

# Chapter 6

## Neofascism, Capitalist Structural Crisis, and Political Propaganda: A Reflection From Political Philosophy and the Critique of Political Economy

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This theoretical essay aims to: present a critical reflection on the characterization of populism in the reactionary right-wing movements and parties that have (re)emerged with greater intensity in the last two decades. We postulate that the most rigorous categorization is neo-fascism, since we have identified a process of fascistization due to the structural crisis of capitalism; from a historical point of view, the main contours of the political propaganda of Nazi-fascism; to approach the phase of neoliberal capitalism and its main transformations in terms of technological revolutions (4.0), subjectivity and rationality; articulate the issue of instrumental disinformation in neo-fascist political propaganda, the technological and lucrative role of Big Tech in this process and the role of algorithms in profiling and microtargeting, based on “digital colonialism” and “platform capitalism”.*

### **PREAMBLE**

A political leader came to power democratically elected, found a nation destroyed, and sought to recover its economy. In four years in office, he reduced unemployment from 6 million to 900,000, GDP grew by 102%, and per capita income doubled. His political and economic projects increased company

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profits by 2750%. He reduced hyperinflation and austerity macroeconomic policies. A ruler who loved music and painting. In 11 years, he increased the number of public libraries by 300%.<sup>1</sup>

If we present this description to any person, giving every guarantee that the information and data are factual, and ask them if they would be an efficient ruler, in the abstract, we can deduce that the answer would be positive. These are quite significant achievements and indicators. Other questions could be asked: who was this ruler? What kind of political regime was in place? What was the ideopolitical basis? What kind of impact did the government have on Western history? Or even, from the point of view of political propaganda: “Could many falsehoods and lies be inferred from telling only the truth?”

The *Geist* of this short *preamble* runs through our exposition, which will be taken up explicitly at certain points because it synthesizes various elements of the phenomenon that we propose to analyze in this theoretical-critical essay.

## INTRODUCTION

The very title of this text reveals how we identify the process of intensification and rise, in the West, of movements, parties, and governments of a non-moderate or traditional right, particularly after the “*Third Great Depression*” of 2007/2008 (Krugman, 2010; Ticktin, 2009). In this sense, we seek to present the socio-economic, political, and cultural elements that shape the historical nature of what we categorize as neo-fascism, based on the extensive academic debate on how to categorize this “type” of right-wing movements, both in its expression in the last century and in the present day - a moving historical phenomenon.

Based on the presuppositions of this characterization, we return to *the practices* of the phenomenon of Nazifascism<sup>2</sup>, outlining the main forms and types of political propaganda, how they used mass communication systems and media, that is, that is, on a large scale and using the great technological innovations of the time, especially radio and cinema. This implies a reflection on capitalism, communication, information, and the very categorization of political propaganda to critically analyze and articulate the historical experiences of fascism and neo-fascism, as well as the economic and technological conditions of today and their differences from the early 20th century. In other words, based on a comparative historical and political analysis, we will try to pinpoint the elements that we believe are essential in the process of discontinuity, continuities, and the “novelties” of the phenomenon that emerges within liberal-capitalist political regimes.

To this end, we present a characterization of the current phase of capitalism, therefore, the changes that occurred in the post-Fordist productive restructuring of the 1980s, what several authors call *neoliberalism* (W. Brown, 2019; Harvey, 2005; Rodrigues, 2022; Saad Filho, 2015), as well as the historical nature and types of crises we are experiencing (political and economic). Thus, after the 2008 crisis and the accelerated telematic process and computerization of socio-economic life, the current mode of social relations and production presents new developments, which scientists have put forward various conceptual hypotheses such as “platform capitalism” (Srnicek, 2019), “surveillance capitalism” (Zuboff, 2019), “communicative capitalism” (Dean, 2009), “data colonialism” (Couldry & Mejias, 2019c) and “digital colonialism” (Faustino & Lippold, 2023). The decisive point, in our view, is the fact that in this historical moment of *Technological Revolution 4.0*, (some are already pointing to 5.0), in which the introduction of new technologies is increasingly rapid and continuous, and therefore the shaping of *subjectivity* and

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