

ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN MANIPULATIVE INFLUENCE AND THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC ANXIETY

BENIK YERIBEKYAN

Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan, Applicant

Lecturer at Vanadzor State University

byeribekyan@bk.ru

Abstract

The article discusses the problem of anxiety formation in society, provides some theoretical justification, identifies specific manipulative strategies, attempts to establish and analyze the interdependence between manipulative strategies and the formation of anxiety. The introduction deals with the issue of information uncontrollability. This fact becomes the basis and foundation for the deployment of the manipulative process. In this context, certain information becomes available for various kinds of modifications and distortions. In particular, framing and verbal techniques of manipulative influence are used as particular manipulative strategies and mechanisms. This whole process eventually leads to social instability and social anxiety. Some theoretical substantiations of the psychological mechanism of the anxiety occurrence are given. In particular, the concepts of social anxiety in terms of clinical and social anxiety in terms of socio-psychological view are distinguished. The emergence of social anxiety is considered in the context of manipulative influence. The phenomenon of psychological infection is analyzed as an essential mechanism for the emergence of social anxiety. Such spheres of social life and reality as the political sphere are considered as specific areas. As a separate mechanism for the formation of public anxiety, the process of spreading rumours is considered. The use of specific manipulative verbal formulations, constructions and rhetorical practices is analyzed as elements and means in this process. The fact of manipulative use of expert opinions is also revealed. The process of forming public anxiety in the context of the pandemic spread is also analyzed. Some discursive formulations that use certain numerical data as a manipulative strategy to increase the level of public anxiety are highlighted. Examples of the spread of rumours in the context of a possible military attack are analyzed, and statistics on the degree of public anxiety are provided.

Keywords and phrases: *manipulation, strategies, anxiety, society rumors, quantitative data.*

**ՄԱՆԻՊՈՒԼՅԱՏԻՎ ՆԵՐԳՈՐԾՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԵՎ ՀԱՆՐԱՅԻՆ
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Խ. Աբովյանի անվանի հայկական պետական մանկավարժական
համալսարանի հայցորդ
Վանաձորի պետական համալսարանի դասախոս
byeribekyan@bk.ru

Համառոտագիր

Սույն հոդվածում ուսումնասիրության են ենթարկվում հանրային տազ-նապայնության առաջացման որոշ հիմնախնդիրներ, ներկայացվում են տե-սական հիմնավորումներ, վեր են հանվում կոնկրետ մանիպուլյատիվ մեխա-նիզմներն ու մարտավարությունները, փորձ է կատարվում վերլուծության են-թարկել և ներկայացնել մանիպուլյատիվ գործընթացի ծավալման, իրականաց-ման և հանրային տազնապայնության առաջացման միջև եղած փոխկապվա-ծությունը: Ներածության մեջ քննարկվում է ժամանակակից աշխարհում տեղե-կույթի և տեղեկատվական հոսքերի կառավարման և համակարգման դժվա-րության խնդիրը, որի արդյունքում համապատասխան խոսքային միջոցների, հնարքների օգտագործման և տեղեկատվության ձևախեղման միջոցով հնա-րավոր է դառնում իրականացնել համապատասխան մանիպուլյատիվ ներգործություն: Այս ամենը վերջնական արդյունքում հանգեցնում է հանրային տազնապայնության աստիճանի բարձրացմանը: Տեսական հատվածում ներ-կայացվում են տազնապայնության առաջացման պատճառներ՝ հիմնվելով կլինիկական հոգեբանության որոշ հայեցակարգերի վրա: Հանրային տազ-նապայնության առաջացման խնդրում ներկայացվում են սոցիալ-հոգեբանա-կան պատճառները, մասնավորապես՝ մանիպուլյատիվ ներգործության համա-տեքստում: Որպես հանրային տազնապայնության առաջացման առանձին մեխանիզմ դիտարկվում է ասեկոսների տարածման գործընթացը, ինչպես նաև հոգեբանական վարակման երևույթը: Հանրային տազնապայնության առաջացման համատեքստում ներկայացվում է երկու ոլորտ՝ քաղաքական և առողջապահական: Որպես հանրային տազնապայնության առաջացման խնդրում մանիպուլյատիվ նպատակաուղղվածություն՝ դիտարկվում են դիսկուրսիվ ձևակերպումներ և քանակական տվյալներ, ներկայացվում են փորձագիտական տարբեր կարծիքներ, բերվում են սոցիալական որոշ հարցումների տվյալներ:

Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ. մանիպուլյացիա, հնարք-ներ, հանրային տազնապայնություն, ասեկոսներ, քանակական տվյալներ:

АНАЛИЗ ВЗАИМОСВЯЗИ МЕЖДУ МАНИПУЛЯТИВНЫМ ВОЗДЕЙСТВИЕМ И ФОРМИРОВАНИЕМ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЙ ТРЕВОЖНОСТИ

БЕНИК ЕРИБЕКЯН

Соискатель Армянского государственного педагогического университета

им. Х. Абовяна

преподаватель Ванадзорского государственного университета

bveribekyan@bk.ru

Аннотация

В статье рассматривается проблема образования общественной тревожности, даются некоторые теоретические обоснования, выявляются конкретные манипулятивные стратегии, делается попытка установить и проанализировать взаимозависимость между использованием манипулятивных стратегий и образованием общественной тревожности. Во вводной части рассматривается вопрос информационной неконтролируемости. Данный факт становится основанием и фундаментом для развертывания манипулятивного процесса. В этом контексте определенная информация становится доступной для разного рода видоизменений и искажений. В качестве особых манипулятивных стратегий и механизмов используются, в частности, словесные приемы манипулятивного воздействия. Весь этот процесс в конечном итоге приводит к возникновению социальной нестабильности и общественной тревожности. Приводятся некоторые теоретические обоснования психологического механизма возникновения тревоги. В частности, разграничиваются понятия социальной тревоги и общественной тревожности. Возникновение общественной тревоги рассматриваются в контексте социально-психологического механизма манипулятивного воздействия. Как важный механизм возникновения общественной тревожности анализируется феномен психологического заражения. В качестве конкретных областей рассматриваются такие сферы социальной жизни и действительности, как политическая сфера. Как отдельный механизм формирования общественной тревожности рассматривается процесс распространения слухов. В качестве элементов и средств в данном процессе анализируется использование отдельных манипулятивных словесных формулировок, конструкций и риторических практик. Выявляется также факт манипулятивного использования экспертных мнений. Анализируется также процесс формирования общественной тревожности в контексте распространения пандемии. Выделяются дискурсивные формулировки, в которых используются определенные числовые данные в качестве манипулятивной стратегии повышения уровня общественной тревожности. Анализируются примеры распространения слухов в контексте возможного военного нападения, приводятся статистические данные касательно степени выраженности общественной тревожности.

Ключевые слова и фразы: *манипуляция, стратегии, социальная тревожность, слухи, количественные данные.*

Introduction

The information flow in the modern world plays an ambivalent role in the regulation of public life. On the one hand, we can talk about the availability of almost any kind of information. On the other hand, the quality of the information we receive needs to be systematically monitored and differentiated.

Numerous sources of information, in turn, are also a certain problem for the stability of public life. You can often see how different information sources, instead of objective coverage of reality, try to give information additional emotional shades and nuances.

These additional information shades are mainly used for manipulative purposes. However, we cannot say for sure that this information is always transformed for manipulative purposes. We believe that in some cases, we can also talk about unintentional manipulation.

However, in both cases, the effect and impact that information of this quality can have on society are almost the same. And the features of this influence can be completely different. This mainly depends on the specific information frame or the verbal mechanisms and techniques used to construct certain information.

Social instability, in turn, is a good foundation and basis for the deployment of various types of information manipulation. To this can be also added instability of value orientation and also economic instability.

In this regard, it should be mentioned that in the modern world, value orientations are significant. We believe that it is impossible to talk about stable and unambiguous value bases both globally and at the level of individual society. There is an inevitable change in cultural trends.

We also consider the process of manipulation as a kind of discursive struggle for power and dominance and as a kind of search for guidelines to relieve feelings of uncertainty and social anxiety. We can also talk about some psychological “infection” since we believe that uncertainty and anxiety are transmitted first through certain information sources and spread with great speed. In other words, social anxiety is the anxiety of a specific information source and then the public possession.

Systematic information manipulation can also lead to the formation of other socio-psychological phenomena, particularly national complexes, the formation of hostility, suspiciousness, uncertainty about the future, and other phenomena. Suppose in this process, we are already talking about touching the deep layers of the psyche, particularly the collective unconscious [1]. In that case, we can see what may form an infringement of national self-consciousness and certain national complexes.

This article will analyze some correlation between certain manipulative technologies (particularly, the use of rumours and the manipulation of quantitative data) and the emergence of social anxiety.

The object of the analysis is the dependence between manipulative influence and the formation of social anxiety.

The subject is the analysis of using two manipulative technologies (rumours and manipulation of certain quantitative data) in the context of increasing social anxiety.

The primary research method is the discourse analysis of the media text, in particular, expert discourse. The theoretical and practical basis is also the identification of two manipulative strategies. Some results of sociological surveys are also demonstrated.

Some theoretical foundation for the formation of public anxiety

In the psychological literature, the study of the issue of anxiety is engaged, in particular, in clinical psychology. In this context, anxiety is considered as a kind of unpleasant, uncertain emotional state that is characterized by the presence of an expectation of danger, anxiety, uncertainty. The anxiety function is alarm and hazard about warning [7].

Anxiety is also the cause of physiological changes in the human body that prepare a person for flight, stupor, or struggle. The main feature of anxiety is a sense of threat and a generalized anxious expectation of danger. In the structure of anxiety and the emotional component, there is also a cognitive and motivational component. It is also essential that the emotion of anxiety is transmitted through psychological "infection". [12].

From the point of view of social psychology, psychological infection is of particular importance and significance.

In the group of anxiety disorders, social anxiety is separately distinguished, which is called social phobia. Social phobia manifests itself as an irrational fear of performing various actions in front of the public. Also, we can observe the symptoms of anxious waiting and avoiding certain disturbing situations [13], [14].

The considered definitions of anxiety are mainly clinical manifestations and characteristics of the symptoms of anxiety. The treatment and psychotherapy of such disorders are pretty time-consuming and out of the consideration scope and discussion.

We believe that social psychology considers the phenomenon of anxiety, referring to the mechanisms of social influence and the context of the processes of manipulative influence.

If we consider the manipulative process in the political sphere, we can see several features. In particular, one of the main means of manipulating public consciousness is language and the linguistic means used in it. The main goal of this process is some adaptation of the public consciousness to the goals and needs of a particular political force or direction. All this ultimately aims to change the current attitudes of this audience and create false stereotypes. [10], [5], [12].

In this regard, specific rhetorical constructions with corresponding linguistic designations are also considered important and exciting. In particular, the rhetoric of danger, where the verbal markers are, for example, "*risk*", "*disease*", the rhetoric of disaster, where the current specific situation is characterized as *hopeless*, *crisis* [2], [11]:

In this regard, the process of spreading various rumours has a unique function and significance. In particular, rumours that tell about the danger, the threat. Especially if an authoritative or famous person utters all this for a given society, the effect can be much stronger [9], [8].

Manipulations with some quantitative and statistical data can become a serious tool and means by which can be formed anxious moods in a particular community. The number, in this case, destroys the ability of the individual or society to think intelligently about the facts. [10], [5].

We believe that these manipulative strategies (rumours and manipulation of certain quantitative data) play an essential role in creating public anxiety. In the next section of this article, we will look at some examples regarding this process.

Manipulative strategies and the formation of public anxiety

In the practical part, we will look at examples of spreading rumours and manipulating certain data on the topic of coronavirus and some other crisis and extreme events.

In addition to some fictional theories about the coronavirus occurrence in the media environment, you can also observe very different information about the number of cases and the danger to life. In some cases, we can talk about objective data, particularly the number and statistics of the World Health Organization. Still, in most cases, we can observe the manipulation of quantitative data in the spread and danger of this disease.

In this regard, a special term is allocated called infodemics, an undifferentiated and irresponsible spread of information [3]. All this is also associated with obtaining a certain manipulative benefit.

In this context, there must be a lot of conflicting expert opinions on the origin, development and course of the disease. Moreover, these expert opinions are often anonymous. So, for example, you can find a statement about the mutational nature of coronavirus infection, and these mutational forms and new diseases are more dangerous [20].

In this expert opinion, there is some exaggeration of the scale of the danger of coronavirus.

In contrast to this opinion, the German virologist notes about the high mortality rate from coronavirus in contrast to seasonal flu. It is said about a study conducted where it turned out that the coronavirus is at least *four times* more dangerous than seasonal flu [18].

In the media environment, you can also find the opinions of medical experts about the duration of the coronavirus in the world. It is mentioned about *the period of a few years*. You can also find such statements as *"This is a war of micro-and macro-organisms. How it develops depends on how strong the spirit of the person who found out that he tested positive for coronavirus will be"* [17].

Here we can cite in particular the data of a sociological survey that was conducted in Moscow. In particular, the fear of infection was present in 24%, and anxiety for relatives was observed in 59% of the population [21].

If we do not consider different expert opinions as deliberate manipulation, we can consider a different interpretation of coronavirus as manipulation. In this case, we can also use the concept of framing and reframing [4], [5].

One of the reasons for the emergence of mass panic is that there is no ideological support, trust in leaders and a low level of group cohesion [7].

All this is a favourable environment for deploying a manipulative process that can eventually become the cause of the spread of panic in a specific society.

In particular, in 2020, the Russian Federation conducted military exercises that have been interpreted then as preparation for the invasion of the territory of Ukraine. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the Ukrainian political elite within their country also spoke confidently about the possible attack of the Russian Federation [23].

In addition to this, rumours were spread about a possible attack by the Russian Federation on Ukraine. In this regard, President Zelensky, in an interview, expressed the opinion that in this case, almost all the rape would be mobilized [19].

The data of the Ipsos opinion poll is also essential, according to which 87% of Ukrainian citizens believe that military operations on their territory are possible [22].

Conclusion

This article examined the correlation between manipulative influence and process on the emergence and spread of social anxiety.

In the theoretical part of this article, we have considered and analyzed some hypothetical questions and views regarding the main mechanisms of the occurrence and course of anxiety and panic.

Of particular interest are the fundamental analysis and identification of the main behavioural responses. In particular, there are three main behavioural response strategies in a panic or panic attack: flight, stupor and attack (active actions, struggle).

These behavioural responses have a particular practical interest for social psychology, especially in studying the correlation between a specific manipulative process and education and the further increase in social anxiety for a particular society. In this process, unique language means, in particular, the formation of specific frames, acquire special importance and significance. All this can eventually lead to social anxiety and, in some cases, public panic.

In this regard, the spread of rumours and manipulating various quantitative data are significant and have manipulative impact and exposure.

In the practical part of the article, we have considered some cases and social situations concerning the course of the manipulative process and its connection and influence on the formation of public anxiety.

Regarding the pandemic, we have mainly considered the use of different interpretations and frames. We also demonstrated certain statistical data on the occurrence of anxiety reactions in the population.

We also gave examples of the manipulative use of rumours to form public anxiety about the possible attack of a rival country. And the statistic indicators can be considered clear proof that the manipulation of various rumours about a possible military attack (in particular, the Russian Federation on Ukraine) increases the level of anxiety and apprehension among the population of Ukraine.

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