Diversionary Media Strategies and utilization techniques

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Abstract

In today's world, the media is a very incredible and powerful tool of disseminating information. Media is also referred to as the fourth pillar of democracy. This study explored how techniques and strategies affect the news and information, illustrated through examples and a case study, that media is influencing and shaping the world. These tactics of the media are not only misleading the general public due to lack of information, but also influencing the policymakers, and important decisions are also being influenced. This bias is prevailing in the media organizations, including the journalists, media owners, and management as well. Both traditional media and social media platforms are engaging in the practice of this biased and perception building. The public's lack of media literacy further hinders their ability to recognize stereotypes and harmful narratives, which in turn shapes public opinion and political discourse.

Keywords: Diversionary Media, Strategies, Diversionary, Distracting, Biased, Media Manipulation, Conflict, Dispute, Biased

Introduction:

 In today's media-saturated world, the power of spreading information is undeniable. News outlets hold the ability to share public opinion, influence policy decisions, and even ignite conflicts. Therefore, it is now being called the fourth pillar of democracy, after the legislature,

judiciary, and administration as it can not only inform but also mislead. It possesses the power to elevate certain issues while downplaying others, to portray individuals and groups in favorable or unfavorable lights, and to instill particular ideologies, thus educating people's minds.

However, the reliability of media in reporting news has come under question. There have been concerns regarding bias in daily news and the absence of a platform that provides people with fair and balanced news. The lack of media literacy adds to the power of media, where the viewers can be fooled because of their inability to decode media messages, and the media can hide the real issue. Hence, the media stands tall and continues to be influential.

With such an influx of information, where media represents all aspects of individual and collective life, it has become a part of our daily lives. People believe what they see in the media as facts and something of importance. Therefore, the questions then arise are: is the content that people are consuming accurate? Appropriate? Culturally favorable? Is it of our national interest? Is it enabling people or creating chaos? But people do not have the capability or the time to think or answer these questions. Media plays a significant role in human psychology, where it employs various tools to shape thought processes and public opinion. This article employs content analysis to examine the recent Israel-Palestine conflict as portrayed in international media. A primary concern is the potential for biased reporting and diversionary tactics, Research investigation revolves around three pivotal questions The article explores how, over the past few decades, science has given us a great deal of knowledge about the psychology of humans. The majority of people, however, do not have access to this data. The ordinary public is never exposed to more than a small portion of knowledge. All of this data is accessible to the ruling class, who are free to do with it as they like. It has been noted that ignorance facilitates the powerful to take control of social order. These media manipulation strategies aim to make the world into whatever the most powerful people on the planet want it to be. They restrict everyone's freedom and capacity for critical thinking.

Research Questions:

1. What are the techniques and strategies of media?

2. How are utilization techniques used in diversionary media strategies to distract the audience?

3. Does "The New York Times" newspaper manipulate the news reporting to mask the intensity of the Israel-Palestine issue?

Objectives:

The objective of this article is to identify the different strategies used by media to divert attention, examine the specific tactics employed within these diversionary strategies and understand how these strategies impact public perception and awareness through a case study.

Problem Statement:

Media is often regarded as a reliable source of information; it is equally skilled at diverting attention of the audience from critical issues and highlighting why and how the media manipulates and distracts the public from pressing concerns. By understanding these strategies, people can become more aware of the potential impact of media and can work towards media literacy for an informed society.

Techniques & Strategies of Diversionary Media

Strategies and techniques can be subtle or overt, but their underlying goal is to maintain control and influence. The most commonly used diversionary strategy in media
is used to divert the attention of masses from imperative issues, and these changes are
determined by the economic or political elites that are the most important aspect of social

control. Noam Chomsky, identified several techniques used by media outlets to achieve these goals. One of the technique was called the **"flooding" technique**, which involved overwhelming the public by creating constant disturbances with irrelevant information. Another tactic is the "problem-reaction-solution" strategy. Media outlets may create a problem or crisis, generate a public reaction, and then present a pre-determined solution that benefits a particular group or interest. This strategy can be used to manipulate public opinion and justify certain policies or actions. One more strategy that media uses is called the **"problem-reaction-solution".** This strategy involves creating a problem, generating a public reaction, and then presenting a solution that benefits a particular group or interest. Furthermore, the **gradual strategy** is about gradually introducing people to an idea that they would not have typically accepted, so that it is less noticed by the people. Involves introducing controversial ideas or changes gradually over time to make them more acceptable to the public. By presenting these changes as inevitable or necessary, media outlets can secure public acceptance at the time for future application. **Deferring** involves convincing the public that short-term sacrifices or negative consequences will lead to long-term benefits. **Normalization** encompasses the use of Normalization, where a certain idea or perspective is shown repeatedly and made to seem normal till it becomes acceptable. **Ignorance** is also one of the tools whose core objective of this strategy is to keep people misinformed. It involves giving people limited information and over-emphasizing certain useless information that limits their ability to make informed decisions and challenge dominant narratives. **Emotional manipulation** is another powerful tool used by media outlets in advertising. In this case, the masses are treated as children who are being introduced to ideas and have no power. Media plays with their emotional side and implants ideas, thoughts, perspectives and certain behaviors that they want the public to show. To keep the general population in a state of denial and irrelevance. Making the public uninformed about the technology and techniques used to regulate and enslave them, "Maintaining the public in a state of mediocrity and ignorance". The **"Self-blame Strengthen"** technique makes individuals feel responsible for their own problem instead of blaming the society. Media narratives encourage the public to assume that being ignorant, vulgar, and uneducated is acceptable. Letting individuals to bear

responsibility for their suffering due to a lack in intellect, skills, or efforts. Instead of fighting back against any economic system, individuals experience blame, resulting in depression, one of whose consequences are to impair their ability to work comes in "Self-blame Strengthen" technique. (Chomsky, 10 strategies of manipulation" by the media)

Media Bias and Objectivity

Journalists often uphold their ethical standard of 'objectivity,' and believe that their own prejudices, demands from sponsors and the owners of media do not affect their job, but the journalistic standard of objectivity is not the same as reality. It is divided into three components: "D-personalization," which states that media persons should not be overly expressive with their own judgment, views, or beliefs, "Balance" which consists of representing the point of view of both sides of a controversy without giving preference to one side; and "accuracy," which mandates that journalists correctly quote individuals and relay facts from sources.

However, research suggests that these principles are not always adhered to. Robert Parry, author of Fooling America, defines a well-funded plan in the United States to establish a conservative press. This includes everything from national radio talk shows to hundreds of attack journals, newspapers, blogs, newsletters, and appropriate opinion columns, as well as national cable television networks that promote challenging conservative values and ideologies, documentary makers that excel in subtle character assassination, and Mega-Buck publishing houses.

Many conservative groups produce their own magazines or television programs. Journalists from the mass media are hired to work with corporate-funded think tanks and public relations agencies. Conservative student newspapers and television programs, such as Milton Friedman's series Free to choose, which aired on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), were funded. Even public broadcasting services, such as PBS, have faced criticism because it received too much funding from oil companies to sponsor its services. (Beder)

These examples highlight the potential for media bias to be influenced by various factors, including funding sources, political affiliations, and personal beliefs. While journalists strive for objectivity, it is essential to critically analyze media content and consider the potential biases that may be present.

Rebecca Restani conducted research in which Twitter was taken as a tool of diversionary media strategy about the dispute of land between Bolivia and Chile that goes back to British decolonization. Considering Twitter as the most efficient, up-to-date source of information that has a direct link with its followers. Bolivia registered a case in the International Court of Justice appealing negotiations of access to the Pacific Ocean. In Bolivia, when the presidential popularity rating was going down, the land dispute was used as a tool to distract attention of people away from the domestic issues and raise popular approval, also known as the "rally-round-the-flag" effects widely discussed over the years. Content analysis was then conducted in order to find out the results. The number of tweets about the land conflict was compared to the overall statistic of tweets and the intensity of mentions of other foreign concerns in each consumer. (Restani, Rebecca, 2019)

Social Media as tool of Manipulation

Social media has also diverted the power of mainstream media into the hands of politicians. The dependence on Twitter by US President Donald Trump is remarkable, but the fundamental ramifications for agenda setting remain ambiguous. By managing U.S. President Trump as a case study, this article presents the evidence that his handling of Twitter deflects critical media (ABC News and The New York) from issues that may be detrimental to him. As the media coverage of the Mullar investigation case drew attention, Trump's tweets on irrelevant topics became more frequent. President Trump's tweets suspiciously draw attention away from the investigation. He barred the media from conferring on subjects that he finds treacherous for him. (Stephan Lewandowsky)

In recent years, deceptive content in internet news and social media has had a major impact on our culture. Svitlana Volkova and Jin Yea Jang conducted this research in 2018 through studying psycholinguistic messages: normative roots and connotations derived from various forms of misleading news ranging from strategic manipulation to propaganda and fabrications. In order to achieve a better understanding of the intention of the writer behind digital misinformation, experimental research was performed with data from (a) reported cases of misinformation in news summaries, (b) propaganda, hoax, and disinformation news accounts, and (c) social media news to ensure the accuracy of our conclusions and generalizations throughout realms.

Diversionary strategy is considered brilliant as well as beneficial in information control to the extent that in nearly all human discussion, an argument is barely a successful idea of deterring a conflicting debate. Leaving an argument to die or changing the subject usually works much better than choosing a dispute and having someone's back. It's also possible that the aim of reasoning in humans is primarily to win disputes rather than to resolve them by finding facts. This strategy further gains an advantage in lowering animosity in contrast to pondering on the same argument.

The Chinese government has long been accused of employing as many as 2 million people to secretly incorporate massive amounts of anonymous and ambiguous writings into the grid of legitimate social media posts, as if they were the authentic thoughts of common people. The individuals employed for this reason are formally referred to as "Internet commentators." (Gary King, Jennifer Pan, Margaret E. Roberts, April 9, 2017)

The concept of bogus news built up popularity after the 2016 US presidential election, but arguments lacked a simple conceptualization and used the label in various ways to identify different aspects. Rachel R. Mourão & Craig T. Robertson presented this paper in 2019, in which they evaluated fake news as genre blending, fusing the aspects of conventional news with attributes that are pointless to objective reporting, such as fabrication, sensationalism, clickbait, and prejudice. The fundamental objective of the research was to examine the features from fifty

websites tagged as "fake" news during the 2016 election as well as how they anticipated the outcomes of social media. Content analysis was conducted in order to generate the conclusion about the stories, classified as fake news, and related social media activities. The findings suggest that these sites are more engrossed in the prejudice veil of connotation than in creating falsities out of thin air. Repeated fabrications in the content were noticed, but most of the time the articles were generally true but partisan, it was also the content that brought the most attention to social media. To put it another way, the findings indicate that during the campaign, resentment towards the Democratic candidate, whereas no support for Trumph, was the agenda behind the sensational, partisan, and fake content. The majority of the material examined did not contain blatant lies but rather a mix of genres mixing reporting, entertainment, and viewpoint.

This analysis has a number of implications. First, it was discovered that exaggeration and sensationalism are not compensated for social media interaction, putting to rest concerns that brilliant, made-up tales are appealing to more views than factual information. In other words, headings like "The Pope stuns the world by endorsing Donald Trump" are definitely rare exceptions instead of the norm. Second, the connection among the power of bigotry and social media results in curvilinear; the reason being, it rises at a moderate level of bigotry, but as stories get more biased, it loses the power. This tells that, putting a layer of bigotry, the most effective tactic used by fake news outlets, is interpretation of true events. (Rachel R. Mourão, Craig T. Robertson, 2019).

Media Bias in Specific Conflicts

Media bias is like a spiral; it repeatedly moves in the same broad direction; it is not random. Some could argue that the public has at least some influence over the media's agenda. Although there may be heightened audience interest in connected news items in the instance of the Palestine-Israel conflict. Readers expect to discover stories with reputable and reliable information. Even in the case of keen public demand that shapes an agenda-setting framework,

such public-interest tales should be closely evaluated, as they will even more affect the public's perception of problem salience. (Caballero, 2010)

According to War without Mercy, slogans, songs, propaganda, disinformation, secret papers, Hollywood films, the mainstream media, and quotations from troops, officials, and politicians were all utilized to affect the perception of the Japanese people in the United States. (Kitano, May 25, 1986.) The subject of inadequacies in media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian issue has been discussed for many years by the public, conflict-related interest organizations, and various governments. For example, the panelists of the United Nations' Public Forum Supporting Middle East Peace in 2003 addressed the media coverage of the crisis and declared it as prejudiced, knowing that media coverage has a significant impact on public opinion. The significance of the appropriate language used in reporting, as well as the vocabulary usage by the news sources and the formation of stories, was also part of the agenda. (McTigue)

For many years, there has been a problem with media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. Experts have observed the journalists' prejudices in how they report on the particular issue. They also condemn the media's indifference to Palestinian culture, particularly when discussing it. (SCHWEITZER, 2011) One feature of the coverage is that the reports are frequently insufficiently detailed to properly describe difficulties. It means that certain portions of the story may be unavailable to the audience, who are sometimes hesitant to conduct more research and prefer to wait for knowledge to come without effort. One of the aims of the article is to find out more about this. The purpose of this analysis is to look at how western students perceive Israeli and Palestinian broadcasts.

Content Analysis of biased reporting of "The New York Times' regarding Israel-Palestine Issue: In order to analyze the diversionary media strategies by using orientalist critical discourse analysis, an old yet still enduring issue has been taken as a case study. One of the longest conflicts in contemporary history is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The consequences of its daily occurrences extend well beyond the parties involved, attracting the attention of millions of

people in various areas of the world. It is also incredibly violent, featuring murder, assassination, injury, home demolition, and incarceration on a regular basis. Foreign media has a long history of being biased in favor of the opposition. It will go to considerable measures to undermine the governing authority under the cover of journalistic freedom. (Zain)

Orientalism in Western Media:

According to the studies, there is an obvious orientalist prejudice in conventional US media coverage on Palestine. It is always in the favor of Israel and strongly biased. (Mearsheimer, John J., and Stephen M. Walt., 2007). In British coverage of the war, the Israeli perspective is depicted as the 'us' stance in the binary opposites system, whereas Palestinians are discursively depicted as 'them' or 'other,' especially in articles where Palestinian perspectives are omitted from the narrative. The abstraction of the current issue between Israel and Palestine's complicated history, as well as the reality that it may be rewritten by particular powers at specific times, are the signs of orientalist thinking. (Sabido)

Chomsky analyzes the sensitization of news concerning violence in Israel and Palestine in his chapter "Middle East Terrorism and the American Ideological System," frequently quoting the New York Times and condemning its uncritical respect for Israelis and unjustified demonetization of Palestinians. "Palestinians carry out terrorism, and Israelis respond, possibly too violently. The fact is frequently quite different in the actual world." (Chomsky, Middle East Terrorism and the American Ideological System. Essay, 2001)

Edward Wadie Said, a public intellectual, was concerned with the way the West represents the East in literature and the intellectual mindset. His book "Orientalism" discusses mainly the distinctions made by Western intellectuals to identify the East as a different entity. Edward Said (1978/2003) argues" that the idea of representation is a theoretical one. The Orient is the stage on which the East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role is to present the larger

whole form." He also investigates the differences between presence and re-presence. He argues that the East should be studied by its own intellectuals for the fact they are more aware of their community than an outsider (Orientalism, 1978). Edward Said demonstrates that "in any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence or representation."

Orientalism is an ideological framework that has been used in this study. This framework is used for studying prejudice in mainly Arab, Muslim countries, for example, Palestine. (Edward).

Orientalism therefore contributes to the development of a framework for analyzing bias in news coverage, which might include diversionary strategies like biased reporting, DE contextualization, and rhetorical devices. Other studies of systemic bias have used similar frameworks and found them to be valuable analytical tools. John Dower's book War without Mercy examines how Japanese people were treated and perceived throughout WWII. (Dower, 1986)
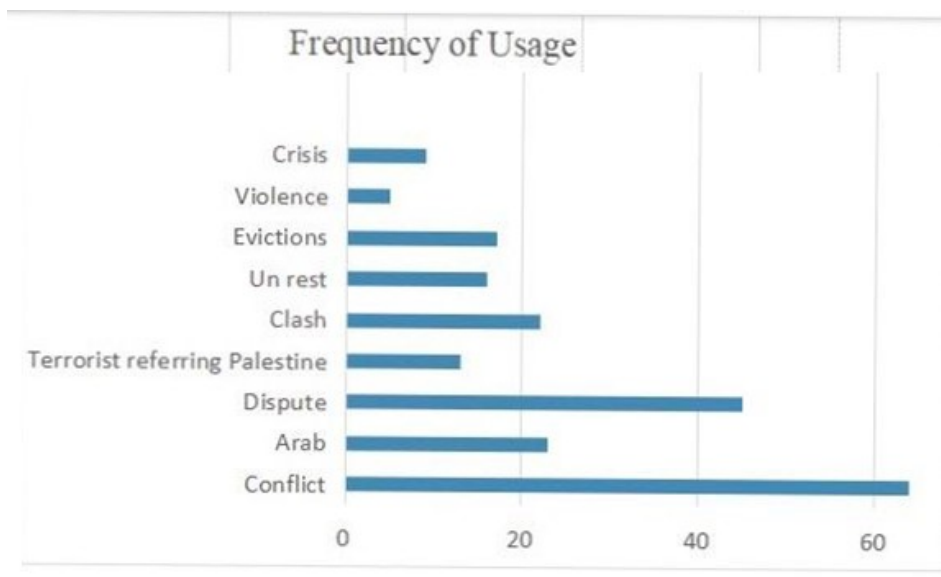
The diversionary media strategies mainly prejudice against Palestine in "The New York Times "of May, 2021

Literature Review:

Noam Chomsky identifies some strategies to understand the techniques used by Divisionary media, which are very effective and demanding. Diversionary Strategy is used to divert the attention of masses from imperative issues and these changes are determined by the economic or political elites and that is the most important aspect of social control by using the flood or flooding technique to create constant disturbances and irrelevant details. Keeping the public's focus distracted away from real social issues and captivated by trivial matters. Chomsky further explains about the "problem-reaction-solution." technique. It introduces a dilemma, or a "situation," in order to elicit a response from the audience, so this is the first of the steps you can take.

Journalists characterize their ethical standard of 'objectivity,' and believe that their own prejudices, demands from sponsors and the owners of media do not affect their job, but the journalistic standard of objectivity, on the other hand, is not the same as reality.it is divided into three components. "Depersonalization" states that media person should not be overly expressive with their own judgments, views or beliefs." Balance" consists of presenting the point of view of representatives on both sides of a controversy without giving preference to one side. "Accuracy", which mandates that journalist correctly quote individuals and relay 'facts' from sources.

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At first, they compared the lexical indicators of biasness, syntactic and stylistic cues, and connotations through disinformation styles such as misinformation, hoaxes and propaganda, as well as deceptive strategies such as falsification or misleading. Later, these observations were used to create machine learning and deep learning predictive models to identify deception techniques and forms of misleading news. Results of this study states that, unlike previous researches being done on deception detection, content having biased language indicators, normative foundations, and connotations rresults in stronger anticipating behaviour of deception strategies in association to syntax and stylistic signs. Hereafter, it's easier to identify falsification strategy as compared to misleading strategy whereas it is difficult to predict disinformation than hoaxes or propaganda. (Svitlana Volkova, Jin Yea Jang, 2018, April)

The diversionary strategy is considered brilliant as well as beneficial in information control to the extent that in nearly all human discussion, an argument is barely a successful idea of deterring a conflicting debate. Leaving an argument to die, or changing the subject, usually works much better than choosing a dispute and having someone's back. It's also possible that the aim of reasoning in humans is primarily to win disputes rather than to resolve them by finding facts. This strategy further gains an advantage in lowering animosity as contrasted to pondering on the same argument.

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into the grid of legitimate social media posts, as if they were the authentic thoughts of common people. The individuals employed for this reason are formally referred to as "Internet commentators." (Gary King,Jennifer Pan,Margaret E. Roberts, April 9, 2017)

Conclusion

The research delves into the broader impact of media bias on public perceptions, political decision-making, and international relations. By exploring the underlying factors that contribute to such biases within media organizations, the study highlighted the importance of promoting ethical journalism. One of the most prevalent diversionary strategies used by the media is distraction, shifting public attention away from crucial issues to trivial matters. This technique is evident in the over-coverage of insignificant topics, which obscures important issues, particularly in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The analysis of linguistic features and the use of negative and violent rhetoric revealed a consistent bias against Palestinians in media reporting, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and presenting a skewed narrative. These findings underscored the significant role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing political discourse. The persistent presence of Orientalist prejudice in prominent international media outlets highlights the need for ongoing critical scrutiny and accountability to ensure fair and balanced reporting. Without such measures, media bias will continue to distort reality and perpetuate one-sided narratives.

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