

Propaganda Model

Edward Herman & Noam Chomsky

Propaganda Model is criticizing of commercial media model at USA. But it can adapt many commercial media companies at different countries.

Propaganda is the manipulation of public opinion. In other words, media construct our opinions. Herman and Chomsky called this feature of media as «Manufacturing Consent»

The propaganda model predicts that corporate-owned news media will consistently produce news content that serves the interests of established power. And media manufacture our consents.

Propaganda model argues that “the raw material of news” passes through five filters that ultimately shape the news audiences receive.

These filters are: 1 Ownership 2 Advertising 3 Sourcing Mass-Media News 4 Flak 5 The Common Enemy

1 Ownership

Main stream media companies are large, profit-seeking corporations, owned and controlled by quite wealthy people.

Many of the large media companies are fully integrated into the market, and they are under the pressures of stockholders, directors, and bankers. Because many of media owner are indeed businessmen.

Many media owners have investment at many different kinds of business areas. Their interents, and business relations have strong effect on news production.

In other explanation there is a strong trend that media largely integrate into the market system. And they controlled by nonmedia companies.

Large media companies all do business with commercial and investment bankers, obtaining lines of credit and loans, and receiving advice and service.

Herman and Chomsky argue that many ‘family media companies’ turned to entities like non-media large companies. They called these kind of media as «giant media»

Another structural relationship of importance is the media companies’ dependence on and ties with government.

The great media also depend on the government for more general policy support. All business firms are interested in business taxes, interest rates, labor policies etc.

In sum, the dominant media firms are quite large businesses, and have important common interests with other major corporations, banks, and government. This is the first powerful filter that will affect news choices.

2 Advertising

Media costs a lot more than consumers will ever pay. With the growth of advertising, papers that attracted ads could afford a copy price well below production costs.

The advertisers' choices influence media prosperity and survival. News media can effort their production only with the money which come from advertisers.

The power of advertisers over mass media stems from the simple fact that they buy and pay for the programs, and news. They are the "patrons" who provide the media subsidy.

The choices of these patrons greatly affect the welfare of the media. Their requirements and demands manage the media.

Large corporate advertisers on television will rarely sponsor programs that engage in serious criticisms of corporate activities, such as environmental problems.

Advertisers want, more generally, to avoid programs with serious complexities, and they seek programs that lightly entertain.

3 Sourcing Mass-Media News

The media need a steady, reliable flow of the raw material of news. But they cannot afford to have reporters and cameras at all places where important stories may break.

Because of this reason the mass media have relationship with powerful sources of information. And these sources have effect on news media.

For example in USA; The White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department are powerful sources. News media need to these sources in order to gather raw stories.

On a local basis, city hall and the police departments are the subject of regular news sources.

Also, business corporations, businessmen, economic institutions, and trade groups are also regular and credible source of stories deemed newsworthy.

Government and corporate sources also have the great merit of being recognizable and credible by their status and prestige. This is important to the mass media.

Taking information from sources that may be presumed credible reduces criticism and costly research.

These sources provide the media organizations advance copies of speeches and forthcoming reports; they schedule press conferences at hours well-geared to news deadlines.

They write press releases in usable language; and they carefully organize their press conferences and "photo opportunity" sessions.

The media may feel obligated to carry extremely dubious stories and mute criticism in order not to offend their sources and disturb a close relationship.

Powerful sources regularly take advantage of media routines and dependency to "manage" the media, to manipulate them into following a special agenda and framework.

4 Flak

"Flak" refers to negative responses to a media statement or program.

It may take the form of letters, phone calls, e-mails, lawsuits, speeches other modes of complaint, threat, and punitive action. It may be organized centrally or locally, or it may consist of the entirely independent actions of individuals.

If flak is produced on a large scale, or by individuals or groups with substantial resources, it can be both uncomfortable and costly to the media.

Advertisers may withdraw patronage. Television advertising is mainly of consumer goods that are readily subject to organized boycott.

The ability to produce flak, and especially flak that is costly and threatening, is related to power.

Flak from the powerful can be either direct or indirect. For example, the direct would include phone calls from the White House to media institutions.

The governments are producers of flak, regularly assailing, threatening, and "correcting" the media, trying to contain any deviations from the established line.

5 The Common Enemy (Anticommunism)

The Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban revolutions counted as very important and devil enemies for state ideology. The discourse of state depended on anticommunism for many years.

This ideology helps mobilize the populace against an enemy. It can be used for anybody who act against the interest of governments and status quo.

As a strong control apparatus, anticommunism ideology played very important role in media agenda. This ideology effected USA news media till the decline of Soviet Union.

This filter (anticommunism) adopted to different countries' media environments by academicians. In the process of adaptation, the name of filter changed as «common enemy»

Like anticommunism, many states create devil enemies that threat the public security. And to be against to devil enemies turns into official ideology.

Official ideologies inevitably effect media agendas. Media try to adjust their discourse to official ideology of state. The notion of «common enemy» turns into a filter that effect news media messages.