

Instagram's 'accidental' mishandling of pro-Palestinian content



Manufacturing Consent

Since its inception, mass media has played an undeniable role in shaping public opinion on various issues, particularly contentious ones. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky coined the concept of "manufacturing consent" to describe how dominant institutions, including mass media, shape public opinion and control the societal narrative in their scholarly 1988 book 'Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media'.

Through subtle manipulation and control,

these institutions create consensus or consent among the population for specific political, economic, and social agendas. By applying filters, selecting and framing news, emphasizing certain issues, and excluding alternative viewpoints, manufacturing consent shapes public perception, reinforces existing power structures, and suppresses dissenting voices.

Herman and Chomsky argue that the filters employed by mass media shape the news we consume, often resulting in biased cover-

age that serves the interests of power structures. Their incisive critique of the media's role in propagating dominant ideologies offers a comprehensive and thought-provoking understanding of the media as a social institution. Contrary to the common perception of news media as defiant, obstinate, and relentless in their pursuit of truth and justice, they actually defend the economic, social, and political agendas of privileged groups that dominate domestic society, the state, and the global order.

Drawing on extensive criticism and research, including case studies on the media's differential treatment of "worthy" and "unworthy" victims, Herman and Chomsky

propose a Propaganda Model to explain the media's behavior and performance. Their work provides a powerful assessment of the propagandistic nature of US mass media, their consistent failure to meet their self-image as providers of necessary information for understanding the world, and offers a radically new understanding of their function.

Following the Israel-Hamas war, it became evident that Israel and the US failed to "manufacture consent" through their traditional propaganda tactics using mass media. Instead, social media emerged as a new tool for the public to access information and make sense of the world. Pro-Palestine con-

tent challenging the accepted ideological stance of Israel and the US quickly spread on social media. Consequently, there was a need for censorship, employing the same filters used in legacy media, and other similar tactics to control the narrative.

It is not incorrect to assume that in our times, social media has replaced legacy media as the primary source of information for the public, as well as a potential tool for governments to "manufacture consent" for their policies and wars. Therefore, it is crucial for us to scrutinize how social media platforms behave during significant events, such as the ongoing brutal Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip.

