

Wacky adventure in the networks

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By Roberto Morejón

Judicial wars against political personalities and the poisoning of social networks with distortions and false news are becoming more and more common nowadays, with members of left-wing and progressive parties as favourite targets.

Many know of judicial wars in Argentina, for what happened to the now former vice-president Cristina Fernández; in Ecuador, for the persecution of Rafael Correa; and in Brazil, where Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva was removed from the arena to prevent him from participating in elections.

It also happened in Bolivia to pave the way for a coup d'état against President Evo Morales in 2019.

The Spanish, through campaigns by the extremist Vox party, and the Colombians, during last year's regional elections, are well aware of the poison in the networks.

As is almost always the case, judicial persecution and toxicity in the networks to unseat political contenders are accompanied by media support.

In Mexico, there are increasing reports of social media contamination to neutralise the push for the Morena coalition's presidential hopeful, Claudia Sheinbaun.

Such has been the hostile frenzy that the former head of government of Mexico City will file a complaint with the National Electoral Institute, as hundreds of thousands of automated apocryphal accounts, called bots, allude to her and the head of state as figures linked to drug trafficking.

The newspaper La Jornada alluded to an indictment against a former mayoral official for spending a large amount of money on the promotion of videos to misinform and dent the images of Morena, Sheinbaun and the Fourth Transformation, promoted by the head of state, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. So much money invested in paid advertisements and messages from dummy accounts implies substantial resources that could emanate from illicit sources.

In Latin American countries, where such dishonest processes have gained ground, there are increasing indications that the right and even foreign interests are resorting to any ploy to prevent the electoral victory of progressive antagonists or to undermine their administration when they come to government. If politics is played with fake audios produced with artificial intelligence, videos taken out of context and distorted polls, then one has to ask whether the electoral tournaments will be dominated by the debate of ideas or by negative and dirty campaigns.

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