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THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL MANIPULATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Studies of modern social and political processes demonstrate that today there are many types of manipulation. It can be argued that manipulation is more and more noticeable, especially with the increasing Internet technological developments in recent times. Today, due to the active use of social media and its appeal to every target audience, it has been easier and more effective for political actors to influence mass political consciousness. However performing manipulation is not just being positive, but actually expecting it to bring negative effects. It is possible for people to react differently depending on their mentality.

The study of political processes (especially the legitimization of power) shows that the influence of political manipulation on their course remains quite high. At the same time an increase in the level of awareness of the processes of political manipulation in the target audience is recorded (in particular, due to the application of critical thinking not only in everyday life, but also during the evaluation of social and political processes). Today political movements that have emerged to use social media to accentuate cultural and ethnic identities also play an important role in political manipulation. One of the most important goals of political manipulation is to attract the addressed public to their side. This is done in order to increase the number of supporters and further strengthen the power.

The article substantiates that today the traditional understanding of political manipulation is supplemented by new technologies of influence on mass consciousness. So it reached a new quality level. In particular, politicians can not only travel around the country to attract the largest possible part of society to their support, but also use social networks to convey their ideas to a wide range of people.

Key words: social media, political manipulation, mass consciousness, information society, post-truth, anti-misinformation actions.

Statement of problem. It is a bad factor that political manipulation appeals to an unlimited power with the ever-increasing technological possibilities, and that social media is actively used to convey either true or false information to people. With the political people on social media platforms taking sides and having different ideas for this reason, many uncensored information, both true and false, is now shared with the audience to be manipulated.

Having such a political manipulation war on social media is actually unacceptable and it has now become a crime to make people act with such belief in fake information.

Analysis of the latest scientific research. The level of political manipulation, especially in the digital environment, and how people are affected by politicians has been the subject of the analysis of certain scientific sources. It is necessary to mention the works of scientists such as D. Flamini, D. Funke, T. Nagasako. On the other hand, more work on the unlimited freedom of sharing brought by social media platforms is necessary and should be made better.

The purpose of the study. Some propaganda systems are always carried out in the political legs of the countries. By using these systems, people's perceptions can be directed and persuaded. Especially after these political actions, many important events may occur and the behaviour of the target audiences may affect the future. Changes, which are described incompletely or

fully, but then realized by being drawn to different meanings, are of great political importance. These behaviours have come to the fore in many important factors from past to present.

Within this context, action can always be taken that can affect people, regardless of the level of development, and in many cases, change can be made. Along with the political manipulations, there may be negative or positive factors in the country. This situation often manifests as negative and results in unqualified actions of individuals.

Within the scope of this research we have done, we will explain the mind games carried out within the scope of the policy and how the target audiences are affected by certain sources. We will consider the concept of political manipulation with its different definitions. We will indicate how and in what way it was realized and by whom it was used, and how such a concept remained alive until today.

As a result of the research, we will better understand the techniques developed to perform political manipulation and the way they are used. Thus, we will state that political propaganda is not only an “advertising tool” but also brings different definitions.

For the research, H. Schiller’s knowledge will be used and examples of his five basic myths [6] will be given and these situations will be conveyed more realistically and scientifically.

Presentation of the main material. The content, which is produced with the mass media in today’s world and whose dissemination time is accelerated through social media, is getting ahead of the facts over time. Due to this situation, it is possible to overturn the rules that should be followed under normal conditions.

It is easy for individuals and societies to receive news about a subject and to obtain detailed information from the news. The most important effect of this is the active use of social media platforms today. No matter where we are in the world, all people can now communicate with anyone and get the audience they want. This convenience brought by social media has not only increased the daily life but also to the point of determining the destiny of a country.

Especially today, a large part of the politics in the world is carried out through social media. As it is known, organizations with different ideas and different ideologies have political goals. In order for these ideas to reach more target audiences, some manipulation actions are carried out in the policy. These manipulation actions are carried out especially through famous social media platforms: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook.

While some of the political manipulations carried out within the scope of social media platforms are carried out in a positive sense, some can be carried out in a negative sense. Having a global structure, the level of audience that social media can reach is high. Because of this situation, political parties are now able to make posts that both disparage their opponents and praise themselves from the social media platforms that the virtual world brings for people in the virtual world in order to convince

The word manipulation emerged from the word manipulation in French and settled in certain languages. As the clear meaning of the word, it puts the information in the form of orientation, selection, addition, and subtraction to differentiate it. There are also meanings such as using the information that has been clarified for their benefit, changing them as they wish by cheating. Manipulation can be expressed in the form of creating an effect on the people in front of it and directing it as it wishes, by using it not within the scope of people’s knowledge and teachings. As a result of these influencing actions and directions, people can change their behaviour and opinion according to the wishes of the person or institution that manipulates. On the other hand, the term manipulation stands out as a preferred term to express more mental activities such as directing and influencing.

Political people who influence the dominance of society and are in power use some techniques to influence the target audiences to listen to them in line with their wishes. One of these

techniques is political manipulation. The person or group dealing with politics performs the act of presenting information, news, or idea to the group they have determined to change the attitudes or behaviours they have created in line with their own goals, based on inclusion, removal, or change, and after this action, the target audience is directed, defined as political manipulation. As a different definition, political manipulation is expressed as the opposite derivation of distorted messages by politicians, which causes a different perception of the situation that carries a political reality, and the formation of minds that are deficient in the truths determined by politics [6].

The concept of political manipulation comes to the fore as a method used when it is very difficult to achieve the desired political goals through threats, violence, or the use of force. If the target audience has any kitten-like behaviour, no reaction, no policy manipulation is necessary [6].

Political manipulation has set the target of persuading and manipulating the masses or individuals by using some special techniques before the politically active factors resort to threats and violence. In this way, it is possible to direct the person or the society without creating a very bad image of the people who carry out political activities by taking action.

When we look at H. Schiller's thoughts and writings about the term political manipulation, it is first seen that it depends on myths and the professional placement of these myths in the human brain. The managers of the mind ensure the management of the determined masses by using this way. H. Schiller provides information on five main myths that reveal manipulation within the framework of political meaning. The first of these factors is individuality and personal preference. When this myth is considered, the importance of the level of individuality within the definition of the word freedom is overestimated and it is stated that this is an undisputed fact.

The second myth stated by H. Schiller is neutrality. The impartiality factor aims to make individuals believe that the government, the institutions that provide justice and the head of state are completely unbiased and free of problems. Even if the mistakes made are sometimes seen by the masses, they are considered a product of individual weakness. Institutions, on the other hand, continue their activities free from all the problems that arise. Looking at this defense, senior management is expressed as an office where personal interests cannot even come to mind.

Third, the myth he expresses is the unchanging human nature. When this myth is considered, expectations are formed by people. This expectation is a factor that lays the foundation for experiencing social change. When people's expectation levels are low, passivity achieves its dominance in society. It is a natural occurrence for images of political, economic, and individual realities to appear in the mind of any person. After the image desired by human nature, human behaviour is affected. Persons act not as they should act, but as expected of them.

The fourth myth is expressed as the myth that there is no social conflict. With this myth, the factors that are preparing to manipulate politically do not accept the existence of social conflict. There is no such thing as the social roots of the conflict for the factors that will take action within the scope of political manipulation.

The fifth myth is stated as media pluralism. When this myth is considered, individual preferences made in a country are expressed to the whole world as if they were at the same level as the reality that occurred within that country. The most important feature of the masses that cause this situation to emerge is their belief structure. Political manipulation by addressing their beliefs makes the job easier [6].

The five basic myths put forward by H. Schiller are used to manage people's perceptions as desired. Thanks to these myths, people who have a say in a political or other institution professionally place a manipulating system in the minds of the masses.

Methods used by political persons in the framework of political manipulation. Manipulation methods and techniques are used within the framework of four main elements. These

techniques are actively used and tried to have the perception of people, to guide and persuade them. We can summarize these methods and techniques as follows. **Positive Reinforcement:** it stands out as a method frequently used by policy makers to reveal behaviours or attitudes as desired, or to continue, renew, and reinforce the behaviour that has already emerged. In this method, there are behaviours such as compliments, showing positive behaviours, making surprises such as praise, and artificial sympathy. With this method, the realization and reinforcement of the behaviours towards the political goal in line with the political goal of the social segment determined as the target is ensured.

Negative Reinforcement: it can be expressed as actions that occur when political factors engage in behaviours such as scolding, making emotional threats, bringing the feeling of guilt forward, using slang words, playing the oppressed or the victim, and crying to manipulate the segment they have determined as the target audience.

Punishment: it comes to the forefront as a method used by political people who will make political manipulations, leaving behind positive emotions such as love, support, and closeness to influence the target audience and therefore manipulate them.

Traumatic Approach: it is the effort of political people to gain superiority over their opponents by performing behaviours such as verbal abuse, extreme anger, and threatening in a way that causes trauma. Thus, they reveal the perception of manipulation in the target audience.

Lying: it is expressed as a technique frequently used by political persons to perform political manipulation. According to this technique, it is aimed that the person who will perform the political manipulation will change the truth that has lost his positive advantage in the political sense by lying and making the target audience accept it.

Denial: it is a technique that occurs when politicians do not accept the situation that will cause them to lose their political advantage. In this technique, political figures try to influence their target audience by refusing to accept the allegations made against them.

Playing Stupid: it is the technique that is determined as a result of the people who will perform the manipulation act as if they do not know about anything after their manipulative behaviour emerges. Within the scope of this technique, the person doing the manipulation attempts to cover up his emerging manipulative behaviours.

Manipulation process on social media. When considered in the social context, globalization is primarily evaluated in relation to two phenomena: economy and social-cultural change. In a general assessment within the framework of these two phenomena, it can be observed that besides material elements facilitating interaction between societies, spiritual elements are also present. Knowledge and culture, falling within the scope of spiritual elements, are at the center of this interaction. Therefore, the increase in interaction between societies also ensures the formation of knowledge and cultural flow. Mass media, which plays a significant role in sustaining this flow and change, shapes the progress of globalization by facilitating the transmission of unique knowledge produced by societies to other societies [3, p. 22–23]. With the development of technology, one of the benefits brought by globalization, the tools that facilitate communication between individuals have also taken an electronic form. As a result, communication has become fast and easy, while also becoming more widespread. The changing form of communication and the supporting tools touch upon many aspects of daily life, transforming and reshaping it.

T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer argue that culture, which emerges alongside communication, brings together all individuals, phenomena, and events on a basis of similarity in today's conditions. From a general perspective, these authors state that all cultures actually possess the same characteristics and that elements originating from a single point can find a reflection in the lives of all societies. They explain this situation through the concept of “culture industry”. The

culture industry reorganizes existing areas, phenomena, and events in life, objectifying them within the framework of mass consciousness, thereby exerting a shaping influence on individual and social life [1]. The culture industry transforms everything known by individuals into a new form suitable for consumption. New forms that originate from a single point gradually find more space and create a vast network [2]. The particular cultural perception underlying M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno's approaches, which is focused on similarity and imposes this similarity on all individuals, is sustained through mass communication tools.

The process of creating similarity, which starts with mass media, is sustained through social media. The attitudes of social media towards society also shape this process. It is evaluated that the characteristics of societies exist in the same way for all members of society, regardless of differences. Media, along with visual elements, contributes to the formation of the perception that every individual possesses the same language, ensuring that the shared content also follows the same direction.

The era of post-truth triggers the spread of fake news and disinformation, strengthening ideas that lack a basis in truth [9]. Therefore, the popularity of this concept was made possible through events like the Brexit referendum and the US presidential elections. Particularly, the active presence of D. Trump on social media with statements such as "building a wall on the Mexican border" and "banning Muslims from entering the country" has raised concerns about the "loss of reality" [3, p. 78]. In the era of post-truth, the most common encounter is with fake news, which refers to intentionally misleading content that can be verifiably false. The rapid spread of fake news reinforces the claim that truth is distorted in a "post-truth" era. Indeed, the post-truth era is a time when perceptions are deemed more important than truth, and any form of manipulation and fake content can easily be directed towards large audiences. For instance, in 2018 Twitter shared millions of tweets from troll accounts believed to be supported by Russia and Iran to demonstrate the extent to which social media posts influence public opinion. The tweets included content related to the US presidential elections and the Brexit process. The following tweet claims that D. Trump supporters outnumber what the media portrays [8].

Social engineering can be considered as a technique used for various purposes, such as fraud, information gathering, or gaining unauthorized access to systems. For instance, psychological manipulation is an effective method of social engineering, which aims to extract confidential information. Social engineers are individuals who excel in observation and interpersonal skills. Beyond being a concept related to the world of technology, social engineering is also associated with social sciences, as its fundamental actor is the "human" being. It aims to hinder people's decision-making abilities and exploit emotions like trust, fear, concern, panic, and others. While social engineering techniques rely heavily on persuading and convincing individuals to disclose sensitive information, they also encompass elements of information manipulation, such as influence, direction, coercion, and deception. A recent example can be seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, where fake news circulated on social media platforms, attempting to create a sense of panic. This period highlighted the importance of accessing accurate and up-to-date information. So the term "manipulated content" gained significance. To such an extent that even the WHO referred to this information pollution, incorporating the previously mentioned concept of "infodemic" into the literature. The infodemic spread faster than the virus itself, manipulating and generating a panic-inducing atmosphere among large populations.

Strategies developed to prevent information manipulation on social media. Cybersecurity has three main purposes, called the CIA triad in the literature: privacy, integrity and availability (confidentially, integrity, availability). Privacy, data is to preserve. Details about personal data, secrets, individuals or companies are private matters that must be encrypted and access

control. Integrity, system and the data in it cannot be changed and processed without authorization. Availability is the ability to use the system as expected. Also, in cyberspace economic, social, political, etc. of security perspectives are also available [7, p. 58].

Measures against information manipulation in social media are mostly at the national level is determined. Countermeasures against information manipulation include misinformation, fake news law to provide legal measures with new legislation and laws, to create specialized setting up government offices, creating a database of misinformation, social media taxation etc. methods are available [5, p. 133].

Political manipulations within the scope of social media increase its value day by day. When research is carried out according to the information obtained from certain sources, it is clear that this is a strategic action worldwide. In a globalized world, you can now get information about all the actions taken wherever you are in the world. Social media has especially helped this world move to a more communicative dimension.

Social media manipulations can be considered as a different strategic move used especially in the elections. Of course, political manipulations from the past to the present have changed. Manipulations made through social media brought about by technology come to the fore more actively today. There are some strategic moves made by individuals who do business in the political sense, especially in order to bring the parties or organizations they have established to the fore.

Today, politics comes to the fore especially in social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Today's politicians are trying to show themselves especially positively by making certain advertisements on social media in order to convey the idea they want to the audience they want.

Governments economic impose sanctions and fines, arrest and prosecute, international restrict travel, seize websites, and restore tax-exempt status can take. However, constitutional and other legal guarantees of freedom of expression, restricts government efforts to regulate the content of online information.

Despite its strict regulations on the media and the internet, information manipulation permeates social media in China. Therefore, Chinese law prohibits any online publication and transmission of false information that may disrupt the economic or social order. The law also prohibits content that could endanger national security, the socialist system, or violate the reputation of others. Spreading false information that seriously disrupts public order on social media in China is a crime punishable by up to seven years in prison [10, p. 43]. In 2016, the Chinese government criminalized creating and spreading rumors that “undermine the economic and social order” [4].

Conclusions and prospects for further research. In the research, it has been stated that the concept of political manipulation doesn't have only one definition, but is used with different definitions in certain sources. It can be clearly stated that the act of political manipulation between the past and the present is carried out by individuals or institutions that hold power. It can be clearly stated that people who want to hold the power constantly change their behaviour by using different methods and turning even negative situations into positive ones. The study has tried to explain in the best way how political manipulation has a conceptual definition and how it has changed with both past sources and sources close to the present.

Explaining in detail the forms of behaviour that emerged depending on the term “political manipulation” with their definitions under certain headings, the effect of the manipulation factor, especially in the political sense, was expressed.

In the definitions used in the research through the sources, how and in what way the target audience is tried to be persuaded by using political manipulation is explained with H. Schiller's five basic myth titles.

Through this research, it has been determined that there are methods and techniques of political manipulation. How these methods and techniques are used on the determined target audience is explained.

It was determined what kind of behaviour the individuals or institutions that hold the power in political manipulation adapt according to the reactions of their target audiences. Especially in the framework of developing technology and the globalized world, political manipulation has begun to include different methods in terms of propaganda and has begun to be used to influence more masses. In terms of eliminating or reducing this situation, it can be stated as a suggestion in terms of raising the awareness of the masses on this issue, receiving education, and developing of research.

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ПРОЦЕСИ ПОЛІТИЧНОГО МАНІПУЛЮВАННЯ У СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕДІА

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Дослідження сучасних суспільно-політичних процесів демонструють, що сьогодні існує безліч типів маніпуляції. Можна стверджувати, що маніпуляції стають все більш помітними, особливо з розвитком в останні часи Інтернет-технологій. Сьогодні, завдяки активному використанню соціальних медіа та їхній привабливості для кожної цільової аудиторії, політичним акторам стало легше та ефективніше впливати на масову політичну свідомість. Однак здійснення маніпуляцій означає не тільки позитивний вплив, але має й негативні наслідки. Люди залежно від свого менталітету можуть реагувати на нього по-різному.

Вивчення політичних процесів (особливо легітимації влади) свідчить, що вплив політичного маніпулювання на їхній перебіг залишається досить високим. Водночас фіксується зростання рівня усвідомлення процесів політичного маніпулювання у цільовій аудиторії (зокрема, завдяки застосуванню критичного мислення не лише у повсякденному житті, а й під час оцінки суспільно-політичних процесів). Сьогодні політичні рухи, які виникли з метою використання соціальних медіа для акцентування культурних та етнічних особливостей, також відіграють важливу роль у політичному маніпулюванні. Однією з найважливіших цілей політичної маніпуляції є залучення цільової аудиторії на свій бік. Це здійснюється з метою збільшення чисельності прихильників та подальшого зміцнення влади.

У статті обґрунтовано, що сьогодні традиційне розуміння політичного маніпулювання доповнюється новими технологіями впливу на масову свідомість. Тож воно вийшло на новий якісний рівень. Зокрема, політики можуть не тільки подорожувати країною, щоб залучити на свою підтримку якомога більшу частину суспільства, а й за допомогою соціальних мереж донести до широкого кола людей свої ідеї.

Ключові слова: соціальні медіа, політична маніпуляція, масова свідомість, інформаційне суспільство, постправа, протидія дезінформації.