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MANUFACTURING OF CONSENT IN THE HYPER-INFORMATION AGE

Abstract

Almost 35 years since the publication of Herman and Chomsky's Manufacturing Consent, the world has undergone significant transformations. For the authors, power appears in an interaction between the (media) corporate and state-political structures, which maintain the status quo, promote desired changes, or limit the undesirable aspirations in the public sphere. Power no longer has a unique possessor in the form of a state-political repressive apparatus. Rather, results from the interaction of multiple forces, while truth is a thing of this world, produced by means of multiple forms of limitation, as Foucault wrote in "Power/Knowledge". Manufacturing of consent is attributed to the mass media and the propaganda model within which media create a partial picture of open issues, prevent the availability of alternative approaches, and select materials for publication in accordance with the dominant political structure. Such a model of power functions under the condition of control over mass media and publishing in general. This paper contributes to the understanding of changes caused by the technical and digital shift that has (potentially) enabled each individual to become a publisher and directly participate in shaping the public sphere. With the flood of publishing on social networks and portals, the issue of control over published content and availability of alternative approaches has turned into its opposite. The problem is no longer how to break the media-corporate blockade, but how to block the entry of "alternative facts", fake news and obscene attitudes into public sphere via algorithm. The review of the relevant literature, research results from secondary sources, and quantitative indicators of modern electronic media usage reveal the extent of the transformation of modern society. Results show that, with information coming to the fore, meaning slips into the background, and the intrusion of the private into public space results in gradual dissolution of both private and public spheres.

Keywords: hyper-information, media environment, manufacturing consent, power, propaganda*;*

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Introduction

Citation styles for *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* offer an elementary and yet crucial insight. They all contain different forms of the same essential information: author(s), year of publication, book title, place of publication and publisher. For example, the APA style (6th ed.) used here states: "Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media. New York: Pantheon Books". The date and place of publication is the crucial information our research will focus on, due to the fact that time and space frame the crucial elements of the book in a specific spatio-temporal manner. In 1988, floppy disk is *the* medium, the Netherlands is the first European country to get access to the internet,[73] and the relations between the USA and the Soviet Union are intensifying and relaxing. The world is entering a phase of intense communication, and authoritarian practices of governments seem to be coming to an end[74], pressured by growing, technically supported transparency and an unprecedented level of access to information. This is a radically simplified view of the world in 1988, from the Western, liberal-democratic perspective. Within this world, politics as a struggle for power is happening in ways that elude the clear understanding and the presupposed transparency of government.

The book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* offers one possible take on the issue of power in the USA's democracy in 1988. Narrowing the research scope to the democratic type of political organization is crucial due to the fact that: "It is much more difficult to see a propaganda system at work where the media are private and formal censorship is absent" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, 1). Dictatorships and authoritarian forms of government ensure public support by using all available elements of force. Democratic societies, on the other hand, need

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73   https://www.uts.edu.au/news/campus-community/18-things-happened-1988;   retrieved 21.11.2022.

74   Such presupposed triumph of Western liberal democracy impelled political scientist Francis Fukuyama to conclude in 1989 that we have reached the moment of: "not just (...) the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: That is, the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government". If such a naïve conclusion can be attributed to overzealous infatuation with the apparent end of bipolar political organization, the same conclusion repeated by Fukuyama in October 2022 in *The Atlantic* deserves a more detailed explanation.

to obtain or gain public support in less forceful, but equally efficient ways. The process of gaining public support is hard to notice and especially difficult to understand because "the media actively compete, periodically attack and expose corporate and governmental malfeasance, and aggressively portray themselves as spokesmen for free speech and the general community interest" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, 2).

In an ideal understanding of democratic societies and their fundamental conditions, mass media act as a kind of an unbiased mediator that mirrors the social realities and public opinion, deals with public issues, clearly and objectively elaborates state policies, crucial events and standings to the electorate, and makes sure that state, public or private structures do not act contrary to law and public interests. The crucial principles of democracy are conditioned by the notion of a rational and reasonably informed electorate, so:

> "Leaders of the media claim that their news choices rest on unbiased professional and objective criteria, and they have support for the contention within the intellectual community. If, however, the powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed, to see, hear, and think about, and to "manage" public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns, the standard view of how the system works is at serious odds with reality" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, 2)

On the level of epistemology, Herman and Chomsky are following a typical rationalist and logicist assumption and apriorism, by which informing people or introducing them to facts and true information necessarily results in rational and logical decisions.[75] Their theoretical framing is deeply rooted in critical theory and Marxist critique of capitalism. According to Marx's basic assumption in *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1999), "The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of nonworkers in the form of property in capital and land, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labor power." What we see in

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75   It comes as no surprise that the short note on *rationalism* in Croatian Encyclopaedia (Hrvatska enciklopedija, 2021) ends with the mention of Noam Chomsky. Although widely disputed, the idea that the mind contains *a priori* categories, which precede experience and determine the structure of language and the way of thinking was preserved in his works.

Manufacturing Consent is an application of Marxist critique to a new form of capitalist (information-based) economy.

Economy of the industrial age was (and still is) rooted in factories and machines as means of mass, serial production. Taking into consideration the technological basis as a decisive factor for economy, politics and social organization, Marx understandably points his critique towards the owners of the means of production that are characteristic of the time and space, as well as towards the instrumentalization of work which, as a consequence of specific technological basis, became a mere means to an (capitalist) end. Herman and Chomsky follow the same logic, adjusting it to the space and time of a new economy. In the age characterised by information as a central economic and social value, as well as digital technology as a new technological paradigm, critique must focus on information and communication (mass media) technology as means of production of the central economic value, and the owners of the technology in question. The powerful no longer manage the relations of power by owning the machines and factories, which are mostly outsourced from developing countries with cheap labor. Respectful of the new, information based, digital economy, they do it by fixing the premises of discourse and deciding what the general populace is allowed to see, hear, and think, according to Herman and Chomsky. Their proposed propaganda model is therefore an old model adopted for a new technological, information, communication and media dominated social, economic and political environment. The outsourced[76] machines and factories are simply replaced by media corporations as a new co-locus of power: in an information-based economy, information is power and those who produce, collect, distribute and control the information are the powerful.

It is clear that control over the means of production and distribution of information is a prerequisite for the propaganda model. If the powerful have the ability to control the information and facts that enter the public sphere, they produce, control, influence and manage the *truth* of public opinion. As Foucault had put it, power no longer has a unique possessor in the form of a state-political repressive apparatus, but results from

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76   In a sense in which space and time are intrinsically influenced by technology (McLuhan, 2014; Stiegler, 1998, 2008, 2010), it can be argued that industrial, factory-based mass production does not construct the same space and time as information-based, digital, hi-tech production. Real-time of the computational technicity further masked the spatial and temporal discrepancies.

the interaction of multiple forces, while "truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint"[77] (Foucault, 1980, 131). The main problem of developed, information-oriented western societies in 1988 is therefore the production, availability and control of information. Following this logic, it is not surprising that, for Herman and Chomsky, mass media became the new stage of the power struggle between the (information) moguls and paupers. After all, rational and logical members of the public only need to be reasonably informed, and the world will become a union of free people, as proposed by Hegel, who regards history as an intelligible process moving towards the realization of human freedom (Hegel, 1975) and as misinterpreted not once, but twice by Fukuyama (1989, 2022).

As the means of production, distribution and control of information in democratic societies, the media do not need to be coerced into cooperation with the ideological state apparatus and corporate power structures. They are an integral part of the system, crucial for its functioning, as stated by Miliband in *Politics and Legitimation* (2013). For Herman and Chomsky, power in liberal democracies resides in an interaction between the (media) corporate and state-political structures, which maintain status quo, propagate desired changes, or limit undesirable aspirations in the public sphere. Blurring the distinction between private and public spheres of influence, the authors state that:

> "A propaganda model focuses on this inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, 5).

Manufacturing of consent is attributed to the mass media and the propaganda model within which media control the information and facts, create a partial picture of open issues, prevent the availability of alternative approaches, and select materials for publication in accordance with the dominant political structure.

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77   Chomsky was, of course, well aware of Foucault's work, and his 1971 debate with Foucault clearly shows the similarities and discrepancies between the two. For Croatian translation, see: *Razgovor: Chomsky – Foucault*; Tvrđa, 2004, 1/2, p. 135-172. Reviewed and translated by Višeslav Kirinić.

This is the baseline of the understanding of Power in Western, democratic societies presented in the book. The understanding is far from original, as it follows a well elaborated theoretical framework extending from Marx to the Frankfurt school and critical theory, and further on to more contemporary critiques. The derivative nature of the propaganda model is even more obvious when compared to Walter Lippmann's works, especially his book *The Public Opinion*, which explicitly discusses *manufacturing* and *creation of consent* (Lippmann, 1997, 248). Turning the attention to the time and place of publication, we see that the book was published in 1922 by New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, or 66 years before Herman and Chomsky reused Lippmann's phrase. Further analysis shows that the reuse or recycling does not end on the level of term *manufacture of consent*. In *The Public Opinion*, Lippmann addresses the issues of the inability of journalists to understand the news and transfer it correctly, the role of the media in presenting information, the nature of public opinion in a democracy and its influence on public issues, as well as the paradoxes of majority rule (Lippmann, 1997). These issues remained at the centre of his attention during 60 years of his career. As emphasized in the introduction to the 1997 edition of *Public Opinion* by Michael Curtis, in 1959 Lippmann was still wondering how the public should know which of the facts about a certain issue are important and relevant, and repeated the conclusion that it requires a specialized inquiry by trained minds. Sharing his thoughts with Columbia University students in 1969, he said that modern reporters, even though more sophisticated and educated than in 1922, were still not prepared for the complex and chaotic reality which they reported about. In a 1919 letter to Ellery Sedgwick, he wrote that "freedom of thought and speech presents itself in a new light and raises new problems because of the discovery that opinion can be manufactured" (Blum, 1985).

At the beginning of the 20th century, there was no doubt that *truth* and the news presented by the press were not synonymous. Lippmann's remarks came as a result of direct experience. Although criticizing it later, he had worked with the CREEL Committee (Funk, 1994), which tried to influence the public opinion by censoring anti-war information and producing all sorts of pro-war materials (magazines, pamphlets, movies and cartoons), and to finally manufacture the consent for the entry of USA into WW in 1917. In a 1919 letter to Oliver Wendell Holmeson, he said

he was "deeply troubled" (Blum, 1985) by his work on public opinion and theories of popular government.

Thanks to direct insight, he regarded the press, propaganda, and censorship as limiting the access to truth. In *Liberty and the News* (2020), he criticized newspaper owners as mostly self-proclaimed defenders of the truth, who are interested in the news not so much for the reason of objective presentation to the public as for financial or ideological reasons. News reporters and journalists are also criticized because their stories are inaccurate and unreliable, as a result of their inability to understand the complex reality. On the lines of rationalist argumentation, he saw the solution in disinterested, unbiased and dispassionate reporting, which will allow the Americans to live deliberately, to be well-informed, and to substitute stereotypes and tradition with purpose.

> "We can no longer treat life as something that has trickled down to us. We have to deal with it deliberately, devise its social organization, alter its tools, formulate its method, educate and control it. In endless ways we put intention where custom has reigned. We break up routines, make decisions, choose our ends, select means…." (Lippmann, 1985).

Governed by majority consent, democratic systems are based on decisions of an electorate. "When the manufacture of consent is an unregulated private enterprise" (Lippmann, 2020), the consent being manufactured is endangered by particular, private interests. Lippmann felt that the solution was in better trained journalists and the creation of an independent research organization that would provide accurate, unbiased information. Since (a) ordinary citizens can no longer rationally perceive layered political problems, because the mass media, due to their speed and conciseness, produce slogans instead of interpreting events, and (b) people do not rationally perceive the realities around them and they are not reasonably informed, it is (c) the duty of intellectuals to help them reach rational conclusions on important issues by manufacturing consent. The idea is simultaneously inspiring and haunting, which Lippmann clearly states.

It is clear that Lippmann addressed all of the issues and elements of propaganda model 66 years before Herman and Chomsky reused it, and it is clear that the propaganda model presented in the *Manufacturing Consent* is as original as its Marxist and Frankfurt School inspired theoretical

framework. Herman and Chomsky appropriate and utilise Lippmann's model of propaganda, but at the same time they unfortunately exclude his theoretical frame in favour of the Marxist agenda. This is unfortunate, because Lippmann's theoretical frame seems far more useful and far less ideologically constrained.

Lippmann claimed that "the world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight and out of mind because it has to be explored, reported and imagined by others" (Lippmann, 1998, 29). Public opinion is the result of the pictures inside the heads of these others being acted upon by groups of people, or individuals acting in the name of groups. This is, however, just the first, elementary level of limitation in our access to essentially second-hand facts, the truth and freedom that (rationally necessarily) follows, resulting from the representative nature of a mediated political and social reality. It is also a benign limitation because it seems to have an easy solution, proposed by Marx and followed eagerly by rationalist leftist theorists, including Chomsky. If the power is in the hands of those controlling the means of production, all that needs to be done is the (re)appropriation of those means as the source of inequality, class differentiation, pauperisation and modern-day (industrial) slavery. The results of such attempts are well known: simply put, whoever takes control of the means of production immediately (meaning: without mediator or directly!) appropriates power by becoming the controller of means of production and the Marxist (as well as common-sense) power equation proves to be true, even at the cost of Marxist, anti-capitalist programme.

Unlike Herman and Chomsky, Lippmann has a far less naïve approach. Crucial factors which limit our access to the facts, even before any attempt had been made to manipulate them, have to do with inherent and almost a priori weak spots of human cognitive functions[78]: (a) artificial censorships, (b) limitations of social contact, (c) comparatively meagre time available in each day for paying attention to public affairs, (d) distortion arising

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78   Behavioural economics explained human decision-making process in real-life situations. Generally put, it seems that decisions are mostly based on biases, stereotypes and other non-rational generalisations. The universality of human tendency towards self-confirmation is one of the reasons why behavioural economist Daniel Kahnemann won his Nobel Prize in economic sciences in 2002. Challenging and countering several basic assumptions of traditional economic theory and, among others, the (Chomskyan, inherently rationalist) presupposition that people make rational choices based on their self-interest, Kahnemann (and Tversky) showed that people often fail to fully analyse situations where complex judgments are required.

because events have to be compressed into very short messages, (e) the difficulty of express a complicated world with limited vocabulary, and (f) the fear of facing those facts that would seem to threaten the established routine of our lives (Cultural Apparatus, 1999). The idea that the problem of power, truth or freedom lies in the hands of external agents is secondary to the problem of individual, personal ability to understand the reality and act deliberately and rationally. In other words, the idea that the problem of power in mass media, information-based society can be reduced to the ownership of media and advertising campaigns (propaganda) is a serious simplification, typical of rationalist, abstract, model-oriented approaches, such as Herman and Chomsky's. Taking into consideration the allure of rationalist and ideological simplifications, Lippmann addressed the issue in 1914:

> "The sense of conspiracy and secret scheming which transpire is almost uncanny. "Big Business," and its ruthless tentacles, have become the material for the feverish fantasy of illiterate thousands thrown out of kilter by the rack and strain of modern life. It is possible to work yourself into a state where the world seems a conspiracy and your daily gong is beset with an alert and tingling sense of labyrinthine evil. Everything askew—all the frictions of life are readily ascribed to a deliberate evil intelligence, and men like Morgan and Rockefeller take on attributes of omnipotence, that ten minutes of cold sanity would reduce to a barbarous myth…." (Lippmann, 1985).

One sane look at classical representations of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, such as Pierangelo Pirak's animation (2017), which Chomsky found "brilliantly done" (The Listening Post, 2018), reveals the mythical tentacles, evil intelligence and omnipotent conglomerate of the state apparatus and media corporate powerhouses announced as simplifications by Lippmann in 1914. To be clear, Lippmann was "deeply troubled" by the possibilities of manufacturing or creation of consent as mentioned above, but his primary concern were the cognitive limitations of media owners, journalists and individual consumers of the media. His problem were the biased and stereotypical ill or uninformed. Herman and Chomsky's problem were essentially perfectly rational, but disinformed. Obviously aware of the abovementioned paradox of power, Lippmann resisted the temptation of rationalist simplification and the naïve idea that

the (re)appropriation of (media) means of production (of information) will solve the problem of cognitive limitations. Unfortunately, Herman and Chomsky did not.

Equally unfortunately, Herman and Chomsky published *Manufacturing Consent* in 1988, at the turning point of technological paradigm. An economist (Herman) and a linguist and activist (Chomsky) for the obvious reasons failed to take into consideration the technical aspect of the media. As naively as with ideological framework, they could not help but follow the sociological, institutional and organizational meaning as the crucial element of the media, disregarding completely the physiological, physical and technical aspect (Biti, 2000). Lippmann did not. Explaining the un-information, among other things, by the technical limitation or compression of messages and vocabulary to make them fit (or simple enough) for the technically limited media, he showed a clear understanding of the complex nature of the media, sowing the seeds for McLuhan's provocative and inspiring conclusion that "medium is the message" (McLuhan, 2014, 7). However, Herman and Chomsky's disregard for the technical (media) paradigm did not come as a result of ignorance of media theory or an unfortunate time and place of publication. The disregard is the result of self-confirmation bias, to borrow a term from behavioural economy.[79] Disregard for the crucial elements of media (political, economic, social) environment stems from the need to confirm the validity of the proposed propaganda model, as well as the basic theoretic (Marxist, critical theory) assumptions built into the model. Due to his fundamentally rationalist standing, Chomsky sees failures of judgement as a result of external manipulation and disinformation of the otherwise rational, logical citizens. Due to his Marxist theoretical motivation, he sees the solution to the issue of power in the (re)appropriation of (media) means of production (of information), controlled by the power elites. For that matter, the manufacturing of consent in Herman and Chomsky's book has less to do with

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79   Instead of basing their conclusions on analysis, people often make decisions using rules of thumb and ground their decisions on factors such as fairness, past experiences and aversion to losing, which economists traditionally do not take into consideration. Biases such as anchoring, availability heuristic, bandwagon effect or self-confirmation bias which Chomsky describes while reducing the influence of the internet on propaganda model to bubble argumentation are equally present in everyone's (even Chomsky's) decision-making processes, regardless of the medium being used. If malevolently used as inherent and unavoidable flaws in the human decision-making design, biases can be amplified and exploited as vessels for all kinds of ideological and corporative apparatuses, which undoubtedly calls for further investigation.

media than with confirming the a priori Marxist, anti-capitalist model of power. In any other case, Herman and Chomsky would take into consideration the revolutionary break in normal technology (communication, science, economy, politics) and a paradigm switch deserving of Kuhn's theoretical framework (Kuhn, 1970).

Technological tipping point

When it comes to time and place of publication as the two categories crucial for the research, it's quite clear that *Manufacturing Consent* was published in a challenging time for classical, rationalist concepts in the field of media and communications. Mirroring and possibly enabling the disintegration of one form of political framework that governed the world since WWII, media as a technological framework was shedding its analogue skin in favour of digitally, binary coded resetting, supported by information and communication technology, but the consequences of this paradigm shift were still incomprehensible.[80] In 1989, just a year after the publication of *Manufacturing Consent*, the World Wide Web was established, and the information and communication paradigm was revolutionized, bringing about essential differences in creating, collecting, organizing, interpreting, storing, searching, spreading, transforming and using information and knowledge.

Classical gatekeeping, the propaganda model elaborated by Herman and Chomsky (1988, 1 – 35), covers a typical analogue, publisher-controlled media environment, claiming that the "raw material of news" gets processed by a series of five interrelated filter constraints (Klaehn, 2002, 17 (2)), "leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print".

Gatekeeping model is classic in the sense that it refers to Lippmann's 66-year-old insights, predating the digital, ICT media ecology of the 1990s, without taking into consideration the influence of www, which brought about the contemporary digital, hyper-information media framework. For that matter, just one year made a critical difference in

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80   It could be claimed that the disintegration and reshaping of the political framework resulted from the substantial change in (media) technology. In his 1962 work, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, McLuhan elaborates on that exact idea. For more contemporary discussions on the topic, see Bernard Stiegler.

understanding the media. As the year when *Manufacturing Consent* was published, 1988 proved to be the end of a (political, economic, technological and social) era, and the *publication* of World Wide Web in 1989 made the book obsolete before it even entered the serious scientific and popular circulation. The fact that the main concepts of the book and propaganda model were elaborated 66 years earlier by Walter Lippmann did not help.

In an interview held on March 13th, 2018 and published under the title *Still manufacturing consent*, Alan MacLeod discussed with Chomsky the relevance of propaganda model in the age of Google, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Defining the internet and the social media as the biggest difference between the time of publication of *Manufacturing Consent* and the present, MacLeod pointed out several important quantitative indicators, relating to media environment in 2016 (MacLeod, 2019).

After hearing the statistics, Chomsky's comment was very clear:

> "I don't think the Internet and social media changes the propaganda model at all. The propaganda model was about the major media institutions and they remain, with all the social media and everything else, the primary source of news, information and commentary" (Macleod, 2019).

Since most of the news on social media and digital platforms comes from major media, Chomsky sees no change in the news media landscape, and the propaganda model remains equally relevant and valid. "If you look at the news on Facebook, it comes straight from the major media. They don't do their own investigations". In fact, he continues, "Ed and I did a second edition of *Manufacturing Consent* about 16 years ago (2002) and we talked about the Internet and whether to write anything about it and we decided just to leave it alone". Taking into consideration the characteristics of a new, hyper-information media environment and the complete disregard of its characteristics by Herman and Chomsky, it seems fair to say that if the theoretical outdatedness did not bury the book, the revolutionary technological paradigm shift undoubtedly did.

Hyper-information media environment

The disregard for the Internet and social networks as potential challengers of propaganda model is an over-simplification by Herman and Chomsky, which points to the need to confirm the validity of the propaganda model and its theoretical foundations. If nothing else, it does not take into consideration the interactivity of internet as a medium, the opened feedback loop and engagement as a targeted, traffic-pushing reaction.

Internet is, for Chomsky, just an outlet for the content generated by major media publishers, which makes it insignificant in any investigation regarding the viability of the propaganda model. Social media are interesting only in the sense in which they create bubbles, due to the fact that "People tend to go to things that just reinforce their own opinions", which Chomsky readily admits (Macleod, 2019). The reasons for excluding internet and social media from further investigation within the framework of propaganda model could not be more clearly stated.

Social media bubbles are result of the algorithm-driven and potentially threatening filtering process, making its influence in a hyper-information media environment an unavoidable part of evaluating the manufacturing of consent. The term hyper-information points to a media environment overloaded with information to such an extent that information loses its purpose of reducing uncertainty. 500 hours of video material gets uploaded to YouTube every minute, which translates to 30.000 hours per hour (Statista, 2022). Even if 99% of the uploaded content is not a life-changing scientific or artistic masterpiece, some of it does have the potential to broaden the views of the public. For instance, the three-hour documentary *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* (Achbar, Wintonick, 1992) uploaded to YouTube in 2017 was seen by 7.380.638 people, which is a reach not even Chomsky can neglect. The term also follows Baudrillards concept of hyperreal(ity):

> "The realm of the hyperreal (e.g., media simulations of reality, Disneyland and amusement parks, malls and consumer fantasylands, TV sports, virtual reality games, social networking sites, and other excursions into ideal worlds) is more real than real, whereby the models, images, and codes of the hyperreal come to control thought and behavior" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2019).

In the hyper-real world, objects are in a state of "ecstasy", of seemingly endless proliferation and expansion. Such objects are outside of or beyond themselves: the beautiful as more beautiful than beautiful in fashion, the real more real than the real in television, sex more sexual than sex in pornography (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2019).

Whatever the quality or relevance of the information, the quantity of data available on the internet is a frightening fact because it radically questions the ability of ordering, organizing and understanding such a quantity of information. In a hyper-information environment, information is ecstatic: the information as more informative in hypertext, available as more available in www, knowledgeable as more knowledgeable on the internet. In a world where information is everything, meaning is retreating and "Information devours its own contents; it devours communication and the social…" (Baudrillard, 1983).

So the circle closes: from Lippmann's un-informed, over Herman and Chomsky's dis-informed to Baudrillard's hyper-informed. If information and facts were crucial, Fukuyama would be right. It seems, however, that they are not and that he is hyper-wrong.

Conclusion

The technological paradigm switch and the ever-accelerating development of ICT feeds the optimism in all segments of society. We create and share more knowledge than ever, reach each other across the globe simultaneously, and create complex models based on unimaginable amounts of big data, which enables us to predict the elements of future more clearly than ever. If there is power in such world, it surely must be the power of technology, calculation, facts, information and knowledge. And yet, as the research shows, Herman and Chomsky claim that their 1988 propaganda model is still in operation, and actually gains relevance. Even though the switch in technological paradigm changed the economy, politics, science, art and society in general, they claim that nothing has changed in the way power is being upheld. The research also shows that their propaganda model is far from original, and that they selectively recycled Walter Lippmann's 1922 concept of manufacturing of consent, deliberately omitting the parts that did not fit the underlying Marxist, anti-capitalist and critical

theoretical framework. Following the classical Marxist power equation, Herman and Chomsky simply replaced the industrial era means of production with information era (mass media) means of production, claiming that in the information-oriented society powerful have the power because they control the production, distribution and access to information. Problems with their interpretation of Lippmann's inspiring concept do not stop at the level of selective recycling and mixing it with outdated and unusable social and economic concepts. Their interpretation seriously simplifies Lippmann's insights, disregarding completely the role of individuals in the information-based power game. Lippmann knew that the problem with information and facts was not primarily in their availability, but in the cognitive limitation of persons receiving it. Crucial factors which limit our access to the facts, even before any attempt had been made to manipulate them, have to do with inherent and almost a priori weak spots of human cognitive functions, explained later on by behavioural economics. While Lippman considers the technical aspect of media and creates the basis for McLuhan's later conclusion that "medium is the message", Herman and Chomsky completely disregard the technical aspect, because it challenges their model and its theoretical basis. By disregarding the technical aspect, they disregard the new, hyper-information media environment, and fail to recognize that Lippmann's uninformed, their dis-informed and Baudrillards hyper-informed people share similar problems because access to information and facts is obviously not the solution.

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PROIZVODNJA PRISTANAKA U HIPERINFORMACIJSKOM DOBU

Sažetak

Gotovo 35 godina od objavljivanja Manufacturing Consent Hermana i Chomskog, svijet je prošao kroz značajne transformacije. Za autore, moć se pojavljuje u interakciji između (medijskih) korporativnih i državno-političkih struktura, koje održavaju status quo, promoviraju željene promjene ili ograničavaju nepoželjne težnje u javnoj sferi. Moć više nema jedinstvenog posjednika u obliku državno-političkog represivnog aparata i dolazi kao rezultat interakcije višestrukih sila, dok je istina stvar ovoga svijeta, proizvedena pomoću višestrukih oblika ograničenja, kako piše Foucault u "Moć/Znanje". Proizvodnja pristanka pripisuje se masovnim medijima i propagandnom modelu unutar kojeg mediji stvaraju parcijalnu sliku otvorenih pitanja, onemogućuju dostupnost alternativnih pristupa i odabiru materijale za objavu u skladu s dominantnom političkom strukturom. Takav model moći funkcionira pod uvjetom kontrole masovnih medija i nakladništva općenito. Rad pridonosi razumijevanju promjena uzrokovanih tehničkim, digitalnim pomakom koji je (potencijalno) omogućio svakom pojedincu da postane izdavač i izravno sudjeluje u oblikovanju javne sfere. Poplavom objavljivanja na društvenim mrežama i portalima pitanje kontrole objavljenih sadržaja i dostupnosti alternativnih pristupa pretvorilo se u svoju suprotnost. Više nije problematično kako probiti medijsko-korporativnu blokadu, već kako algoritmom blokirati ulazak "alternativnih činjenica", lažnih vijesti i opscenih stavova u javnu sferu. Pregled relevantne literature, rezultata istraživanja iz sekundarnih izvora te kvantitativnih pokazatelja korištenja suvremenih elektroničkih medija otkrivaju razmjere transformacije suvremenog društva. Rezultati pokazuju da s izlaskom informacija u prvi plan značenje odlazi u drugi plan, a zadiranje privatnog u javni prostor rezultira postupnim rastakanjem privatne i javne sfere.

Ključne riječi: hiperinformacija, medijsko okruženje, proizvodni pristanak, moć, propaganda