Psycho-politics and Big Data as new forms and tools for political organization

Psicopolítica y **big data** como nuevas formas y herramientas para la organización política

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Abstract

This article asks if the subject is an autonomous being in political deliberation or if are the thoughts, positions and forms of political organization mediated by the different communicational tools to which the subject is exposed who determine it. Thus, it analyzes the relationship between Mass Media and politics with the deliberative capacity of the individual when making decisions in the political context based on Han and Chomsky. The methodology is qualitative with documentary design, the instrument are bibliographic sheets applied to primary and secondary sources. Databases are used with the algorithm: "Neoliberalism, Psycho-politic, Big Data, Mass Media and Democracy". Thirteen (13) books and twenty (20) articles are analyzed. The argumentative text identifies the new forms and tools of political organization and the relationship between politics and the media. It is concluded that: 1) Neoliberalism directs the idea of a free market towards the individual himself; 2) Critical citizenship that has a more active role in democracy is necessary; 3) Psycho-politics is identified as a new form of political organization; 4) The new tool of politics is Big Data; 5) It is evident that the relationship between politics and Mass Media is linked to power groups; and 6) The emotionalization of political communication decreases individual autonomy.

Keywords

Big Data, democracy, emotions, Mass Media, neoliberalism, psycho-politics.

Resumen

El presente artículo indaga si ¿es el sujeto un ser autónomo en la deliberación política o son los pensamientos, las posturas y las formas de la organización política mediadas por las distintas herramientas comunicacionales a las que se ve expuesto quienes lo determinan? Así, analiza la relación que existe entre *mass media* y política, con la capacidad deliberativa del individuo al tomar decisiones en el contexto político, a partir de Chomsky y Han. La metodología es cualitativa con diseño documental, el instrumento son fichas bibliográficas aplicadas a fuentes primarias y secundarias. Se usan bases de datos con el algoritmo: "Neoliberalismo, psicopolítica, *big data*, medios de comunicación de masas y democracia". Se analizan 13 libros y 20 artículos. Se identifican las nuevas formas y herramientas de organización política y la relación entre política y medios de comunicación. Se concluye que: 1) el neoliberalismo direcciona la idea de libre mercado hacia el individuo mismo, 2) es necesaria una ciudadanía crítica que tenga un rol más activo en la democracia, 3) se identifica a la psicopolítica como una nueva forma de organización política, 4) la nueva herramienta de la política es el *big data*, 5) se evidencia que la relación entre política y *mass media* está vinculada con los grupos de poder y 6) la emocionalización de la comunicación política disminuye la autonomía individual.

Palabras clave

Big data, democracia, emociones, medios de comunicación de masas, neoliberalismo, psicopolítica.

238

Introduction

This paper addresses the correlation between politics and the media, from the perspective of authors such as the American philosopher Noam Chomsky and the South Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han. From Chomsky's point of view, the article studies the issue taking as an example the role of advertising and the functionality that the media play in

politics. On the other hand, Byung-Chul Han analyzes the new power techniques exerted by neoliberal capitalism and *big data*.

The objectives are to analyze the relationship between *mass media* and politics with the deliberative capacity of each individual for decision making, and to identify the new forms and tools of organization of political power. The research question inquires if the subject is an autonomous being in political deliberation or if are the thoughts, positions and forms of political organization mediated by the different communication tools to which the subject is exposed to.

The main idea of the document states the late-modern subject in the use of its deliberative capacity for the political and its critical apparatus, which may be undermined or diminished by the influence of social networks, which capture the emotions of the subject and his psyche under the dynamics of digital profiling, which develop the algorithms of *big data*, to which is added the neoliberal practice that defends the disciplinary transition from duty to self-exploitation of the subject through performance-oriented power.

The importance of the subject for present and future generations is in how philosophy, as an area of formation of the subject, must act as a preventive educational means for the awareness of the use of social networks and the limits of this subject-*big data* interaction, which has become a daily neoliberal practice to motivate the self-exploitation of the subject. This leads to deterioration of mental health and loss of autonomy, as well as preconfigured deliberative capacity in capturing thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

In this sense, the topicality of the philosophical and social analysis made by Byung-Chul Han (2023, 2020, 2017, 2014) and Noam Chomsky (2002, 1995), is in their significant contribution on the precipitated transformations of the current society, which, after experiencing a pandemic by COVID-19 (Cabeza and Velasco, 2023; Flórez Pabón *et al.*, 2 23), demonstrates the need to slow down the model of production and consumption that has co-opted the economic, political and social dynamics of humans, but this is not enough, but now it moves to the psyche of people and therefore their emotions (Han, 2014).

If philosophy makes this call to attention, the relevance of the subject with respect to the discourses of performance and its consequences in the political rests in its preventive language against self-exploitation, in favor of the care of the psyche and for the interaction with social networks in contrast to contemplation, ritual, party and leisure (Han, 2023).

239

Φ

The methodology of this work is qualitative with documentary design based on literature review (Barraza *et al.*, 2021, p. 7). A search was conducted from Noam Chomsky's and Byung-Chul Han's books. In addition, secondary sources (Nussbaum, 2019; Roig, 2009; Foucault, 2007a and b; Handke, 2006; Bentham, 1979) and twenty articles consulted from open access databases and subscribed were used. On the other hand, to give context to the work, journalistic reports were used. In this sense, the articles analyzed were from the last five years. The terms or descriptors in the search algorithm obeyed neoliberalism, capitalism, *big data*, media and democracy. Keywords were established through the UNESCO Thesaurus.

In this context, this paper is structured in four sections. First, the context of the proposed problem and the analysis of the authors Byung-Chul Han and Noam Chomsky. Then, in Psychoplitics, Han's characterization of this issue is analyzed and the changes and differences between Psychoplitics and Biopolitics are highlighted. Third, it shows how *big data* is the tool that enables the exercise of psychopolitical control, an action that occurs after analyzing the data of users of different digital platforms. Finally, it presents the relationship generated between mass media and politics, from the examples given by Noam Chomsky and some events in Colombian society, thus showing the role that propaganda plays and how —with the exploitation of emotions— there are consequences that affect the autonomy of the individuals that make up contemporary society.

Analysis of the context of new power techniques

Byung-Chul Han (2014) believes that —from the implementation of a neoliberal form of government, manifested in psychoplitics, and directly related to the use of technological tools such as *big data*— there is access to the psyche of individuals, know their desires and emotions. This knowledge generates from the use of social networks or Internet browsing, a fact that can have consequences in the political sphere, since the information generated is used as a tool of rulers and political parties to grant and offer targeted information for specific purposes, in the search and achievement of power. This fact raises risks for the autonomy of the subjects, since there is an interference in decision-making through the use and capitalization of emotions.

On the other hand, Noam Chomsky (1995) highlights the relationship generated by the media with politics in democratic societies. This relationship was generated from the beginning of television and radio,

240

where these media were influenced by governments or private power groups, who used the dissemination of content for private purposes. For this reason, it was sought to have an influence on individuals and thus exert a form of social control through elements such as propaganda and advertising.

Byung-Chul Han criticizes the neoliberal system in his book *Psychopolitics* (2014), where he talks about topics such as freedom, capital, man seen as a company, etc., topics that were mentioned by Michael Foucault in *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2007b). For Han, a biopolitics is no longer realized before man, but thanks to elements such as *big data* there is the possibility of accessing the psyche of the individual, which carries a string of inconveniences and consequences. Therefore, Foucault's work allows us to recognize the elements of a biopolitics that is directly related to liberalism and thus analyze, from Han, the transition that occurs from biopolitics to psychopolitics, to finally address the element that enables this change, i.e., *big data*.

One of the references that Han (2014) makes about Foucault is that the French thinker failed to address psychopolitics in the neoliberal system, insofar Foucault focuses his analysis of power on biopolitics and anatomopolitics. "In his lesson of 1978-1979, Foucault fails to deal with the analysis of neoliberal biopolitics" (p. 22), insofar as his lessons focus on the analysis of the docility of bodies. However, it is possible to mention several elements exposed by Foucault around biopolitics, after the review that he carries out on liberalism and neoliberalism, which he does from two aspects: German neoliberalism and North American neoliberalism, as extreme forms and power technology of contemporary governmentality (Raffin, 2021, p. 307).

This is how Foucault (2007b) approaches the issue starting from the historical analysis that he carries out on liberalism and neoliberalism, for which it is evident, according to Páez and Gómez (2021), that civil society should be the determining logic of the market, and not the State, insofar as the decisions and actions of the rulers now involve the continuity of life occurred in biopolitics (Cabeza Herrera, 2010, p. 105). In this way a policy of life will be imparted, making the subject another element that enters the market game and where man is mentioned no longer as subject or individual, but as a project of himself when seen as a company.

Han (2014) mentions that, from Foucault's perspective, disciplinary power "makes the body a machine of production" (p. 20), understood as a flow of income, which will depend on the capacities of the worker and vary over the course of his life, until this machine becomes obsolete

241

to fulfill a certain function, i.e., until his old age does not allow him to continue working (Foucault, 2007b).

In this way, by making man a means of production, also cover regulatory measures for their health, longevity, population growth between birth and mortality (Han, 2014). A regulation that will be exercised by the State in order to maintain the proper functioning of market policies that would be directed to the individual and society. Michael Foucault (2007a), spoke directly of biopolitics by mentioning the administration of life, so much so that power:

> It was centered on the body-species, on the body transferred by the mechanics of the living and which supports biological processes: proliferation, births and mortality, health level, duration of life and longevity, with all the conditions that can make them vary; all these problems are taken by a series of interventions and regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population (p. 168).

242

Φ

In this way, a stage of biopower begins, in which man, already seen as a company, as a means of production and as a machine, must be managed, so that, in the analysis proposed by Foucault (2007b), it is evident that the idea of an investment in human capital in the growth of capitalist society is originated, by linking elements such as: the upbringing of the child, the cultural level of parents and the care they exercise over their child, in addition to issues such as marriage and couple relationships. Thus, from an economic point of view, the demographic order is one of the analysis elements of the economy, and the data generated from it will be used to exercise a disciplinary power over individuals (Foucault, 2007b).

This way, the relationships of both the couple and the parents with their children are capitalized. Every child born is seen as a future worker, who will eventually be linked to working life and it is the State, as well as his parents, who must invest some resources in his welfare. This investment of the State is made thinking about what the child can contribute later to his nation, consequently, it is expected to obtain a benefit from this, characterized in that this child will become the labor and the indispensable workforce for the development and operation of the industry (Gozálvez and Cortijo, 2023; Rodríguez *et al*., 2018; Argüello *et al*., 2012;) and, on the other hand, the family is a production unit that ensures upbringing. Benefits are shared between the State and the family (Páez and Gómez, 2021, p. 10).

This new approach to market policies directed towards the activities of man leads to the individual becoming *Homo oeconomicus*, an "entrepreneur and an entrepreneur of himself" (Foucault, 2007b, p. 264). Since man must be considered and must consider himself as a company, the individual becomes a tool on which an influence can be made, a power can be exercised, in this case a biopower, therefore, an articulated theory develops that invests in human capital, hence:

> The company is formalized based on the company model, which redefines the "*homo oeconomicus*" as entrepreneur of himself from the notion of human capital. The *homo oeconomicus* constitutes for itself its own capital, its own producer and the source of its income (Raffin, 2021, p. 316).

The investment that this man-company will make will be reflected initially on who is chosen as a couple, then in the education of the children that result from this relationship and later in the time of care that is dedicated to the infant. These activities will be seen and analyzed as elements of a company, which leads to the expectation that, after the investment of resources, a profit will be obtained. Therefore, "we should speak of 'biopolitics' to designate what brings life and its mechanisms into the domain of explicit calculations and makes power-knowledge an agent of transformation of human life" (Foucault, 2007a, p. 173).

Transformation through governmentality, which links power and government by subjecting life to a single possible logic (Raffin, 2021, p. 321). Governmentality then becomes a technology of power that is directed and exercised over civil society, over life (Toscano, 2018, p. 248), a fact that is framed and deployed in liberal thought and later in neoliberal thought, where market rationality was placed in aspects that were not necessarily considered economic: the birth rate and the conformation of families.

From Byung-Chul Han's (2014) reading, Foucault "expressly links biopolitics with the disciplinary form of capitalism, which in its form of production socializes the body" (p. 22), however, this does not happen with neoliberalism. With the implementation of a neoliberal policy, capitalism is transformed, focusing its attention on the psyche of the individual, thus generating a transition between biopolitics and psychoplitics, which will be addressed next.

243
Φ

Psychopolitics as a domain of the psyche and human emotions

The first topic addressed by Han to develop his characterization of psychopolitics will be freedom, which must be understood in a different way at the time when the individual is constituted as a project of himself and accompanied by the feeling of freedom (Han, 2014, p. 7), since man considers that he is no longer subject to external elements, however, now he is the one who submits himself in search of continuous improvement, consequently, the existence of the subject develops in a society of performance.

Thus, in a capitalist society marked by a category of competitiveness, man has been involved in *neuro-enhancement*, which basically consists in the use of biomedical technology or drugs such as nootropics to improve his cognitive functions (*i. e.* memory or learning). This supposed improvement is exercised by healthy individuals who face a burden of competitiveness and intellectual performance (Martínez, 2016, p. 293). However, this improvement, in addition to the possible side effects, has as a main consequence the production of fatigue and exhaustion, linked to the excess of positivity and the forgetting of negativity.

In this way, the automaton man will only generate results, where the fatigue to which he is subjected will be faced and lived in solitude. For this reason, it is stated that "today's society is not primarily a disciplinary society, but a performance society that is increasingly exposed to the negativity of prohibitions and mandates and masquerades as a freedom society" (Han, 2017, p. 49). This is seen in the change of the verb duty by power, an element that has changed the psychology of man. Thus, the subject of today is a subject of affirmation, it says to itself that it can do things by pressing to achieve goals, in the search for an "ideal self", thereby generating a distance from the disciplinary society, unlike what was proposed by Arturo Roig (2009), where the subject recognizes and values himself and, from there, generates recognition of the other (Botero *et al.*, 2023).

Thus, the subject does not have as one of his maxims the fulfillment of duty and does not expect a moral gratification, but a gain in terms of pleasure. It is no longer another who exercises an order on him, but it is he who exercises that order on himself, for this reason, to the supposed liberation that has been obtained from the other, the subject presents himself as the new image of his coercion (Han, 2017, p. 50). The man of the performance society is required and self-demanded to constantly outper-

form himself, regardless of whether to obtain such a result he has to use different substances. This results in mental illness or *burnout* syndrome.

As it stands, "illnesses like depression and *burnout* syndrome are the expression of a profound crisis of freedom. They are a pathological sign that today freedom becomes, by different means, coercion" (Han, 2014, p. 7). Therefore, the freedom that man believes he has by parting with the society he forbids is only illusory, since it is he who now destroys himself. Thus, from the neoliberal ideology, this freedom of the individual is related to the freedom of capital, i.e., the idea of free competition that was related only to the market, will now also be related to the subject. Thus, for the 'entrepreneurial worker' (p. 9), his success or failure is sold to him as a result of his own responsibility.

From this perspective, with the advent of digital media through the Internet and the consequent advent of social networks, the idea of unlimited freedom is presented. However, this alleged freedom becomes a means of control and surveillance, which are linked to the image of the panopticon presented by Jeremy Bentham (1979). These digital panoptics have certain characteristics, in which communication between individuals is stimulated, which provide their information freely through what is published on social networks.

This is made possible through a consumer capitalism, which sells meanings and emotions, making emotion a means of production. In this sense, "the neoliberal regime presupposes emotions as a resource to increase productivity and performance" (Han, 2014, p. 38). In addition, in the capitalism of emotion a gamification of work is performed that promises immediate gratifications, the same happens in the gamification of social communication, which manifests itself through *likes*, the number of friends or followers, after which, communication is commercialized and leisure is also capitalized, making life itself a form of production.

In this way, the acceleration of communication is used as a tool and the purchase is stimulated and needs are generated: the use of business self-help texts with the idea of creating better professionals, offering the individual the idea that by projecting a good image, he will be able to get the job and the life he wants, i.e., an issue based on emotions (Han, 2017, p. 39) to achieve psychoplitical control.

Neoliberalism, by emotionalizing the productive process, makes the human being stop being a subject and become a project of himself, building himself as a product that is a holiday and enters the becoming of supply and demand, thus breaking into all areas of life, since it is not only his work, but his private life that is publicized through digital media

245
Φ

and new technologies. The communication that is exerted in the different digital platforms calls for transparency, with which it seeks to precipitate the obtaining of information (Han, 2014, p. 12) and in this constant flow of information, surveillance initially begins in the others, who are the consumers of the information that is offered to them.

At this point, politics becomes another element of consumer capitalism, "politicians and parties also follow this logic of consumption. They have to *provide*. In this way, they degrade to suppliers who have to satisfy voters as consumers or customers" (p. 13), which only participate to the extent that they complain or make a claim, thus establishing for Han a "spectator democracy" where the communication exerted transforms individuals into consumers, in the middle of a society where consumption is increasingly of masses (Lomelí, 2019, p. 352).

Thus, the power exercised is an intelligent power, which invites the subject to communicate, share and highlight their needs or concerns, thus revealing, through social networks, the most intimate details of his life. This power becomes not the one who denies or hinders freedom, but the one who exploits it, assessing conscious and unconscious thoughts (Han, 2014, p. 17). It does so by means of an analysis developed from the information produced from everything that is published on the networks or on the web pages that are visited. This intelligent power differs from the disciplinary power, which was not interested in the psyche, on the contrary, the intelligent power is able to interfere in the needs and desires of the subjects.

Another difference with Bentham's panopticon is observed, since it requires visual monitoring. With the digital panopticon, thought is accessed, unlike Foucault's disciplinary power. For Han (2014), neoliberalism will exploit and explore the psyche thanks to the emergence of *big data* (p. 21), since the elements of capitalism's production changed, insofar as the motivation for production is based on the immaterial and the incorporeal, from computer programs and digital information that move emotions.

Now, within the forms of exploitation exercised by neoliberal psychopolitics, there are workshops of personal *management*, which refers to the administration of personnel with the intention of optimizing the work of workers, or business *coaching*, which aims to motivate employees so as to obtain better results. These are part of the framework created for the optimization of the individual, which seeks the creation of an increasingly efficient worker, where not only improvements in working capacity are sought, but also interferes in other aspects of life, so that continuous improvement is shown as something necessary, even if it leads to total self-exploitation (p. 27).

Sophia 36: 2024.

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Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 237-261.

In addition to the above, one of the main characteristics of neoliberal psychopolitics is the excess of positivity, in which the imaginary is created that everything is possible, the idea is emphasized in the subject of "being able to do". This power is maximized in the information society, as everything is just a *click* away. In this context, an increase of words is generated with the continuous generation of information received, but that is also created. This time characterizes by the fact that the person who receives the information can also produce it, which generates an exacerbated increase of information (Silva *et al.*, 2023, p. 127), which can result in the "information fatigue syndrome" (IFS) (Lomelí, 2019, p. 356).

The problems that arise from the perspective of man as an entrepreneur of himself and that is constituted as a project to realize, are evident in an environment where you have a strong sense of freedom, you are before a digital panopticon, in which you do not conceive the feeling of being watched, people feel free to share and spread their lives without external coercion, as a consequence, each subject is panopticon of their own being (Han, 2014, p. 35).

247

Thus, in the capitalism of emotion not only cognitive improvement will be taken into account, but also emotional (p. 35). From the capitalization of emotions, it is possible to achieve a psychopolitical control that will go unnoticed by the subjects (p. 40) and that with the use of *big data*, maximizes the influence that can have on him and his decisions to the extent that he usually decides based on emotion.

The big data as an enabler of psychopolitics

The effectiveness of *big data* as a digital panopticon lies in the fact that it does not escape the thoughts and desires of people, who do not have the feeling of being watched, since it addresses even their psyche through emotions to know their desires and thoughts. With the emergence of *big data*, in a digital age where everything is measurable — the temperature, the calories in food, the miles traveled — where everything relates to performance and efficiency, sensations and moods also begin to be measured. In this way a self-measurement and self-control is developed. These data that are generated are published and exchanged making the self-monitoring of each individual a self-surveillance, causing the individual "as a subject who illuminates and watches himself, is isolated in a panopticon in which he is simultaneously inmate and guardian" (Han, 2014, p. 49).

However, it is not only the individual who registers all his activities. On the contrary, a trace of what is searched or the pages visited are recorded in that data - left voluntarily or without consent – creating a digital profile, which represents each individual, making the network perhaps know someone better than the same individual knows, to the extent that the role of artificial intelligence (AI), through algorithms, is to know the preferences of users of the different digital platforms, with which their tastes, priorities and needs are redirected (Lomelí, 2019, p. 357).

The *big data* does not forget or omit anything, it is extremely efficient and can be used to generate focused and personalized advertising. This can be seen in the electoral campaigns, where microtargeting performs an analysis of the data generated by groups with particular interests, which are provided or given a specifically designed advertising in order to influence their decisions in the elections and even predict the behavior of voters, making this data a tool of psychopolitics. Thus, "if *big data* provided access to the unconscious realm of our actions and inclinations, it would be conceivable for a psycho-politics to intervene deep into our psyche and exploit it" (Han, 2014, p. 51), a fact that can be demonstrated after the Cambridge Analytica scandal:[1]

> In 2014, the data analytics firm that worked with Donald Trump's and Brexit campaign, *Cambridge Analytica*, conducted a study in which it used Facebook's platform to conduct personality tests on hundreds of thousands of users of the social network. The aim was to develop models that would allow prediction of user behavior. However, the company used the occasion—supposedly for academic purposes—to extract information from the contacts of the subjects studied, producing a base of tens of millions of people. As known a few years later, the goal of data mining was to produce predictive models that were intended to influence the behavior of voters (mostly registered) by sending selective information (González, 2019, p. 267).

These practices cause serious implications, since with such actions they could manipulate the collective unconscious and adapt the behavior of the masses under a particular interest. This interest would be managed by whoever has the power or resources to buy that data and manipulate individual and collective life at will (Vidal and Olivares, 2021, p. 145).

There are various platforms in the digital market that categorize and separate individuals according to their functionality to later sell this data, there are companies dedicated to this exclusively: Xeerpa in Spain or Acxiom in the United States.[2] In addition, there are platforms such as Google or Facebook that offer their services for "free", however, they

collect the data of their users through permissions that the user accepts without measuring the extent of the consent granted (Cubillos, 2017, p. 37).

When *cookies* are accepted or *the* permissions requested by the application are activated, access to the marketing of personal data is being granted, "refusing to provide data implies the loss of global services or the reduction of their quality and, consequently, being marginalized from global narratives" (Vidal and Olivares, 2021, p. 146). This is an act of coercion, since users of digital platforms, if they want to access the information hosted there, are forced to give their consent in order to use them.

The *big data*, as already stated, does not allow forgetting. The digital memory accumulates information and even when individuals believe they delete their files, searches or social media posts, each of these elements has been recorded. An example of this is that platforms such as Telegram,[3] which stores their information in the cloud, offers the service as a guarantee of privacy, however, in the cloud this guarantee of custody is not secure as it depends on external operators (Varela *et al.*, 2017, p. 145). This happens because each of the data that is on the Internet is susceptible to be intercepted or used by *hackers*, where the confidentiality of the data only makes part of a false security belief about them.

Through *big data,* human behavior becomes predictable based on the correlations generated by the analysis of the information of each individual, where the individualities are denied. The transparency generated by *big data* develops a coercion to eliminate the strange and the other, for this reason *bannoptikum* is used (Romero, 2023), in charge of identifying those individuals who are not useful for the system and thus discharge them as if they were worthless objects. Thus, a kind of digital social class is created, where men will be classified according to the functionality that can be achieved from them (Han, 2014, p. 58), with which this knowledge generated through *big data* enables a new way of doing politics, becoming a tool capable of generating social changes to the extent that:

> Psychopolitics is based on emotions and the logic of spectacle as axes of communication, making possible a control and exercise of power without parallel that, based on an almost total knowledge of society, is able to model behavior and direct impulses for specific interests pursued (Lomelí, 2019, p. 360).

The information currently received is consistent with the directions resulting from data analysis, which configures that the information received corresponds to a *marketing* strategy, i.e., that it is linked to pro-

249

Φ

paganda elements to affect the consumption not only of things but of emotions. In the relationship between the media and politics, this exploitation of emotion is evidenced, by selling to the common of society an idea of patriotism or the idea that one must defend oneself against an enemy that puts national values at risk (Nussbaum, 2019).

The Role of Digital Propaganda as a Means of the Psychopolitical

For Noam Chomsky, this corresponds to a propaganda model and, while this model was designed in the 1980s, his view of media performance is not different today, of course, one must bear in mind the changes that have occurred with the digitization of the media. Thus, Chomsky (1995) consolidates an analysis oriented to the characteristics of the propaganda model, where he expresses that, although advertising is not the purpose of the media, it is considered a relevant fact, since the role of journalists will be to show themselves according to the directions of the owners of the media or the government, given the relationship that arises on this topic.

In addition, Chomsky and Ramonet (2002) consider that "the first modern propaganda operation carried out by a government happened under Woodrow Wilson," (p. 6), where a commission was created that was supposed to convince people of the need for America to join World War I. This commission was called the Committee on Public Information (CPI), and it sought to present the Germans as the enemies to be defeated. News events were created in which atrocious acts were invented to portray the Germans as monsters. In this way, the power of the media is in creating narratives such as *fake news,* which obfuscate reality (Villa *et al.*, 2020, p. 41).

For this reason, the *agenda setting*, where digital media dictate which topics are addressed or discussed (Busquet and Medina, 2013, p. 80), can be linked to the orientation of responding to a propaganda intention mediated by the influence that can be generated between groups of power and *mass media*. Thus, the media, being run by companies or by the Government, choose which news they show and which they do not (Chomsky, 1995, p. 19). However, it must be clear that the role of the media is not generalized, since there are media in which their information does not respond to the guidelines of the government agenda. Therefore, based on a documentary review, it is possible to identify whether the actions of the media correspond to the propaganda model or not.

The five main characteristics that determine the propagandistic role of information are presented and analyzed:

> (1) The size, concentration of ownership, wealth of the owner, and orientation of the profits of dominant media companies; (2) publicity as the main source of media revenue; (3) the media's dependence on information provided by the Government, companies and "experts", information otherwise funded and approved by these major suppliers and other power actors; (4) various "countermeasures" and corrective measures as a method of disciplining the media; and (5) "anti-communism" as a national religion and control mechanism. These elements interact and reinforce each other (Chomsky, 1995, p. 23).

1st. It is evident how since the beginning of the implementation of the media as a massive information system, this is involved in the conditions of the market, where the owners of the media, being entrepreneurs or bankers, based their operation focused on the profits that could generate the appropriation of the media. There, interest groups appear, investing resources for their operation with the objective of market profitability (Chomsky, 1995, p. 31).

Thus, a transition began, where the print media sought to become part of broadcasting or television. Following the development of new technologies, this same process took place in the need for media such as television and analog radio to be transferred to digital media, where it must be taken into account that from the beginning of the operation of the *mass media*, they were linked to the Government, under its concession and authorization (Chomsky, 1995, p. 39). For this reason, the *mass media*, being managed by business groups and generating some dependence on their link with the political class, are limited in the information they generate or publish, since this must correspond to the interests of the power groups.

2nd. The main feature is that advertising becomes the source from which information companies can generate profits. Thus, it is important to mention the pressure that Governments can exert, as they become actors that finance the media. Currently, in Colombia, law 2063 was approved in 2020, in which the Government allocates public money for the economic revival of the media, in addition to the money they receive for the advertising of the State. In this case, there is a risk of self-censorship due to the conflict of interest raised in accordance with the express complaints from the Foundation for Press Freedom (FLIP) (Franco, 2021, para. 13).

Now, another conflict arises in the case of television, since those who show themselves contrary to the guidelines of the Government or

251
Φ

groups of power may not receive the support of companies, since: "Large companies that advertise on television will rarely sponsor programs that address serious criticism of business activities, such as the problem of environmental degradation" (Chomsky, 1995, p. 48), with which, the broadcast content becomes sensationalist when seeking to generate programs that look to attract the attention of large audiences and, from there, can offer advertisers that their advertising will reach a greater number of people and will persuade the preferences and attitudes of the recipient (Cazorla *et al.*, 2022, p. 87).

3rd. The symbiosis between the different sources of information and the media, derived from the high level of power, results from the exchange of various interests (Chomsky, 1995, p. 49). The media, being nourished by information, focus their attention on places where news is constantly generated and this happens with government institutions, in addition to large companies that also have the power to generate constant information. One of the significant differences is that anyone today can generate information with digital media, thereby losing the hegemony of news in the role that focused on government and business. In Colombia, this was evident in the context of the national strike of 2021, with the case of alternative media, where the information presented did not always correspond to that generated through the oligopolies of communication (Romero and Martínez, 2021, p. 18).

4th. The pressure exerted by the Government on the media and civil society to ensure that the information generated is in accordance with what the political leaders want the people to know and discuss. Thus, "the Government is one of the largest producers of these critical responses, routinely attacking, threatening and 'correcting' the media, and attempting to curb any deviation from the established line" (Chomsky, 1995, p. 68).

Following the analysis of what happened in the context of the Colombian national strike, digital media were persecuted because the information transmitted was generally linked to violence by agents of the State. As an example, the attack on a correspondent from Colombia Informa,[4] that occurred on May 26, 2021, while covering a citizen mobilization in Bogotá. Similarly, FLIP documented 152 attacks on digital media (Romero and Martínez, 2021). This was intended to distort what was published on social networks.

5th. It creates a need to focus attention on finding someone to point to. This is exemplified in the creation of an enemy or narratives in the service of a story, in order to instruct citizens in the self-interest of the storyteller (Chomsky, 1995, p. 74). From these narratives to achieve profit,

252
Φ

i.e., to justify military spending or the action of the Government in its foreign policy and this is framed in a policy where terror was how public opinion was sought to be biased.

Today, the practice of looking for whom to name as responsible for the state's ills has diversified. Now labeled migrants or corruption, there is a trend towards xenophobia that is related to an authoritarian neoliberal stance and, therefore, the fight against these issues is raised (Saidel, 2021, p. 270). Faced with this reality, digital media are used to create an emotionalization process in individuals, however, the power of *mass media* is used without distinction of political ideology, where it is evident that published contents are broadcast with hidden interests (Cornejo, 2022, p. 78).

The emergence of social networks on the political scene would give rise to the same thing that happened at the end of the 1980s, when one had a positive view of technological advances: "The emergence of cable and satellite communications [...] has weakened the power of the oligopoly of the communications network and retains potential to strengthen access for local groups" (Chomsky, 1995, p. 354). It was seen in these advances that the population had a way of countering the unidirectional information of the hegemonic media, however, these media are also subject to the market economy, where advertising is necessary to ensure its functioning, leaning towards the same as always (Chomsky and Ramonet, 2002, p. 31), only now, the public of interest is segmented through *big data*, algorithms and digital social networks with content for immediate consumption (González, 2019, p. 274).

Thus, propaganda appears as an element in which emotions will be used as a means to achieve direction to people. In both traditional and digital *mass media*, emotions are the order of the day, since, with the use of social networks and the Internet, emotion is used as the means by which consumers are invited. These emotions are part of the *marketing* model and, specifically, political *marketing* in electoral processes (Chomsky and Ramonet, 2002, p. 46).

Consequently, emotionality will be exploited by companies that benefit from personal data, which are offered in the market for a political leader, a party or a company to buy and use them for propaganda purposes, seeking to influence the decisions of individuals and gestating a change in political communication towards emotions and desires, which cloud reason and favor emotional opinion and fanaticism (Lomeli, 2019, p. 352).

For this reason, one fact to be considered is the veracity of the information received. For Chomsky (1995), the way in which the media are articulated to make an information be taken as true is the familiarity that the

253
Φ

media develop with a subject, the attraction to the story (p. 77). In the present, it is no longer the means, but the people who exercise this function. This happens now with information going viral, where being linked to personal tastes is not verified, but is delayed in an instant and uncritical way, not only the news, but the large amount of information that becomes a trend through viral processes that underpins post-truth (Lomelí, 2019, p. 356).

Therefore, in the role that social networks occupy in the political evolution, there are consequences such as the inclination of perception and opinion for a specific candidate and his subsequent election (González, 2019, p. 275). This information modifies their behavior and has a direct impact on the decisions that the individual makes, without being aware that subtly their action has been directed through the psychoplitical control carried out by the digital *mass media*, which, appealing to emotions, obtain the answers already preconceived in the action of the citizen (Cazorla *et al.*, 2022, p. 88).

With the emergence of new digital platforms and the incorporation of multiple social networks on behalf of independent media, a plurality of media was generated, which Chomsky believed necessary, media in which the diversity was truly reflected (Romero and Martínez, 2021, p. 20) and interculturality of the population, as well as the recognition of the other (Botero Urquijo *et al.*, 2023; Oses Gil *et al.*, 2022, p. 11). However, with algorithms, this plurality of information is reduced to individual tastes, which contributes to generate a bias of the information given that the data received only give more force to personal, subjective, emotional positions, with little or no objectivity and that favor the permanence or creation of sectarian groups (Cazorla *et al.*, 2022, p. 89).

As in the recent past "political truths are centered on the attack and defamation of a supposed responsible or enemy, which is built with manipulated data and, above all, images and audio that seem irrefutable thanks to their plausibility" (Lomeli, 2019, p. 359), the use of fear, hope or indignation to mobilize citizens has been present with the intention of manipulating, favoring a warlord or collective and convincing in electoral campaigns (D'Adamo *et al.*, 2021, p. 204).

Considering that one of the most significant characteristics of the propaganda model is that the media obtain its profits from advertising and the segmented use of the data collected in the processing of *big data* (González, 2019, p. 270), it is necessary to defend itself not only from the manipulation of the media, but to promote a self-defense of algorithmic AI, to search for information in other media that show other positions and thus open the spectrum of the world that faces itself. It is sought

254

that data that are used as timely information for decision making are not biased and limited.

Understanding that "people are not certain if our selection is based on our own decision, or if it has been conditioned by the personalized information developed by an algorithm" (Vidal and Olivares, 2021, p. 150), attention must be paid to the fact that the hegemonic media are faced with the population moving increasingly to inform themselves via social networks, so the Reuters Institute presents *online* sources as the most consumed, in contrast to traditional media (Garcia, 2021, para. 12). This shows the vulnerability to which the population is subjected to being under the influence of the emotionalization of social networks and focused advertising, thus promoting psychopolitics (Lomelí, 2019, p. 360), where, "emotions are a fundamental part in the conscious or unconscious decision-making process, since it is from them that we can define the universe of stimuli that surrounds us" (D'Adamo *et al.*, 2021, p. 210).

Thus, the autonomy of man is compromised, emotions are used in electoral processes where individuals are determined by the influence of external factors that have a direct impact on the psyche and in decision-making. Thus, the role that social networks play is to offer immediate gratification and that causes cognitive perception and emotional affiliation in the political sphere (Cazorla *et al.*, 2022, p. 83), leading decisions to correspond to a propaganda model with which psychoplitical control is exercised.

For Han (2014) there is a need for a depsychologization, which aims to prevent the neoliberal system, through psychopolitics and *big data*, from guiding man, so that allows the individual to come out of submission by becoming aware that the freedom he believes he has is illusory. From this, psychology is destroyed for the human being to build himself, the individual is invited to allow himself leisure, where unconscious acts become conscious and routine is not normalized; the importance of stopping and analyzing the information received is manifested, since man, at present, is not allowed silence, is constantly surrounded by a bustle that affects his mind and is generated by the excess of communication and content on social networks.

In addition, philosophy, presented as an idiotism makes possible the creation of new thoughts, where being an idiot is related to the idea in which the individual is not tied to what the system proposes; idiotism is shown as a new way of being, where people act and think differently. Thus, the philosophical attitude understands that thought is given from a narrative and not from a calculation, because it allows the subject to act in a different way than the current society does, does not forget negativ-

255
Φ

ity, does not fit into the excess of positivity, it allows the encounter with the strange. Hence, the individual who philosophizes will be seen as "the crazy", insofar as individuals are not allowed to isolate themselves from what the neoliberal system offers and think of themselves differently.

This representation of the idiot is also related to the image of the heretic. When understanding heresy as a choice that breaks with the doctrine presented by the digital, it is detached from the excess of information and the need to publish and comment; then, it is related to silence and stillness, where only something is expressed when it really must be said. In this way, philosophy grants an art of living that moves in silence, stillness and thinking about what is really considered to be communicated.

So a call is made to immanence, which is represented in the figure of children. They explore, they do not care about the future, they do not plan their lives. The idea of immanence is related to the contemplation of the here, the now and the sublime. From there the emotional-mental balance in the world of performance is sought, in the same way, if life is understood as an event, it is possible to encounter the strange, with what arises without being planned, so life is detached from the calculated and schematic (Han, 2023).

On the other hand, it is necessary to overcome individualism, for which Byung-Chul Han (2017), when returning to Handke's position (2006), speaks of fundamental fatigue, which unites, relates to language and gives confidence in the world, to the extent that it enables the decrease of the self. It is not related to exhaustion and gives a moment of peace and tranquility to a society that forces us to always be producing or learning. The point is not to speak of a weariness of the self, but of a weariness of the us, in such a way that individualism is eliminated to make a call to the collectivity and the community. In the same sense, rites are presented as those that make it possible to break with a narcissistic stance, insofar rituals unite men and generate a community (Han, 2020).

Conclusions

It is evident that in contemporary politics, after the expansion of neoliberalism as an economic system, a free market policy was developed that was directed towards the individual himself, thus causing the establishment of the idea that individuals should conceive themselves as entrepreneurs of themselves. Thus, human beings are called and obliged to be in a constant preparation to face the changes demanded in a labor market

and with the appearance of social networks, these become the showcases where man advertises himself; therefore, neoliberalism as an economic model has the capacity to transform subjectivities.

On the other hand, it establishes the need for a critical citizenship that has a more active role, given that with the implementation of neoliberal policies, democracy may be at risk of being co-opted under the influence of business groups, leaders or political parties, to the extent that, through technological developments that transformed analog media into digital media, these groups can guide people to think, feel and act in a certain way. The media can contribute to direct citizen participation or contribute to population control.

Likewise, psychopolitics is identified as one of those new forms of political organization, insofar as neoliberalism is no longer supported in biopolitics, since current capitalism focuses its attention on the psyche of the people and this is achieved through the development of a consumer capitalism that arouses emotions. After the idea of personal or professional success —reflected in social networks— comes psychopolitical control through the use of *big data* that, being designed as a tool of analysis and profiling, accesses the desires and needs of the subjects.

In this way, the new tool of politics is *big data*. From the information gathered by using social networks and browsing the web, a digital profile is created where people's tastes and preferences are known. This element is used by governments and political parties to generate targeted advertising, which serves for electoral campaigns, as in the case of Cambridge Analytica, where the ability to modify the behavior, emotions and decisions of people through the use of algorithms and AI was manifested.

Finally, mass-oriented media possess the intrusive power to influence decision-making, emotions, and subject actions. Likewise, the relationship between politics and *mass media* is linked to power groups, where the owners of the media—who are usually entrepreneurs or large corporations, as well as the state—seek to defend their own interests, by justifying their actions through the narrative produced by the information offered in the media broadcast.

In this way, it affects the mind of the subjects, generating more impact on the social environment and reality. Moreover, the relationship between *mass media* and politics corresponds to a propaganda model, where the economic profits of the media are mostly due to advertising. On the other hand, a narrative is constructed about whom to blame the evils of the State, thus generating an emotionalization process in the subjects.

Thus, with the advent of digital media and the linking of politics with social networks, a *marketing* model is created around emotions, so that the information received responds to individual interests and can modify behavior and directly affects the ability to decide. The population is in a state of vulnerability, since these are the means by which the highest percentage of people are informed. In this way, a psycho-political control is generated, directly affecting the autonomy in the deliberation of the subjects, since the thoughts, the positions and the forms of political organization are configured to a great extent by the use of the different communication tools to which the individuals are exposed.

Notes

1   British company offering data acquisition, predictive analytics, audience perspective and digital advertising services. It worked from 2013 to 2018: https://cambridgeanalytica.org would later become Emerdata https://www.emerdata.org
2   The first is a Spanish company that creates profiles of people using the data they share on social networks, so that later this data is used by the companies that buy it (https://xeerpa.com). The other is a San Francisco-based company that offers data management for *marketing* purposes (https://www.acxiom.com).
3   Instant messaging platform created in 2013, provides cloud data hosting and allows audio and video streaming (https://web.telegram.org).
4   Communication agency established in 2010. From a popular point of view, it is evident the political and social materiality of Colombia (https://www.colombiainforma.info).

Support and financial support of research

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259
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261
Φ