ANALYSIS INTO THE SPECIFICS OF MEDIA WARS ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNICATIVE PARADIGM OF MODERN SCIENCE

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the specifics of a newly emerged phenomenon in socio-cultural reality, i.e. the media wars. The purpose of this paper is to explore the attributes of media wars over social media and their effect on the mind and behavior of a modern man. It is noted that the possibilities of communicative paradigm help to reveal the essential attributes of this phenomenon such as: growing popularity of social media for a modern man, expanded web of possibilities for conducting media wars, emergence of new tools of war in cyberspace for the minds of masses. The conclusion is made that virtualization of socio-cultural space pushes peoples to perceive social reality through mass media and leads to domination of clip thinking.

Keywords: media wars, mass consciousness, cyberspace, social media language, communicative paradigm.

1 Introduction

The modern socio-humanitarian sciences are increasingly using the methodological possibilities of communicative paradigm. In our opinion, the approach to analyzing the phenomenon of media wars through the lens of communicative paradigm appears to be rather effective. Its effectiveness is high due to two reasons: first, communication has semiotic nature, and second, communicative paradigm makes it possible to extend the scientific analysis to practical aspects of social life (Mogilevskaya, 2015).

Communicative paradigm facilitates exploration of such phenomena as online communication, marketization of different types of communication, online communication on various information platforms, widening of a range of possibilities to manipulate minds by capturing the larger audience over the Internet. First of all, this becomes possible as the most active portion of population represented by the youth, are moving to the Internet space, leaving behind the information published in print media, and broadcasted on radio and TV (New generation of Internet users: Research into habits and behaviors of Russian youth online, 2017).

In the context of communicative paradigm, we would like to point out that the modern youth choose Internet not simply as a source of information, but as a place for communication, as a form of self-identification and self-cognition.

The relevance of this research is high as it is evident that the cyberspace is becoming the theater of war, the arena where the major struggle for the minds of youth is unfolding, whose position is critical for the country's future. As our study focuses not on media wars as such but on their waging on social media, we find it necessary to distinguish between the online social media and the social network, or the actor network. This concept receives close attention in the modern sociology.

2 Literature Review

The theoretical analysis in this research is founded on a phenomenological tradition gaining popularity in the applied research, which was first introduced by E. Husserl (2005). He was the one who directed the scientific analysis towards the phenomena of the world cognized by human through experience. Further, we relied on the works of P. Berger and T. Luckmann (1995) dealing with the social constructivism; it was them who proved the thesis on the construction of human perceptions of social reality. Moreover, P. Berger can be called an excellent empiricist, as he validates his conclusions related to the social phenomena based on solid evidence, which provided us a strong methodological basis for examining the phenomenon of media-

warfare. Also, P. Berger and T. Luckmann (1995) apply the techniques of cultural events typification, which in our study helped us to identify some features common to all media wars and the techniques for manipulating consciousness, perception and assessment of events by the virtual audience.

The basis of the communicative paradigm is found in the concepts of K. Apel (2001) and J. Habermas (2000) and their followers. The sphere of practical reason attracts K. Appel (2001), who believes that philosophy should engage in the study of transcendental pragmatics. The communicative community is the field of his scholarly interests. In his critique of scientism, the philosopher sees the main goal of mediating existing rationalities by the communicative rationality, which explains well various kinds of diverse information existing today in the media space and widely used in the media wars.

Thus, Russian researcher A.V. Nazarchuk (2003) exploring the works of K. Apel (1997) writes that the scientist provides an adequate description of an ideal communicative community. These scholarly expectations give a better understanding of the possibilities of infinite interpretation of any event or phenomenon in social media and to understand the power of social attitudes. Modern authors driven by the ideas of phenomenology see the main goal of philosophy in the search for intersubjectivity of social life, and thus their views may also prove useful for exploring the diversity of both the informational content and the warfare techniques employed in media wars.

J. Habermas (2000) looks into the possibilities of communicative practices and how they may alter the public opinion and human behavior. The understanding of social reality as an integrative force that unites society leads him to creating a four-volume analysis into development of the communicative paradigm. Drawing on the principles of the phenomenological tradition, he concludes that communication forms a huge part of our social world. The sociologist believes that it incorporates the phenomena of individual action and collective consciousness. Our study rests upon the theory of communicative rationalization providing us an explication of the technological part of justification of media wars, and the theory of social action, as such are the actions and interactions in media confrontations.

I. P. Berdnikov (2003) in his study thoroughly analyzes and uses the concept of a communicative structure as the space for human life, reflecting on it through the paradigmatic and socio-cultural foundations, he concludes that communicability is relevant to the further progression of social life and reveals the correlation of interdependencies between human life space and communicative structures. L. Wittgenstein (2009) of language games is considered a great contribution to understanding of the specifics of media wars. The scientist addresses the question of both internal and external boundaries of language; they appear to be open in relation to external objects and may be subject to considerable change. Thus, for examining the specifics of media wars in social networks within the communicative paradigm we relied on the theory of communicative rationality by K. Apel (1997), the theory of language games by L. Wittgenstein (2009) and the concept of communicative rationality by J. Habermas (2000), and the quintessence of the above theories helped us to reveal the key features of media wars.

3 Research Methodological Framework

The purpose of this paper is to examine the specifics of media wars and to validate the idea that social media are becoming an arena for media wars. The object of the research is the phenomenon of media wars, and the subject of the research is the effect of media wars on population.

The hypothesis of the research is as follows: the specifics of modern media wars lie in that such wars prove highly effective in creating communicative space for different audiences,

alternately making people either subjects or objects of influence, where different techniques of language games find their use.

The research objectives were as follows:

1. Demonstrate within the limits of the communicative paradigm, that media wars in social media have obtained new attributes and their role has grown beyond purely entertaining and communicative to political;
2. Expand on the idea that media wars on social media go hand in hand with the processes of mass consciousness manipulation.

The methodology of the research is aimed at achieving this goal, which becomes possible with the use of theoretical and methodological tools of culturology, philosophy and semiotics (Berdnikov, 2003). The study of the phenomenon of media wars hinges, first of all, on the possibilities of the communicative paradigm, based on which it can be demonstrated that everyday instrumental communication is the major factor in the accumulation of social capital of all forms (Nazarchuk, 1993).

The authors pay much attention to the usefulness of the phenomenological approach in analyzing the specifics of media wars on social media (Smirnova, 2009). Also, the research is based on semiotic approach, as virtual reality can be interpreted as a system of signs used to create semantic and perceptual spaces. The study makes use of the theory of social rationalization to demonstrate the consequences of the emergence of automatic profiles (social bots).

The method of theoretical analysis made it possible to identify the specifics of the communicative paradigm, the inherent attributes of media wars and the behavior of social media audience (Kotlyarova et al., 2017).

The method of historicism helped to look at the object of research in retrospect for understanding characteristics of the processes causing emergence of social networks. In practice, this method was applied, for example, to find out and compare the levels of victimization among the population (Pocheptsov, 2012).

The comparative method makes it possible to understand, through the comparative analysis, how the functions of social media change against the backdrop of raging media wars (Shvachkina & Rodionova, 2018).

Of particular importance for this research is the extensive theoretical and methodological base of philosophical and cultural reflections. The sociocultural approach also constitutes an important methodological basis for analyzing the processes of mass consciousness exposed to the influence of mass media, and therefore represents a battlefield for information wars.

4 Results

Social media becomes a promising battleground for media wars; according to a Google study, 65% of Russians having access to Internet spend their time on social media, while the percentage of teenagers is as high as 98% (New generation of Internet users: Research into habits and behaviors of Russian youth online, 2017). For this reason, the authors pay close attention to social media and specific features of media wars conduction there, as social media offer many benefits for various kinds of media attacks in interstate conflicts, political controversies, interreligious and interethnic struggles. First, it is important to define the term "media war", which is relatively new, and yet has no sufficiently precise and clear definition. This term is used mainly by journalists, and in philosophical, sociological, and culturological reflections its use is intuitive. Thus, there exists a broad interpretation of media wars by M. C. Libicki (2003) according to whom this concept covers the disruption of communication between a command center and subordinates, the destruction of electronic infrastructure, propaganda, and information sabotage. This broad interpretation of media wars essentially shifts the focus from the field of information to all

forms of warfare, including firefight. We have the views similar to those expressed by G. Pocheptsov (2012), who divides information wars into technology wars and humanitarian wars, and if the former concern the technology, the latter concern people. Therefore, media wars, in our view, should be referred to the second group of information wars.

Contemporary studies indicate that social networks, which date back to the 1990s, have enormous potential for media wars. Although initially they held no appeal for the ideologists and fighters of information wars due to the limited services, and the prototypes of social networks such as eGroups/OneList, ICQ, Evite, which provided certain opportunities for communication, were not interesting as an arena for media wars. It wasn't until the early 2000s that some projects emerged that conquered the whole world, such as LinkedIn, MySpace, and FaceBook. Only such giants could be compelling for media wars, because these platforms had a large number of people ready to perceive any information. Researchers believe that crucial for perception in social media are three dimensions, namely social interaction (structural), trust (relational), and common language and vision (cognitive) (Warren et al., 2015; Quinn, 2016).

 The analysis in modern science may result in the conclusion that social networks have become an excellent ground for manipulating consciousness, since they have gained popularity, primarily among young users with their count reaching millions around the world. Their great value for media wars may be explained by the lack of strict control from the state, their branched structure and the absence of a single center, which made social networks an ideal arena for information warfare, as the goal of media wars is to penetrate the alien information space and reshape it according to own standards (Hofmann, 2005). This is what feeds the desire of states that are in confrontation to create "information troops" that will use social media to reformat mass consciousness. The United States has embarked on such a project, concerned about combating Russian propaganda on Odnoklassniki and VKontakte, as well as on Russian Facebook and Twitter (Spiridonov, 2008).

It will not be fair to say that the media warfare techniques originally differed from any other forms of manipulation of consciousness. Thus, hiding or concealing information is a rather classic method, however, the use of this method on social media becomes extremely difficult, as the distinctive characteristic of social media is their openness, and much complication is caused by the vast possibilities of searching for information, leaving comments, including links to other websites. Undoubtedly, the efforts of moderators, who block or delete dangerous content, could have been effective, but those users who already read and reposted such content, bring all their efforts to naught. A more effective method is information diffusion in a plentitude of insignificant messages, which make it extremely difficult to sift the wheat from the chaff. While the valid and useful information remains out of users' attention. Still, in social media the initiators may not only find this information, but also spread it quickly. Contamination or blurring of concepts is an important tool in media wars, and one and the same phenomenon may in the twinkling of an eye acquire multiple different connotations.

5 Discussion

Due to the fairly recent emergence of the phenomenon of media wars on social media and the recent surge of interest in this topic, we would like to indicate the semantic scope of our study: since there is no sufficiently elaborated methodological basis and conceptual approaches to the concept of media wars in social media, here we present our own vision of it.

The limits of the analysis into the specified problem are related to the uneven spread of the Internet across the globe, so it becomes difficult to produce reflections and identify the universal characteristics of media wars in social media.

A thorough analysis of the informational "new language" of media wars is the challenge of further study. The advantages of the communicative paradigm are helpful in tracing the language

metamorphosis occurring in the virtual communicative space today. Finally, since social media have long been seen as alien to propaganda institutions, our task is to show that social media are no less convenient place for manipulating the consciousness of the masses.

The functioning of social media in cyberspace, being a complex systemic phenomenon featuring self-replicating social and technological systems, represents a highly intriguing problem for scientific analysis. The basic function of social media is communicative, but to this day they have not been recognized as mass media.

As we have already noted, media wars are gaining traction, expanding their battlefield through the virtual space. Media wars are targeting the mass and individual consciousness, and therefore their effectiveness is largely determined by the public susceptibility to the information that is broadcasted by mass media. Social media becomes the most effective means of information dissemination, so media wars unavoidably move into cyberspace (Rudenko & Mogilevskaya, 2017).

Ideologists of media wars could not but appreciate the effectiveness of social media, which are multifunctional and universal (by which we mean the web networks' capacity to be a mass media, a mail, a source of rumors, and a generator of public opinion) (Rudenko & Kotlyarova, 2017).

As a means of communication, social media have a number of advantages over mass media, becoming an effective mechanism of political propaganda. These advantages include their interactivity, because while all mass media, both print and electronic, imply monologue and mentorship, social media require actions and involvement of a person. They make the person a participant in the discussion of certain events. It is difficult to keep silent and to remain a bystander on the web, it urges to express one's attitude to the news or discussion, providing all possible opportunities for this in the form of reposts, likes, clicks. The ease and cumbersomeness of actions prompts the user to join the discussion, and creates the phantom feeling of complicity (Mogilevskaya, 2015).

Media war actors take into account the effectiveness and potential of social media in propaganda. It would seem that the very nature of the Internet with its immense possibilities to verify any information contradicts the idea of manipulation, however, only a few resorts to its manipulation force, those for whom social media are only a means of receiving and exchanging information, rather than a space for expressing feelings and emotions. This is what makes the majority of the inhabitants of social media the main target of manipulation and recruits of propaganda campaigns. After all, the interactive nature of the web is to mobilize a response from the participants in a multi-voiced dialogue, and this resonance should be emotional and impulsive (Shvachkina et al., 2017). Propaganda in social media is most often presented in a lexical and semantic field, stirring the psyche, provoking a strong reaction, urging to write comments and to give likes. Readiness for a single impulse is often expressed in a simple but uniform action, say, painting one's profile picture in the red, blue, and white colors of the French flag.

The effectiveness of propaganda in social media largely depends on their capacity to create an illusion of active position, in fact, without any real action taken. At the same time it gives the feeling of unity with like-minded people, whose names no one will ever know.

Social media as a ground for media wars are also effective in that the opponent is not distant from you, neither in time nor in space. Virtual opponents share the same territory of social media, and this proximity heats up the confrontation. The lack of spatial and temporal boundaries is also exacerbated by the atmosphere of total impunity and anonymity, which simply provokes to humiliate and insult the opponent (Kwon et al., 2021). Also, scholars believe that social media have a varying effect on civic participation depending on the level of an individual social capital, rather than having the same effect on civic participation (Choi & Shin, 2017).

Social media users tend to create communities of like-minded people, which, on the one hand, act as forces of support and, on the other hand, are extremely demanding as concerns meeting the requirements of this limited community, which is expressed in the support of campaigns of this community (Illarionov, 2017).

Despite the declared independence, users of social media are easily controlled, as they are dependent on the opinion of their contact group, and therefore such an insignificant thing as no "likes" can frighten people and make them submissive, as they may perceive it as an act of neglect or even punishment. Actors of media wars take into account this attribute of social media - its power to instill social fears of something, such as the loss of this phantom environment of allies, and unwittingly a person loses the ability to think independently, to express a standpoint without looking at others (Rodionova et al., 2019). This is what the social media user gives up for the possibility of bullying his enemies, i.e. other people. Those people have a different opinion or simply express doubts about the views advocated by the community.

Since the phenomenon of media wars is, according to scholars and journalists, as new as social media themselves, the interaction between them has become known relatively recently, because social media on the Internet originally functioned and developed as a resource for entertainment (Buliann, 2015).

However, the inner working of social media makes them a suitable battlefield for media wars. Whereas mass media have a relatively limited audience and are associated with completely transparent or at least known sources of information, the branched structure of social media, the lack of a single center, the predominance of feeble connections, anonymity, and most importantly unification based on interests rather than social characteristics, make social media an ideal tool of media wars.

Social media not only serve as a platform for propaganda campaigns, but also become a method to organize people during the media war. These are "quiet" wars that do not require universal soldiers, because the "fighters" of media wars on the Internet are often non-aggressive, humble users of social media. For example, a new term "slaktivist" has been coined relatively recently, it refers to people who actively discuss and actively spread propagandistic information of various kinds. These people are neither ideologues nor driving forces in the media war, but they create the necessary information effect, an information echo that increases the importance of propaganda campaigns (Kuznetsov, 2015). One may agree or disagree with M. Gladwell (2002), who is skeptical about the ability of social media to cause profound changes, but these are social media, due to their decentralized nature and lack of an organized single leadership, that create a new propaganda model that exposes hidden dissent. In online media wars, these are the slacktivists who control the flow of information and amplify it (Gladwell, 2002). In the absence of an explicit core, online media can form a protest center which anonymity allows for a relatively safe planning of agitation, rumor spreading, public opinion creation, and recruitment of supporters. And this is the main advantage of conducting media wars over social media - the scale of coverage, the branched structure, the absence of explicit leaders creates an illusion of independent thinking and the independence of conclusions. If we are talking about the basic rules of propaganda over social media, they are not much different from the rules of propaganda in other mass media.

According to N. Davis (2005), these rules include, first of all, the principle of simplification, which consists in the fact that the world may be represented binary, antagonistically. Any complication, the slightest disagreement is interpreted as apostasy and betrayal. Only by dividing the world, events, and people according to the principle of "us and them" or "right and wrong" it becomes possible to emotionally excite people and create an atmosphere of intolerance. And although this technique

is not new, it works effectively over online media, since, due to interactivity, social media allow for an instantaneous, immediate response against dissenters. Directly related to the principle of simplification is the principle of distortion, according to which anyone who thinks otherwise should be humiliated and ridiculed (Davis, 2005). Crucial for propaganda is to present its own goals as predominant and consistent with the interests of audience. Therefore accentuate the issues that are relevant to social media users. This protest platform allows to achieve unanimity, which N. Davis (2005) calls one of the obligatory principles of creating the propaganda content. Researchers also note that in media wars it is highly important to make an appealing presentation of certain goals and actions (Siegelstoinz, 2016).

The purpose of any media war is to reformat, recode the mass consciousness in order to inculcate new values, often contrary to those instilled in childhood, and to mobilize people to fight for the new values. Here the benefit of social media is their ability to quickly mobilize the masses for new movements (Mosca & Caranta, 2016). The success of media campaigns over social media has always been great, but it is not always possible to measure the level of protest sentiments through social media. For example, during the Twitter revolution in Iran, not more than ten percent of users created more than half of all tweets about protests and elections, and they were the ones who sparked multi-million protests. Therefore, the role of online services such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube in media wars is, according to analysts, an important subject for research (Damier, 2012).

6 Conclusion

Thus, the communicative paradigm helps to understand that the reformatting of consciousness, the achievement of communicative goals of media wars, is impossible without changes in language, all new in culture is initially crystallized in language, and therefore the compromising of the opponent's values is possible only by discrediting the existing linguistic capital. Modern man, wandering in the vast expanse of the information field, in his communications tries to rely on authoritative figures or analytics, which can be radically tendentious, as it is itself a tool of media wars.

It should be noted that the virtualization of modern life deprives us of a possibility to perceive the world as an immediate reality, distorting our perception through the communication channels of mass media, depriving us of a possibility to build an integral picture of the world, replacing it with biased, clipped images, which makes it easy to manipulate consciousness, without which media wars would not exist, because the goal of any information warfare is creation of a project, whether political, ideological or commercial, for which some kind of mythology should be fabricated. The next is to create a certain cyberspace, where a very great amount of information circulates, and where the boundary between the real and the virtual is blurred, which becomes an arena of media warfare.

Further, it should be noted that in the information war more and more often they resort to the technique of disseminating information based on concepts that lack any specific content, based on archetypes, filled with content of a very arbitrary nature. Thus, a notion of "spiritual bonds", which has become rather popular recently, may carry any meaning, and is perceived only on an intuitive level.

Finally, to wrap up, media wars make an extensive use of "new language" helping to open new Overton windows, simply by giving a different connotation to common expressions, replacing the frightening and scary with something that is ordinary and posing no threat. Audiences, brought up in the traditional lexical field, do not always grasp the meaning of familiar words or phrases. That is how media wars create the language of propaganda, which is essentially the language of domination.

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