

Actants of manipulative communication

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ABSTRACT

The study starts from assumption that together with disinformation, intoxication, and propaganda, the manipulation is a form of persuasion, a form of persuasive communication. The manipulation is a communicative action. By the way of meta-analytical method, we emphasize some ideas. The royal way of promoting the decisive interests is manipulation-, often accompanied by constraints and violence. The world is divided into amateur manipulators and professional manipulators. Professionals are those whose job is exactly to get something from the others. The action of manipulation is not an activity performed on inspiration, randomly and by ear. Manipulation is a structured, organised and planned persuasive intervention. As actants of manipulative communication are mentioned journalists, priests, businessmen, sellers, scholars, teachers, artists, writers, nobilities.

Keywords: communication; manipulative communication; targets; actants

1. INTRODUCTION

The action is performed as a dynamic and controlled process. The management of the action of manipulation is done based on a plan developed by specialists working in teams.

The plan of the action of manipulation, the basic document of organising and planning the persuasive intervention, is structured thus:

- analysing the social context and actual situation;
- defining the issues raised by the current situation;
- setting the goals and establishing the manipulating objectives;
- delimiting the targets of the intervention (as elements of knowledge and as target effects);
- specifying the action strategies;
- determining the tactics;
- outlining the anticipation device (feed-forward) and feed-back of the intervention;
- choosing the methods, procedures and means to implement the strategies and tactics to achieve the objectives;
- setting the self-protective, informational and psychological coordinates of the manipulating message;
- setting the propagation channels;
- establishing the work schedule;
- forecasting the budget;
- determining the procedures of evaluation.

Our world is composed by amateur manipulators and professional manipulators. Professionals get ever something from the others (Borowski, 2013; Borowski, 2014). Professionals are sellers, chiefs, social workers, teachers, etc. The sellers are some manipulators. For example, they can sell soaps to us, either forcing us to try a sample, or insisting to inform us we need to stay young and with a soft skin: this is why we need the soap. In the first case, by manipulation, they “force” us to buy, imposing a preset behaviour to us. In the second case, they impose a status of idiots to us, meaning the status of someone who buys a product for some qualities which directly it does not truly have to a larger extent than competing products (Johnson, Hample, & Cionea, 2014). In the first situation, they sell a soap to us without offering us the reasons why to choose that type, and in the second situation, they sell a soap to use, offering false motives.

2. TARGETS AND ACTANTS OF MANIPULATIVE COMMUNICATION

The targets of manipulation are human subjects as individual, group or collectiveness which are subject to manipulating influence. In relation to the type of manipulation, the sources of manipulation can be: individuals, groups or collectiveness. In the case of interpersonal manipulation, the actors are individuals in their capacity as a private individual. But when it comes to the manipulations of collectiveness, then the source becomes complex.

The source-actants are the latent partners and the specialists. The latent partners are those individuals or groups interested in manipulating certain collectivities. The latent partners may be governments, military general staffs, intelligence services, socio-professional organisations or groups of interests or of pressure (business, trade unions, etc.). Ultimately, the latent partners are decision-makers. They turn to some specialists who deal with designing, planning, organising and implementing the manipulating intervention.

The actants of manipulation themselves, those whom translate the plans into manipulation, those who compete and play the decisive role on the stage of manipulation are the intermediaries: agents of influence-manipulation or good-faith intermediaries. The agents of influence-manipulation are the actors receiving a role in the scenario of manipulation, which they perform. They are of importance in the collectiveness the manipulation of which is aimed, they have renown and audience. Without having the overall vision of manipulation, without knowing the project of manipulating intervention, they have the consciousness of participation in an action of influence. In relation to the agents of influence-manipulation, the good-faith intermediaries propagate a message about which they do not know what effects it seeks. They are deceived regarding the goals and speeches which they automatically bring to stage. They are self-suggested that what they say or do only has a momentary importance in the personal history of relations to those whose manipulation they actually contribute to. They are drawn on the stage relying on the pride of notable people and on their will to stand out (Joule & Beauvois, 1997).

A few categories of people are taken as benchmarks, as influence-manipulation agents, as good faith intermediaries or as sounding boards in the actions of manipulation.

Above all, specialists seek journalists. They know that the objectivity of journalists is vulnerable, but is defended by that it is questioned only as an exception. On the other hand, more than in the case of any other professional category, journalist's word is not verified, it is felt. The law of Pascal-Kapferer acts primarily: “social knowledge is based on trust and not on evidence”. The audience is sensitive to the press, especially for two reasons: it trusts the journalists and is almost always in a hurry. The audience does not think to verify, nor does it

have the time to verify. Therefore, the journalist is the ideal actor for manipulation. What they manipulatively add to the basic information is perceived as what gets into their free will from the comment. The press information has a furious impact. The journalist is at the moment of rapid reading, as reading of seduction, beyond any suspicion. Beyond the law of Pascal-Kapferer, once it is seduced, the audience's sensitivity to negative journalism is increased. It is no longer capable to observe the journalist's tendency towards self-importance, whom marks the manipulating information. It does no longer observe the relations of the journalism/journalist with the economical power or political power. Journalist's self-censorship or the censorship imposed by the managers of the funds or broadcast frequencies are also hard to detect.

Priests are social actors of great trust. They have a guaranteed and dedicated audience. That audience can be manipulated.

For their concern to do justice and for their power to do "a manipulative justice" when it comes to causes of social resonance, the magistrates have no longer the suspicion of being propagators of persuasion. As such, they are seen as good faith intermediaries.

A persuasive force is also the business circles. In an effort to defend their "rights" by actually promoting their great interests, these business circles turn into circles of interests, as they do not have any debts to conviction. The royal road to promoting the great interests is manipulation, often accompanied by constraints and violence (Cuichi, Iancu, 2010).

Scholars and teachers represent the ideal agents of manipulation to influentially intervene in the collectivities of youths and in the scientific ones. They have the vanity of professional success and do not hesitate to use means of persuasion. "The teacher is the seducer par excellence" shows Professor Constantin Cucos (Cucos, 2007, p. 91). Seduction is one of the fundamental operations of persuasion, and seduction prevails along with the lie within manipulation. Therefore, professors are the perfect manipulators: they enjoy trust and also have a seductive training. Their message can be easily modelled manipulatively, adding ideas to it on the project of the action of manipulation (Cociocar, 2012). The stars in general, artists, writers are notabilities enjoying trust. Therefore, they can be credible and legitimate actors of a manipulative intervention. Their message must keep them at the centre of attention (Coman, 2005; Coman, 2011).

Being at the centre of attention, they are those whom have influence, and their influence can also have manipulative emphasises. They are also trainers and guides of opinion. They are models. Therefore, they have the decisive qualities to be agents or good faith agents or sounding boards. A category of individuals may be very easily seduced: the young. Opinions, ideas and views triggering behaviour can be grafted and are grafted manipulatively on its aspirations of originality, on its tendency to oppose the old, on the propensity to protest and contest, on the ambition to introduce new values. All these categorical vulnerabilities to persuasion are formed on a background which includes them and renders them convergent: the youth is the moment of the identity crisis. Not having an identity fixed, the young seek it. In this search where the young invest and wastes emotional and intellectual energies, seduction and fiction are easily articulated. The vulnerability also represents factors favouring the manipulative intervention (Teodorescu, 2006; Peters, 2012).

The targets of manipulation must be integrated into a situation of manipulation wherein a manipulative message would be transmitted to them. Both the situation and the message are part of the project of organising and performing the action of manipulation.

The situation of manipulation is grafted on contacts between negotiators, demonstrations of military forces, economical pressures, press campaigns, etc. Manipulation valorises the ambiguities and indeterminacies. It is created in the areas of confused and debile knowledge,

on the short interpersonal knowledge. It also raises on the interpersonal and inter-group tensions, exploiting the divergences and misunderstandings. The perimeter of manipulation extends to the border of the system of verification. As it is known, the law of Pascal-Kapferer says that, in general, “social knowledge is based on trust and not on evidence”. As such, the manipulation can get very far (Panea, 2012; Panea, 2013). The situation of manipulation is a vitiated social situation. Manipulation starts from a political, economical, social, military, informational situation and changes it by means of manipulative messages. In manipulation, daily situations are distorted on the confused areas, so that they would acquire for the target the significations permeable to manipulation. Septimiu Chelcea (1994) considers that manipulation (of behaviour) consists in influencing the human subjects to perform actions inconsistent with their own purposes, without the latter becoming aware of the discrepancy between their own purposes and the distant purposes of those influencing them.

Manipulation exists, as we have interests which we would like to achieve through others, without them knowing it. The manipulator and the manipulated are connected by a manipulative relation. Herein, the first one has a motif for the fulfilment of which they seek/find or stimulate an opportunity, using the secondary as a means. The manipulator creates a scenario where the manipulated (an individual or a group) is destined to play a role that is unpredictable for the latter. In the script (scenario), that who has the control introduces their own interests for performance. They also install an eventful regime appropriate to preventing the access of the manipulated to the basic intentional substance of the approach. The manipulated one remains manipulated as long as they are under the power of a foreign intention, seduced and lied to, incapable to think this intention does not belong to them. Seduction, lie, myth, fabling are the functional elements of the manipulative mechanism. Repetition may also be added to them, unspecifically and narrowly: repetition, violence, alternation between tension and its absence (Tudor D., 2001, p. 77).

3. CONCLUSION

The manipulated is the tool of an intention which does not belong to them in essence. The manipulative intention is an induced intention. The manipulation is individualised by the deliberate intention of producing changes of opinion, attitude, behaviour, turning to rational and emotional techniques under the conditions where the manipulated is outside the control concerning the purpose and mechanism of persuasive undertaking.

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