Reflexive Control in the Israeli Digital Diplomacy of Normalization; Edy Cohen's Twitter Page, a case study

التحكم الانعكاسي في الدبلوماسية الرقمية الإسرائيلية للتطبيع ؛ صفحة التويترالخاصة بإيدي كوهين ، دراسة حالة

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Abstract: To alter reality and achieve legitimacy while preserving itself as an occupying power, Israel uses Digital Diplomacy (DD) to foster Normalization. This study examines unusual patterns of message tailoring using Propaganda as a Reflexive Control to affect Arabs' perception and manipulate their decision-making algorithms towards Normalization. A quantitative content analysis of Cohen's Twitter page is conducted to examine how political messages are created, supported, and contested using Reflexive Control (RC) processes and the use of its 4E Funnels to gauge the scope and intensity of Cohen's page disinformation campaign. Between August 15 and September 15, 2020, a month before the signing of the Abraham Agreement, 2598 Reflexive Control techniques tailored into 883 tweets and retweets, were scraped and analyzed. The results show that Cohen's page uses all RC techniques and the 4E Funnels intensively and simultaneously: "Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making (70.2%); a tactic flexibility of information weaponization; ""Affecting Perception by Providing False Information" (14.5%); a tactic flexibility; "Affecting the Timing of Decision-Making (10.4%); a tactic flexibility; and power pressure (5.0%), a tactic asymmetry of information weaponization. Using context analysis of the information environment and content analysis, the study found that the scope and intensity of Cohen's page disinformation campaign is high. The page scored high levels of dissemination and amplification depending on fake followers (31.6%). These findings have implications for the RC's plausible deniability, a tactical information asymmetry strategy.

Keywords: Reflexive control, propaganda, Israeli digital diplomacy, cyber warfare, Normalization.

المستخلص: في إطار عملها على تغيير الواقع واكتساب الشرعية دون أن تغير واقعها كقوة احتلال، تستخدم إسرائيل الدبلوماسية الرقمية لتعزيز جهودها للتطبيع. باستخدام منهج دراسة الحالة، سعت هذه الدراسة إلى فهم الكيفية التي تعكس بها صفحة إيدي كوهين أنماطًا غير عادية من تصميم الرسائل باستخدام الدعاية كعنصر تحكم انعكاسي لإدارة الإدراك العربي وإفساد خوارزميات اتخاذ القرار العربية نحو التطبيع. قامت الدراسة باستخدام التحليل الكمي لصفحة ايدي كوهين على توبتر لفهم كيفية إنشاء الرسائل السياسية ودعمها وتمريرها من خلال تقنيات التحكم الانعكاسي والمسارات الأربعة التي تحددها النظرية، ودراسة مساراتها الأربعة لقياس نطاق وشدة حملة التضليل في

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صفحة كوهين. قامت الدراسة بتحليل 2598 تقنية تحكم انعكاسي في 883 تغريدة نشرت في صفحة كوهين في الفترة من 15 أغسطس إلى 15 سبتمبر 2020؛ أي مجمل منشورات الصفحة خلال شهر قبل توقيع اتفاقية إبراهيم. أظهر التحليل قيام صفحة كوهين باستخدام مكثف ومتزامن لجميع تقنيات التحكم الانعكاسي كالإغراء بالحوافز والتوريط، كما يلي: تقنيات التأثير على عملية صنع القرارات لدى الخصم والمرتبطة بالمرونة التكتيكية؛ وهي أحد استراتيجيات تسليح المعلومات بنسبة (70.2%)؛ والتأثير على الإدراك من خلال تقديم معلومات كاذبة وترتبط بالمرونة التكتيكية لتسليح المعلومات بنسبة (14.5٪)؛ وتقنيات التأثير على توقيت اتخاذ القرار وترتبط بالمرونة التكتيكية بنسبة (10.4٪)؛ والضغط باستخدام القوة بنسبة (5.0٪) وتندرج تحت عدم التناسق التكتيكي لتسليح المعلومات. بتحليل سياق بيئة المعلومات وتحليل المحتوى، وجدت الدراسة أن نطاق وشدة حملة المعلومات المضللة مرتفع. يظهر تحليل الحسابات الوهمية للصفحة نسبة عالية من التضخيم والانتشار من خلال عدد الحسابات الوهمية للمتابعين والتي تصل إلى (31.6٪) متابعا وهميا. بهذا يتضح دور التشفير في النظرية والذي يسمح بإخفاء الهوية الرقمية، ويندرج ضمن عدم التناسق التكتيكي لتسليح المعلومات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحكم الانعكاسي، الدبلوماسية الرقمية الاسرائيلية، البروباجاندا، الحرب السيبرانية، التطبيع.

INTRODUCTION:

"Beyond the typical "shooting war," there are a number of unconventional types of warfare: media, diplomacy, information, and cyber warfare (Manwaring, 2020). To fulfill end-state goals, the hegemonic powers destroy and replace the enemies' people and values. They opt for state and non-state actors' informal practices, or cyber-intelligence Operations (CIO), which allow both public and digital diplomacy to manage images and perceptions. To this end, various tools are utilized, none the least, the Israeli public diplomacy program "Hasbara" and the Israeli digital "Diplomacy of "Normalization." In 2019, Israel established more than 800 social media platforms, which the Israeli newspaper "Jerusalem Post" calls "secret weapons" (Gross, 2019). The logic behind digital platforms entails that information, diplomacy, and cyberwarfare are part of the unconventional war prism (Manwaring, 2020).

In 1919, "propaganda" meant Germany's "spies and lies"; whereas by 1930, "propaganda" was understood to include efforts by just about anyone to influence public opinion. Subsequently, it became a deliberate strategy for manipulating minds in digital or hybrid warfare. This comprises asymmetric battlegrounds on the front lines of population conflicts (Bjola & Pamment, 2016). The use of propaganda as a reflexive control, a theory that originated in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and has its background in the strategic thinking of Sun Tzu and particularly the Chinese use of stratagems, has later become part of wartime techniques of opinion manipulation and Digital Diplomacy (DD) practices (Jaitner *et al.* 2016).

This study examines the use of propaganda as a reflexive control to investigate how the non-official state-actor Edy Cohen's Twitter page reflects unusual patterns of message tailoring using propaganda as a reflexive control to manage Arabs' perceptions and corrupt their decision-making algorithms towards Normalization; thus, making decisions for the best of Israel. It investigates how reflexive control allows the use of a wide spectrum of incursions, implosion strategies, and policies for a long list of state-end goals and gauge the scope and intensity of Cohen's page disinformation campaign. This helps understand the digitization of meddling and cyber-intelligence Operations (CIO) by state and non-state actors, more precisely, the negative CIO, which deals with publicity and has the potential to affect targeted audiences.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

Problem Statement

Israel has long skewed political messages toward normalization with Arabs in an attempt to gain legitimacy for an occupying country that is heavily characterized by international society for the high number of Palestinian casualties and an unresolved conflict (Pashayeva, 2019). Researchers examined Israeli official state actors' on-line propaganda; however, none has investigated the Israeli non-official state actor's pages, especially Edy Cohen's, despite the massive number of followers that overarched parallel Israeli platforms and the extremely perplexing, contradictory, and ramified Digital Media patterns he uses. Additionally, no reference has been made to the Reflexive Control Theory in the context of analyzing the Israeli digital diplomacy.

Goals and Significance of the study

This study seeks out unusual patterns of message tailoring, as well as an examination of the scope and intensity of Cohen's page disinformation campaign to provide full confirmation of the presence of RC. It investigates how the Israeli Digital Diplomacy of Normalization uses paraphernalia to manipulate logarithms of thinking and gear Arab nations' attitudes towards Normalization; an area that has not been closely cultivated from this angle.

This study will be significant as it examines the Israeli Digital Diplomacy (DD) of Normalization as a meddling tool. It might allow a contribution to the use of the under-researched prism of the dark side of the internet in Israeli colonial contexts and to research fields of digital diplomacy, digital hegemony, soft power, and cyber-Intelligence Operations (CIO). It might offer an understanding of how propaganda, which we propose falls short of analyzing extremely perplexing and overdose contradictory and ramified DD, is used under Propaganda as a Reflexive Control to manipulate Arab's perception; and provide evidence to the broad spectrum of digital Israeli warfare of incursion.

Research Questions

To achieve the aims of the study, the present research addresses a major question: **How does Edy Cohen's Digital Diplomacy of Normalization reflect unusual patterns of message tailoring using propaganda as a reflexive control to manage Arabs perception and corrupt their decision-making algorithms**? I referred to lay this sub-question: **how intense is Cohen's page disinformation campaign**?

Scope and Boundaries of the Study

The scope of this study extends over a multidisciplinary area of research: digital diplomacy, cyber-information operations, politics, and digital hegemony. The study analyzes tweets and retweets on Edy Cohen's Twitter page, "@EdyCohen" published from August 15, 2020, to September 15, 2020. It extends over the period of one month before the signing of The Israel—United Arab Emirates and Bahrain Normalization Agreement, which is officially called the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement-Treaty of

Peace, Diplomatic Relations, and Full Normalization. We anticipate that this period, which witnessed a significant increase in media and diplomatic efforts to market the agreement, will mirror similar digital diplomatic efforts on social media platforms.

Photos, caricatures, articles, and videos that are not commented on by Cohen are excluded from the sample.

literature review

Many researchers have cultivated propaganda as a Reflexive Control. Bjola and Krysianna (2020) provided an original framework for understanding the logic of digital propaganda and the conditions that may facilitate an effective response; drawing on Finland's model of 'resilience' to digital disinformation. In this vein, Bjola (2019) presented the Reflective Control theory as a good framework to understand how a state can hack the diplomatic game. He argues that knowledge of audiences' thematic, interactional, and reactional preferences and reactions, as well as their demographic and psychographic profiles, help states make strategic influences that shape the preferences of people in other states towards predetermined actions in its interest. This is achievable, he asserts, by building filter mapping and micro targeting. Giles and Seaborg (2018) presented a compound program of targeted decision-making processes through which RC works. It takes into consideration not only the logical processing of information of the enemy but also the emotional, psychological, and cultural frameworks within which decisions are made. Bjola and Pamment (2018) argue that digital diplomacy and tools are part of dark web practices that digitally reconstruct alternative realities. They believe the weaponization of information in the digital sphere has three different core features: Strategic Asymmetry, Tactic Flexibility and Plausible deniability. Coward and Bjola's (2016) work bears witness to these conceptualizations.

Bjola & Pamment (2016) argue that data generated from social platforms is used to build cognitive records to understand patterns of thinking, determine the weak points, and design messages and reactions. In other words, this helps both easily identify trends, patterns, and relationships and corrupt the opponents' decision-making algorithms. The initiators' priorities thus become the opponents' despite being against their will. In a similar path, Jaitner and Kantola (2016) examined how cognitive information and cyber operations can be manipulated to gain an advantage over an enemy. Their paper analyzes how RC can be applied in a fictional operational setting. It describes how it is possible to combine both (cognitive) information warfare and cyber warfare methods to create deception following the principles of RC or any other theory or technique. Thomas (2004) discussed reflexive control and its role as an information warfare weapon. His hermeneutic research re-examined the theory and the way it creates certain model behaviors in the system it seeks to control. He further presents Russian researchers' work on the theory, like Turko, who revealed that this theory, which depends on the analytical capability, experience, and knowledge of the enemy, camouflage, and deception, is a "method for achieving geopolitical superiority and a means for arms control negotiations" to destabilize the geopolitical balance.

While Schelling (2008) believes this theory naturally walks side by side with the definition of diplomacy as bargaining, where the power to hurt is defined as a bargaining power; and exploiting it is diplomacy.

This is inherently a vicious diplomacy, even in the pursuit of peace; it is used as bargaining power; Lass well (1927) discussed the use of a wide spectrum of incursions, implosion strategies, and policies for a long list of state-end goals. Operations are performed through digital platforms by manipulating significant symbols using propaganda.

The majority of studies in the field of Israeli digital diplomacy have focused on examining Israeli state actors' Facebook pages. Al Khrabsheh (2018) studied the media policy of Israeli Official Occupation Forces spokesperson Adraei's Facebook page. Samuel-Azran and Yarchi (2018) investigated Normalization on the level of the politicians' messages, using Adraei's Arabic Facebook page as a case study to understand propaganda and Arabs' interactions. In the same vein, Abu Mualla (2017) investigated propaganda practices on Adraei's Facebook page. Manor and Crilley (2018) investigated the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) linguistic frames to resonate with the Israeli narration and influence audiences during the 2014 Gaza War. Lev-On *et al.* (2017) examined the domestic Digital Diplomacy prism of the Israeli Knesset) members' peer-to-peer diplomacy (P2P); this study highlights the role of non-state actors in digital media, a major approach of the current study.

Previous studies focused on Israeli digital diplomacy and mediation in the Arab world. They tried to elucidate Israel's digital diplomacy procedures as a phenomenon, propaganda, soft power practice, etc. In other words, they answer what tools and procedures are used, what discourse is overwhelming, etc. None of these studies tried to trespass on description and reliance on propaganda to understand the Israeli DD as part of the dark side of internet practices or to use the long-standing theory of Propaganda as a Reflexive Control. Despite the large number of followers that span parallel Israeli platforms and the extremely perplexing, contradictory, and ramified Digital Diplomacy management style on Normalization, no previous studies have looked into the Israeli non-official state actor Edy Cohen's page.

The Theoretical Framework

This study aims to understand how the Israeli Digital Diplomacy of Normalization is used as a warfare and a tool to change perceptions. We have developed a methodological paradigm that will articulate this research and its findings, based on the Political Agenda Theory and the Reflexive Control Theory- the two theories that are most germane to our questions.

The political Agenda deals more with gaining access to and exploiting the individual's private stock of meaning than using groups to organize individual or group attitudes (Lasswell, 1927, p. 628–9). Reflexive Control is a type of information warfare strategy that focuses on perception management, minds' manipulation during conflicts, and control rather than managing a subject as a "reflex" itself. It involves the "specific process of imitating the enemy's reasoning or imitating the enemy's possible behavior and causing him to make a decision unfavorable to himself" (Thomas, 2004, p. 241). The Reflexive Control Theory, which was developed by V.A. Lefebvre before information warfare and information operations, can be utilized at strategic, tactical, and plausible deniability levels (Bjola & Pamment, 2018). It operates on a variety of levels, including cognitive, informational, tactical, and strategic (Thomas, 2004; Bjola, 2019). It uses a multitude of strategies under each of the four main processes it employs: "Power Pressure", "Affecting Perception", "Affecting the Adversary Decision-

Making", and "Affecting the Timing of Decision-Making". The theory also offers a four-step analysis of the 4E funnels of digital Reflexive Control Theory (i.e. Entice, Engage, Elevate, and Exploit. Each of which can be examined to assess the scope and intensity of disinformation campaigns.

The Sample and the Analysis Tools

The study examines Edy Cohen's Twitter page as a case study, which, in the researcher's opinion, is pertinent for two reasons. First, Cohen introduces himself as the unofficial spokesperson and the voice of Israel. Second, despite the apparent and sizable number of his page followers, which add up to 386,522 k, Cohen's page has not yet been yielded to academic study. This reveals a huge discrepancy in comparison to the numbers of followers on the official Israeli DD pages at the same period of taking the sample; including but not limited to, the Israeli MOFA, which is followed by 258.5 k; and Israel in the Gulf, a page followed by 69.7 k. This applies to Israeli diplomats' pages, including but not limited to: then Israeli minister of foreign affairs Gabi Ashkenazi , who is followed by 55.4 k; the Ambassador of Israel to the Arab Republic of Egypt Amira Oron, who is followed by 4900 k; and the head of Israel MOFA's Arabic-language New Media Section Yonatan Gonen, who is followed by 44.375 k; Third: the offensive and combative manner in which DD management and message customization are done, which relies on conflicting and incorrect information in addition to strong language, rumors, and offensive content.

Using Vicinitas, a digital platform that presents in-depth analysis on how users are engaging, particularly on Twitter and scraps engagement scores and tweet types, the researcher scraped tweets and retweets. Using MAXQDA, a data-analysis software solution that provides users with a variety of functional methods in data analysis and Excel, the conceptual coding and quantifying of the sample are pursued. We looked at both dissemination and amplification using Spark Toro, a digital platform that analyzes millions of public social and web accounts to identify demographics, behavioral traits, discussion themes, and other essential audience research. The research goes beyond the traditional analysis of these two quantifiers, which depend on the number of likes, shares, and comments. It uses a fake follower audit to examine who is influencing the page's online activity deepens our understanding of fake information and info-flooding, two RC perception affecting techniques.

898 tweets and retweets in all were scraped and examined. Cohen did not comment on 16 tweets and retweets that contained images or caricatures; therefore, these were excluded from the sample since visual analysis requires a semiological approach, which falls beyond the purview of this study.

Research Methodology

Following its theoretical framework, this study carries out a quantitative content analysis to identify anomalous patterns of message tailoring that fully demonstrate the functioning of RC. To gauge the scope and intensity of Cohen's page disinformation campaign, the study uses context analysis of the digital landscape and content analysis to analyze the 4E Funnels. This methodology provides a clear framework for understanding Cohen's atypical online political engagement.

RESULTS

It is worth mentioning that the use of Reflexive Control entails combining many influences, behaviors, and dynamics. Therefore, "any one of these elements in isolation cannot be properly labeled as reflexive control" (Giles et al. 2018, p. 27). The 4E Funnels together with RC approaches; according to Bjola, indicates that RC is extending its boundaries. The analysis show that 883 tweets seems to be using 2598 RC techniques, with an average of two RC techniques per tweet. The large referent numbers used for analysis in the tables below would thus be justified.

The study found that the page exerts an intensive effort to entice the audience. It uses all RC techniques intensively and consecutively. The most frequently used RC process is "Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making" (70.2%); a Tactic Flexibility of information weaponization; which was followed by "Affecting Perception by Providing False Information" (14.5%), a Tactic Flexibility; "Affecting the Timing of Decision-Making" (10.4%), a Tactic Flexibility; and Power Pressure (5.0%), a Tactical Asymmetry.

The results of the study seem reasonable, as hybrid warfare and manipulating the logarithms of thinking using Reflective Control require more focused work on affecting adversary's decision-making processes, their perception, and the time decision-making; it requires less work on power pressure processes. In comparison to other pages like Cohen's, the scope and intensity of its disinformation campaign received overwhelming dissemination and amplification ratings depending. The analysis of fake accounts shows a high percentage of amplification and dissemination. The results reveal that (31.6%) of the page's followers are fake. These findings are significant in terms of deniability, the third weaponization dimension. Cohen's page is a conductive medium for propaganda through Reflexive Control, results indicate.

1- **Message Tailoring Analysis**

First: Affecting the Timing of Decision-Making

According to the analysis, "Affecting the Timing of Decision-Making" processes which amounts to (9%) of the total number of RC techniques measured by the number of tweets. This subdivides into: First, "Setting a Goal" or suggesting a long-term action in the initiator's best interests which amounts to (50.9%) of the total number of "Affecting the Timing of Decision-Making" processes; second, "Provocation" or setting a goal for the enemy to take action that is in the initiator's interest which amounts to (24.9%) of the total number of "Affecting the Timing of Decision-Making" processes; third, "Division" by convincing the enemy to operate in opposition against local coalitions which amounts to (24.2%) of the total number of "Affecting the Timing of Decision-Making" processes. (See table 1).

Table (1) Affecting the timing of decision

Technique	Frequency	Percentage Frequency/Total techniques of Affecting the Timing of Decision Making
Setting a goal	137	50.9%
Provocation	67	24.9%
Division	65	24.2%
Total: Affecting the Timing of Decision Making/Total No. Of Techniques By No Of Tweets	269	10.4%

Second: Affecting the adversary's Decision-Making

The page made extensive use of "Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making" processes, which amounts to (70.2%) of the total number of RC techniques by number of tweets.

This includes all tweets that show a different modulation of facts during the preparatory period of signing of the agreement, as follows: "Overload" or image-type transfer which amounts to (16.6%) of the total number of "Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making Processes, "Overload" or image change which amounts to (57.3%) of the total number of "Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making" processes"; and "Distraction and Paralysis" which amounts to (26.1%) of the total number of "Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making" processes.

The use of "Overload or or Change of Image by Type" amounts to (16.6%) of the total number of these processes. Overload by type techniques distributes as follows: First, the "Transfer of One's Image of a Situation with Risk" which occurs when tweets provide the opponent with an erroneous or incomplete image of the situation (71.3%); and subdivides into the following techniques: "Setting an Aim" (52.3%), "Creating a False Picture" (29.2%), and "Feigning Weakness" (18.5%); second, the "Transfer of an Image of One's Doctrine" (14.9%), third, the "Transfer of One's Own Image of a Situation" (12.2%); forth, the "Transfer of an Image of One's Goal" (1.7%).

The "Overload" or transfer of the image, which includes all tweets that show a different modulation of facts during the preparatory period, amounts to (57.3) of the total number of "Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making" processes. This can be traced using five techniques: the "Dispatching of Excessively Large Number of Messages to the Enemy" (85.2%);" Incomplete Images" where portions of the truth are presented (4.2%); "False information" (4%); a "large Amount of Conflicting information" (3.7%), and "Portions of the Truth-Based on One's Perception" (2.8%),

The use of "Distraction and Paralysis" techniques amounts to (26.1%) of the total number of "Affecting the Adversary's Decision Making" processes. This technique occurs when there is an attempt to create the perception of a specific threat, real or imaginary, suggesting a vital interest or pinpointing a weak point during the preparatory stages of combat operations to force the enemy to reconsider the wisdom of his decisions and to operate along this or that axis. It realizes this through two techniques. First, it includes all tweets suggesting "Weak Points" (89.1%) of "Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making"

processes. This includes the "Ideological" (11.1%), "Moral" (10.8%), and "Legal" (8.5%) techniques, in addition to "Other Areas" (69.6%) which range over different practices including direct incitement to people or incitement of a second party against a third party; accusations of terrorism or anti-Semitism, etc.; flattery, insults, and ridicule; and challenging a second party to do or not do something. Second, it counts for all tweets that use the "Suggesting a Vital Interest" technique (11%). This subdivides into "Creating the Perception of a Specific threat" by naming it (7.6%) and "Elements of Surprise" (3.4%). (See Table 2).

Table (2).Affecting the adversary's decision-making process

Technique	Frequency	Percentage Frequency/Total techniques of Affecting the adversary's decision-making process
Overload or change of image by type		
Transferring an image of the situation with risk	216	71.3%
setting an aim	113	52.3%
creating a false picture	63	29.2%
feigning weakness	40	18.5%
Transfer of an image of one's own doctrine	45	14.9%
Transferring of one's own image of a situation	37	12.2%
Transfer of an image of one's own goal	5	1.7%
Total Overload or change of image by type/Total No. Of Techniques By No Of Tweets	303	16.6%
Overload or transfer of image		
Dispatching an excessively large number of messages to the enemy	890	85.2%
Incomplete image	44	4.2%
False information	42	4.0%
large amount of conflicting information	39	3.7%
Portions of the truth based on one's own perception	29	2.8%
Total Overload or change of image/Total No. Of Techniques By No Of Tweets	1044	57.3%
Distraction and Paralysis		
Suggestion of weak points	424	89.1%
other areas	295	69.6%
Ideologically	47	11.1%
Morally	46	10.8%
Legally	36	8.5%
Suggesting a vital interest	52	11%
Creating the perception of a specific threat	36	7.6%
Element of surprise	16	3.4%
Total: Distraction and Paralysis /Total No. Of Techniques By No Of Tweets	476	26.1%
Total: Affecting the adversary's decision-making process/Total No. Of Techniques By No Of Tweets	**1823**	**70.2%**

The overload or transfer of an image includes "dispatching" large amounts of messages to the enemy. To support the previous results, the researcher made a special analysis of page activity per day. The results show an influx of tweets and retweets around the clock. This information flood is a feature of RC. This is evident not only in the 898 tweets and retweets published during a month but also in the huge number of RC techniques used, which amounts to 2598. (See Table 3).

Table (3). Number of tweets and retweets per day

day	Number of tweets (tweets and rewets)	Day	Number of tweets (tweets and rewets)
15-Aug	60	31-Aug	36
16-Aug	54	1-Sep	13
17-Aug	49	2-Sep	2
18-Aug	33	3-Sep	3
19-Aug	33	4-Sep	7
20-Aug	25	5-Sep	16
21-Aug	36	6-Sep	13
22-Aug	49	7-Sep	30
23-Aug	23	8-Sep	21
24-Aug	14	9-Sep	24
25-Aug	32	10-Sep	21
26-Aug	33	11-Sep	22
27-Aug	31	12-Sep	40
28-Aug	27	13-Sep	29
29-Aug	17	14-Sep	21
30-Aug	39	15-Sep	29
Total Number of tweets/retweets Per day			883

Third: Affecting Perception by Providing False Information

The analysis show that @EdyCohen uses a number of "Affecting Perception" processes which amount to (14.5%) of the total number of RC techniques by number of tweets. This includes any tweets that contain fake news, unsourced or fabricated claims, non-credible claims with sources, claims based on previous unsourced information, etc.

The page applies all of the "Affecting Perception" processes simultaneously. The results demonstrate that "Camouflage" or showing in-depth knowledge of the enemy's culture and life with an analytical capability (30.5%); "Disinformation" or giving wrong information or formulating certain information (22.3%); and "Deliberately Distorted Doctrines" which questions solid and grounded beliefs (16.7%).

They reveal the use of "Deception" or giving false biographical data, habits, and psychological deficiencies (9.5%); "Enticement" or encouragement of the adversary to accept threatening information in order to reveal "hot button" issues; (9%); and "Denial" or abandoning one position to reinforce another (7.2%). The least used techniques are "Intimidation" or blackmail by implicit force (4%); and "Conceal" or displaying oneself in a strong place (0.8%). (See table 4).

Table (4). Affecting Perception by Providing False Information (Fake News)

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Affecting Perception by Providing False Information		
Camouflage	115	30.5%
Disinformation	84	22.3%
Deliberately distorted doctrines	63	16.7%
Deception	36	9.5%
Enticement	34	9.0%
Denial	27	7.2%
Intimidation	15	4.0%
Conceal	3	0.8%
Total: Affecting Perception by Providing False Information /Total No. Of Techniques By No Of Tweets	**377**	**14.5%**

Disinformation techniques do not simply rely on false information; the page relies on retweeting from accounts with a high percentage of fake followers. According to the digital platform Sparktoro, @AntonioIHaddad, who has 8,166 followers, received 2,042 fake followers, accounting for (25.0%) of the total number of followers; @kasimf, who has 5,616,239 followers, received 2,622,784 fake followers, accounting for (46.7%) of the total number of page followers; and so on. This can also be called a deception strategy and has a variety of ramifications, given the average amount of @EdyCohen followers. Retweets from these accounts contribute for 5% of the entire daily information flow. This indicates camouflage, disinformation, deception, and denial, which are perception-altering strategies used by Cohen's page to deliver misleading information through unverified accounts with a high percentage of fake followers. This calls into question Cohen's page online information sources and credibility.

Fourth: Power pressure

"Power Pressure" processes, which subdivide into "Deterrence" and "Pressure", account for (5.0%) of the total number of RC techniques by number of tweets. This demonstrates how controlling side processes are used to cause the enemy to make bad decisions. "Pressure," which accounts for (69%) of all "Power Pressure" processes, frequently includes the deployment of superior force, force demonstrations, and psychological attacks. It is divided into three techniques: "Putting the Opponent in a Position" through the dissemination of information that discredits the government (48.8%); "Threating" or officially declaring war (16.3%); and "Showing of Force" (3.9%), which includes provocative maneuvers, weapons tests, increasing the alert status of forces, and forming coalitions. Aside from pressure techniques, "Deterrence," or the appearance of overwhelming superiority, and power enhancement account for (31.0%) of all "Power Pressure" processes. (See Table 5).

Table (5). Affecting by Power Pressure

Technique	Frequency	Percentage
Pressure	89	69%
Information that discredits the government	63	48.8%
Threat	21	16.3%
Show of force	5	3.9%
Deterrence	40	31.0%

Total: Power Pressure/Total No. Of Techniques By No Of Tweets	129	5.0%

1- The scope and intensity of Cohen's page disinformation

The study examines the Reflexive Control Theory's 4E Funnels to determine the scope and intensity of Cohen's page disinformation effort. According to Bjola (2019), entice can be measured by message context analysis in order to analyze atypical patterns of online political engagement and systematic utilization of tailored messaging. A context analysis of the information environment reveals a sudden influx of digital messages, as well as a pattern of simulations adopting all RC approaches processes simultaneously. This illustrates how the first RC Funnel, Entice, has shaped online conversation's pre-normalization endeavors.

Engage content analysis, according to Bjola (2019), is required to understand the spectrum of positions reflected by the tweets and how they are "skewed towards political topic[s]" aiming at audience participation in a "manner resembling the "weak link logic" (p. 24). Engage, the second level of the four RC funnel framework is a technique for customizing political messaging. Understanding the messages and perspectives made in tweets and retweets, as well as how these messages are skewed toward Normalization, is aided by content analysis of Affecting the Adversary's Decision-Making process and fake perception strategies. Three major engagement techniques were used as an incubator for political messages. @EdyCohen tries to affect the adversary decision process by manipulating the way images are presented. The images are overloaded with additional meaning and perception faking techniques. The analysis of these techniques revealed how the audience is aimed at participating in a "manner resembling what Bjola (2019) calls the "weak link" logic" (p. 24). The previous analysis of the page reveals a pattern of consent engineering towards Normalization through RC. This shows that RC has crossed the borders towards Engagement.

According to Bjola (2019), the term "Exploit" refers to appeals for action "either in favor of or against a specific objective that Party A seeks to exploit and accomplish through RC strategy" and "convincing the enemy to operate in opposition to local coalitions" (p. 24). The study of @EdyCohen analyzes provocation and incitement to action against local coalitions within target countries that oppose Normalization. The page employs flattery and appeals for action with the leaders and governments of friends. Goals such as the insurmountability of Normalization and the necessity of limiting aid to the Palestinians, among other things, are frequently mentioned. In terms of these calls and goals, the study suggests that the fourth level of RC, namely "Exploit," is used at the level of "Affecting Decision-Making Time" processes.

The use of "Elevate," the fourth level of the RC 4E funnel design, would be reinforced by the anticipated surge of inflammatory messages directed towards Palestinians, anti-normalization leaders, and nations. This dimension, however, needs to be strengthened through research into how the page is shared and amplified. In this context, it is crucial to employ unconventional technologies to identify "patterns of deliberate acceleration," such as botnets (Bjola, 2019, p. 23).

First: Dissemination

Cohen had 386,522 followers overall and posted 36,413 tweets and retweets in the 8.1 months after the account's start, according to a dissemination analysis. Using the web tool Sparktoro, the @EdyCohen page is compared to similar accounts with between 350,000 and 400,000 followers using the account engagement score. According to data from the engagement score tool, @EdyCohen's page had an average of 490.6 likes, accounting for 30% of the overall engagement score, while comparable accounts received an average of 55.77 likes. @EdyCohen receives an average of 27.3 retweets each tweet, accounting for 40% of the page's overall engagement score, whereas similar accounts with a similar amount of followers receive an average of 25.94 retweets. @EdyCohen tweets 334 times each week on average (which accounts for 20% of all weekly tweets).

@EdyCohen receives an average of 27.3 retweets every tweet, accounting for 40% of the page's overall engagement score, whereas similar accounts with fewer followers receive an average of 25.94 retweets.

@EdyCohen tweets 334 times a week on average (which accounts for 20% of the overall engagement score), with a following to follower ratio of 0.0015, where the following to follower ratio refers to the number of persons the user follows vs the number of followers they have. It accounts for 10% of the overall engagement score. Furthermore, @EdyCohen's page is not verified; Cohen can deny responsibility for actions including purposeful deceit or disinformation (Bjola & Pamment, 2016) and "ignore" or "transfer the blame to non-state actors without fear of major consequences." (Coward & Bjola, 2016, p. 207).

Table (6): dissemination analysis extracted through the digital platform Sparktoro

Account Status	No.
Avg. likes per tweet	490.57
Avg. Retweets per Tweet	27.3
Tweets with Engagement	100.0%
Account Age	8>1
Times Listed	635

Second: Amplification

Analysis of fake accounts is an approach for amplification analysis. Sparktoro, a tool for detecting fake followers, found that 31.6% of Cohen's page followers (or 122,141 out of 386,522 followers) are fake. This tool conducted an audit check of 2,000 randomly selected accounts of the most recent 100,000 accounts that follow @EdyCohen in order to identify spam, bots, and low-quality accounts. It then looked into more than 25 factors associated with these accounts, most of which are listed in Table (7). None of these alone suggest spam or low-quality accounts, but their presence substantially correlates with the page's low quality. (See Table 7).

Table (7): frequently observed factors for @EdyCohen's followers: fake audit extracted through the digital platform Sparktoro

followers: fake audit	No.	followers: fake audit	NO.no
Inactive followers for 120+ days	8%	Location issues	59%
Inactive followers between 90 and 120 days	3%	Number of Tweets	27%
New Twitter users	18%	Over sharing	13%
Default profile image	14%	Times listed	93%
Display name	48%	No. of Followers	60%
URL issues	90%	No. of Following	45%
Profile keywords	53%		

According to a page audit investigation, one-third of Cohen's followers are fake, consisting of spam, bots, propaganda, and so on. The engagement score suggests that bogus accounts are responsible for 30% of likes and 40% of retweets. Reflexive Control (RC) argues that the employment of media amplification tools and botnets is proof that RC is active (Bjola, 2019). These findings are significant in terms of the Plausible Deniability factor. Despite the fact that @EdyCohen did not conceal his online identity as an initiator, the analysis revealed that the profile was not formally verified. Hegemonic meddlers may employ a network of Internet service providers (ISPs) or botnets to send pre-written messages. Given this, the option to "reject responsibility for activities involving purposeful deception or disinformation" (Bjola & Pamment, 2016, p. 7), "ignore" or "transfer blame to non-state actors without fear of major consequences" (Coward & Bjola, 2016, p. 207), and keep the target audience or enemy off-balance remains open. Furthermore, @Edycohen's Twitter pages make considerable use of botnets and fraudulent accounts. These pages are introduced as axiom sources and a retweet source for @EdyCohen information. This validates the utilization of RC and indicates the scope and intensity of the disinformation campaign. Using the 4E funnels, the research found that RC is crossing borders via Bjola words.

DISCUSSION:

The most often employed Reflexive Control methods by @EdyCohen to skew political messages are addressing weak points, undermining governments, camouflaging, using provocation, and setting Normalization as a goal. Arabs, whether in support of or opposed to Normalization, are crunched and squished by using them.

Message customization by @EdyCohen includes tweeting or retweeting rumors, using abusive language - including insults and humor, and spreading false information. The article heavily relies on local knowledge and information about target environments, as well as Arab cultural components such as Nabati poetry. The hegemonic dimension is evident in @EdyCohen's attempts to influence Arab policy through a variety of strategies such as camouflage, fake news, provocation, incitement; division; setting goals and aims; suggestion of weak points; and exercising pressure and deterrence. Furthermore, it appears in efforts to Affect Decision-Making Timing in both normalization and anti-normalization initiatives (by threats and enticement). The usage of this dimension connects to another weaponization dimension, tactic flexibility.

Using propaganda as a Reflexive Control, @EdyCohen exploits perception-changing techniques; the page employs deception, disinformation, false information, incomplete images, image manipulation techniques, and other fact flipping and falsification techniques to manipulate logarithms of thinking in order to tilt Arab nations' attitudes toward making decisions for the profit of their enemies. This is a weaponization component associated with tactic flexibility. Power pressure is the least prominent tactical asymmetry tool and the least employed RC technique.

@edycohen is flooded with information, including an unusual large amount of messages and contradictory data. The page, which has (31.9%) fake followers, relies primarily on retweeting from Twitter accounts with a high number of fake followers. This might include the proliferation of bot-generated news and the possibility of faking the dissemination of its content in order to demonstrate interaction and put the target audience or enemy on the defensive. This is a plausible-deniability strategy in which identities are masked in order to more effectively disseminate targeted messages.

By combining tactic flexibility, tactic flexibility, and plausible deniability, @EdyCohen has weaponized information in the digital sphere to promote state political messages, attack anti-normalization governments and leaders, and defame Palestinians.

@EdyCohen DD stresses the informational dimension, or "informational control," as the most typical type of propaganda. This appears to be digital meddling rather than deterrence. Meddling, in addition to being an RC tactic, is a hegemonic strategy. The disinformation effort is being boosted by the use of the 4E funnels (entice, engage, exploit, and elevate).

Concerning the employment of a sudden influx of digital messages, an unusual pattern of RC techniques and tailored messages are used to engineer consent and tilt Arabs toward normalization, with a special emphasis on the adversary's decision-making processes and the faking of perception processes.

CONCLUSION:

Propaganda in the digital sphere refers to three elements of information weaponization: strategic asymmetry, tactic flexibility, and plausible deniability. It also refers to the manipulation of significant symbols (Lasswell, 1927) and diplomatic engagement that could be construed as deception and manipulation (Bjola, 2019).

Whether or not non-state actors are engaged, cyber-intelligence operations (CIO), particularly negative CIO that deal with publicity and have the capacity to harm purportedly implicated nations, can have major detrimental effects on a state's reputation and diplomatic relations (Coward & Bjola, 2016).

The study indicates unexpected patterns of message customization. All RC processes are used constantly and concurrently. Mind manipulation processes garner the most attention;"Affect the Adversary's Decision-Making," "Affect Perception by Providing False Information," and "Affect the Timing of Decision-Making", in particular. This is congruent with the timing of the page's intensive disinformation campaign, which started prior to the signing of the Abraham Agreement of Normalization. In comparison

to other similar pages, the page received high dissemination ratings. According to the research of bogus reports, there is a large level of "Amplification"; a Plausible Deniability, which reveals attepts to manipulate minds by showing vague contest using the bandwagon effect. This verifies propaganda as Reflexive Control is used; it reveals the scale and intensity of the disinformation effort is high and fraudulent.

In the end, impulsion is a compulsion, whether it originates from individuals or is transmitted via traumas; war, and whether fatal or not (Manwaring, 2014). As a result of this unconventional conflict, destabilization is therefore typically accomplished in a variety of methods, including by the people of the enemy states themselves" (p. 2014). The "Digital Diplomacy of Normalization," or @EdyCohen's reflexive control methods, are a manifestation of the internet's dark side. They are used to acquire control, impose hegemony, and manipulate Arabs into acting in Israel's favor. Al in all, Cohen's digital diplomacy is a meddling and warfare.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

When combined with propaganda, RC tactics aid disseminating disinformation and manipulating thinking logarithms by unconventional harsh message patterning, which seemingly sparks numerous conflicts and uphold power. This study recommends raising awareness of the dangers posed by Israeli normalization, meddling, and cyber warfare. It also recommends using containment strategies. The confinement model, which extends Bjola and Pammen's (2016) work, helps the target countries strengthen their resistance to attacks and their defenses against Reflexive Control. If the following are included in the reaction plan, this is possible:

To combat media misinformation.

To keep a watchful eye out for areas of weakness in each society and develop solutions to close the door to any intrusions.

To formulate quick response methods in order to stop viral media amplification and digital message transmission, along with a thorough analysis of RC possible effects.

The study suggests that future qualitative research could focus on Cohen's page. Future research can examine other Israeli Digital Diplomacy practices in light of RC, such as citizen diplomacy, selfie diplomacy, and peer-to-peer diplomacy.

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