

**Title:** Psychographic Profiles: A Digital Invasion of Self-Determination  
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The rise of psychographic profiles in advertising is generating a multibillion-dollar industry that drives the demand for a new, valuable commodity: personal information. Data companies construct digital profiles to draw inferences about an individual's values and personality--invaluable information for marketers. Consequently, the demand for demographics has been displaced by the more intimate revelations available in psychographics.

This study seeks to expose how the commodification of personal information in the data industry incentivizes an invasive race among companies that compromises consumer privacy at the information and decisional levels, an invasion that catalyzes the encroachment upon a fundamental human right: self-determination. The digital relationship between data companies and consumers emerges as a critical subject for reevaluation, which this research approaches with a hermeneutic focus that considers the perspectives of various modern philosophers.

Thomas Rickert's concept of ambience reveals the ontological digital space that develops when companies employ psychographic profiles to elicit the desired consumer responses. This unidirectional domination restricts consumers' potentiality for critical engagement. Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere calls for emancipation from such restrictions, advocating for social spaces that invite one's use of reason.

Hans-Georg Gadamer's attribution of expanded understanding to an active second party suggests that the critical component for the reshaping of digital engagement is the conscious, informed consumer. Increasing data transparency invites the consumer as an active second party to act and counteract the messages generated by psychographic profiles-- a shift that reshapes the digital space into one that welcomes critical engagement to preserve self-determination.

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