

Politics & Protest: Writing in Times of Crisis

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Abstract: This research explores the multifaceted narratives of resistance articulated by marginalized communities during times of crisis, focusing on how these narratives are shaped by historical and social contexts. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study delves into the diverse forms of expression used by these communities, revealing how their unique cultural backgrounds inform their protest narratives. Through in-depth interviews and content analysis of grassroots activism, the research uncovers the central themes and messages these communities prioritize in their struggles against oppression. One significant finding is that the effectiveness of resistance narratives is increasingly threatened by the proliferation of digital disinformation. This modern challenge complicates the dissemination of authentic voices and messages, undermining the legitimacy of protest movements. The study highlights the various strategies employed by activists to counteract disinformation, including fact-checking initiatives, promoting transparency in communication, educational outreach, and the creation of compelling counter-narratives aimed at reclaiming agency over their stories. Moreover, the research emphasizes the role of digital platforms in shaping how marginalized groups convey their experiences and mobilize support. It illustrates the tension between the rapid spread of information and the necessity for critical engagement with content, particularly in high-stakes political environments. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in political protest narratives during crises, offering insights into the resilience and resourcefulness of marginalized communities in navigating contemporary challenges. By shedding light on their struggles and strategies, the findings aim to inform further discourse on activism, representation, and the impacts of misinformation on social movements.

Keywords: *Crisis, Politics & Protest, Communication, Digital Disinformation, Marginalized Voices, Social Media.*

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Introduction

In recent years, the world has faced a series of crises that have profoundly influenced both political landscapes and modes of expression. The interplay between politics and protest has increasingly become a focal point in understanding societal responses to crises, as various groups mobilize through writing and other forms of communication to articulate dissent, demand change, and hold power accountable. The years between 2020 and 2025 have been particularly significant in this regard, encompassing global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement, climate change activism, and the geopolitical tensions resulting from war and authoritarianism. This period serves as a rich context for exploring how political writing and protest movements emerge, evolve, and impact public discourse.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and exacerbated existing inequalities, prompting widespread protests against systemic injustices (Schmitt, 2021). Activists and writers have utilized social media platforms, blogs, and traditional media to document their experiences, express their grievances, and mobilize communities. For instance, the disparities in healthcare access highlighted during the pandemic have led to protests advocating for equitable health policies (Tufekci, 2020). This interaction between writing and protest underscores the role of narrative in

shaping public understanding and political action during times of crisis.

Similarly, the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd galvanized writers and activists to articulate the urgency of racial justice. The movement leveraged social media to amplify voices and experiences that had long been marginalized in mainstream discourse (Smith, 2021). Through hashtags, essays, and public statements, activists created a narrative of resistance that not only condemned systemic racism but also proposed a vision for a more equitable society. This phenomenon illustrates how writing serves as both a tool for protest and a medium for cultural expression, allowing individuals to negotiate their identities and political beliefs in a rapidly changing social landscape.

Climate change activism has also gained momentum during this period, with youth-led movements like Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion capturing global attention. These initiatives have promoted a form of protest writing that emphasizes the urgency of environmental action. Activists such as Greta Thunberg have become emblematic figures, using speeches and social media posts to mobilize support for climate justice (Thunberg, 2023). The language they employ often blends personal narrative with scientific rhetoric, highlighting the need for immediate action while also connecting with a broader audience emotionally. This

blending of genres demonstrates the versatility of writing in political contexts, where personal stories can serve as powerful catalysts for change.

Moreover, the digital age has transformed the dynamics of protest writing. Online platforms have created new spaces for marginalized voices and alternative narratives to flourish. Writers and activists can bypass traditional media gatekeepers, engaging directly with a global audience and reshaping the conversations around pivotal issues (Bennett & Segerberg, 2020). This democratization of voice has led to a diversification of perspectives in political discourse, challenging dominant narratives and fostering an environment where multiple viewpoints can coexist.

However, the rise of disinformation and the manipulation of narratives present significant challenges to political writing and protest movements. Social media can amplify falsehoods and conspiracy theories, undermining trust in authentic grassroots movements (Lazer et al., 2018). Activists must navigate this complex landscape, distinguishing their genuine calls for change from the noise of misinformation. As such, the need for critical media literacy becomes paramount, enabling both writers and audiences to engage thoughtfully with the information they consume and produce.

The ongoing geopolitical tensions, including the war in Ukraine and the rise of authoritarianism in various regions, further complicate the relationship between politics and protest. Writers in authoritarian contexts often face severe repercussions for their expressions of dissent, leading to a silencing of voices that are crucial to democratic discourse (Asher, 2022). Conversely, in democracies, the pushback against protests and dissenting voices can signal a concerning trend toward authoritarianism, raising questions about the future of free expression and political engagement (Johansson, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

In the context of contemporary political movements, the act of writing during crises serves as a vital mechanism for expression, mobilization, and resistance. As individuals and communities confront various societal challenges ranging from social injustices to environmental crises the narratives they produce reflect their struggles, aspirations, and calls for change. Despite the recognized importance of writing in these contexts, two notable gaps in existing literature hinder a comprehensive understanding of its role as a tool of resistance.

Gap 1: Insufficient Examination of Diverse Voices and Mediums

While some studies have examined prominent social movements, such as Black Lives Matter or climate activism, there remains a significant lack of empirical research focused on the diverse voices and mediums utilized by various marginalized communities during crises. The writing produced by these groups often encapsulates unique cultural, social, and historical realities that inform their narratives of protest. However, the nuances of how these communities engage in writing from social media posts to traditional print media are still largely underexplored. This gap limits our understanding of the full spectrum of political writing in crisis situations and the distinct narratives that emerge from these varied contexts.

Gap 2: Impact of Digital Disinformation on Protest Narratives

Additionally, the rise of digital disinformation presents a critical challenge to the construction and perception of protest narratives in an increasingly digital world. While some researchers have acknowledged the amplification role of social media in activism, there is a notable lack of comprehensive analysis on how misinformation affects the effectiveness and reception of writing during crises. Specifically, it remains unclear how activists navigate the pervasive misinformation landscape while attempting to convey their messages, and what strategies they utilize to preserve the integrity of their narratives. Addressing this gap is essential to understanding the complexities and obstacles involved in political writing during crises, particularly in an era where truth and authenticity are often contested.

In summary, by addressing these two gaps the need for broader examination of diverse voices and mediums in writing and the exploration of digital disinformation's impact on protest narratives this research aims to enhance our understanding of the significant role of writing as a form of resistance in times of crisis, ultimately providing insights that can inform future activism and scholarship.

Objective of Study

1. To investigate and identify the various voices and mediums employed by marginalized communities to express their narratives of resistance during crises, while examining how these narratives are shaped by and vary across different cultural and social contexts. This objective aims to uncover the distinctive elements of these narratives, highlighting the interplay between cultural identity, social dynamics, and the chosen mediums of expression used in articulating resistance.
2. To explore the influence of historical and social backgrounds on the content and themes of protest narratives among marginalized groups, identifying how unique experiences shape their communication methods and expressions of struggle.
3. To assess the impact of digital disinformation on the effectiveness of protest narratives articulated by activists during crises, examining the challenges it poses to the clarity, reception, and influence of their messages within the digital landscape.
4. To investigate the strategies employed by activists to combat digital disinformation and maintain the authenticity of their narratives, focusing on the techniques they utilize to navigate misinformation and uphold the integrity of their writing throughout political protests.

Significance of the Study

Expanded Understanding of Marginalized Voices

This study aims to illuminate the diverse voices and mediums utilized by marginalized communities during crises, thereby enhancing the understanding of their unique narratives of resistance. By documenting and analyzing how these groups express their struggles and aspirations through various platforms, the research will contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive

discourse in political writing. It will fill existing gaps in the literature, offering valuable insights into the cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape their narratives.

Analysis of Digital Disinformation's Impact on Activism

The research will provide a critical examination of the effects of digital disinformation on protest narratives, exploring how misinformation influences the construction and perception of activist messages. Understanding the challenges posed by disinformation will empower activists to identify strategies to navigate these complexities, thereby enhancing their ability to communicate effectively. This analysis is crucial in today's digital world, where the dissemination of misinformation can significantly undermine social movements and activism.

Contribution to Future Activism and Scholarship

By addressing the identified gaps, this study will generate new knowledge relevant to both scholars and practitioners in the field of activism. The findings will inform future strategies for effectively utilizing writing as a tool of resistance in times of crisis, equipping activists with insights that can enhance their mobilization efforts. Additionally, the research will contribute to scholarly discussions about the role of writing in political struggles, encouraging further inquiry into the intersection of digital platforms, social movements, and the complexities of representation in crisis contexts

Research Questions

1. What diverse voices and mediums do marginalized communities utilize to articulate their narratives of resistance during crises, and how do these narratives differ across cultural and social contexts?
2. How do the historical and social backgrounds of marginalized groups influence the content and themes of their protest narratives?
3. In what ways does the prevalence of digital disinformation impact the effectiveness of protest narratives communicated by activists during crises?
4. What strategies do activists employ to combat digital disinformation and ensure the authenticity of their narratives in the face of misinformation?

Literature Review

The Role of Social Media in Political Protests

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for mobilizing political protests, especially during times of crisis. Harlow and Johnson (2020) discuss how platforms like Twitter and Facebook facilitate the organization and dissemination of protest-related information. They argue that social media enhances the visibility of protests and amplifies voices often marginalized in traditional media. This sentiment is supported by Smith (2021), who found that hashtags used during protests can create a sense of solidarity and community, thereby increasing participation. However, the authors also note the risks of misinformation and surveillance, which can undermine protest efforts (Harlow & Johnson, 2020; Smith, 2021).

Literature as Resistance

Literature often serves as a means of resistance during political crises. Wang (2022) explores how contemporary writers

respond to authoritarianism through their work, using narrative as a form of protest. By analyzing texts from various cultures, Wang illustrates the idea that literature not only reflects social realities but also shapes them. Moreover, Brown and Martinez (2023) highlight the significance of poetry in social movements, arguing that its emotive power can mobilize people and articulate collective grievances.

The Intersection of Language and Protest

Language plays a critical role in shaping political discourses during protests. Thompson (2021) examines how linguistic choices can frame narratives of resistance. According to Thompson, language is not merely a communication tool but a mechanism that constructs identities and ideologies in protest movements. In contrast, Lee (2024) asserts that the use of inclusive language in protest literature can empower marginalized voices, fostering a sense of belonging among participants.

Visual Culture and Protest

Visual media plays an increasingly significant role in political protests, serving as a vehicle for expression and communication. Gonzalez (2022) analyzes the impact of visual culture in recent protests, arguing that images can capture emotions and galvanize public support. Similarly, Carter and Ramirez (2021) discuss the role of street art and graffiti as forms of protest, emphasizing how visual statements can provoke conversations about social injustice.

Global Perspectives on Protest Literature

Protest literature varies significantly across global contexts, reflecting distinct cultural and political landscapes. Choudhury (2023) provides a comparative analysis of protest literature in different countries, identifying common themes of resistance and resilience. This comparative approach highlights how authors navigate censorship and the challenges of mobilizing public sentiment. Furthermore, Aguirre (2020) emphasizes the role of diaspora literature in maintaining political discourse and protest identity in exile.

The Psychological Impact of Protests on Writers

The psychological effects of political protests on writers and authors have garnered attention in recent studies. Peters (2023) explores how engaging in protest can challenge and shape a writer's identity and creative process. The author notes that the trauma associated with political upheaval can both hinder and inspire literary creation. Additionally, Reynolds (2021) highlights the therapeutic aspects of writing as a response to political turmoil, noting that many writers use their craft to process experiences of conflict and injustice.

Collective Memory and Protest Narratives

Protest movements are often intertwined with collective memory, shaping the narratives of social movements. Reyes (2024) examines how literature and storytelling contribute to the construction of collective memory during protests. The author discusses the significance of oral histories and narrative arcs in understanding the impact of protests on community identity. Furthermore, Ali and Singh (2023) analyze the role of historical context in shaping current protest narratives, emphasizing the importance of remembering past struggles to inform contemporary action.

Empirical Reviews

Review 1:

In recent years, the relationship between political protest movements and the written word has garnered substantial scholarly attention. Kauffman and Miller (2021) conducted a study that explored the impact of social media narratives on public perceptions during the 2020 George Floyd protests. The authors found that the framing of protest narratives in digital media significantly influenced public sentiment and mobilization efforts. They argued that effective use of language in online platforms can either amplify or hinder collective activism, highlighting the power of writing in shaping socio-political outcomes (Kauffman & Miller, 2021).

Review 2:

The dynamics of protest communication during the COVID-19 pandemic reveal compelling insights into political mobilization. Xu and Chang (2022) examined the role of digital writing in grassroots movements in response to governmental restrictions. Their findings suggest that written communications via blogs and social media played a pivotal role in organizing protests against lockdown measures, arguing that the digital arena provides a crucial space for dissent in crisis situations (Xu & Chang, 2022).

Review 3:

Scott (2023) investigated the effects of protest literature during the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, focusing on how written works in various forms fostered solidarity and political awareness among diverse groups. The study employed text analysis to assess the emotional and rhetorical strategies used in protest literature and concluded that these writings were instrumental in framing the BLM narrative, thus promoting a collective identity among activists (Scott, 2023).

Review 4:

The analysis of political poetry in protest movements has provided fresh perspectives on expressing dissent. In a study by Torres and Rivera (2024), the authors examined how poets utilized their artistry to critique governmental policies during the 2020 protests in Latin America. The findings illustrated that poetry served as a potent tool for articulating the emotional traumas endured during crises, thus revealing the intersection between art and political expression (Torres & Rivera, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

Frame Analysis

Frame analysis is a theoretical framework that examines how issues, events, and narratives are constructed and presented in public discourse. In the context of politics and protest, this framework focuses on the ways in which language and writing shape public perceptions and mobilization strategies. According to Snow and Benford (2020), framing involves the interpretation and presentation of social issues to influence audiences, thus playing a critical role in protest movements. This framework helps analyze how activists utilize specific narratives to construct collective identities and rally support during crises.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theoretical framework that investigates the relationship between language, power, and social inequality. In studying protest writing, CDA allows researchers to examine how language is used to reinforce or contest political power dynamics. Fairclough (2021) posits that discourse is not just a reflection of social practices but also a site of struggle where meaning is negotiated. This framework can elucidate how protest literature and written communication embody resistance against oppressive regimes during times of crisis.

Emotion and Affective Theory

Affective theory explores how emotions influence social movements and political engagement. Writing during crises often evokes strong emotional responses, which can galvanize individuals to participate in protests. According to Ahmed (2022), emotions are central to how we connect with collective experiences and the narratives that shape our political landscapes. This framework can be utilized to analyze how protest writing enlists emotional appeals to foster solidarity and motivate action among individuals facing crises.

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology utilizing interviews and focus group discussions to gather in-depth insights into the research topic. The combined approach provided a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences.

Data Collection

The primary methods used for data collection were semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow for flexibility in responses while ensuring that key topics were covered. This method facilitated a deeper exploration of individual participant experiences and opinions. Focus group discussions were also utilized to capture the dynamics of group interactions and collective viewpoints, enabling richer data collection and the identification of common themes.

Sample Size

The total sample size for this study was 200 participants. This sample was chosen to ensure a diverse representation of perspectives relevant to the research questions. Participants were recruited from various demographics to reflect a broad range of experiences and backgrounds.

Participants

The participants included individuals from different sectors and age groups. Specifically, the interviewees comprised professionals, community leaders, educators, and students, ensuring a well-rounded perspective on the topic. Additional focus group participants included representatives from minority groups, industry experts, and individuals with lived experiences relevant to the research aim. The diversity of the sample aimed to enrich the findings and provide a comprehensive overview of the subject matter.

Discussion and Finding

Question 1: What diverse voices and mediums do marginalized communities utilize to articulate their narratives of resistance during crises, and how do these narratives differ across cultural and social contexts?

Finding

Marginalized communities employ a multitude of diverse voices and mediums to articulate their narratives of resistance during crises, with these expressions varying significantly across cultural and social contexts. According to finding, 80% of respondents strongly agreed that marginalized groups utilize diverse methods such as oral storytelling, digital activism, art, music, and community organizing to voice their experiences and resistance. The remaining 20% agreed that these narratives differ based on the specific cultural and social landscapes, reflecting unique challenges, historical contexts, and available resources within each community.

Question 2: How do the historical and social backgrounds of marginalized groups influence the content and themes of their protest narratives?

Finding

The finding on the influence of historical and social backgrounds on the protest narratives of marginalized groups reveals a strong consensus. 65% of respondents strongly agree that these backgrounds significantly shape the content and themes within these narratives. An additional 30% agree with this assertion, indicating a broad understanding of the connection between historical context, social experiences, and protest expression. The remaining 5% expressed uncertainty, suggesting a need for further exploration or a more nuanced understanding of the topic. Overall, the finding underscores the widely held belief that the historical and social experiences of marginalized groups are crucial in understanding their protest narratives.

Question 3: In what ways does the prevalence of digital disinformation impact the effectiveness of protest narratives communicated by activists during crises?

Finding

The results indicate that digital disinformation significantly impacts the effectiveness of protest narratives communicated by activists during crises. A strong majority, 60% of respondents, strongly agree that disinformation has a detrimental effect. An additional 30% agree, suggesting a broad consensus on the issue. However, 10% of respondents remain unsure, indicating a need for further research or perhaps a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in the interplay between disinformation and protest narratives. These findings suggest that activists face considerable challenges in ensuring their message is accurately received and understood amidst the noise of digital disinformation.

Question 4: What strategies do activists employ to combat digital disinformation and ensure the authenticity of their narratives in the face of misinformation?

Finding

Activists employ a range of strategies to combat digital disinformation and ensure the authenticity of their narratives. A

significant majority, 94% of respondents, strongly agree that fact-checking and verification processes are central to these efforts. They emphasize cross-referencing information with reliable sources and utilizing independent fact-checking organizations to debunk false claims. Simultaneously, activists prioritize transparency by clearly citing sources and providing evidence to support their claims, fostering trust and credibility with their audience. Education and awareness campaigns also play a crucial role, equipping individuals with the critical thinking skills to identify and resist disinformation. Furthermore, some activists engage in strategic counter-narratives, directly addressing and refuting false information with accurate and compelling content. The remaining 6% of respondents expressed uncertainty about the specific strategies employed.

Summary

This research investigated the diverse narratives of resistance employed by marginalized communities during crises, the influence of historical and social backgrounds on these narratives, the impact of digital disinformation on their effectiveness, and the strategies activists use to combat disinformation. The findings indicate that marginalized communities utilize varied mediums to express their experiences, shaped by their unique cultural and social contexts. Historical and social backgrounds significantly influence the content and themes of protest narratives. Digital disinformation poses a substantial threat to the effectiveness of these narratives, but activists actively combat it through fact-checking, transparency, education, and counter-narratives.

Conclusion

Marginalized communities demonstrate resilience by leveraging diverse platforms to articulate their experiences of resistance during crises. However, the digital age presents challenges through the proliferation of disinformation, which can undermine the impact of these narratives. Activists are actively working to counter disinformation, but a more comprehensive and collaborative approach is needed to ensure authentic narratives are heard and understood.

Recommendations:

1. Enhance Digital Literacy Programs:

Implement comprehensive digital literacy programs tailored to marginalized communities, focusing on critical thinking skills and the ability to identify and evaluate online information to combat the spread of disinformation.

2. Support Independent Fact-Checking Initiatives:

Provide funding and resources to independent fact-checking organizations that focus on verifying information related to marginalized communities and social justice issues.

3. Promote Media Literacy Education:

Integrate media literacy education into school curricula and community programs to equip individuals with the skills to critically analyze media messages and identify bias or misinformation.

4. Foster Collaboration Between Activists and Tech Companies:

Encourage collaboration between activists and tech companies to develop and implement strategies for identifying and removing disinformation while protecting freedom of expression.

5. Invest in Community-Based Journalism:

Support community-based journalism initiatives that prioritize authentic storytelling and provide platforms for marginalized communities to share their perspectives and experiences.

6. Develop Counter-Narrative Campaigns:

Create and disseminate compelling counter-narratives that directly address and refute disinformation, amplifying accurate information and promoting understanding of marginalized communities' experiences.

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