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THE MEDIA SPACE AS AN ARENA OF INFORMATION WARFARE: MANIPULATING PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN GLOBAL POLITICS

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Abstract. The article examines the role of mass media in contemporary international relations and analyzes the mechanisms of media manipulation that influence political perceptions of international events. The study aims to provide a theoretical assessment of the role of mass media in world politics and identify the principal methods of selecting, structuring, and interpreting information through which public opinion and perceptions of foreign policy processes are influenced. The methodological framework combines systemic and comparative approaches, a theoretical review of scholarly literature, and a conceptual analysis of political communication mechanisms. The article examines theoretical perspectives on symbolic power, the influence of communication media on public consciousness, the network-based nature of contemporary power, propaganda, cultural hegemony, and agenda-setting. Particular attention is paid to selective fact selection, framing, contextualization of messages, emotionalization of information, repetition of political narratives, and the creation of an illusion of pluralism. Drawing on theoretical approaches and studies by Kazakhstani and Turkish scholars, the research explores the relationship between media communication, geopolitical competition, and information confrontation. The findings indicate that the influence of mass media depends not only on the content of information but also on how it is presented, the sequence in which it is delivered, and the interpretive frameworks through which it is perceived. The article concludes that media manipulation constitutes a multilevel mechanism of political influence capable of shaping images of international actors, legitimizing foreign policy decisions, and affecting perceptions of international conflicts. The practical significance of the study lies in the potential application of its findings to research on international political communication and information warfare, as well as to the development of critical thinking and media literacy.

Keywords: international relations, mass media, media manipulation, information warfare, political communication, geopolitical competition, public opinion.

Introduction.

The current stage of international relations is characterized by the growing importance of the information factor in shaping states' foreign policy strategies, managing international conflicts, and defining the nature of interaction among key actors in global politics. The globalization of information communications, the digitalization of the media landscape, and the rapid dissemination of news content have significantly altered the mechanisms by which public opinion regarding international events is formed. In this context, the mass media serve not merely as channels for transmitting information but as significant participants in political communication, capable of influencing the interpretation of international processes, the shaping of national images, and the legitimation of foreign policy decisions.

The relevance of this study stems from the fact that, in contemporary global politics, information is becoming a strategic resource, while the information space is emerging as a distinct arena of international competition. Alongside traditional instruments of foreign policy influence, states and other political actors employ media communications to advance their interests, cultivate a favorable international image, and shape perceptions of political events. Crucially, the impact of mass

media is determined not only by the veracity of the information disseminated but also by the criteria for its selection, the sequence of its presentation, its emotional tone, and the context of its interpretation. Consequently, media content can serve as a tool for deliberately influencing public consciousness and shaping specific perceptions of international political reality.

The choice of research topic is driven by the problematic situation arising from the tension between the public need for objective and comprehensive coverage of international events and the potential for media resources to be used for the selective presentation of facts, the construction of political narratives, and the manipulation of public opinion. On the one hand, the media disseminate information, broaden access to the international agenda, and facilitate public discussion of foreign policy decisions. On the other hand, the dependence of information production on political, economic, and institutional factors can lead to uneven event coverage, the dominance of specific interpretations, and limited visibility for alternative viewpoints. This raises questions regarding the boundaries of information mediation and the mechanisms through which the media shift from merely informing the audience to shaping specific perceptions of international processes.

The analysis can also be strengthened by incorporating the concept of "information disorder," which shifts attention from individual false statements to the broader communication environment in which content is produced, distributed, interpreted, and amplified. Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) propose examining three interrelated dimensions: the agents involved, the messages circulated, and the interpreters who encounter them. Applied to international relations, this framework makes it possible to investigate not only what a message says, but also who benefits from its circulation, which channels amplify it, how it is adapted to different linguistic and cultural contexts, and how audiences interpret it. This approach helps avoid reducing information warfare to a simple opposition between true and false statements and instead treats it as a process embedded in political, institutional, and technological relations.

A more precise conceptual distinction is needed between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) distinguish misinformation as false information shared without an intention to cause harm, disinformation as false information deliberately created or disseminated to cause harm, and malinformation as genuine information used out of context or disclosed with the intention of causing harm. This distinction is analytically important because the same media message may have different implications depending on the intentions of its producer, the circumstances of its circulation, and the effects on the target audience. Accordingly, the presence of an inaccurate claim should not, by itself, be treated as sufficient evidence of a coordinated manipulation campaign; assessments should also consider provenance, context, patterns of dissemination, and available evidence of intent. [11]

The theoretical foundation for studying this subject matter comprises various approaches to analyzing communication, symbolic power, and political influence. In particular, Pierre Bourdieu's concepts allow the media landscape to be viewed as a sphere of symbolic struggle; Marshall McLuhan's ideas highlight the impact of communication media on forms of public perception; and Manuel Castells's research reveals the significance of information networks and the production of meaning in the functioning of power. The propaganda model proposed by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, as well as the agenda-setting theory of Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, are also crucial for understanding the mechanisms of media manipulation. Drawing on research from various countries - including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Türkiye - complements this general theoretical analysis by examining information warfare within the context of specific international crises and geopolitical interests.

Despite the significant attention the academic community has devoted to issues of political communication, propaganda, and information warfare, there remains a need for a comprehensive understanding of the role of mass media in contemporary international relations. Analyzing the interplay between information selection, the framing of issues, and the construction of images of international actors is of particular importance. A key research question remains: how do the media agenda and the ways international events are portrayed influence public perception of conflicts, foreign policy decisions, and international cooperation?

The aim of the study is to provide a theoretical analysis of the role of mass media in contemporary international relations and to identify the key mechanisms of media manipulation through which information regarding international events is selected, interpreted, and politically contextualized.

To achieve this goal, the study addresses the following research objectives: to examine the significance of information and media communication in contemporary international relations; to analyze key theoretical approaches to the influence of mass media on political perceptions; to identify the characteristics of information influence and media manipulation; to investigate the mechanisms of agenda-setting, framing, selective presentation of facts, and the formation of dominant political narratives; and to assess the role of media manipulation in information warfare and the pursuit of states' foreign policy interests.

The methodological basis of the study consists of systematic and comparative approaches, theoretical analysis of scientific literature, as well as conceptual analysis of the mechanisms of political communication. Their use allows us to consider the media as an element of the modern system of international relations and identify the features of their participation in the formation of political interpretations and public perception of international processes.

The scientific significance of the study lies in the systematization of theoretical concepts regarding the role of mass media in international politics and a comprehensive examination of media manipulation as a set of mechanisms for the selection, structuring, and interpretation of information. The findings may facilitate further study of the interrelationship between media communications, information warfare, and the shaping of international political reality.

Materials and Methods. The study is based on a qualitative approach aimed at examining the role of mass media in contemporary international relations and identifying the mechanisms of media manipulation, propaganda, and information confrontation. The research materials consist of scientific publications, theoretical works, and analytical documents addressing political communication, information warfare, public opinion formation, and the influence of media narratives on international political processes. The theoretical framework draws on Pierre Bourdieu's work on symbolic power, Marshall McLuhan's ideas on the influence of communication media, Manuel Castells's research on the relationship between communication and power, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's propaganda model, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw's agenda-setting theory, and Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan's framework for information disorder. Analytical materials on foreign information manipulation and interference were also considered, including relevant publications by the European External Action Service.

The study employed a systemic approach, theoretical analysis of scientific literature, comparative and conceptual methods, analytical interpretation, and methods of synthesis and generalization. The systemic approach made it possible to examine mass media in relation to political institutions, states' foreign policy interests, and contemporary information technologies. The comparative method was used to examine different scholarly approaches to media influence, the formation of political narratives, and the mechanisms of information confrontation. Conceptual analysis helped distinguish between information influence, propaganda, disinformation, and media manipulation. The analytical procedure involved examining the mechanisms of information selection and presentation, the framing of international events, the repetition of political narratives, and the formation of public perceptions. At the final stage, the results of the theoretical analysis were systematized to identify the principal patterns of interaction between mass media, political interests, and international communication.

The study is theoretical and qualitative in nature. Scientific materials were selected according to their relevance to the research topic, academic significance, and ability to explain the mechanisms of media influence in international relations. The study does not involve surveys, interviews, experiments, or quantitative content analysis of a statistically defined sample of media publications. Consequently, the findings are intended to provide a theoretical explanation and interpretation of media influence mechanisms rather than to quantify their prevalence or establish direct causal relationships. These limitations were taken into account when formulating the conclusions, allowing

theoretical propositions, analytical interpretations, and claims requiring further empirical verification to be distinguished.

Theoretical Foundations of the Role of Mass Media in Contemporary International Relations

Modern international relations constitute a system of interactions and connections across various spheres-political, economic, social, cultural, military, and others. Information and communication permeate international relations, serving as a necessary and integral element of interaction. The role of information in international politics can hardly be overstated: it is transmitted via diverse channels, analyzed, used as a basis for drawing conclusions and making decisions, and even manipulated. Consequently, the role of the mass media is also growing.

In the context of globalization, information is emerging as a distinct strategic resource capable of shaping the balance of power between states and influencing the nature of international interaction. As noted in studies examining the essence of information warfare amidst globalization, the development of global communications expands the scope for information-based influence and transforms the information space into a distinct dimension of international confrontation. [1, 385] In this context, information superiority should be viewed not merely as a technological advantage linked to access to information and the means of its dissemination, but also as the ability to shape the information agenda, steer the interpretation of international events, and influence perceptions of political actors. Thus, control over information flows becomes a factor in advancing foreign policy interests and strengthening a state's international standing.

The fundamental model of the communication process was formulated long ago, dating back to the works of ancient philosophers. Aristotle, for instance, noted that any act of communication involves at least three elements: the speaker, the message they produce, and the intended recipient of that message. By "speaker," Aristotle referred not only to oral orators but also to those who created written texts; manuscript culture was already well-developed in his time, and the philosopher himself released some of his own works in written form.

Press statements are not directive in nature and do not exert a direct influence on society or its various spheres of activity; however, mass media indirectly affect their audience in both overt and covert ways. Consequently, information policy is viewed as an integral component of state policy. Mass media can be described as a mirror reflecting societal processes; yet, the crucial point is that this "mirror" may selectively portray objects and events-and interpret them in varying ways-to suit the interests of specific power circles. As a result, the media become an instrument of information warfare between states. Based on the information received, the target audience forms opinions about political actors and events; herein lies the manipulative nature of mass media. By disseminating information, various actors-such as politicians, political parties, and entire nations-influence the choices made by modern society and shape individual consciousness.

It is precisely this transformation in the role of information and the media landscape that leads to a broader understanding of the structural changes in modern global politics. Contemporary international relations are increasingly extending beyond the confines of traditional military and economic resources. Amidst globalization, rapid digitalization, and transnational information flows, information has emerged as a strategic resource that shapes political, economic, and cultural interactions on a global scale. Mass media serve as a key instrument of influence, acting not merely as a channel for transmitting news, but as a mechanism for constructing reality.

Kazakhstani scholars are making a significant contribution to the study of the interrelationship between mass media, information warfare, and international relations. For instance, B. Zhaparalina examines how the Russian-Ukrainian crisis is portrayed in Kazakhstani media, focusing on the growing influence of media, the Internet, and social networks on the perception of international events. [2, 103-105] Examining this study highlights the fact that media manipulation and information warfare represent not only theoretical issues in modern political communication but also practical factors influencing the formation of public opinion during international crises. In this context, the national information space becomes a setting where foreign policy narratives, competing interpretations of events, and the interests of various political actors interact. Thus, Kazakhstan's

experience demonstrates the need to analyze the role of the media not only at the global level but also by taking into account the specific information policies of individual states and their positions within the system of international relations.

Within this framework, a crucial distinction arises between "informational influence"—understood as a broad array of methods for conveying and interpreting information—and "media manipulation," defined as the deliberate shaping of how information is perceived. The manipulative potential of the media manifests not only in the dissemination of inaccurate information but also in the selective presentation of facts, the construction of interpretive frameworks, and the marginalization of alternative explanations for international events. This approach allows the media landscape to be viewed as a competitive arena where political actors vie for the power to define the international agenda and the legitimate ways of interpreting unfolding events. [3, 3]

The mass media play a central role in disseminating and entrenching manipulative interpretations within the system of international relations. Far from merely acting as neutral transmitters of facts, they actively participate in the processes of selecting, structuring, and interpreting information, thereby shaping public and political perceptions of international reality. They determine which events are deemed significant and which remain on the periphery of the information agenda. Through agenda-setting and framing mechanisms, they direct public attention, shaping perceptions regarding which threats, conflicts, or diplomatic processes require an immediate response.

This understanding resonates with the position of Pierre Bourdieu, who viewed the media landscape as a specific social field of symbolic struggle, within which competition takes place for power over legitimate interpretations of social reality. In the researcher's view, control over language, categories of description, and mechanisms of symbolic production enables the reproduction and reinforcement of relations of domination and subordination in society. [4] In this context, the media act not as neutral channels for transmitting information, but as active agents of symbolic violence that shape enduring frameworks for perceiving political actors and international events. Consequently, the media transform into an instrument of information warfare between states, exerting a targeted influence on public opinion. Through the selection of facts, the strategic emphasis of meaning, and the interpretation of information, political elites, parties, and state institutions exert a manipulative influence on the consciousness of individuals and social groups.

It is precisely this transformation in the role of information and the media landscape that leads to a broader understanding of the structural changes in contemporary global politics. As Marshall McLuhan emphasized - "the medium is the message" - communication channels themselves, exert a decisive influence on forms of social interaction and the ways in which political reality is perceived, regardless of the content being conveyed. [5] In this sense, media technologies not only transmit information but also structure the cognitive and symbolic frameworks within which political meanings are formed - a fact that takes on particular significance in the context of international relations and information warfare.

Amidst globalization and rapid digitalization, this line of reasoning is further developed in the works of Manuel Castells, who characterizes contemporary society as a "network society"—one in which power is increasingly exercised not so much through direct coercion or material resources as through control over information flows and communication networks. He asserts "power is exercised by constructing meaning in the human mind through processes of communication" [6, 3], highlighting the pivotal role of media and information channels in shaping interpretations of social and political reality. In this context, mass media serve not merely as conduits for information but as active agents of symbolic power, capable of structuring the realm of potential political choices and legitimizing dominant foreign policy narratives.

The geopolitical dimension of information warfare is also explored in the works of Turkish authors. For instance, O. Ergün examines manipulation and geopolitical codes within the context of information warfare. Adopting this approach highlights that media manipulation is linked not only to the selection and interpretation of information but also to the broader strategic objectives of states amidst international competition. Through information flows, symbolic imagery, and specific

interpretations of events, perceptions of allies and adversaries can be shaped, foreign policy decisions justified, and particular frameworks for perceiving the international landscape entrenched. In this sense, information warfare constitutes a struggle not merely over the dissemination of information, but over the shaping of political narratives capable of influencing public opinion and the legitimacy of foreign policy actions. [7]

Consequently, information warfare in contemporary international relations is conducted not only through the dissemination of specific messages but also by shaping the conditions under which those messages are perceived, interpreted, and imbued with political significance. While control over information channels enables one to influence the spread of information, control over interpretive frameworks allows one to shape how that information is understood in the public and political spheres. It is at the intersection of these processes that the manipulative potential of modern media emerges - manifesting in the ability to direct audience attention, cement specific images of international actors, and shape attitudes toward foreign policy decisions. This necessitates a shift from a theoretical analysis of the media's role to an examination of the specific mechanisms of information-psychological influence.

Mechanisms of Media Manipulation and the Shaping of Political Reality in Global Politics

By employing manipulative techniques, those in power can indeed achieve their objectives with relative ease, as such mechanisms of influence operate indirectly, unobtrusively, and with psychological effectiveness. Their key advantage lies in the fact that they do not require substantial material outlays for direct coercion or a repressive apparatus. Instead, control is exercised over interpretations, meanings, and information flows, making it possible to steer public behavior without resorting to overt pressure.

Through media outlets loyal to the authorities, a concerted effort is underway to exert a spiritual and cognitive influence on the public consciousness. By employing a wide array of manipulative techniques - such as the selective presentation of facts, framing, the emotionalization of messages, narrative repetition, and the creation of a pseudo-consensus - the media can suppress critical thinking, transform value systems, and alter behavioral patterns. The result is a form of "programming" of civic behavior, wherein individuals come to perceive imposed attitudes as their own conscious choices.

In doing so, mass media structures not only select information but also construct its context, predetermining the audience's expected reaction. They define which emotions should accompany the perception of an event and which interpretations are considered legitimate versus marginal. For this reason, the media can be viewed as a kind of regulator of public opinion that ensures the reproduction of dominant political narratives and upholds existing power structures.

This understanding of the media's role is corroborated by the work of Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman, who, through their "propaganda model," demonstrated that mass media function as a system of filters shaping public perception in the interests of political and economic elites. In their view, the media do not so much inform the public as "mobilize support for the special interests that dominate state and private activity." [8] In this sense, manipulation manifests not in the direct distortion of facts, but in the structuring of the field of permissible interpretations, creating in the audience a sense of voluntary agreement with the positions being imposed.

The manipulation of consciousness is impossible without establishing the institutional and technological conditions necessary to control information flows. Such control entails not only restricting access to alternative sources but also structuring the information landscape so that the audience primarily receives interpretations of events aligning with the interests of those in power or dominant groups. In this context, creating a so-called illusion of pluralism - a situation where a diversity of sources and opinions appears to exist while the fundamental interpretive frameworks remain uniform - takes on particular significance.

A mechanism of this kind is described in detail in the propaganda model of the media developed by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky. In their view, mass communication in modern societies operates through a system of "filters" - economic, political, and institutional - that determine

which topics receive coverage, the context in which they are presented, and which interpretations are deemed legitimate. The authors emphasize that the key role of propaganda lies not in the direct suppression of information, but in the selective choice and structuring of news; this creates an appearance of diverse opinion while ensuring the actual dominance of specific political positions.

The distinction between organic dissemination and coordinated amplification is particularly important in contemporary information operations. Bradshaw and Howard's research on organized social media manipulation documents the use of automated accounts, coordinated human activity, and other forms of computational propaganda by political actors in multiple countries [12]. In a later assessment of foreign information manipulation and interference, the European External Action Service (EEAS, 2025) examines how networks of websites, social media channels, and inauthentic accounts can operate across platforms and be adapted to local audiences. These findings suggest that an information campaign should be analysed as an ecosystem rather than as an isolated post: the relevant indicators include repeated message patterns, synchronized activity, cross-platform circulation, impersonation, and demonstrable technical or organizational links. Similarity of political narratives alone, however, is not sufficient to attribute a campaign to a particular state or organization.

Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony follows a similar logic, positing that the stability of power is secured through the manufacturing of consent rather than solely through coercion. Gramsci noted that dominant groups seek to control not only political institutions but also the intellectual and informational landscape, shaping a "common sense" that society perceives as natural and neutral. In this context, the illusion of pluralism serves as a mechanism of hegemony: a limited diversity of opinion is permitted, yet the fundamental frameworks of values and interpretation remain unchanged. [9]

Agenda-setting theory, developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, offers an additional explanation for this process. According to this concept, the media exert a decisive influence not so much on what people think as on what they think about, by determining the priority of topics and their level of importance in the public consciousness. [10, 179-182] Thus, ignoring or minimizing coverage of specific events leads to their effective exclusion from the public agenda, creating an asymmetrical picture of political reality.

The combination of these mechanisms - institutional filters, the hegemonic manufacturing of consent, and agenda management - results in the standardization of behavioral norms and modes of thought. The audience perceives the offered interpretations as natural and voluntarily adopts the dominant assessments of events. In this context, manipulation manifests not as a direct distortion of facts, but as the structuring of the very field of possible knowledge, within which alternative viewpoints are marginalized or deprived of public visibility.

This pattern of media attention is not merely a coincidence but the result of information selection - a process reflecting not an objective picture of "everything happening in the world," but rather editorial choices regarding what to cover and how. Research indicates that the media does not provide a comprehensive portrayal of international events; instead, it filters them based on editorial priorities, audience interests, and political frameworks, resulting in disparities in the level of media attention different events receive. This exemplifies a selection bias in news coverage: certain topics come to dominate the agenda while others remain marginal or are ignored altogether, thereby shaping an asymmetrical understanding of international processes and pressing threats. Such media coverage does not reflect the objective significance of events but rather constructs it through the selection and extent of reporting, ultimately influencing the perceptions of both the public and policymakers.

Finally, a key element of media manipulation is the contextualization of facts. Through the choice of vocabulary, visual imagery, expert commentary, and juxtapositions, the media establish interpretive frameworks within which the audience makes sense of events. Consequently, some events are perceived as legitimate and justified, while others are viewed as threats, deviations from the norm, or acts of aggression. In the era of global media networks and digital platforms, manipulation is amplified by the speed of information dissemination, algorithmic content filtering, and the emotionalization of the news agenda. The media become not merely intermediaries but active participants in the international political process.

A further mechanism requiring attention is algorithmic amplification. Digital platforms rank and recommend content through systems that respond to signals such as users' previous activity, predicted engagement, and patterns of interaction. These systems do not necessarily "intend" to promote falsehoods; however, when visibility is strongly connected to engagement, emotionally charged or surprising content may gain an advantage in the competition for attention. UNESCO's Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms emphasize the need to address disinformation and harmful content while protecting freedom of expression and access to information [13]. For research on international relations, the key question is therefore not simply whether an algorithm is biased, but how platform design, audience behaviour, advertising incentives, and political communication interact to shape the visibility of competing narratives.

Thus, amidst globalization, digitalization, and the growing interdependence of states, the mass media are becoming a key factor in the functioning of international relations. They are ceasing to be mere channels for the transmission of information and are increasingly acting as active participants in the political process - shaping interpretive frameworks, constructing images of global political actors, and influencing the dynamics of international conflict and cooperation.

The manipulative potential of the media manifests itself primarily in their capacity to select, structure, and contextualize information. Through mechanisms such as agenda-setting, framing, and the symbolic construction of reality, mass media shape enduring cognitive frameworks for perceiving international events, thereby determining which threats are deemed significant, which actors legitimate, and which actions justified or unacceptable. Consequently, the media's influence is predominantly indirect: it operates not through direct coercion, but by shaping meanings, values, and perceptions that the audience accepts as natural.

It is particularly significant that, in today's information society, manipulation increasingly takes on a structural character. It manifests itself through the control of information flows, the creation of an illusion of pluralism, the standardization of interpretations, and the reproduction of dominant political narratives. Under these conditions, the media become a crucial instrument of symbolic power, enabling states and political elites to influence public opinion, legitimize foreign policy decisions, and shape the international agenda.

Generative artificial intelligence adds a new dimension to this problem by lowering the cost of producing large volumes of text, images, audio, and video, including content adapted to different languages and audiences. Synthetic media can be used to impersonate public figures, fabricate apparent evidence, or create misleading visual contexts; at the same time, the existence of AI-generated material does not automatically mean that it is persuasive or politically consequential.

The EEAS report on foreign information manipulation and interference published in 2025 records cases involving AI-assisted content and distribution, while emphasizing the importance of evidence-based attribution [14]. A rigorous analysis should therefore distinguish between the use of AI as a production tool, the deceptive nature of the resulting content, the coordination of its dissemination, and its measurable effects on audience attitudes or political behaviour.

Overall, it can be concluded that the role of the media in international relations continues to grow, transforming the nature of political confrontation. The information space is evolving into an independent arena of struggle for influence, where the key resources are not so much material capabilities as the ability to control meanings, interpretations, and communication flows. For this reason, analyzing the media as an instrument of manipulation has become essential for understanding contemporary global politics and the mechanisms that shape global public opinion.

Conclusion

The study leads to the conclusion that the mass media occupy a pivotal position in the system of modern international relations, acting not merely as channels for disseminating information but also as active participants in shaping political perceptions of international events. In the context of globalization and digitalization, information flows have acquired strategic importance, as they influence the perception of states, the assessment of foreign policy decisions, the formation of international public opinion, and the nature of interactions among political actors. Consequently, the

ability to manage the dissemination of information and determine how it is interpreted has become a significant resource of political influence in global politics.

An analysis of theoretical approaches to the study of media communications has shown that the influence of mass media cannot be reduced solely to the transmission of factual information. The concepts of symbolic power (P. Bourdieu), communicative impact (M. McLuhan), and the network organization of power (M. Castells) allow the media landscape to be viewed as an environment where meanings, political assessments, and enduring patterns of perceiving reality are shaped. Meanwhile, the propaganda model (E. Herman and N. Chomsky), the concept of cultural hegemony (A. Gramsci), and agenda-setting theory (M. McCombs and D. Shaw) reveal the institutional and communicative mechanisms through which certain interpretations gain widespread currency, while alternative viewpoints may be relegated to the periphery of public attention.

The study identifies the primary mechanisms of media manipulation as the selective choice of facts, agenda-setting, framing, the contextualization of messages, the emotionalization of content, the repetition of political narratives, and the creation of an illusion of pluralism. Their impact manifests not only in the dissemination of inaccurate information but also in the specific ways accurate information is presented - where the emphasis placed, the choice of concepts, visual imagery, and expert assessments steer the audience toward specific conclusions. Thus, the manipulative potential of the media lies primarily in the ability to influence the conditions under which information is perceived and to limit the scope of possible interpretations of international events.

These mechanisms take on particular significance amidst international crises and geopolitical competition. Shaping images of allies and adversaries, framing specific actions as either legitimate or threatening, and promoting advantageous foreign policy narratives can all serve as tools of information warfare. Examining research by Kazakhstani and Turkish authors adds a regional dimension to the theoretical analysis, highlighting the need to consider the specificities of national information landscapes, state foreign policy interests, and the nuances of how international conflicts are reported. At the same time, media influence should not be viewed as one-way or absolute; the reception of messages also depends on the audience's political leanings, media literacy levels, trust in sources, and access to alternative information.

The results of the study allow us to conclude that in modern international relations competition takes place not only for material resources and political advantages, but also for the opportunity to determine the content of the information agenda and consolidate certain ways of interpreting world politics. Information superiority in this context implies not just control over communication channels, but also the ability to influence the formation of political meanings, images and assessments through which society perceives international reality. At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish between information influence as an inevitable component of political communication and media manipulation as targeted influence, in which selective presentation of information is used to form a predetermined perception of events.

These considerations point to the need for a more explicit analytical framework for future empirical research. A comparative study of media coverage of an international crisis could define the unit of analysis as an article, broadcast segment, social media post, or a defined sequence of posts; select media outlets according to transparent criteria; and establish a fixed observation period. The content could then be coded for source attribution, headline framing, terminology used for the principal actors, inclusion of official and independent sources, emotional language, contextual information, and corrections or updates. Comparing these indicators across countries and media systems would make it possible to identify recurring differences in representation without assuming in advance that every difference constitutes manipulation. Where claims of coordination or foreign interference are made, content analysis should be combined, where possible, with network evidence, platform transparency data, and independently verifiable information about the sources.

Overall, the study confirms that the media play a crucial role in shaping contemporary international political reality and that media manipulation is a multi-layered process driven by the interplay of political interests, institutional conditions, and communication technologies. Understanding the mechanisms of this process is essential for analyzing international conflicts,

evaluating foreign policy strategies, and comprehending how global public opinion is formed. From a practical standpoint, the findings underscore the need to foster critical thinking and media literacy, enhance the transparency of information practices, and cross-reference information from diverse sources. Future research should focus on the comparative analysis of how specific international crises are covered in national versus international media, as well as on the impact of digital platforms and algorithmic content dissemination on the formation of foreign policy perceptions.

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МЕДИАПРОСТРАНСТВО КАК АРЕНА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЙ ВОЙНЫ: МАНИПУЛИРОВАНИЕ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫМ СОЗНАНИЕМ В МИРОВОЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается роль средств массовой информации в современных международных отношениях и анализируются механизмы медиаманипуляции, влияющие на формирование политических представлений о международных событиях. Цель исследования заключается в теоретическом осмыслении роли средств массовой информации в мировой политике и выявлении основных способов отбора, структурирования и интерпретации информации, посредством которых осуществляется воздействие на общественное мнение и восприятие внешнеполитических процессов. Методологическую основу исследования составили системный и сравнительный подходы, теоретический анализ научной литературы и концептуальный анализ механизмов политической коммуникации. В работе рассмотрены теоретические положения о символической власти, влиянии средств коммуникации на общественное сознание, сетевом характере современной власти, пропаганде, культурной гегемонии и формировании информационной повестки. Особое внимание уделено таким механизмам медиаманипуляции, как избирательный отбор фактов, фрейминг, контекстуализация сообщений, эмоционализация информационного содержания, повторение политических нарративов и создание иллюзии плюрализма. На основе анализа теоретических подходов и исследований казахстанских и турецких авторов раскрывается взаимосвязь медиакоммуникаций, геополитической конкуренции и информационного противоборства. Установлено, что влияние средств массовой информации определяется не только содержанием распространяемых сведений, но и способами их представления, последовательностью подачи и интерпретационными рамками. Сделан вывод о том, что медиаманипуляция выступает многоуровневым механизмом политического воздействия, способным влиять на формирование образов международных акторов, легитимацию внешнеполитических решений и восприятие международных конфликтов. Практическая значимость исследования связана с возможностью использования его выводов при изучении международной политической коммуникации, информационных войн и развитии критического мышления и медиаграмотности.

Ключевые слова: международные отношения, средства массовой информации, медиаманипуляция, информационная война, политическая коммуникация, геополитическая конкуренция, общественное мнение.

ӘЛЕМДІК САЯСАТТАҒЫ АҚПАРАТТЫҚ СОҒЫС АРЕНАСЫ РЕТІНДЕГІ МЕДИА КЕҢІСТІК: ҚОҒАМДЫҚ САНАНЫ МАНИПУЛЯЦИЯЛАУ

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада қазіргі халықаралық қатынастар жүйесіндегі бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарының рөлі қарастырылып, халықаралық оқиғалар туралы саяси түсініктердің қалыптасуына ықпал ететін медиаманипуляция тетіктері талданады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – әлемдік саясаттағы бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарының рөлін теориялық тұрғыдан зерделеу

және қоғамдық пікір мен сыртқы саяси үдерістерді қабылдауға әсер ететін ақпаратты іріктеу, құрылымдау және түсіндіру тәсілдерін анықтау. Зерттеудің әдіснамалық негізін жүйелік және салыстырмалы тәсілдер, ғылыми әдебиеттерді теориялық талдау және саяси коммуникация тетіктерін тұжырымдамалық талдау құрайды. Мақалада символдық билік, коммуникация құралдарының қоғамдық санаға ықпалы, қазіргі биліктің желілік сипаты, насихат, мәдени гегемония және ақпараттық күн тәртібін қалыптастыру мәселелері қарастырылады. Ақпараттық деректерді іріктеп ұсыну, фрейминг, хабарламаларды белгілі бір контексте түсіндіру, ақпарат мазмұнын эмоциялық тұрғыдан күшейту, саяси нарративтерді қайталау және пікір алуандығының жалған көрінісін қалыптастыру сияқты медиаманипуляция тетіктеріне ерекше назар аударылады. Қазақстандық және түрік зерттеушілерінің еңбектерін ескере отырып, медиакоммуникация, геосаяси бәсекелестік және ақпараттық текетірес арасындағы өзара байланыс ашып көрсетіледі. Зерттеу нәтижелері бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарының ықпалы тек таратылатын мәліметтердің мазмұнына ғана емес, оларды ұсыну тәсілдеріне, ақпараттың берілу ретіне және түсіндіру шеңберлеріне де байланысты екенін көрсетеді. Медиаманипуляция халықаралық саяси акторлардың бейнесін қалыптастыруға, сыртқы саяси шешімдерді заңдастыруға және халықаралық қақтығыстарды қабылдауға ықпал ететін көпдеңгейлі саяси әсер ету тетігі деген қорытынды жасалады. Зерттеудің практикалық маңызы халықаралық саяси коммуникация мен ақпараттық соғыстарды зерттеуде, сондай-ақ сыни ойлау мен медиасауаттылықты дамытуда оның нәтижелерін қолдану мүмкіндігімен айқындалады.

Түйін сөздер: халықаралық қатынастар, бұқаралық ақпарат құралдары, медиаманипуляция, ақпараттық соғыс, саяси коммуникация, геосаяси бәсекелестік, қоғамдық пікір.