

\*\*\*Call for abstracts\*\*\*

## Manipulation Online: Philosophical Perspectives on Human-Machine Interactions

Edited volume & online workshop series

\*\*\*Editors\*\*\*

Fleur Jongepier (Radboud University Nijmegen) & Michael Klenk (Delft University of Technology)

\*\*\*Aims\*\*\*

We invite submissions of extended abstracts (700-1000 words) for an *\*online workshop series\** and an *\*open-access edited volume\** to be published with Routledge (or similar).

\*\*\*Topic\*\*\*

We increasingly interact with artificially intelligent machines like virtual assistants, robot care-takers, or algorithmic systems used for behavioural targeting. Such systems influence our (online) lives and the decisions we make in various ways. Recently, both the public and an increasing number of digital ethicists have raised concern about the distinctly *manipulative* nature of the influence of some digital technologies (e.g. Burr & Floridi 2020, Susser et al. 2019, Klenk 2020, Yeung 2016, Zarsky 2003). At the same time, the concept of manipulation has only very recently received sustained attention from moral and political philosophy (see e.g. Coons & Weber 2014).

The two fields have much to contribute to one another. The debate about online manipulation rests on philosophically underexplored territory. It is, for instance, unclear *who* can manipulate, *what it takes* to manipulate, and what if anything is wrong with manipulation. Conversely, the philosophical debate on manipulation could gain by putting relatively abstract theories of manipulation, transparency, and autonomy to work by applying them to actual (or apparent) manipulative practices by autonomous systems and big tech corporations.

The aim of the online workshop series, whose contributions will form the basis for an edited volume, is to provide a platform for bringing together expertise from the core philosophical disciplines and digital ethics on the topic of online manipulation.

\*\*\*Themes\*\*\*

We invite contributions on the (1) conceptual and (2) normative nature of online manipulation. Questions to be addressed may include but are not limited to the following themes:

*\*The conceptual nature of online manipulation:\**

1. The intentional nature of manipulation. This theme raises questions about the nature of intentionality, the capacities of machines for intentionality, and comparisons with parallel debates about the agency of corporations.

2. The scope of manipulation. This theme raises questions about metaphilosophy and philosophical methodology, for example, about whether we need a uniform concept of manipulation, and how we can go about deciding about the matter.
3. The covertness of manipulation, which raises questions about the epistemology of manipulation (e.g. questions about the self-knowledge of potential victims of manipulation, the relevance of available vs aware information, and informational means to avert manipulation).

\*The moral dimension of online manipulation:\*

4. The relation of manipulation and autonomy. This theme raises normative philosophical questions about the concept of autonomy, its controversial relation to manipulation, and the potential for machines to undermine it.
5. The moral status of manipulation. This theme raises questions about substantiating the moral wrongness of manipulation and questions about, for example, the relative moral importance of tackling manipulation worries and whether manipulation is indeed the problem in machine-human interactions.
6. The responsibility for manipulation. This theme raises questions conditions for blameworthiness and blame and possibly different responsibilities in the context of economic interactions.

\*\*\*Format\*\*\*

We invite contributors to a series of six online workshops where each contributor will have an opportunity to present their work and receive feedback from fellow contributors to the volume and other participants. Our aim of the online workshop series is to facilitate in-depth discussion of chapters, exchange between contributors, and coherence of the volume, as well as to bring together an expert group of scholars working on related questions and topics, i.e. to set up a virtual 'workgroup' on online manipulation. We plan to start the workshop series in January 2021 (precise dates and times to be confirmed with contributors).

The edited volume will be based on the contributions to the workshop. We are aiming for a fully Open Access volume. There are up to six spots for contributed papers. Six additional contributors have already been invited to contribute to the workshop series and the volume.

\*\*\*Timeline\*\*\*

August 24th 2020: Deadline for abstract submission  
August 31st: Decision about acceptance  
January 8th 2021: Full manuscript submission (max 8000 words)  
Mid-January 2021: Start of workshop series  
by June 2021: Submission of book manuscript

\*\*\*Submission details\*\*\*

Please submit your anonymized abstract, in .doc or .pdf format, by email to Michael Klenk at [m.b.o.t.klenk@tudelft.nl](mailto:m.b.o.t.klenk@tudelft.nl) Abstracts must not exceed 1000 words, incl. notes and references.

Please direct any queries related to this call to Michael Klenk at the above email address or to Fleur Jongepier at [f.jongepier@ftr.ru.nl](mailto:f.jongepier@ftr.ru.nl).

We particularly welcome submissions addressing new or underexplored topics, submissions from a variety of philosophical traditions, and submissions of an interdisciplinary nature. We especially encourage submissions from women and members of underrepresented groups.