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Bogdan A. Shaclein, Bachelor Student, Specialty “Judicial and Prosecutorial Activity”, Department of Theory of State and Law, O.E. Kutafin Moscow State Law Academy, Moscow, Russia.

Scientific adviser: Sergey V. Lipen, Associate Professor, Department Professor, Department of Theory of State and Law, O.E. Kutafin Moscow State Law Academy, Moscow, Russia.

Technologies of political manipulation in the era of post-truth (on the example of the confrontation between the USA and the Russian Federation)

Abstract: Manipulation in modern society is one of the fundamental mechanisms of confrontation between countries. Through consideration of this issue on historical facts, it can be concluded that this article reveals the technologies of political manipulation in the post-truth era (on the example of the confrontation between the United States and the Russian Federation) through the study of theoretical and methodological aspects and consideration of post-truth as a tool for constructing and modifying political reality, leaving to manipulation through the post-truth tool. The object in this study is post-truth as a form of influence on the consciousness of citizens and its formation in modern political discourse, while the subject: Technologies and methods of political manipulation of consciousness in modern discourse (the era of post-truth). In study, the author solves following tasks as to define the basic concepts that designate the post-truth era and distinguish it from others, identify the main methods, technologies of political manipulation in the era of post-truth, identify the features of political interaction in the era of post-truth, determine the degree of development of this phenomenon in world politics, using the example of the information confrontation between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, and also, determine the degree of effectiveness of the influence of post-truth technologies on modern political processes.

Keywords: manipulation, post-trapping, confrontation, technology, Russia, USA.



Богдан Александрович Шаклеин, студент 2 курса специалитета, специальность «Судебная и прокурорская деятельность», кафедра теории государства и права, Московская государственная юридическая академия им. О.Е. Кутафина, Москва, Россия.

Научный руководитель: Сергей Васильевич Липень, доцент, профессор кафедры, кафедра теории государства и права, Московская государственная юридическая академия им. О.Е. Кутафина, Москва, Россия.

Технологии политического манипулирования в эпоху постправды (на примере противостояния США и РФ)

Аннотация: Манипуляция в современном обществе является одним из основополагающих механизмов ведения противостояния между странами. Через рассмотрения данного вопроса на исторических фактах можно выйти на то, что данная статья раскрывает технологии

политического манипулирования в эпоху постправды (на примере противостояния США и РФ) через исследование теоретико-методологические аспектов и рассмотрения постправды, как инструмент конструирования и модификации политической реальности, выходя на манипуляцию через инструмент постправды. Объектом в данном исследовании является постправда, как форма воздействия на сознание граждан и его формирование в современном политическом дискурсе, в то время как предметом: Технологии и методы политического манипулирования сознанием в современном дискурсе (эпоха постправды). Из этого выстраиваются основная цель исследования и задачи, которые необходимо выполнить, а именно: определить роль постправды в современных политических взаимоотношениях и способы влияния на политические процессы. В ходе исследования автор решает такие задачи как определение основных понятий, обозначающих эпоху постправды и отличающие от других, определение основных методов и технологий политического манипулирования в эпоху постправды, выявление особенностей политического взаимодействия в эпоху постправды, определение степени развития данного феномена в мировой политике, на примере информационного противостояния Российской Федерации и Соединенных Штатов Америки, а также выяснение степени эффективности влияния технологий постправды на современные политические процессы.

Ключевые слова: манипуляция, постправда, противостояние, технологии, Россия, США.



Introduction

The relevance of the topic of this study due to a number of factors:

1. Currently, the post-truth policy is gaining popularity in the field of international relations, due to the effectiveness and wide arsenal of manipulation methods based on information technology.
2. In the context of modern information confrontations between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, post-truth technologies are actively developing, improving the ways of influencing the political orientations of the electorate.
3. The phenomenon of post-truth is relatively new, which implies the absence in the scientific community of sufficient scientific development of the topic and, consequently, a universal and clear system for classifying its forms and methods of influence.
4. Given the possibility of post-truth politics to manipulate the minds of the population and set the political agenda, it is necessary to conduct further research on this phenomenon in order to develop tools and methods for limiting and counteracting the impact of post-truth political manipulation methods on the population.

Currently, a large number of scientific works by political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, lawyers and experts in the field of international relations have been published on the subject of post-truth research and methods of political manipulation in its discourse. The works used in this course work can be divided into two main groups:

1. Articles and monographs devoted to the study of the conditions for the formation of the phenomenon of post-truth and the methods of political manipulation characteristic of this period. The emphasis is on the study of social, political and psychological processes and the analysis of the modern picture of the world. Here it is necessary to highlight the works of R. Kreitner (*Kreitner, 2016*), I.D. Tuzovsky (*Tuzovsky, 2020*), A.V. Manoilo, A.E. Popadiuk

(*Manoilo & Popadiuk, 2020*), R.L. Hasen (*Hasen, 2020*), S.I. Strong (*Strong, 2017*), V.V. Borshchenko (*Borshchenko, 2021*), Yu.V. Puyu (*Puyu, 2014*), I.V. Gorokhov, T. Yu. Gerasimova (*Gorokhov & Gerasimova, 2019*), A.Yu. Garbuznyak (*Garbuznyak, 2019*), V.V. Subochev (*Subochev, 2019*).

2. Research papers by Russian and foreign authors that explore political manipulations in the era of post-truth and their role in the system of international relations. These publications present the political processes of the development of international relations and election campaigns, in which post-truth technologies were used and on the example of which the techniques and methods of political manipulation in the post-truth era are analyzed. Authors of these studies: MC Sandra (*Sandra, 2016*), D.G. Evstafiev (*Evstafiev, 2020*), P.J. Quirk, A. Rudalevige, Smith C.W. (*Nelson et al., 2021*), E.E. Glazov (*Glazov, 2018*), O.V. Popova (*Popova, 2018*) and others.

The following provisions are submitted for consideration:

1. The politics of post-truth is now actively used in modern international and internal conflicts, providing tools for non-coercive influence on the minds of people in order to lobby for certain political ideas, beneficially exercising influence.
2. An important role in the implementation of the post-truth policy is played by actively developing social networks and Internet resources that make it possible to convey viral fake news to citizens without checking for authenticity and in the shortest possible time, using bots to create the illusion of a discussion around certain issues, shifting the focus of the audience's attention from problematic aspects political discourse.
3. The methods of political manipulation in the post-truth era cause a growing distrust of the political sayings of officials and information provided by official channels and the media. This is achieved due to the abundance of fake information, their high degree of confidence due to the inability of citizens to confirm or refute this information.
4. The phenomenon of post-truth is debatable, there are no generally accepted concepts and classifications of this phenomenon, which, in turn, complicates the development of ways to counteract the methods of political manipulation that are characteristic of modern political discourse.

Article structure due to the logic of the study and consists of an introduction, one chapter, conclusion and references, including 20 titles.

Theoretical and methodological aspects of the study of forms and methods of political manipulation in the era of post-truth

The phenomenon of post-truth as a subject of political research

For the first time, the phenomenon of post-truth was mentioned in 1992 in an essay by the American playwright Steve Tesich and until 2016 had no clear definition: "We have acquired a spiritual mechanism that can deny the truth of any significance. In a very fundamental way we, as a free people, have freely decided that we want to live in some post-truth world." (*Kreitner, 2016*)

That all changed in 2016, when the Oxford Dictionary named post-truth the word of the year. The publication defines post-truth as a concept that refers to or refers to circumstances in

which public opinion is shaped more by appeals to emotions and personal beliefs than by objective facts: “Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” (*Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries post-truth adjective*)

There are also views according to which post-truth is not a new phenomenon at all, according to E.E. Pronina and A.S. Kirichenko is just a new name for political manipulations, “political technology tricks are now called a special form of truth” (*Tuzovsky, 2020*) methods to which, due to the modern availability of information and its leaks, have become known to parts of the population. Colin White refers the emergence of the phenomenon of post-truth to the period of life of N. Machiavelli.

Nazi propaganda used tools similar to post-truth and was guided by similar goals, it was important not to be truthful, but to appeal to the masses by arousing in them a sense of their own exclusivity and pride in their state through the use of false, but convincing information. So, confirming the above idea, one can quote the head of Nazi propaganda J. Goebbels “We are not seeking the truth, but the effect” (*Goebbels, 1998*).

Such close attention to post-truth was caused by the emergence in the international arena of many precedents of political accusations, the main distinguishing features of which were the lack of factual validity of claims and the use of indirect arguments aimed not at direct proof of the truth of one’s position, but at persuading the world audience that one is right. As an example, associated with the 2016 US presidential election. After the victory of the Republican Party candidate Donald Trump, it was established that an important role in his election was played by the army of bots, the origin of which was again blamed on the Russian Federation and again no factual substantiations of the information provided were presented in the accusations, but only indirect arguments that appealed to a wide to the masses only through persuasiveness.

In modern political discourse, the struggle for political support enters a new, international level, states, using the media (hereinafter referred to as the media), wage information wars, directing their action to gain the trust of an international audience. In such confrontations, the importance of the reliability of information is lost, since it is difficult or even impossible for ordinary citizens to verify the accuracy of the information provided to them, the main role in gaining their trust is played by its persuasiveness.

According to I.D. Tuzovsky (*Tuzovsky, 2020*) there are three main criteria for post-truth, based on the definition of “Oxford Dictionaries”:

1. The news reports of the post-truth era not only do not use, but also ignore the factual validity of the theses. In the course of ignoring the facts, it becomes possible to deliberately distort reality in the minds of the recipients in order to create the views necessary for the manipulator on events, persons, processes, in the form necessary for the communicant.
2. Information appeals to the value and moral convictions of a person.
3. This allows you to create cognitive distortions in the mind of the recipient, which, in turn, are a tool for changing views on events and processes.

4. Emotional pressure is used to argue the position. It is a tool for creating confidence among the objects of influence in the veracity of the information provided by them, not by achieving the truth, but by convincing others that they are right.

Modern scientific approaches to the study of the phenomenon of post-truth

In their writings, representatives of the Department of Political Institutions and Applied Political Research at St Petersburg University (*Popova, 2018*) concluded that the increasing role of post-truth in modern political discourse is associated with the prevalence of communications in social networks and the receipt by citizens of information about the surrounding political reality from them, bypassing the use of reliable sources. In their opinion, the system-forming factor of the political discourse of the post-truth era is political uncertainty.

A.V. Manoilo and A.E. Popadyuk (*Manoilo & Popadiuk, 2020*) in their article consider the connection of the post-truth phenomenon with the cognitive distortion of reality caused by the activity of social media platforms to replace objective facts with fake news (fake-news), a feature of which is the presentation of unreliable information in order to arouse “hype interest, feverish excitement or panic” (*Manoilo & Popadiuk, 2020*). Sandra Marco Colino in her article also draws attention to the active use of fake news in modern politics, in particular, on the example of the UK leaving the European Union, however, in her opinion, the increased occurrence of these precedents is an indicator that there is a “transition of society into the era of technocracy” (*Borshchenko, 2021; Pyyu, 2014*)

A supporter of the communicative approach to considering the phenomenon of post-truth A.Yu. Garbuznyak (*Garbuznyak, 2019*) in his article “Post-truth Phenomenon: Devaluation of Fact in Media Discourse” connects media communication channels (media narrative) with the growing level of dissemination of political information through interpretation. According to this approach, the media is the main communicator that communicates information about politics to society. As a result, the media have the opportunity to shape the political consciousness of citizens and, consequently, their perception of modern political discourse. According to A.Yu. Garbuznyak fake news does have an impact on modern political processes, however, their effectiveness is greatly reduced due to the ability to counter them using fact-checking (information verification). A feature of post-truth is the difficulty for confirmation and refutation, and, professor C.I. Strong (*Strong, 2017*) points out that people’s vulnerability to political disinformation (fake news and post-truth politics) is based on the “information deficits” (*Strong, 2017*) resulting from the audience’s lack of interest in studying political processes, however, Strong notes in his essay that attempts to correct the information deficit by increasing the amount of information provided or giving refutation of fakes often lead to an even greater level of delusion in recipients who are firmly committed to their original position. People are more likely to hold on to their factually inaccurate beliefs if the information is presented in a way that is easy to counter. Also, resistance to changing one’s point of view is most clearly manifested when observing the confrontation between the two sides, as happens in political debates. This phenomenon helps to understand why, in the era of post-truth, media attempts to point out factual inaccuracies in the speeches of participants in political struggle have little effect on the perception of these political actors by the electorate. Also S.I. Strong pointed to the possibility of countering fakes aimed at dividing society by finding common ground among the opposing

sides, focusing on higher goals that appeal to all or most of the participants in the confrontation that cannot be achieved in conditions of disunity. “Focusing on “superordinate goals,” meaning “goals which are compelling and highly This phenomenon helps to understand why, in the era of post-truth, media attempts to point out factual inaccuracies in the speeches of participants in political struggle have little effect on the perception of these political actors by the electorate. Also S.I. Strong pointed to the possibility of countering fakes aimed at dividing society by finding common ground among the opposing sides, focusing on higher goals that appeal to all or most of the participants in the confrontation that cannot be achieved in conditions of disunity. “Focusing on “superordinate goals,” meaning “goals which are compelling and highly This phenomenon helps to understand why, in the era of post-truth, media attempts to point out factual inaccuracies in the speeches of participants in political struggle have little effect on the perception of these political actors by the electorate. Also, S.I. Strong pointed to the possibility of countering fakes aimed at dividing society by finding common ground among the opposing sides, focusing on higher goals that appeal to all or most of the participants in the confrontation that cannot be achieved in conditions of disunity. “Focusing on “superordinate goals,” meaning “goals which are compelling and highly Also S.I. Strong pointed to the possibility of countering fakes aimed at dividing society by finding common ground among the opposing sides, focusing on higher goals that appeal to all or most of the participants in the confrontation that cannot be achieved in conditions of disunity. “Focusing on “superordinate goals,” meaning “goals which are compelling and highly Also S.I. Strong pointed to the possibility of countering fakes aimed at dividing society by finding common ground among the opposing sides, focusing on higher goals that appeal to all or most of the participants in the confrontation that cannot be achieved in conditions of disunity. “Focusing on “superordinate goals,” meaning “goals which are compelling and highly appealing to members of two or more groups in conflict but which cannot be attained by the resources and energies of the groups separately.” (*Strong, 2017*)

According to the political approach to the analysis of the phenomenon of post-truth, which is represented by Richard L. Hasen (*Hasen, 2020*), one of the main reasons for the existence and rooting of the modern phenomenon of post-truth in political discourse is the lack of a judicial body on the world stage that everyone could trust and whose objectivity would not be called into question: “there is no generally accepted arbiter whom a broad spectrum of the public will rely upon to resolve public factual disputes” (*Hasen, 2020*). Based on the works of Richard L. Khasen, his opinion on the decreasing role of objective facts, the increase in reliance on the evoking of emotions in recipients when submitting information agrees with the representatives of the Department of Applied Political Studies of St. Petersburg State University (*Popova, 2018*), A.V. Manoilo, A.E. Popadiuk (*Manoilo & Popadiuk, 2020*), and A.Yu. Garbuznyak (*Garbuznyak, 2019*), as well as with some other researchers of the post-truth phenomenon.

Also, Richard L. Hasen notes that due to the modern accessibility of mass media sources through the Internet, there are more and more media outlets that provide not objective information, but interpretation of information in the manner in which the readers themselves are interested. Khasen calls this phenomenon “cheap speech” (*Hasen, 2020*). This is precisely the negative side of modern freedom of speech and the prevalence of social networks. The danger lies in discrediting the media, which are trying to give objective information and an assessment of the reality of the audience. There is a loss of trust in official sources and people actively believe

fake news (fake-news) that find their use in the political struggle for the consciousness and perception of the electorate.

“In place of media scarcity, we now have a media fire hose which has diluted trusted sources of information and led to the rise of “fake news” – falsehoods and propaganda spread by domestic and foreign sources for their own political and pecuniary purposes.” (*Hasen, 2020*). Due to the fact that people in the post-truth era are more inclined to believe those sources that appeal to their interests and tend to trust less information that causes internal conflicts in them, regardless of its reliability, and also, due to the specific perception of post-truth news, not can or find it difficult to verify the accuracy of information, another form of danger of post-truth arises. The public may not believe in the danger of global warming and the need to care for the environment, question the danger of global problems such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also, the danger of the era of post-truth is reflected in their writings by Gleb Tsipursky and Fabio Votta. They note that the inability of citizens to differentiate false and true information is caused by rapid technological changes, in particular, the development of social networks as the main channel for perceiving information. This justifies, from the point of view of Richard L. Hasen, the danger of post-truth politics for the liberal democratic values of society and democratic principles (*Garbuznyak, 2019*).

Post-truth as a tool for constructing and modifying political reality

Modern researchers note that social media, in addition to carrying out its basic function - broadcasting information to the masses, are also beginning to provide their own views and interpretations of the transmitted data. It follows that the media now play a leading role in shaping political reality. The media are the main tool for changing the views, moral and value orientations of the audience, therefore, they actively influence the formation of a certain attitude of information recipients to a particular political event.

The traditional methods used by the post-truth media to construct and modify political reality are “media agenda setting, priming and framing” (*Popova, 2018*).

The media agenda is based on the dependence of the emphasis placed by the media on events and the importance attached by the audience to these events. The media that sets the media agenda does not control the attitude of individuals to events, however, by selecting certain news, they can give significance in the minds of the audience to this or that event, and therefore, thanks to this tool, the media can influence what the electorate will think about and on what problems will focus on.

Priming is inseparably linked with the concept of prime “an object, after meeting with which a person’s ability to act with an identical or similar object changes” (*Popova, 2018*), in Russia this term is also called pre-adjustment. Priming is a technique aimed at quickly solving a problem that has arisen and forming a certain opinion about it by analogy with questions, actions, in a word, solutions to similar problems that have been used in the past. In addition to setting the media agenda, which implies the exclusive influence of the media on the perception of the significance of certain political issues by society, priming suggests that the issues covered have a key influence on the perception and evaluation of a particular political actor by individuals. Therefore, the information which is broadcast by the media directly affects the perception of politicians by the population. Raising the media of certain problems and their regular coverage

increases their (problems) significance in the eyes of the audience, in shaping the public's view and evaluating a particular politician. Moreover, the more often a certain agenda or issue is raised, the greater the impact it has on citizens' assessment of politicians' actions. This allows the media to shift the focus of the audience's attention, for example, from domestic to foreign politics.

Framing, on the other hand, is based on the dependence of citizens' perception of problems on how they are covered or how they are interpreted in the media. With a certain presentation and interpretation of similar information, it can be given different meanings. This effect is achieved through the process of creating frames, interactions between the main political actors, as a result of which social media processes information in a negotiated format to meet the needs of political elites and then broadcast to the masses.

The researcher of traditional methods of constructing and modifying political reality R. Entman (*Popova, 2018*) states that although the information transmitted by the media has a significant impact on the minds of individuals, it cannot completely change their position on certain issues, however, such flows of information can set the vector of thoughts of recipients by choosing information and how to submit it.

Also, post-truth researchers identify new media technologies for modifying political reality associated with the era of post-truth, namely "personalization of politics, emotionalization of politics, entertainment politics, hybrid media campaigns." (*Popova, 2018*)

The personalization of politics is a shift in the focus of the audience's attention from political institutions that express various political currents to the individuals who represent them. The main role in these processes is again played by the media. As a result of the acceleration of modern communications due to the dominance of the Internet and television, the growing role of the media in shaping the political consciousness of the population and the commercialization of media information, it is the politician's speech, appearance and personal qualities demonstrated to the general public that are the basis for the formation of his image. Due to the personalization of politics, the party, political program and factual arguments play a much smaller role than personal impressions of this or that political actor formed on the basis of external characteristics, charisma, style of speech and behavior in shaping the political beliefs of the electorate.

The emotionalization of politics implies that in modern political discourse the main role is played not by factual argumentation and rational arguments, but by the emotional presentation of information and upholding one's positions. This trend can be clearly seen in the US elections. Whereas in the 2008 election, the winning Democratic candidate, Barack Obama, used social media such as Twitter mainly to demonstrate proximity to the population, a progressive lifestyle, and inform about upcoming events and planned events (*Bykov, 2010*), in the 2016 election, the winning Republican candidate, Donald Trump, used social networks for extremely impulsive expression, using emotional overtones to give their messages sincerity and persuasiveness against the background of other candidates, who maintained their accounts moderately and politically correct. Studies show that messages that cause a violent emotional outburst are more actively distributed on the network than formalized ones (*Popova, 2018*). Given the fact that negative information spreads much faster than positive information, the active use of fake news in the 2016 US elections can also be explained.

Due to the fact that social networks are the main channel for obtaining political information for the public, given the highest degree of redirection of viral fake news with negative connotations, it can be understood that the views of the population at the time of the elections were mainly framed based on the received negative emotions. from fake information broadcast by social networks and distributed by ordinary citizens. Thus, the person of Donald Trump was played up in these information stuffing as positive, “for example: the Pope supported the candidacy of D. Trump in the US elections” (*Popova, 2018*). Donald Trump’s opponent Hillary Clinton, in turn, appeared in this news in a negative way, H. Clinton sells weapons to the Islamic State.

Entertainment politics represents the transformation of politics into an entertainment show. This phenomenon occurs during the period of commercialization of the media and the “race for ratings”. This political concept is based on the concept of newsiness, according to which modern media, when creating a structure of public interests, share information in such a way that the data provided can be qualified as news. Views on the criteria for being newsworthy differ. J. Galtung and M. Rouge identify the following criteria:

1. Frequency – allows you to determine the degree of uniqueness of the event.
2. Amplitude – the choice of an event based on the drama and duration of the process, the longer and sadder, the better.
3. Surprise – how much the information is unexpected for the audience, how positively it is perceived by the recipients.
4. Unambiguity – Events must be interpreted in a certain way and in a simple way, in order to more actively attract the attention of individuals.
5. Relevance – Information interpreted by the media must fit the expectations of the public.
6. Recognizability – How relevant the information is to the current agenda and cultural context for ease of understanding.
7. Continuity – the constancy of the structure of the information provided and the frequency of its provision.
8. Composition or balance – it is necessary to present data in a balanced way, balancing negative events with positive ones (*Popova, 2018*).

A different view is held by T. Harkap and D. Onil (*Popova, 2018*). In their opinion, the following criteria of newsworthiness can be distinguished:

- 1) is there any mention of the political elite (whether individuals or organizations);
- 2) whether celebrities are mentioned.
- 3) whether the event is entertaining (of public interest).
- 4) whether it is surprising.
- 5) is this news good (i.e., saving someone) or bad (accident, tragedy).
- 6) whether this event is important.
- 7) how close it is to the culture of the country.

From these classifications comes the understanding that the media, guided by the criteria of newsiness, choose events with a simple structure, long duration and a high level of drama and which are associated with some significant person.

Media hybridity consists in broadcasting ambiguous or unsaid information by political actors in order to increase attention to their person.

Post-truth as a tool of political manipulation

The views of scientists on manipulation vary, some psychologists believe that manipulation is destructive and is described as “secret mental influence, with the aim of causing damage” (*Borsichenko, 2021*).

Based on the research of Yu.V. Puyu (*Puyu, 2014*), in which she relied on the works of S.L. Bratchenko, manipulation can be applied, in some cases, in the interests of the objects of manipulation, which, in turn, indicates that the process of manipulation is not always destructive and can be used for constructive purposes. It becomes obvious that manipulation can be used in various forms and be both constructive and destructive. It follows from this thesis that manipulation, according to the views of some authoritative thinkers, does not have a negative connotation.

The main task of political manipulation is to convince the electorate, by appealing to their interests, of the need to adopt a certain political discourse, which often runs counter to the real interests of the public. “Making the audience believe or do things that are in the interests of politicians and against the best interests of the people”.

The signs of manipulation are:

1. Spiritual and psychological impact (lack of physical).
2. An action that is imperceptible to the object of manipulation (Gorokhov & Gerasimova, 2019).
3. The greatest role in the impact is played not by the factual basis of information, but by the form and nature of its presentation.
4. It is carried out indirectly, by creating a deliberately necessary reaction to certain newsworthy events.
5. Actions are carried out in the interests of the manipulator
6. Impact is always purposeful (*Puyu, 2014*).

A feature of political manipulation as an instrument of political struggle is the correspondence to its goals, namely, the focus on obtaining, implementing and maintaining power. If we deepen the above a little, we can come to the conclusion that the purpose of political manipulation is to create a certain image in the minds of people (object of influence) in relation to any subject or action, which allows them to get their support in the course of the struggle for power, for example, support in elections.

Methods of political manipulation are actively used in election campaigns, lobbying for certain changes in legislation and conducting information confrontations on the world stage.

V.V. Amelin classifies the following series of operations:

“1) The introduction into the public consciousness under the guise of objective information of the desired content for a certain group.

2) impact on the painful points of public consciousness that excite fear, anxiety, hatred.

3) the implementation of declared and hidden plans, the achievement of which the manipulator connects with the support of public opinion for his position.”

Due to the increase in the level of social atomization in modern times and the emergence of groups of individuals whose connections are impersonal, Evstafiev D.G. in his work “New

Socio-Political Protestism and Technologies of Information and Political Manipulations. Experience 2017-2020” (*Evstafiev, 2020*) highlights the target audiences of political impact:

1. Youth. A social group that is a priority for manipulative influence. Thanks to the current trends in planting a cosmopolitan worldview among young people, a stratum of cosmopolitans is forming and increasing, socially and culturally separating themselves from the majority of the population of the state. In practice, this influence is aimed at forming anti-patriotic sentiments from cosmopolitan views.
2. Military personnel and employees of law enforcement agencies. Manipulative influence on this group is hampered by the presence of systemic rigid ties (i.e., an oath). Basically, the impact on them occurs in the format of intimidation and discredit.
3. Pensioners. Together with young people, they are a significant object of manipulation, due to the high level of social vulnerability and their low involvement in modern communication systems, but at the same time, their influence in traditional communication systems remains.
4. Recipients of social benefits. They are the most difficult audience for directed manipulative influence due to the increased level of social consolidation. Their exposure is served by the fact that they can be included in other categories of citizens. They are exposed to populist propaganda aimed at promoting or discrediting the current government.
5. Small business. Representatives of this social community are one of the most atomized groups of the population and can be manipulated by simple means due to the low degree of social and economic stability.

D. G. Evstafiev notes that these are only the main audiences, and the impact also occurs on budget workers, civil servants and other social groups.

The features and conditions of post-truth as an instrument of political manipulation are:

1. Availability of basic communication channels and “their management according to the classical hierarchical scheme”.
2. Filling the modern political information field with fakes.
3. The special importance of the presence of visual identifiers for the political consolidation of groups. Such signs can act as symbols, for example, used by the protest movement in the Republic of Belarus of the white-red-white flag of the Belarusian People’s Republic and from 1991 to 1995 the state flag of the Republic of Belarus, but also the slogan of the same protest movement – “Live Belarus!”, a person, such as the organizer of the protest movement in the Russian Federation, Aleksey Navalny, can also serve as a visual identifier. In modern political discourse, the media come to the fore in the process of manipulation.

It is customary to refer to the media as the press, news agencies, radio, television, social networks.

In the era of post-truth, since the beginning of the 21st century, most of the media are moving from distribution through physical sources to the Internet, broadcasting information through text publications or videos. The specificity of the post-truth era is the abundance and easy accessibility for the masses of the media, of varying degrees of reliability. In his article “Strategies and tactics of political manipulation in the media” V.A. Golyanskaya and N.V. Melnik (*Golyanskaya & Melnik, 2019*) note that in modern reality, people have access to many sources, the reliability of which is difficult or even impossible for ordinary citizens to verify. Media with

different political biases can give opposite information about the same informational occasion, and people can only choose, based on personal preferences, those sources that they will trust.

Classification of conditions and methods in the political manipulation of post-truth

Under the conditions of the modern system of democratic values, the legal toolbox is also becoming democratic, there is a shift from the forms of direct prohibitions and opposition to a system of incentives that directs the activity of citizens in the right direction. It is precisely because of this that in the era of post-truth, political and legal manipulation becomes so in demand. The main technology of manipulation is the appeal and adjustment to the already known opinion of the electorate. Much attention is paid to the organization in society of visible feedback from citizens to the government, which is actually a set of pre-prepared responses. Also, in the conditions of modern political manipulation, social myths are actively created, as an example, the myth of Russia – the aggressor. An important role in the arrangement of political manipulation is played by repetitiveness – the repeated repetition of campaign materials, i.e., the repetition of social myths, which contributes to their rooting in the public consciousness. Political manipulation in the post-truth era is based on the fulfillment of a number of conditions:

- 1) Appeal to the requests and needs of objects of manipulation.
- 2) Based on the emotions, feelings and psychology of the target audience.
- 3) Changes in the representation of objects of manipulations about the current problem.

All these conditions fully fit into the system of modern democratic values. All conditions are aimed at a person, appeal to his interests and are aimed at changing his consciousness.

The main methods of political manipulation that have gained the most active use in modern political discourse are:

1. News feed of information. It is a widespread form of manipulation and is based on the transmission of messages to the media that meet the criteria of being newsworthy in order to form a certain picture of political events in the audience that is beneficial to political elites.
2. The introduction into the minds of people of certain information that is not directly related to politics, but is involuntarily taken into account by individuals in the formation of their political views.
3. Appeal in the political and legal agenda, by influencing the societal pain points to create certain moods and trends (i.e., the tragedy of September 11, 2001 for the United States or the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 for the Russian Federation).
4. Tabooing certain topics of discussion that may interfere with the formation of a certain agenda (*Glazov, 2018*).
5. The legitimization of lies, echoing point (*Garbuznyak, 2019*), under the pretext of protecting any minorities or repelling information attacks. This also includes campaigns to create fake news or post-truth news, which are mostly driven by bots (*Kreitner, 2016*).
6. Using bots. Bots are used not only to throw news, but also to create the illusion that the electorate supports certain ideas or personalities in social networks, given the mass character of modern politics, this actively influences the thoughts of real people who see active support for a particular candidate or a particular idea in social networks (*Glazov, 2018*).

7. The simplicity of sayings, their ease of understanding for the population and the emotional coloring of the messages, without using factual arguments to defend their positions (*Popova, 2018*).

The role of post-truth manipulation in modern election campaigns (on the example of the 2016 and 2020 elections in the USA, 2018 in the Russian Federation)

Let us consider the role of post-truth in the events that caused such a strong growth of scientific interest in this phenomenon (post-truth). Post-truth political manipulation technologies were actively used in the 2016 US election race. Since the beginning of the campaign, Republican candidate Donald Trump has made a number of political statements characterized by a strong emotional coloring and lack of factual validity (*Garbuznyak, 2019*), relying on such a phenomenon of the post-truth era as the emotionalization of politics. His political company appealed to the feelings of the population. So, Donald Trump used the social network Twitter to create an image of a sincere politician among the electorate, expressing controversial and often contradictory thoughts about political events. The candidate's messages were often ambiguous or understated, which increased the level of media interest in his person. They invited Donald Trump to clarify issues that arose from his short messages on Twitter, which allowed them to receive many publications in the media and many media platforms on which the candidate's speeches were broadcast, thereby increasing awareness among the population. Donald Trump's speeches were written in simple language and had a bright emotional color, replete with jokes, which made it possible to increase the audience's interest in his introductions. There is a reliance on such a phenomenon of modernity as entertainment politics. Donald Trump also used such a technique of political manipulation as repeated repetition of ideas in his speeches, which, in turn, also made it easier for the population to understand and accept these ideas, and also, in view of the broadcasts with his participation in a variety of media, allowed the formation of a profitable media agenda (*Popova, 2018*). Also, in the election race, the Republican candidate used such post-truth tools as fake news and bots in symbiosis. Taking into account the theory of the rapid spread of negative emotionally charged fakes in social networks, many bots were engaged in stuffing fakes into the media space (*Kreitner, 2016*), which made it possible to form a negative image of the opponent – Hillary Clinton and a positive image of Donald Trump (*Popova, 2018*).

In the 2020 elections, the situation did not change much, Trump again attracted the attention of the media, generated four times more tweets than Joe Biden, despite the fact that his messages were again as simple and emotional as possible. He also did not do without contradictory, false or provocative statements, again receiving attention in the media. By August 2020, the Washington Post reported 25,000 false statements by the president. Also, after blocking Donald Trump's account on the social network Twitter, American studies showed that the amount of disinformation in the online media space fell by 73%. A feature of the 2020 elections was the campaign of Donald Trump supporters to delegitimize the elections, which was accompanied by a lot of fake news about fraud in the electoral system, which divided Americans into two opposition-minded groups (*Nelson, 2021*).

The presidential elections in the Russian Federation in 2018 were mainly characterized by such a post-truth phenomenon as the personalization of politics. People voted or boycotted the

elections based on their personal attitude towards the candidates rather than rational logic. Candidates in the political struggle intensively used such a political mechanism as the conformity of opinions – speaking in support of the candidate of opinion leaders and famous people, whose support is significant to the public. The political technologies of post-truth were also actively used. The organizer of the protest movement in the Russian Federation, Alexei Navalny, who was not admitted to the elections, disseminated post-truth information (which is difficult to confirm or refute). As an example, Navalny accused candidates K.A. Sobchak and P.N. Grudinin that they are “Kremlin projects” to create the illusion of alternative elections, these rumors quickly spread among the public due to the fact that negative emotionally charged stuffing has the highest degree of distribution in social networks. The emotionalization of politics also plays a certain role. Video bloggers such as Yuri Dud, Ruslan Usachev, Nikolai Sobolev and others often expressed a negative attitude towards the candidacy of the incumbent president, without supporting their judgments with factual evidence. The phenomenon of turning politics into a show is also actively used, for example, in the framework of the television debate, candidate K.A. Sobchak during a dispute with V.V. Zhirinovskiy doused him with water, thereby appearing before the public in the form of a strong woman rebuffing a male offender.

Conclusion

The first paragraph of this work reveals the concepts and history of the emergence of post-truth. Post-truth is a concept that has developed in modern times, according to which the appeal to emotions and personal convictions has a key influence on the formation of public opinion, prevailing over objective factual argumentation. The genesis of this phenomenon is debatable, some researchers believe that post-truth is another way of political manipulation.

The second paragraph highlights the main modern scientific approaches to the consideration of the phenomenon of post-truth. Scholars' approaches to post-truth research vary. It was possible to single out two main scientific approaches: communicative and political.

The third paragraph discusses the post-truth tools used in the course of influencing the existing political reality in order to change it to the needs of the manipulator. The main tools are priming, framing and media agenda setting. Also, post-truth researchers identify new media technologies for modifying political reality associated with the post-truth era, namely, personalization of politics, emotionalization of politics, entertainment politics, and hybrid media campaigns.

In paragraph 4, post-truth is considered as an instrument of political manipulation. The definition and classification of political manipulations is given. The target (particularly vulnerable to influence) audiences of political manipulation are identified. The key role of the media in modern political manipulation is indicated. The features of political manipulation in the era of post-truth are given, namely: the availability of basic communication channels and their management according to the classical hierarchical scheme, the filling of the modern political information field with fakes, the special importance of the presence of visual identifiers for the political consolidation of groups.

Section 5 gives a classification of the conditions and methods of political manipulation of post-truth. Conditions – appeal to the requests and needs of the objects of manipulation, reliance on the emotions, feelings and psychology of the target audience, changing the representation of

the objects of manipulation about the existing problems. Methods – news feed, introduction of indirect information into the minds of people to change certain value orientations, appeal to the agenda, legitimization of lies, tabooing of information, simplicity of speech, use of modern technologies (bots).

Paragraph 6 shows the impact of post-truth politics on the existing political reality on the example of the elections in the Russian Federation in 2018 and in the United States of America in 2016 and 2020. The methods and conditions of post-truth and their influence on the election results are shown.

The leading positions are now played by the media, which release news, the reliability of which does not play a role for their success, since it is difficult to verify for ordinary citizens. These messages are not focused on direct ways to win an audience, such as political advertising, but on an indirect change in the views of the public, by raising and increasing the importance of topics that are beneficial to the agenda and hushing up or discrediting other informational events that run counter to the desired political course. An important role in obtaining the support of the population is played not by professionalism and reliable argumentation, but by the sensual interpretation of the messages submitted by the population. Based on the analysis of the main trends in the development of the post-truth phenomenon, the conclusion is formulated that although post-truth cannot directly change the opinions of individuals on specific issues, it can influence their perception of their significance, or switch the focus of attention to other problems, facilitating the manipulation of consciousness.

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