

comprehensive support services and prioritizing collective care over retributive practices, this policy offers a promising pathway toward protecting lives and reinforcing the social bonds necessary for a truly democratic society.

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UDC 340

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Truth, freedom and algorithmic power in the post-truth age: an assessment from the perspective of foucault and actor network theory

Abstract

Traditionally, truth has long been regarded as a universal and objective category. However, in the post-truth era, it is seen that truth is shaped by beliefs, emotions and identities rather than being an objective reality. In this study, Michel Foucault's views on the relationship between knowledge and power and the Actor Network Theory (ANT) perspective are used to analyze the transformation in the post-truth era's conception of truth and freedom. It is shown that digital technologies invisibly manipulate individual choices and perceptions, especially through algorithms. It is argued that freedom is not only the right to choose, but also the way an individual perceives options. In this context, it is argued that freedom in the contemporary world needs to be rethought within technological actors and networks.

Introduction

This study focuses on the question of whether social media, which is indispensable for all of us in recent years, and the algorithms used by social media in the background, create a problem of freedom in our democratic or individual choices. Algorithms reinforce users' cognitive and social biases, making them vulnerable to manipulation. Platforms such as Facebook and Google have gone from being a neutral intermediary to becoming an important player that can

determine outcomes in public issues. This is because algorithms are roughly artificial intelligence systems that determine which content individuals will see and in which form.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the changing nature of truth by discussing the philosophical dimension of the concept of post-truth and to address the impact of algorithms, the technological tools of the digital age, on individual freedoms. The paper proposes a rethinking of freedom in contemporary society, in particular by combining Michel Foucault's views on the relationship between knowledge and power with the conceptual framework offered by Actor Network Theory.

1. *The Post-Truth Era: The Changing Meaning of Truth*

The age we live in is often referred to as "post-truth", a term that refers not only to the disregard of facts by individuals, but also to the process of constructing truth based on emotions and beliefs. According to Michel Foucault, truth consists of a structure produced by certain mechanisms of power: "Truth is produced within a society by certain institutions, and these institutions regulate the circulation and functioning of truth" (Foucault, 1980). In the post-truth era, these mechanisms operate in a more sophisticated way, especially through media and digital technologies.

2. *Technological Developments and Algorithmic Manipulation*

While technological platforms were initially conceived as neutral information tools, today their algorithms shape the flow of information to which users are exposed. algorithms reinforce cognitive and social biases, making individuals vulnerable to manipulation and thus limiting free will. In Foucault's words, "power is a process that not only prohibits but also shapes through the production of knowledge" (Foucault, 1975). The freedom of the individual depends not only on the ability to make choices, but also on how those choices are presented.

3. *The Role of Algorithms from ANT Perspective*

Actor Network Theory (ANT) emphasizes the active role of non-human entities (technology, documents, machines) in the social order.

As Bruno Latour puts it:

"Technology is not a static extension of society; it is an actor acting on its own and creating new social forms." (Latour, 2005)

In line with this theory, algorithms are not just passive tools, but actors that actively shape individuals' perceptions and preferences. Thus, freedom should be redefined within the framework of the dynamic interaction between the individual and technology.

4. *Conclusion*

In the post-truth era, individuals are not only bombarded with false and misleading information, but their intellectual and agency freedoms are gradually diminished by the invisible interventions of the technological infrastructures that enable the dissemination of this information. Tools such as social media algorithms, data mining, artificial intelligence-based content recommendation systems, and deepfake technologies have begun to determine not only what individuals consume, but also what they accept as truth. This situation blurs the boundaries of individual autonomy, forcing an update of philosophical questions about what freedom is and how it should be protected.

In this environment, where reality is no longer a fixed reference but is shaped by various centers of power, Michel Foucault's view that truth is constructed within

power relations provides a powerful theoretical framework for understanding the post-truth era. According to Foucault, knowledge is not an innocent projection, but a phenomenon that is always shaped and reproduced under the influence of certain forms of power. In this context, technological tools have become mechanisms of power that not only carry knowledge, but also play an active role in the production of knowledge itself.

On the other hand, theories that emphasize the influence of non-human actors, such as Actor-Network Theory (ANT), are of great importance in explaining the effectiveness of algorithms, bots, and software in social processes. The ANT approach treats technological objects not as passive tools, but as subjects with active roles in the formation of social reality. It shows that truth in the post-truth era is not only a matter of consensus among people, but also a process in which truth is produced in a complex web of relationships between human and non-human actors.

As a result, the post-truth era is not only an epistemological crisis, but also an era that requires a rethinking of fundamental philosophical concepts such as freedom, subject, power, and ethics. The technological apparatuses that bring about the structural transformation of truth have come to determine not only what individuals believe, but also how they think, how they behave, and what they are exposed to. Therefore, the protection and redefinition of freedom will be possible not only through individual consciousness or ethical sensibilities, but also through philosophical critique and regulation of technological systems.

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