

(FAKE) NEWS AS PART OF THE INFORMATION OPERATIONS: US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2020 – CASE STUDY

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Abstract:

Nowadays there is no doubt that Internet media, especially social networks, have a great political, economic and security influence on the international political scene. Cyberspace has become a new war zone where (non) state actors govern. Although information operations have always been an integral part of the strategic military concept of warfare, today they are the modus operandi of another type of warfare even for the small actors. Fake news has a role to play in shaping public opinion and, by analogy represents the Damocles sword over democracy as a generally accepted civilization value. The trend of countering fake news is a project that unites national governments. It does so, by identifying fake news as a tool or instrument of information operations that threaten the democratic stability of the states. No country or government is immune to this type of media anomaly given that fake news, propaganda or populism (as a benign form of half-truth news) has always existed and is now an integral part of every cell of the online media. Countering fake news is subject to analysis to all security agencies and centers dealing with this issue. The 2020 US elections are being perceived as a second half of the 2016 presidential elections which left a dark mark on democracy and the credibility of the elections as an indispensable process. Four years later, again, the presidential election was marred by suspicions of numerous election irregularities and mutual accusations by the presidential candidates of spreading fake news. Moreover, cyber fights were transferred to the streets, which further burdened the political situation in the country. Undoubtedly, in the period that follows, governments of the great powers are to be facing the growing power of the "uncontrolled media", where non-state actors reign. **Keywords:** *social media, information warfare, fake news*

INTRODUCTION

This paper is about the impact of social media as a tool for achieving political, economic and military influence in times of global health crisis and its use as soft power to influence the Internet audience. Special reference will be given to the US presidential elections 2020.

Simultaneously, the paper will tackle INFO operations as integral part of the strategic concepts of warfare of the armies in the world. Currently, they are modus operandi of another type of warfare of (non) state actors, i.e. for political and economic warfare. To be more specific, social media as an alternative to other mass media have begun to dominate as a result of political, academic and business ties to the global world while certainly referring to Europe, America and

Asia. Given that today there are almost 2 billion Internet users and 600 million users of social networks, role of social media in shaping the opinion at the international and domestic political scene is obviously large (Hanson, March 2012). Numerous political analysts have devoted time to exposing the power of the Internet as a medium that had a major political impact on both 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections. To be precise, Facebook and Twitter had a big role in creating public opinion among the American public, which consequently had a big role in creating the final elections results. In the period before and during the elections, a real verbal war was fought on the Facebook network with political opponent being scandalized while the other candidate was being favored. Definitely, the political struggle in cyberspace was dominated by half-truths unlike in 2016 (during the 2016 presidential elections, cyberspace was dominated by fake news aimed to stagnate the political opponent, but at the same time create security incidents that increased dissatisfaction and uncertainty among the American population). The role of this type of truths is in the ability to avoid media censorship (plagiarism of text and images, videos that contain disturbing content, texts that produce violence). In addition, half-truths are harder to prove in a legal process. Moreover, targeted audiences much easier receive them. According to Joseph Nye, Harvard University professor, fight against fake news should be uncompromising and it is the only way to preserve democracy as the highest form of civilization today. This is supported by the recent analysis of foreign companies dealing with the budget of social networks. It shows the percentage of funds to deal with these threats has increased. That is, combating fake news has simultaneously been going on in several areas (Detachment). So, in 2018, Facebook and Twitter began successfully to deal with the spread of fake news by improving the algorithms for checking user profiles and content posted through these media. In addition, control over media outlets registered in countries outside the United States has increased. Also, the control of VPN services, IP addresses has increased and the criteria of marketing companies as the main source of income for those who produce such news have been tightened (Undoubtedly, many of the fake news were created for commercial purposes, i.e. those who produced them made a profit directly from marketing agencies, but many of those who created or stimulated their creation do so for political or economic purposes. What was noticeable during these presidential elections, unlike the elections in 2016, was the profit made by the website owners through Click Bank and the sale of referrals, i.e. items with a political message. The best-selling item in this election was coin/(s) with the image of Trump.

Generally, the effects of political news have a huge effect on a certain target population. The purpose of this news is threefold. The first one is economic, i.e. for commercial use and it is pure earnings from an audience which believes in conspiracy theories. Naturally, it is experienced by part of the population which is a victim of the conspiracy. The second moment (and even a problem) is the censorship of certain media (these are the mega-popular media) that for decades have been creating opinion about the society and the world. They impose a media culture and declare themselves as a tool of a democratic society. However, use undemocratic means. Third one is the alliance of powerful media and multinational corporations with supranational interests (Thomas,2005). Moreover, according to the analysis of available data there is a common goal of dethroning incumbent President Trump.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO CONDUCT INFO OPERATIONS

INFO operations are carried out for political, economic or military supremacy over a particular state, political or economic entity. Thus, psychological operations are carried out through social media, by creating and disseminating true, half-truths and false information projected towards targeted audience in order to influence their emotions, motives, morals and desires. In addition, the aim is to influence the behavior of the state and the non-state actors. By nature, INFO operations are carried out at a strategic, operational and tactical level. In a long run, strategic operations are designed to create a global environment to implement the other phases of information operations. Operational information operations are conducted in the medium term and aim to support regional campaigns and create space where tactical information operations will be conducted. Tactical information operations are the practical execution of a set of measures, procedures and techniques to achieve an advantage in the theater (field) where the operations are performed. All three categories are a cycle that does not end by carrying out tactical operations but continues with creating new strategic information operations in the wider zone of operations (Zone of interest if using intelligence wording). Given that most of the population in the modern world is constantly present in the cyberspace, especially on social media, exercising some influence is initiated through the cyberspace. Social networks have become crucial factor in creating public opinion in crisis situations. Hence, numerous projects have been made and have been disseminated through social networks for the purpose of self-promotion (Shirky, January/February, 2011).

To this end, actors who have used soft power through social networks during a political or economic crisis accomplish this influence in three stages (Wallace, 2000). The first stage is to identify the source of the threat. At this stage the data are generally completely true to ensure the credibility of the information source. In the second phase, the problem gets exaggerated by its strength, intensity and threat. At this stage, part of the semi-true and false information is inserted in the part where the cause of the threat is identified. The third phase is the phase when social networks are used as a space for assimilation, expanding influence, spreading values, eroding the truth, but also (de) mystifying the altruistic processes of certain countries during crises. Simultaneously, the Internet has been and it is used to stimulate false news from various state and non-state actors as part of the cyber war of the great powers.

2. TARGETING THE AUDIENCE

Audience usually receives the message individually and differently according to the beliefs, convictions and previous experience. However, the goal of the message sender is to create a frame or value code of the message that will be equally received by the audience, i.e. will create an equal value system among the audience. To make it clear, it is good to mention that the main goal would be to create a universal message to be accepted by the audience. It should be taken into account that each individual reacts differently both physically and spiritually to certain events, sensory stimuli, photographs, events and the like. Therefore, the psychosomatic reaction of individuals by the one who creates the message should be taken into account. At the same time, it should be known that social networks indirectly have large data bases for their users in terms of search interest i.e. what they like, what news they read most often, what health problems they have, whether and what they comment on (all this is allowed by the algorithm primarily for

commercial purposes due to the suggestion of the news and analogously to the ads on those posts). On the other hand, social media have become passive creators of life and the opinion of their users in general, i.e. they have a huge power of influence in both the daily and socio-political life of the individual (Chen, 2008).

3. FAKE NEWS VERSUS SENSATIONALISM

Fake news have become commonplace on the Internet and have had a major impact on shaping public opinion (33-1-1, 5 May 1994). Some of the fake news is due to the vacuum of political (in) power that has gripped American society in the last decade, especially during the 2016 US presidential elections. A survey conducted by the authors of this article related to the 2016 presidential elections shows that the most common fake news at that time were the categories **Creation of a world government** (with the help of the so-called Deep State and Soros), **AntiMuslim and anti-immigration movements**, and **Racial discrediting of African Americans**. These were the most exposed news on social networks covering the topic of the US presidential elections campaign in 2016 and even few months after the elections.

As for the 2020 presidential elections, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Reddit have improved their algorithms for finding fake news (text, image and video) and timely removed content that lacked information credibility (news source, authors -journalists, research or scientific institute behind the information). In addition, companies engaged in online commercial advertising tightened the criteria for awarding ads, especially for owners of websites lacking history of few years, as well as web sites dealing with politics or so-called sensational news with politicians and celebrities involved in the political campaign as key actors. Obviously, during this presidential campaign, sensational news replaced fake news thus avoiding the fake news algorithm (not properly supported by credible sources). Such news was simultaneously shared by both political camps managing to raise the interest of the politically undecided population.

In order to illustrate and clearly distinguish the news published during the two presidential campaigns of 2016 and 2020, as authors of the text we analyzed the information on the social network Facebook during the presidential campaign in 2016 and some of the topical news during the 2020 presidential elections on the social networks Facebook, Twitter and Parler.

To be precise, for 2016 we conducted a survey in three Facebook groups with over 100,000 members where news about the presidential campaign was shared, in the period from September 5 to December 11 (period of 3 months before and immediately after the US presidential election). In addition, we compared news shared across three categories. The first category is labeled as **Creating a world government - Deep state**. The second category is **Anti-immigration policy** (referring to the population of South American countries) **and Anti-Muslim movements in the United States**. The third category is **Racial discrediting of African Americans**.

A Facebook group is a unit of content analysis. The results are mutually analyzed, semantically linked and compared by using Semantic Text Analysis Software.

Figure 1. **Creating a world government (Deep state).**

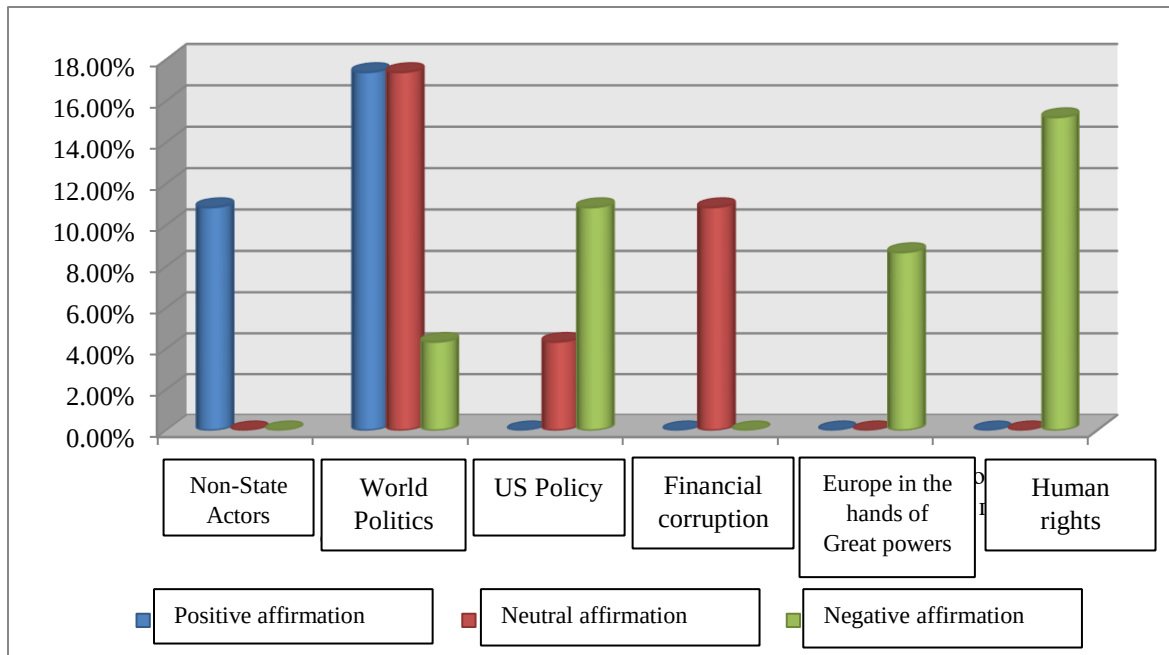


Table 1. Creating a world government (Deep state).

Subcategory	total texts	+	0	-
Total	46 (100%)	13 (28,26%)	15 (32,6%)	18 (39,13%)
Non-state actors	5 (10,86%)	5 (10,86%)	0	0
World politics,	18 (39,13%)	8 (17,39%)	8 (17,39%)	2 (4,34%)
US policy	7 (15,21%)	0	2 (4,34%)	5 (10,86%)
Financial corruption	5 (10,86%)	0	5 (10,86%)	0
Europe in the hands of the great powers	4 (8,69%)	0	0	4 (8,69%)
Human rights	7 (15,21%)	0	0	7 (15,21%)

Data were obtained by using the analytical software *Tropes* with semantic analysis of certain words in the texts that gravitate around the phrase creating a world government. Additionally, statistical analysis was performed with Semantic Text Analysis Software.

Analysis includes a total of 46 texts. Whole category is divided into 6 subcategories. Texts are analyzed to see if they have had a positive, negative or neutral affirmation. The percentages are given by the total number of analyzed texts and not only by the given subcategory. Thus, when we analyze the term non-state actors in the content of the published texts on this topic, the role

of nonstate actors in identifying the causes and actors that are part of the so-called world government have had a positive affirmation (out of a total of 5 texts all have a positive affirmation). World politics and Cold War as a key variable in the fight against the creation of a world government have had an identical percentage of positive and neutral affirmation (out of a total of 18 texts 8 texts or 17.39% have a positive affirmation, 8 texts or 17.39% have a neutral affirmation, and 2 texts or 4.34% have a negative affirmation). Generally, the US policy as subcategory has a negative affirmation (out of a total of 7 posts or text, 5 text or 10.86% of the total number of texts). Interesting enough is to have found that in the subcategory labeled as financial corruption all the analyzed texts have had a neutral affirmation. By analyzing the content of the text, the term human rights have had an extremely negative affirmation (out of a total of 7 texts, all 7 had a negative affirmation). Also, out of a total of 46 analyzed, texts the subcategory of world politics has the highest percentage of positive affirmation, the subcategory of world politics has the highest percentage of neutral affirmation and the subcategory of human rights has the highest percentage of negative affirmation.

Chart 2. Anti-Muslim and Anti-Immigration movements.

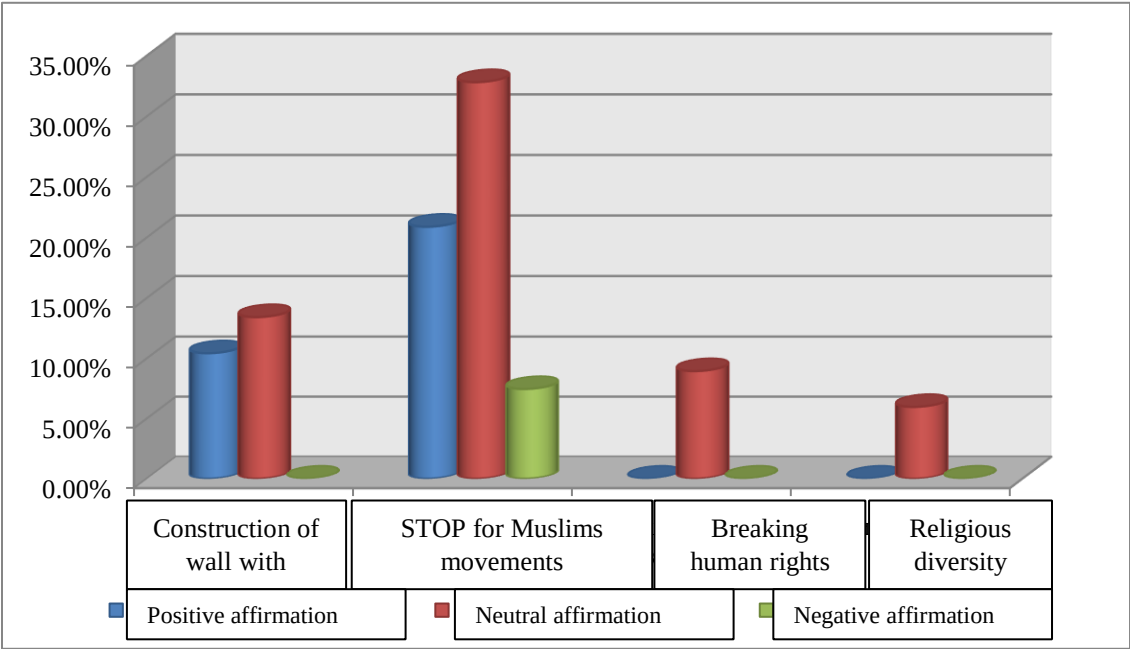


Table 2. Anti-Muslim and Anti-Immigration movements.

Subcategory	total texts	+	0	-
Total	67 (100%)	21(31,34%)	41(61,19%)	5 (7,46%)
Construction of wall				
Mexico	16 (23,88%)	7 (10,44%)	9 (13,43%)	0 with
STOP for Muslims				5
	41 (61,19%)	14 (20,89%)	22 (32,83%)	

movements				(7,46%)
Breaking human				
	6 (8,95%)	0	6 (8,95%)	0 rights
Religious diversity	4 (5,97%)	0	4 (5,97%)	0

Analysis includes a total of 67 texts. Whole category is divided into 4 subcategories. Texts are analyzed to whether they have had a positive, negative or neutral affirmation. Percentages are given by the total number of analyzed texts and not only by the given subcategory. Thus, when we analyze the subcategory Construction of a wall with Mexico (meaning a ban on migration from Latin America) in the content of the published texts on this topic (out of a total of 16 texts, 7 texts or 10.44% have a positive affirmation, 9 texts or 13.43% have a neutral affirmation and there is not a single text with a negative affirmation). The STOP subcategory for Muslim movements (as a result of religious intolerance) has the highest percentage of neutral affirmation again (out of a total of 41 texts or 61.19%, only 14 texts or 20.89% have a positive affirmation, while 22 or 32.83% are with neutral affirmation, and only 5 texts or 7.46% have negative affirmation). In the subcategory of Human Rights Violation (based on religious intolerance) all texts have a neutral affirmation.

In the subcategory Religious diversity as a key variable all publications or texts have a neutral affirmation.

Chart 3. **Racial discrimination.**

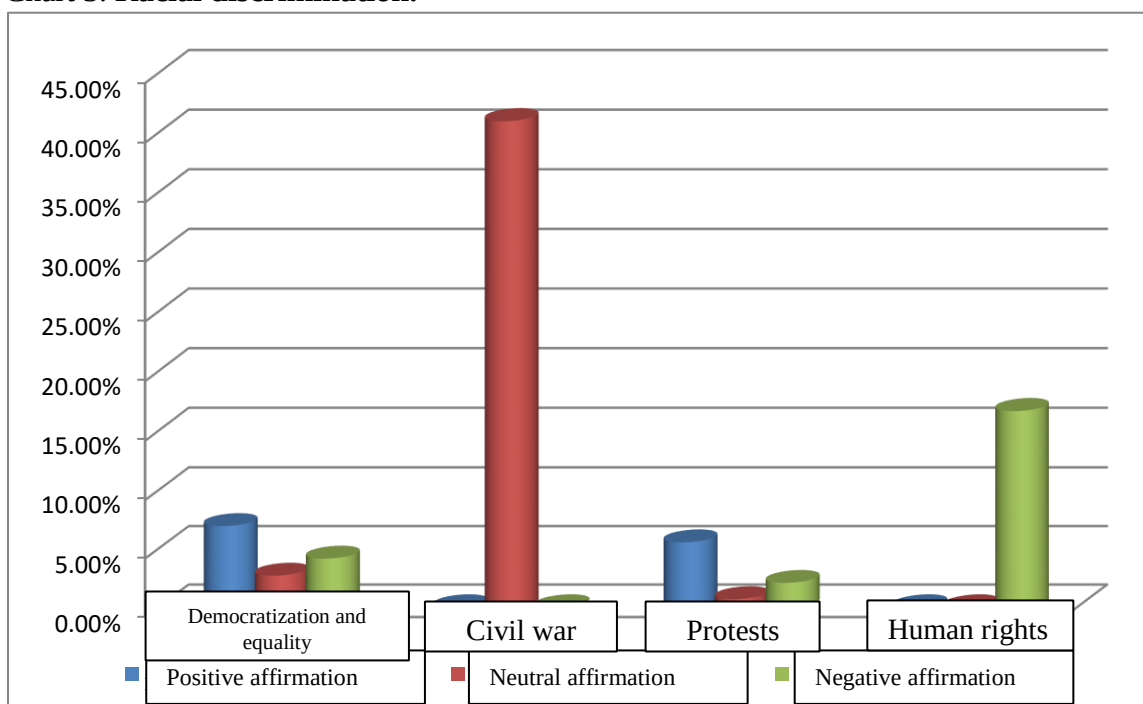
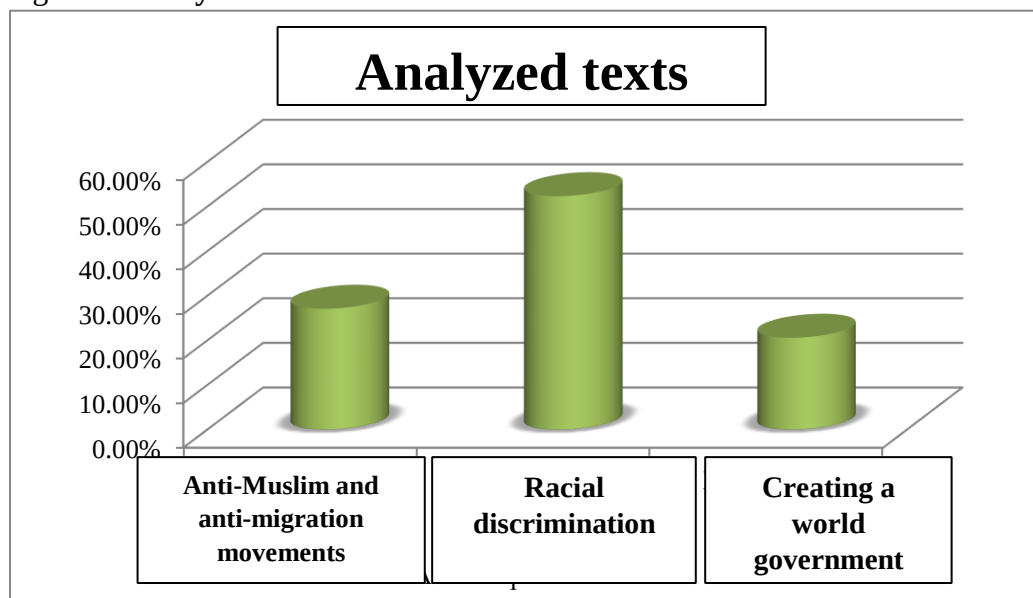


Table 3. **Racial discrimination.**

Subcategory	Total texts	+	0	-
Total	144 (100%)	35 (24,30%)	64 (44,44%)	45 (31,25%)
Democratization and equality	20 (13,88%)	10 (6,94%)	4 (2,7%)	6 (4,16%)
Civil war	59 (40,97%)	0	59 (40,97%)	0
Protests	12 (8,33%)	8 (5,55%)	1 (0,69%)	3 (2,08%)
Promotion of Human rights	24 (16,66%)	0	0	24 (16,66%)
<u>Other</u>	<u>29 (20,13%)</u>	<u>17 (11,8%)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12 (8,33%)</u>

Analysis covers a total of 144 texts. Whole category is divided into 4 subcategories. Texts are analyzed as to whether they have had a positive, negative or neutral affirmation. Percentages are given by the total number of analyzed texts and not only by the given subcategory. So, when the term Democracy and Equality of Communities (meaning racial communities) is analyzed in the content of the published texts on this topic, no explicit racial intolerance in the audience (out of 20 texts 10 texts or 6.94% have a positive affirmation, 4 texts or 2.7% have a neutral affirmation and 6 texts or 4.16% have a negative affirmation) has been traced despite Trump's speech in which he underestimates African-Americans,. In the subcategory Civil War (as a result of racial intolerance) all texts have a neutral affirmation. In the sub-category: Promotion of human rights as a key variable (out of a total of 24 texts) all of them have a negative affirmation.

Figure 4. **Analyzed texts**



The graph shows that the most of the posted texts are for the category of Racial discrimination (with 144 texts or 56.03% of the total number of published texts that were subject of analysis).

Next on the line are the Anti-Muslim and Anti-Immigration publications with a total of 67 texts or 26.07% of the total posted and analyzed texts. Final, is the category of Creating a World Government with a total of 46 texts which represents 17.89% of the total published content.

Next is the research of the news during the US presidential elections in 2020. We emphasize that most of the analyzed content is from the posts or news posted on Facebook groups, popular Twitter accounts and accounts of popular Trump supporters on the social network Parler.

The survey was conducted in two Facebook groups with over 100,000 members with news about the presidential campaign being shared in the period from August 5 to October 30 (3 months before the US presidential election). In addition, a Parler profile of Trump supporter with 100,000 followers was investigated (the research was done on his posts, comments, likes, post sharing). We compared the news that was shared in three categories. The first category is the labeled under the term **COVID 19 Pandemic**. The second category is **Election irregularities** (this category is mostly news created and shared by Trump supporters). The third category is **Racial Discrimination** (this category includes news about the socio-political movement Black Lives Matter. Black Lives Matter is a powerful socio-political movement formed as a response to police brutality against the African-American population in the United States. During the 2020 presidential election, their political inclination towards the Democrats was evident, although unlike in 2016, the trend of African American voters or supporters for the Republicans increased by almost 4.5% compared to the previous elections).

Facebook group is a unit of content analysis. These results are mutually analyzed, semantically linked and compared by using Semantic Text Analysis Software.

Figure 5. **COVID 19 PANDEMIC.**

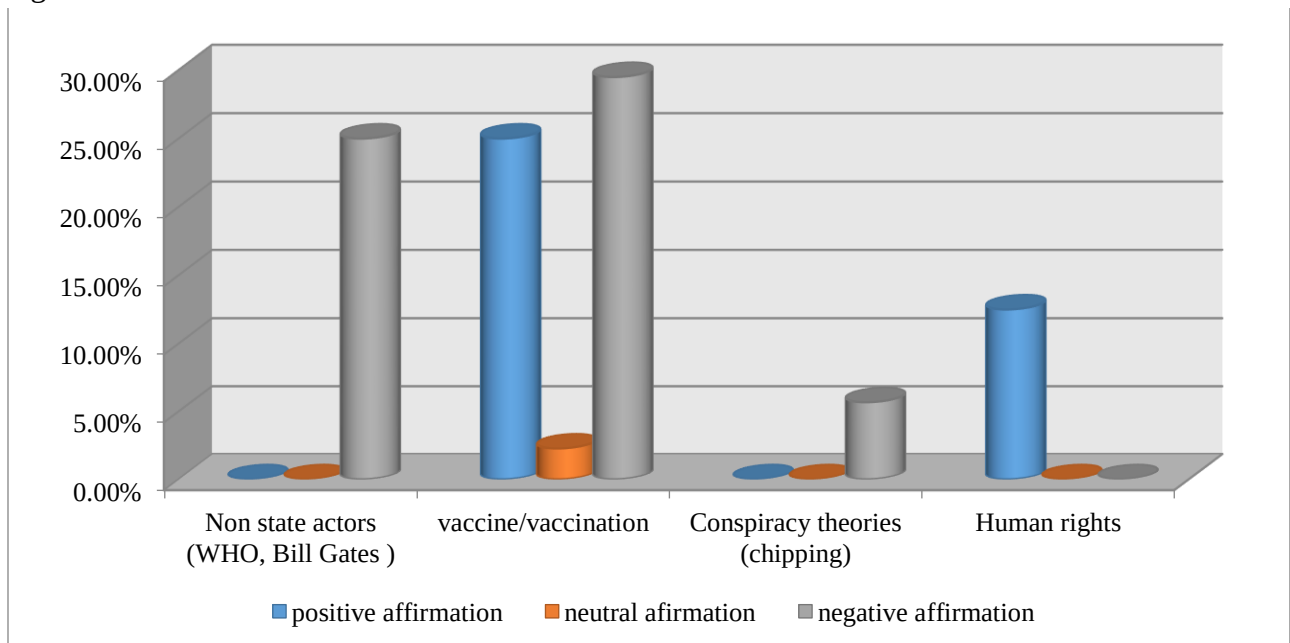


Table 5. **COVID 19 PANDEMIC.**

subcategory	Total texts	+	0	-
total	88 (100%)	33 (37,5%)	2 (2,27%)	53(60,22%)
Non state actors (WHO, Bill Gates)	22 (25%)	0	0	22 (25%)
vaccine/vaccination	50 (56,81%)	22 (25%)	2 (2,27%)	26 (29.5%)
Conspiracy theories (chipping)	5 (5,68%)	0	0	5 (5,68%)
Human rights (right not to be immunized)	11 (12,5%)	11 (12,5%)	0	0

Analysis included a total of 88 texts. Whole category is divided into 4 subcategories. They are analyzed in terms of whether they have had a positive, negative or neutral affirmation. Percentages are given not only by the given subcategory but by the total number of analyzed texts. Thus, when we analyze the term non-state actors in the content of the published texts on this topic, the alleged role of non-state actors in creating and managing the pandemic with out of a total of 22 texts have had a negative affirmation. This is primarily due to the sensational news featuring an interview with Bill Gates in 2015 warning the world about the possibility of a pandemic due to a super virus. Almost all texts have portrayed him as creator of the pandemic for profit from the vaccine. He has also mentioned digital certificates related to the subcategory labeled as vaccination/immunization. This has launched the idea of Gates allegedly standing behind the human chipping project. Some of the texts are also result of Trump's criticism that the United States will stop funding the WHO because of the confusion with information about the virus, especially at the beginning of the pandemic. These texts are especially shared by anti-vaccine groups and QAnon conspiracy theory groups (According to CNBC, in just 6 months, there are 16,000 posts with misinformation about Bill Gates on Facebook, and they have been liked about 2 million times). In the subcategory labeled as vaccine / vaccination (out of a total of 50 texts, 22 texts or 25% have a positive affirmation, 2 texts or 2.27% have a neutral affirmation, and 26 texts or 29.5% have a negative affirmation). In the subcategory Theory of conspiracy and chipping, all texts are with negative affirmation (out of a total of 5 posts or text,

all are with negative affirmation). Finally, in the subcategory Human rights (right not to be vaccinated) all texts or a total of 11 or 12.5% have a positive affirmation.

Figure 6. **Election irregularities.**

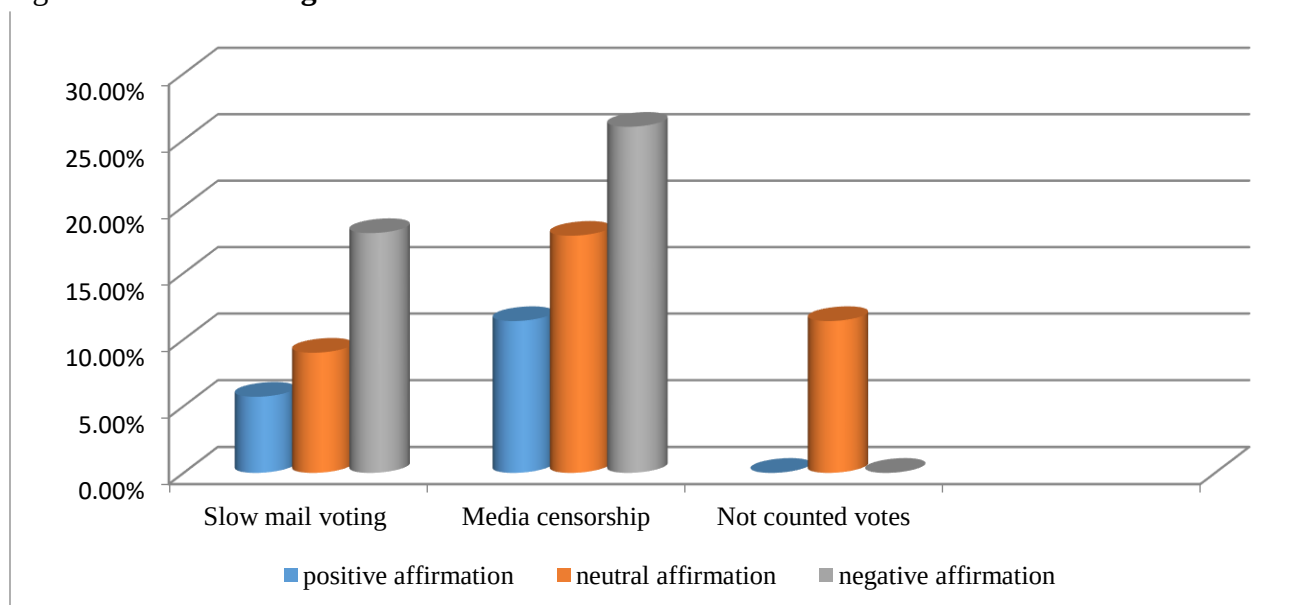


Table 6. **Election irregularities.**

subcategory	Total texts	+	0	-
total	123 (100%)	21(31,34%)	47(38,2%)	55 (44,7%)
Slow mail voting	41 (33,33%)	7 (5,7%)	11 (9 %)	23(18%)
Media censorship	68 (55,28%)	14 (11,38%)	22 (17,8%)	32 (26%)
Not counted votes	14 (11,38%)	0	14 (11,38%)	0

Analysis involved a total of 123 texts. The whole category is divided into 3 subcategories. They are analyzed in terms of whether they have had a positive, negative or neutral affirmation. The

percentages are given not only by the given subcategory but by the total number of analyzed texts. Thus, when we analyze the subcategory Voting by mail in the content of the published texts on this topic (out of a total of 41 texts, 7 texts or 5.7% have a positive affirmation, 11 texts or 9% have a neutral affirmation and 23 texts or 18.7 % have a negative affirmation). Negative affirmation dominates which indicates that the general population in particular, especially Trump supporters, do not trust the mail voting. In the subcategory Media Censorship, the largest percentage is with negative affirmation (out of a total of 68 texts or 55.28%, only 14 texts or 11.38% are with positive affirmation, while 22 or 17.8% are with neutral affirmation, and 32 or 26% are with negative affirmation). That said most Trump supporters believe there is a media censorship of the Republican nominee. After the election, many social networks permanently have banned the Trump account and accounts of significant influencers who supports him. The most explicit example is when the social network Grindr has preventively set up an algorithm for the impossibility of creating a Trump account, which is certainly not typical for a country being perceived as the cradle of democracy. What follows is the subcategory of not counted votes (based on data available from federal election commissions) where all texts have a neutral affirmation.

Figure 7. **Racial discrimination and the socio-political movement Black Lives Matter**

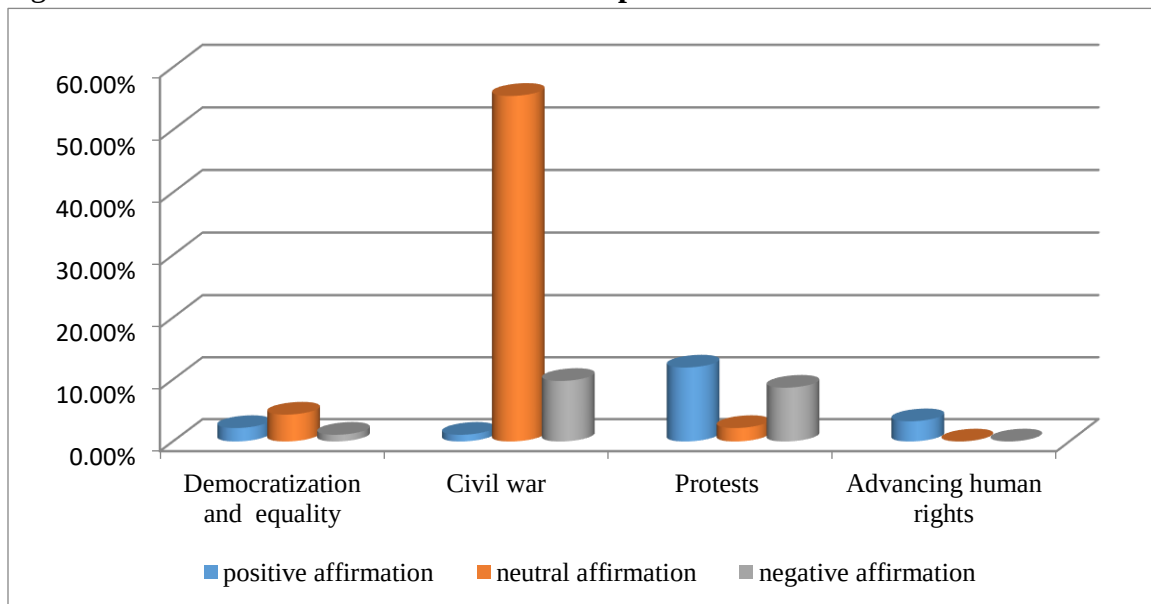


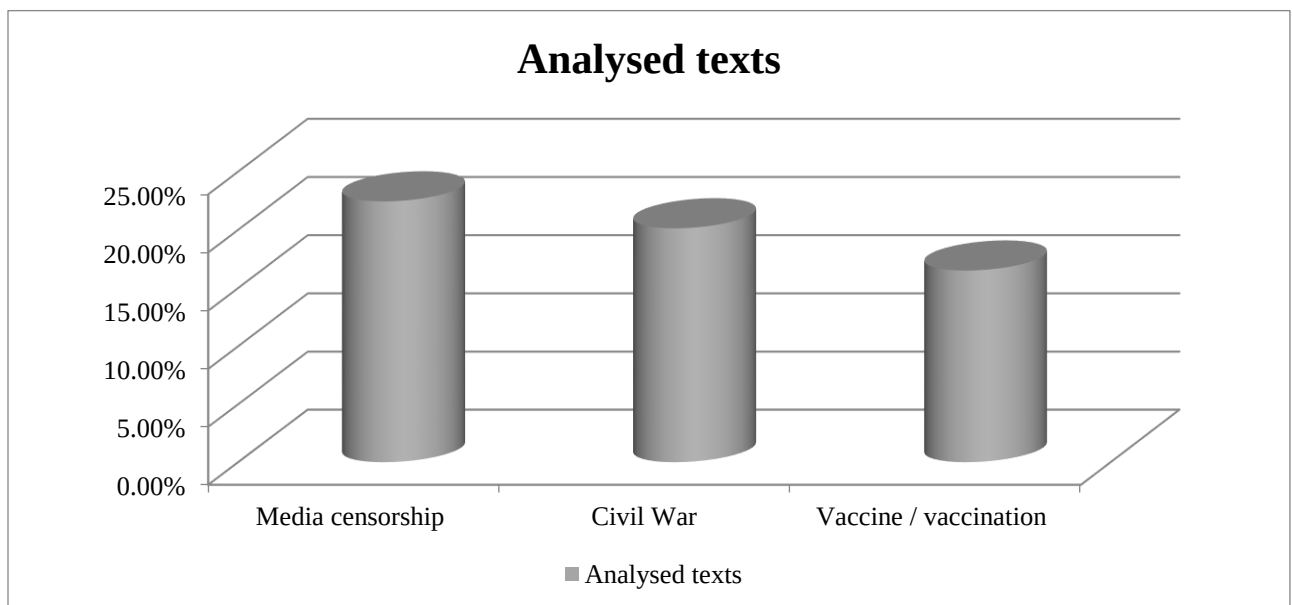
Table 7. **Racial discrimination and the socio-political movement Black Lives Matter.**

subcategory	Total texts	+	0	-
total	92 (100%)	17 (18,48%)	57 (62%)	18 (19,56%)
Democratization and equality	7 (7,6%)	2 (2,17%)	4 (4,34%)	1 (1,08%)

Civil war	61 (66,3%)	1 (1,08%)	51 (55,43%)	9 (9,78%)
Protests	21 (22,82%)	11 (11,95%)	2 (2,17%)	8 (8,69%)
Advancing human rights	3 (3,26%)	3 (3,26%)	0	0

Analysis included a total of 92 texts. The whole category is divided into 4 subcategories. They were analyzed in terms of whether they had a positive, negative or neutral affirmation. The percentages are given by the total number of analyzed texts and not only by the given subcategory. Thus, when we analyze the term Democracy and Equality of Communities (meaning racial communities) in the content of the published texts on this topic (out of a total of 7 texts, 2 texts or 2.17% have a positive affirmation, 4 texts or 4.34 % have a neutral affirmation and 1 text or 1.08% have a negative affirmation). In the subcategory Civil War (as a result of racial intolerance) most of the texts have a neutral affirmation. Noteworthy to mention is that although the media have exaggerated the news of America being on the brink of civil war, the audiences have not thought so. In addition, the newspapers and television have exploited the term civil war much more than in reality (we take as a benchmark social media with free speech in a form of emoticons, comments and sharing). That is why most of the texts referring to this category have a neutral affirmation. In the subcategory labeled as promotion/advancing of human rights, all texts have a positive affirmation.

Figure 8. **Analysed texts.**



The graph shows that the most published texts are for the category Media censorship (with 68 texts or 22.44% of the total number of published texts which are subject of analysis). Next on the line is the category of Civil War (with published total of 61 texts or 20.13% of the total

analyzed texts). Final one is the category Vaccine / vaccination and a total of 50 which represents??? 16.5% of the total published content.

CONCLUSION

Social media create and design various political and socio-economic or security situations with the help of (non)state actors. Fake news play great role in creating public opinion and can imply a number of political and security conditions. On the other hand, social networks and groups have become virtual alliances of like-minded people (regardless of nationality, gender and other type of affiliation) which with a lot of energy convey the message to those on the "other" side.

There is no doubt that happenings in social media are reflected in everyday political life. Dissatisfaction with cyberspace is often translated onto the streets as protests, street violence or other forms of civic activism.

According to the survey conducted for the 2016 presidential election, it may be concluded that most of the numerous Facebook groups supported the presidential candidate Donald Trump. At the same time, in those groups there was much more activity of the members than in the groups that supported the presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. By analogy, Facebook's algorithm was designed to give more reach within the group in case of more activities. That way, a post is more likely to go viral, which increases the impact on the audience. In this case, thanks to the algorithm and the activity of Donald Trump supporters, the published content that was in his favor was much more available in time and Internet space to end users (it does not mean that Facebook deliberately made it possible, because if there was such activity in groups where Hillary Clinton is supported, then that content will be much more common to end users). The bottom line is that, coincidentally or not, the great activity of Facebook, the large number of Facebook groups that supported Trump, the elaboration of topics that the American public wanted to hear determined Trump's victory.

In the research for the presidential elections in 2020, there is a significant change in the content and information that shared on social media. Namely, the fake news (in the form of text, image or video) was minimized, i.e. they were deleted or did not reach the audience at all. This indicates that social media (especially Facebook) have made great strides in combating fake news (by creating algorithms to prevent fake news, opening regional fact-checking offices, and coordinating with commercial marketing agencies for non-disclosure of space for ads on dubious websites). The most common news that was shared was the news that affected the common man, such as the corona virus pandemic, election irregularities instigated by President Trump through his Twitter account as well as his political associates. As a result, the IT giants (Big Tech) have taken a step that is debatable in democracy. Thus, Trump's 88 million-strong Twitter account, through which Trump communicated with his supporters, pursued international politics, was permanently deleted, and Trump was banned for life. Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have temporarily deleted Trump's profiles. The Perler social network, which was considered a port for conservatives in the United States, was hastily demolished, deleted from the Google Store, Apple Store and Amazon. In addition to Trump's profiles, the profiles of Trump's campaign team have been deleted, and they can no longer even send emails to their supporters. Also, the profiles of Trump's lawyer, Sidney Powell, who led the fight against electoral fraud, of right-wing populist

and conservative ideologue Steve Benson, of General Michael Flynn, of the most prominent conservative journalist, Rush Limbo are deleted. The profiles of some Republican senators have also been deleted, and one has been arrested. The profiles of Rudy Giuliani and other Trump aides have also been deleted. It is noticeable that all the news related to Trumpism (the ideology for Make America Great Again) is blocked in the digital space. All of this indicates that the US presidential election was as scandalous as the 2016 election, which is likely to result in legal and technical changes to the state and federal voting system.

Hence, it can be concluded that during the presidential elections in 2016, social networks were an instrument of (non) state actors to achieve political influence. However, it is social networks (people who manage them) that are nowadays becoming powerful actors in creating the global politics.

The comparison between the two studies suggests that intolerance for diversity (racial, religious and even class in economic terms) is on the rise, distrust of the federal government's systemic governance is also on the rise, and the potential for internal unrest is a threat to American democracy.

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