

# **SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A TOOL OF POLITICAL MANIPULATION AND PROPAGANDA**

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Propaganda as a means of purposeful formation of the social worldview has existed throughout human history. With the rapid development of the global information society and the widespread use of information and communication technologies on the Internet in all spheres of life, electronic media have taken on a significant function in shaping people's worldview, establishing their values, views, beliefs and preferences. In the realities of modern information wars, social networks are actively used to carry out purposeful propaganda influence on citizens. Examples are: the Israeli– Palestinian conflict, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia; revolutions in Syria, Egypt, Tunisia. Social networks also act as organizers, coordinators of certain types of actions, protests, etc.

The use of social networks in modern conflicts and wars is due to a number of conditions:

1. Openness and easy access to the network;
2. Lack of sufficient control over user actions;
3. Social media is user-based: In some social networks, the users create their own content entirely, and they can express their unique point of view by controlling the shared content. In other words, social media is both

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a receiver and a transmitter. An important point is that social networks have become an alternative to media, and occupied an important place in the life of modern man.

4.Social media is community oriented: Social networks can create online communities by bringing together people with common views and interests. The community pages that people open over any subject allow people to create, share and discuss a variety of information.

5.Social media allows the establishment of social relations: Social media platforms bring together people from different languages, religions and ethnicities, allowing social relationships to change.

6.Social media has an emotional aspect [1].

Governments use the media to disseminate their opinions, positions, and views; try to maintain some communication both domestically and internationally. And it is social networks that are a convenient tool for such communication. In general, it has been proven that it is not only citizens or aggressor states that use social networks to carry out political manipulation. Such practices have been adopted by both numerous states and local politicians. In 2019, according to US researchers, evidence of organized manipulation with the use of social media was found in 70 countries, while in 2018 there were only 48 such countries, and in 2017 - 28 [2].

CMs have the characteristics of the media, as they shape the opinion of Internet users through technical devices (mobile devices, computers). There are a number of features of communication made with the help of social networking technologies: virtuality, interactivity, hypertextuality, globality, creativity, anonymity and mosaicism. All of them make such communication, on the one hand, global and accessible, and on the other - uncontrolled.

Social networks have a number of dangers, as they are an online resource where users are free to create and distribute content. Such dangers can be: intentional creation of negative and false information for profit; open dissemination of confidential information; prohibited content (violence, murder); cybercrime, cyberterrorism; bullying (intimidation, threats, harassment); dependence on social networks in general, etc.

With the development of socio-communicative technologies, information flows in the world network are increasing, the analysis of which must be carried out in order to conduct timely and effective counterpropaganda. Counter-propaganda should include not only monitoring of current information attacks, but also clearly know the vulnerabilities that the enemy usually hits and the ways to protect them from destructive influence. [3]

Thus, in the modern world of information technology, social networks have become an important part of any political and social process. Due to their openness and easy access, as well as ease of use, social networks have become

a direct threat to the strengthening of manipulative, psychological influences from cyberspace. Information oversaturation makes us weaker in the critical perception of information, and the use of viral marketing in modern media contributes to increasing resistance to propaganda and misinformation. The topic of using social networks for political manipulation opens up a wide range of political or psychological research in modern society.

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