international conventions on warfare because Ukrainians are humane, unlike Russians, and it also affects the future of Ukraine – how others will treat the Ukrainian state:

*“I think it is necessary to take everyone captive and then deal with it. After all, Ukraine, Ukrainians, have always been such a humane nation, so it seems to me that we should take everyone prisoner, and then deal with this situation and determine some kind of punishment for them. After all, we are people, not animals”* (Respondent 32).

**Emotional attitude and vision of the future.** Constructed images of enemies create grounds for the formation of emotional attitudes based on two primary emotions: hatred and contempt. Hatred is felt towards all images of the enemy, but contempt and disgust are more often manifested to the authorities and the population in general. Here is one example of a respondent's description of emotions towards the authorities:

*“Anger. Contempt... but definitely not respect... Even this speech of Putin, which gave rise to such events, has historical value. That is, it would be worth even listening to it. But in fact, I do not even want to listen to it, because there is a feeling of disgust. There is a feeling of not getting into this swamp”* (Respondent 5).

Also, as another example, the respondents' answers about the emotions they feel towards the Russian people:

*“And the feeling, well, first of all, it's disgusting, sad that we have such neighbours, that is, they will not go anywhere, and these people will not go anywhere with these gizmos in their heads. Well, more disgust and anger”* (Respondent 31).

Emotions and attitudes towards the image of the enemy affect the vision of the future. Accordingly, in their vision of what relations with Russia will be like in the future, most respondents seek to distance themselves and would not like to have any contact with Russia.

*“I really want them (remark. relations with Russia in the future) not to exist. I just wish they didn't exist. Because a relationship is when you communicate. And I do not want us to communicate with them. Absolute absence of any relations”* (Respondent 10).

Respondents also noted that Ukrainians will consider Russians as enemies for an extended period after the war. This period will be long because of what Russians are doing in Ukraine now because many people may or have already lost their loved ones. Additionally, they mention that we must constantly consider and see Russia as an enemy. Otherwise, the war may happen again, as it happened in the past, for example, even after the Holodomor, Ukrainians forgave and had a favourable attitude towards Russians after some time.

*"I believe that I will not forgive this for the rest of my life. I will not forgive even for very practical reasons, for very practical plans to avoid any mistakes in the future"* (Respondent 9).

There were different figures, after how long Ukrainians will stop seeing Russia as an enemy from 20 to 50–70 years. Some noted that Russia is a permanent enemy of Ukraine; therefore, the hostility will be permanent. A necessary condition for establishing relations with Russia is a change in the views of Russians and their recognition of their responsibility:

*"Well, it seems to me that some kind of reconciliation is possible only through responsibility. When Russia will say: "Sorry, we were bitterly mistaken. We were told here about the Nazis, but it turns out that in Mariupol, they destroyed randomly, and we all were not told about it" and they will pour ashes on their heads, but until that happens, it seems to me that there can be no normalization of relations there"* (Respondent 11).

**Factors influencing the image of the enemy.** Various factors can influence the attitude to the enemy image and its dehumanization. Among them are the presence and perception of threat, which influence the increase of hostility. During the full-scale invasion, almost all Ukrainians felt the impact of the war. In addition, since October 10, 2022, most of the population has had interruptions in electricity, water and heat due to Russian attacks.

Additionally, due to modern technology and the prevalence of information, there is a feeling, even if you are not at the front or in Ukraine, that you can watch the events of the war as if in the front row of the cinema. Respondents who left abroad because of the war or lived there before the war also had all these feelings and perceptions about the war during the interview, as well as those who were in Ukraine. A man who has been living abroad for a long time and not because of the events of the war says so:

*"For me, it is still very personal because all the Ukrainians who are now, who are now fleeing, who are now fighting, have become much closer to me than they were before"* (Respondent 4).

The same was observed in relation to those who lived in the western regions of Ukraine – also the lack of a soft attitude towards the enemy.

That is, there was no tendency for people closer to the hostilities to feel more negative emotions towards the enemy image than those in relatively safer places. As well as those who had to move and leave something behind (home, friends, etc.) and those who did not move anywhere. At the time of the interview, almost none of the respondents had lost close relatives and friends (only one respondent) due to the full-scale invasion. However, the loss of significant relatives and the experience of living through the occupation, etc., may have a more substantial impact.

No differences were found between those respondents who had relatives or friends in the Ukrainian army and those who did not. This shows a certain homogenization of society towards the enemy.

The attitude towards the enemy was assumed to be influenced by family or friendship ties with Russia. During the interviews, respondents were asked relevant questions to find out. Some respondents said that they tried to avoid the topic of war when talking to relatives:

*"I have relatives in Russia. After all, they are my relatives, and it's probably not necessary to tear up all relations. So, we try not to discuss this topic (remark: war)"* (Respondent 68).

Others said they had cut off contact:

*"I have no contact with my part of the family in Russia anymore, I have no desire to contact them. These people are just zombies for me"* (Respondent 46).

The influence on the attitude of having relatives is related to various factors: closeness of relations, relatives' attitude to the war, etc.) Therefore, this relationship should be further investigated. However, among the interviewees who indicated ties with Russia (having relatives, friends, etc.), only a few noted that they found it difficult to answer whether Russians as a people should be responsible for the war.

**Conclusion.** After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine's citizens, when the threat has become concrete, the image of the enemy is also specific rather than vague. The category of Russian citizens who support the war is added to the image of Russian authorities and Russian soldiers as enemies.

The war and its consequences are tangible for almost the entire population of Ukraine, at the same time, modern media influence the effect of "proximity of war". Therefore, there were no differences in the perception of the enemy among people from different regions of Ukraine, both those with more active hostilities and those with less. As well as the presence of relatives or friends in the Armed Forces. This shows the homogeneity of society, which is formed in the conflict against the enemy.

The construct of the enemy image is formed through the description of the personal characteristics of the enemy and emotions that arise towards him. The core element of the enemy image is that the government, the military, and the population appear as not very powerful but at the same time, dangerous enemies. They are described as those who have a weak cognitive sphere but have emotional characteristics such as cruelty.

The authorities are the most powerful and dangerous enemy with emphasized irrationality. The population of Russia is shown as subjectless and does not contain any moral assessments, unlike the authorities and the military. The authorities and the military are spoken about as non-humans or animals, and Russian citizens are dehumanized as slaves.

In the case of the military, the construction attempts to reduce the threat of this enemy by emphasizing the weakness of professionalism and flaws of the subject. Such definitions are intended to level somehow the impact of such dangerous components as cruelty and immorality of Russian soldiers.

In constructing the enemy image, one can see such psychological processes as stereotyping of the enemy, mirroring, dehumanization, and selective perception. There is a psychological balance: the worse the enemy, the better we are, and the enemy is dangerous but not too powerful because it must be defeated.

Emotionally, two emotions are dominant towards the enemy: hatred and disgust. The emotional state towards the enemy is also translated into the vision of the future. Respondents do not want to have anything to do with Russia in the future. Despite such emotional attitudes, there is a consensus that capturing Russian soldiers is necessary, as it serves as an exchange fund for Ukrainian prisoners, as well as compliance with international

conventions – something that distinguishes Ukrainians from Russians, which is also an example of mirroring the enemy and is important for a positive image in the international arena.

This study is qualitative, so additional quantitative research is needed to generalize the findings to the entire population of Ukraine.

It is worth continuing to study the image of the enemy in Ukrainians to see whether there are changes in the construction of the enemy image when 9 months have passed since the full-scale invasion and what influences it. A separate topic may be the question of the impact of specific events on a person and their perception of the enemy (for example, those who survived the occupation).

Studies of the construction of the enemy image and the collective perceptions created on its basis provide essential data for describing the picture of the post-war future, understanding the politics of memory and the concept of guilt and responsibility in intergroup conflict.

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