



THE CATEGORY OF MANIPULATION AND ITS TYPES

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ABSTRACT

This article reveals the essence of the content of the category of manipulation. In doing so, a generalized definition of its many interpretations is developed by analyzing and synthesizing the features that make up the content of the concept of manipulation. It also compares the interpretations of the concept of manipulation in different studies and identifies its types.

KEYWORDS: *manipulation, manipulator, communicator, symbolic force, political myth, image, stereotype, hidden influence, the distortion of information*

DISCUSSION

The term “manipulation” is derived from the Latin word “manus” which means “hand”. In European languages, this term is used in the sense of referring to some object with certain purposes (for instance, the manual manipulation of a physician, his way of illustrating something to a patient using his hands). The Oxford English dictionary describes the term “manipulation” as “influencing someone discreetly, governing their actions without their notice, discreet act of influence”. Clearly, the term manipulation has a metaphoric aspect, and can be used in a figurative form of a speech.

So, the term manipulation literally means to handle objects skilfully with hands, and it figuratively means to influence people without their notice. It is clear from the thoughts given above, that this term was, right from the beginning, associated with the complex of skilful, even hidden influence methods. If we look at the descriptions of the term “manipulation”, we can notice that it has a number of unique characteristics. First, it is a kind of physical violence and psychological influence. In this case, the human mind, and the psychic structure of a person is conceived as a target for the manipulator. The work of sociologist Herbert Franke “The Manipulated man” (1964) is considered as one of the first works dedicated to the direct study of the mind manipulation. The researcher describes the mental manipulation as such: “manipulation denotes to often hidden and harmful influence on the object of manipulation by the manipulator”[1].

Second, the manipulation is such a hidden influence, that its target does not notice the facts of manipulation. As H. Schiller puts it, “In order for manipulation to be successful, it must stay covered and hidden, and the target of manipulation must perceive the effects of manipulation as natural and necessary (inevitable) phenomena. In other words, the process of manipulation requires an imperceptible level of false reality”[2]. If the attempts of manipulation is discovered and the information about them is spilled, the circle of actions is diminished. Otherwise, there is a great risk towards the manipulator. In these kind of cases, even if the attempts of manipulation are discovered, the actions are encrypted more securely in order to hide the main goal of the manipulation. Thus, the top-secrecy of the information is one of the main features of the manipulation.

Third, the manipulation is such a kind of influence, exerting of which requires special skills and professional knowledge. Even at the local scale, in order to manipulate the social world, certain expertise and professional skills are required. Thus, the manipulation of social sphere becomes a certain type of technique, and it bolsters the processes of the production of specialists capable of handling such technique and of scientific and popular literature. Part of the authority technologies are one of the most important aspects of manipulation. However, it must not be understood as exerting influence on the behavior of a friend or a companion.

A number of thinkers, such as I. L. Vikontyev, A. I. Vlasov, D. A. Volkogonov, E. A. Dotsenko, L.



G. Ionin, S. Kara-Murza, A. N. Kochergin, A. I. Kovler, G. Churchill, H. Schiller conducted in-depth studies of the essence, contents and the types of manipulation. The study of these works focuses on the object, subject, goals and objectives of political manipulation, dosing information using modern media and technologies, the formation of specific advertising policies, exaggeration of rumors, negative assessments, social rhetoric, the formation and confirmation of socio-political myths and socio-political images and allows to identify and analyze the descriptive features of the expressed procedural manipulation.

Accordingly, the study of the peculiarities of socio-political myths and the formation of socio-political image is an important aspect of forms and methods of manipulation. As we are aware, the term "image" was first introduced to the scientific usage by E. Bernaiz. P. S. Gurevich, A. F. Gutsal, N. A. Karnaupov, V. M. Shepal and others, in their researches on the aspects of socio-political image, revealed the habitual, material, environmental, verbal, charismatic and kinesthetic elements of manipulation. According to the results of above mentioned researches, the image is created with the purpose of manipulating the popular consciousness on the basis of special technologies.

The fundamental and theoretical bases of socio-political myths are treated in depth in the works of V. I. Garadj, R. A. Zbov, V. N. Kelasyev, I. M. Chudinov and others. According to these researches, manipulation is specially oriented exertion of influence on a certain object with the purpose of attaining previously set goals. The role and the importance of manipulation came to be understood gradually, as the implementation of political technologies proliferated and studies of "popular consciousness" are intensified. The level of success of the manipulation depends on the amount of the means of influence exertion, and the level of their elasticity and variety.

It must be specifically stated, that in political literature, the term "manipulation" is used to denote a special means of promoting a certain idea. In this case, the first task is to form an environment of information, or, say, to form a "target" of information influence. In the manipulation of public political consciousness, it is important to control the process of information and communication, which determines the forms, rules, perceptions and attitudes of human activity.

There is wide range of theoretical and methodical approaches in defining the term "manipulation". G. V. Grachev describes this notion as "Non-violent, mental influence, or form of hidden domination"[3]. D. A. Volkogonov describes this term as "the domination of the mental state of an

individual, and the authority over the processes of his inner changes"[4]. He assumes that the process of manipulation can be considered successful only when the manipulator succeeds in implanting the stereotypes he wants to the consciousness of an individual. According to Volkogonov, "manipulation is one of the stepping stones of the mechanisms of psychological warfare"[5]. A. I. Vlasov describes manipulation as, "securing authority against the will of the populous"[6]. V. Ricoeur, in his work titled "The Art of Political Manipulation" describes a world which allows for the victory with means of manipulation. According to R. Cialdini, "manipulation is prompting for some behavior with means of lie"[7]. According to E. L. Dotsenko, "manipulation is an attitude towards others as means or tools"[8].

Renowned American thinker, Herbert Schiller describes manipulation as "hidden and compulsory programming of thoughts, goals, feelings, attitudes and behaviors"[9]. Another leading American thinker, E. Shostre thinks that, "manipulation is using, exploiting and controlling others, or treating them as objects"[10].

In 1921 V. M. Bekhterov published a work, titled "Collective Reflexology". In it, he describes a kind of popular absorption under the influence of "psychological contamination". Bexterev connects the phenomenon of absorption directly with the process of manipulation of consciousness, explaining it in this act as a threat to the mind of "I", for instance, foreign ideas without the direct participation of the subject. Analyzing the above approaches and considerations, we can give a psychological definition of the same concept: manipulation is a type of mental influence used to achieve a one-sided victory by secretly encouraging others to perform a certain action against their will[11].

As we are aware, the phenomenon of manipulation is, above all studied by the researches in political sciences. For, this term is first used in politics as a metaphor, then transitioned in other spheres of public consciences.

The notion of political manipulation covers the notions of interpersonal and mass manipulation in its content. In the first case, the manipulator uses the certain technique consisting of the methods of interpersonal manipulation. In the case of mass manipulation, the manipulator uses manipulative techniques.

The interpersonal manipulation is directed towards individual people, while the mass manipulation is directed towards entire nations. For, manipulators, in their use of mass manipulation, try to exert their influence on as much portion of the populace as possible. In this case, the opinion of a



certain portion of the population, and in some cases, even of some individuals are presented falsely as the opinion of the entire population.

E. Kanetti in his work, "The masses and the authority" presents the idea that, "human nature presents a great fear in him"[12]. His present work aims to illustrate the essence of the feelings of fear in human nature. According to him, "an individual person can destroy the whole amount of virtue in the nature of the entire humanity"[13]. The author concludes, that it is strange that there should exist conflicts between one man and the whole mass of others who can destroy him. In this work, the pessimism about the future leads to the domination of the spirit.

According to Y. P. Avverin, the technological manipulation of the masses is "the exertion of the influence on the public opinion by the communicator with the help of management effects"[14]. The political manipulations can acquire not only negative, but positive aspects. For instance, they can be used for attracting the masses to the political events, and for heightening the level of their participation in political scene of the society. But, this study mainly concerns with the analysis of the negative aspects of the notion of manipulation.

Therefore, this study considers the meaning of the category of political manipulation in the form of covert influence on the general public through propaganda, using the features of popular psychology, forcing people to think and act according to the interests of the manipulator.

Manipulation is the distortion of the information for some purpose. Therefore, the symbolification of the information, associated with the imaginative universes is placed in important position. The objectivisation of the information is achieved through the codification. This, in its turn, gives an opportunity "to control the individual". The codification of the information is forming its structure, changing its status, and creating informational schemes. This allows people's minds to absorb the elements that are required to exist at a stage before they can comprehend the constituent component of the information. In this sense, the informational codification is associated with the regulation of social and individual practice, and it is directed strictly to a set purpose. According to S. Kara-Murza, "the codification is associated with systematization of situational chaos through the symbols"[15]. It is achieved through the unification and homogenization of the reality and by creating a simplified and intelligible picture of the universe. The tensions and conflicts in the process of understanding is lifted with the help of codification, formalization and unification of the information.

The codification, by limiting the variety and choice, simplifies its objects and makes it intelligible for any age group. "Thus, through the codification, the universe will acquire a simple, rational, intelligible and controllable aspect. As a result, both the man and the universe transforms into a stable, rational and formalized which can be foreseen"[16].

Thus, the manipulation is the recreating and reforming the information accordingly with the interests of the manipulator through the redefinition of certain political events and the creation of symbolic authority. The symbolic authority, according to S. Kara-Murza, "is associated with the manipulation of not only world picture, but of its own status in public space, it's "own image"[17]. It claims to change the assessments and imaginations. Truthfully, the words, and notions, which are chosen for the formation of reality, "create" reality as they are expressed. In this case, the chosen words and symbols serve as a basis of strategy and identity.

With the help of rumors, gossip, judgements, superstitions, myths, images, the public is influenced and a new reality is created by replacing old relationships with new ones. The symbolic authority is based on the principle that if the universe is changed, then so are the methods of its formation, and in its turn, the content and the identification of the social groups. It can be argued, therefore, that the symbolic authority is the authority of the formation of required groups, the absorption of the image of a certain universe to the minds of the others, "a way of asserting oneself"[18].

On a concluding note to the above-mentioned thoughts, we can assert that the recreation and remaking of the information is achieved through following methods:

1. The distortion of the information (the interpretation of information, which does not represent the reality, or based on the subjective position);
2. The veiling of information (sifting, censoring and monitoring and presenting the materials according to the interests of manipulator);
3. The manipulation through the presentation of the information which is remade according to the tastes and the interests of the manipulator;
4. Urging the masses to make positive decisions about the manipulator (the attempt to show the judgements the manipulator needs as the judgements of the objects of manipulation);
5. The manipulation, associated with the time of the presentation of the information.

Thus, the manipulation of the public consciousness denotes to a hidden method of influence exertion in which the objectives and the expected results of the process of the manipulation are kept secret. It is achieved through the myths and



with the help of various information-distortion techniques.

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