SUSTAINING HEGEMONY THROUGH MEDIA

Reinforcing entertainment-based propaganda through social media to create unrest in society: Case study of Pakistan

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2022

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Name of Student: (Mahnoor Anwar)

Date:

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family who have been a source of constant support and motivation. Following to my friends and mentors who pushed me to strive harder towards my goal. I finally dedicating this to the entire population of Pakistan, to serve as awareness in the realm of on-going 5th generation warfare.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

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All praises to Allah Almighty who is the most beneficent and the most merciful all respect for His Prophet (P.B.U.H), who enable us to recognize our Creator.

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Abstract

This study revolves around the concept of the entertainment media being used by powerful countries (referred to as hegemons in this study) to perpetuate their hegemony. The primary significance in this research is the use of movies to build narratives and distorted realities by inciting symbolic bullets into the subconscious of the audiences. Thus, creating perceptions and attitudes beneficial to the hegemons.

This study concentrates on Pakistan as a case study, where these hegemons used the media to reduce self -worth in our society causing despondency among the youth. This notion was evaluated in qualitative sense through both the literature review and interview-based data of 10 experts, it was concluded that these symbolic representations did in reality exists in our youth. Majority of them become easy target of psychological operation being carried out by foreign   entertainment industry through of 5th generation and hybrid warfare.

Keywords

Hegemon, symbolic bullets, hybrid warfare, psychological operations, movies.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Wars have been part of the human civilization. Though this activity has been constant feature of our history, but its process has always undergone changes because of new strategies and technological development. In early times, when states wanted other states to meet their demands or stop the act of aggression, they would just go for the kill. In that period the primary focus was on the strategy of direct attack through wars. By strength and power, these big states would justify their actions and no weaker would question anything due to fear of repercussions. The main point to note here is that all this is possible if the world is Uni-polar, no other power has the capability to challenge the strong state's decision or oppression in any way.

In the current world, powerful states or hegemons established international organization as the League of Nations and its successor organization, the UN to give a certain direction to world affairs.

One early examples of this great power politics was the war of the Korean peninsula (1950-1953), where big states/hegemons fought to achieve their own hegemony. This pattern was repeated in Vietnam. Here the US fought not to help the innocent citizens of the poor country but to extend its capitalists ideology in the region. The US finally pulled out of an unwinnable war after suffering heavy causalities and mounting domestic pressure.to justify unpopular wars, a need was felt perception management not only for domestic audience but international audience as well. This was through mainstream and popular media.

Media's Ascent

As technological advancement started to play its role, perception management was increasingly done through entertainment industry that included movies, television. With the advent of these two powerful media, the great powers began to shape domestic and the international public opinion to promote their own cultures and narratives. This helped them perpetuate their hegemonic actions and claims. The idea here is not to undermine the role of print media or the

radio, rather to ponder about the magnified effects that came with the movies and television serving as both as news/information and entertainment portal. If we talk about the role of radio in the world war, it worked as both of a propaganda as well as a motivating tool towards both friends and foes. Therefore, to point out the fact that media as always portrayed a role in either confusing the enemy or providing the necessary support to one's own soldiers.

Influence of media

With the new technology at hand, studying its effects became imperative for researchers. Thus, a new communication theory was created. This was called as the magic bullet theory. This theory described the effects that media could have on its audience (Nwabueze & Okonkwo, 2018). As is evident by its name, the concept projects that the message transmitted by the media acts like either a bullet or needle being injected, meaning that the respective message directly impacts its audience. This research in the 1930s to 40s showed media in whole new light. Furthering on the above notion, around 80 years ago, when radio prevailed greatly, dramatic series were broadcasted over the US. In one of the episodes, a scene from H.G. Well's book "War of the Worlds", it was broadcasted that an alien invasion of New Jersey was found to be so believable, that many listeners panicked. This incident made headline news (Weisberger, 2018). This clearly exemplified the impact the media could have on its audience. Over the years this, impact created by the electronic media over live audiences has only increased.

Propaganda has permanently been enshrined in the military doctrines of states. Psychological operations are planned meticulously to weaken the national morale and the will to fight (Yamin, 2019). What spies and fifth columnist did over a span of many days, the mainstream as well as social media can do within a matter of hours. These strategies act as force multiplier and destroy the fighting spirit of the nation, even before the bullet is fired. This is often done through causing polarization within the society by segregating the public perception on various issues. A divided polity is easier to handle than a united polity.

"Divide and conquer "Julius Caesar

Rewriting history according to one's own perception

Rather than the conventional ways of acquiring knowledge through books and academic journals, people now rely on media to form opinions. Now the social media (internet) has become the center of our lives. Obviously prolonged exposure to social media increases the propensity of the unsuspecting public to believe whatever is being presented to them their perception about public issues is now shaped by what the media is offering to them.

With this new form increasing technologically, hegemonic states quickly started to employ this aspect in their doctrines. From aiding in conventional battles by confusing the enemies with fake news and propaganda, to manufacturing consent both domestically as well as internationally. The motives behind hegemonic power politics, came to be challenged, at first, they started to mainly use the print and the electronic media to sway the audience in believing their righteous actions even if it involved great humanitarian loss. Focusing on this area, Tarak Barkawi relates these ideas with the Vietnam syndrome. Where the US was criticized for not being on the people's sides and fighting its own power gains. So, to remedy this aspect, the US through media started to re-write the Vietnam conflict in their own preferred lens. From movies and propaganda dominating the electronic media, they created a liberating image of themselves (Barkawi, n.d). So, the concept being that whenever the US wants to either distract the international public from any other incident or prep them towards a situation favorable to them, they greatly use the media. Thereby media becomes a soft power in sustaining their hegemony in the world.

"When the media is controlled by people who runs the world, you are only going to get news that they want you to know. They will paint anther's man country's hero a tyrant, a dictator or a murderer and favor the next just to divide and conquer the people".

<div align="right">Henry Johnson Jr.</div>

Nuclear deterrence or soft power

With introduction of nuclear deterrence in the international politics, major wars slowly have been replaced by small/proxy wars in other countries' territories. Even with this type of warfare, it still required material resources, so they started to heavenly reply on the soft power granted by the media. In contemporary times, the global media is still dominated by the US, with its major media conglomerates) it openly creates and reinforces its position among the international audience. Except for one media giant (Brettlesmann) that belongs to Germany, rest seven major media giants belong to the US exclusively (Harrie, 2009). As English became the international language for communication across the world, neither China nor Russia could compete in the media race of the global world. This situation left the US to unilaterally dominate the global perception. With not being satisfied with just the electronic media, they took the internet as well. All major media platforms i.e., Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram e. t. c. are owned by the US, there by giving them a marked advantage in waging a propaganda war and influencing the perception of the captivate audience and that too without shedding any blood.

 While internet has become the new bearer of bulk information, studies that people still refer to the print and electronic media to form opinions. So, in terms of information the traditional media would surpass the social media or internet generally (Quattrociocch & Conte, 2011). So, it can be generalized that through fake news and propaganda filled movies, individuals' logics and ideals can be manipulated by perpetuating certain ideas.

As soft power changed the dynamics of warfare, this era is constantly becoming victim of psychological operations. While cyber-attacks may create direct and instant results, psychological operations may give more sustainable results to achieve goals. Emphasizing further on this notion, Col. Alfred H Paddock Jr. (US Army) said that "the planned use of communications to influence human attitudes and behavior. It consists of political, military, and ideological actions conducted to create in target groups behavior, emotions, and attitudes that support the attainment of national objectives." (Rodríguez, 2020) Psychological warfare is not a connotation of the present it has existed since early times. This strategy was introduced by Sun

Tzu, decades ago, then its use as a military instrument could be seen through the Mongols of the Middle East, to the Roman Empire and finally following the British in the 19th century (Paddock Jr 1989). Referring to the point here is that these military tactics have become more lethal with the advancement in technology. As Sun Tzu wrote "Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win." (Pelzer, 2021)

The Non-Physical West (Defying Geographical Constraints)

To sustain their dominant hold over the world, the hegemons and their allies' created notions like the core and periphery or the West and the Rest.

At present, conflicts and power games do not revolve around geography rather according to the power gains of the hegemon. Like how Japan physically being the East comes under the category of the West. Similarly, many states of Europe despite being physically in the West are not part of it (Hall, 1992). The era of geographical construct is long over, and ideological construct dominate the international realm now. One of the major reasons why constructs such as the West and the rest, thrive so much is due to being ambiguous in nature. Their foundational requirements change with situations. These constructs are created to clearly define the lines between the powerful, its allies and the rest of the world. The most eminent question mark in this idea is the question of the WHO, who decides which state will be part of the West regardless of the geographical constraints and why. When geographical demarcations of regions exist why is there a need for this construct. History repeats itself, this clash of civilization existed like when fighting against the oriental Persian, the Greeks referred to themselves as the Westerners some 25 years ago (Sorman, 2008). Since there is no clear distinction between what is and what is considered. There comes a need to revert to the concept of perception management and propagandas. Otherwise, it becomes to explain how the international realm has accepted that Japan and Taiwan are part of the west, while physically not being a part of it.

Movies as Perception Creation and Management tools

Movies have been unabashedly for waging propaganda campaigns. Television and the radio that are part of every urban household adds to this information warfare. Hollywood and Bollywood have played an important role in churning out propaganda and shaping domestic and international opinion. Hollywood has unrivalled international reach. This medium has been used productively to promote the American way of life to the world. The American movie makers not only profited by selling American fantasies but also benefitted greatly in terms of finances. Since this measure was proved to produce great results, directors of such propagandized films, also started dealing with documentaries (Dunnigan, n.d.). As movies provided the narrative in an art form, documentaries took more off a direct approach towards sensitive issues and thereby re-writing history, where the hegemons actions were not considered right.

The traces of this idea can be readily found amongst the cold war tactics, where both main superpowers used propaganda and perception management to shape world opinion. Both the US and the USSR sold their ideologies (Capitalism vs. Communism) to convince the world at large that their system is the best. Movies such as *Mission to Moscow* (1943) to *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) both created propaganda against each other (Bullis, 2009). So, it can easily be said other than news channels, movies and documentaries over time have also played quite an eminent role in the creation of hegemonic suited perception. Another point that can be noted that the through this medium, the audience that could not be impacted through the fake news be fished in through this measure.

Major Wars and Proxy Wars

The end of the World War II brought a distinct change in the landscape of military doctrines, where the great powers started to resort to proxy wars to cater to their aims. The first indication of this can be seen in the Cold War. Another variable to consider here is that when major wars diminished in number civil wars gradually increased (World Bank, n.d.). Can it be considered that the long-time effects of the soft power through the media led them to this situation? By creating internal strife within a state, the great powers could intervene has they

pleased. Relation to major wars, civil wars do not attract much attention unless hegemons have stakes in the conflict. By creating instability these power-hungry hegemons to use the resources of the said state without any objections. Now this is one perspective to the propaganda situation, even if this is just in theory, we would still need to account for the consequences that would come with the constant exposure to such propaganda. If such heavy propaganda is constantly thrown at the audience, would their perceptions start to distort and could this lead to polarization in the society.

The major rationale behind constantly referring to propaganda and its relation to great power politics, is to make clear of its possible aftereffects on the most vulnerable sector of the population. When a human is born, it has to learn everything from speaking to understanding what is being said. The individual goes through series of social institution and educational institutions to make its perception and ideals. In the case of historical events, individual learn them in a series of grades moving forward. So, what would happen if they are exposed to distorted perceptions from a very young age? Rather than following their own ideals that supports their culture and traditions, they would slowly and gradually grasp the version of the hegemonic perceptions. Thus, leading towards a manufactured consent that provides sustainability towards the title of hegemony of the powerful.

Victims of Great Power Politics

Pakistan became the center of international politics due to its geo-strategic location. Due this feature Pakistan firstly became a pawn of the great powers during the Cold War and now it faces another challenge as tensions rise between the US (the current hegemon) against the China (the economic giant). While these hegemons resort to other hard measure but in case of Pakistan being nuclear, soft power was a better option. Stuck between great powers, Pakistan has long been a victim of 5th generation warfare. (Nadeem & Mustafa, 2021) As 64% of the Pakistani population comprise the youth, creating false or negative images on the young minds would serve their purpose far better than any other tactic. Corrupting the minds of the future generation to create extreme case of polarization in the society, leading up to the degradation of public-government relations. At first Pakistan was a victim of great powers, but as India

started rising as a regional power their soft power measures doubled in nature towards Pakistan. This revelation was made by the Brussels based organization exposing the EU-disinfo lab scandal. While Bollywood was already propagating certain narratives, these 15 years long operation that was conducted in 116 states, through fake media outlets furthered their narratives through social media and the electronic media (Butt, 2021).

The 5th generation warfare against Pakistan, is subtly changing the world opinion. Despite India's inhuman actions in Kashmir, it is Pakistan that earns a bad name for supporting 'terrorism' (Batool, 2021). The case of Kashmir serves as one of the best examples of how media narrative changes the reality. Content such as the *Kashmir Files* has tried to re-write historical narrative by exaggerating the reality and making the Muslims from actual victims to perpetrators of the exodus (Tribune, 2022). Projecting a distorted image setting a narrative for everyone that wasn't physically present during that or in the contemporary scenario. Thus, spreading BJP's anti-Muslim narrative across the international audience.

Movie based Propaganda through Social Media

Movies create false and misleading impressions. These false perceptions are reinforced on the social media. This agenda setting perpetuates the target audience to accept propaganda on face value and not question false and negative images. While hegemons through use of bots on the social media, can make their narrative/propaganda reach to a wider audience e.g., in 1974, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann presented the notion that when a major opinion starts to exit, minor opinion leader's jump on the band wagon of the dominant opinion due to fear of being isolated, judging by the scenarios it claims to explain it was named as the Spiral of the Silence theory. (Mass communication theory, n.d.).

Further explaining this aspect, Maxwell McCombs idea of priming and framing in the agenda setting theory provides the necessary insight of how media platforms create impactful narratives. Therefore, movies and social media both work in sync with each other in furthering their narrative (Wright, 2015). As mentioned earlier that the impact on internet was less compared to electronic media. So, it can be considered that the narrative provided by movies is maintained and stabilized through social media bots.

One such case, was the disinformation against the Aurat March on the social media. Held on 8th March every year, since 2018, this movement brought together women from all walks of life and all parts of the country, to fight for their rights.

The alleged blasphemous video from the *Aurat* (Women) March took the social media by the storm, it aligned its ideals to those of the Anti-Islam movements in France. A newspaper headline said it all: "Pakistan's new feminist movement, as exemplified by the annual Aurat March, has ignited— and exposed — the margins-to-mainstream disinformation pipeline" (Khurshid, 2021)

The impact and hype created by the social media through dis-information led mainstream media reporting the incident without checking the actual reality behind it and contributing to false foreign narrative (Bukhari, 2021).

While this campaign came with the motive for fighting for women rights it ended up portraying distorted notions that came as causing cracks in the foundations of the society thus causing polarization even between genders. The hegemonic funded campaigns to create instability within the state.

These cracks are then used to sway not only the domestic but the international public, towards certain misperceptions. For instance, how the   New York Times (*As Women's Marches Gain Steam in Pakistan, Conservatives Grow Alarmed, Rehman*) used this opportunity to showcase their distorted version of a conservative and rigid of Islam that oppresses the women of their society. Inculcating ideas and norms that would make the population question their religious values and beliefs thus weakening their resolve for their own faith and nationality.

With this eminent issue at hand, there arrives a need to understand that how movies and social media facilitate each other in the creation of powerful distorted perception. How one sets the distorted perceptions in motion thus creating space for information warfare to take place, while the other ends up reinforcing that propaganda. Working in sync in to engineer and manufacture consent for the hegemons against their own national interests.

Transition from television to internet

In context to Pakistan, ban on movies from premiering is not something new in the country. From being banned due to vulgar content, to misrepresentation of Pakistan either as failed state or terrorist state, Pakistan Censor board has had its fair share. Movies like G.I. Joe, Raazi, Agent Vinod, Pari, Phantom etc. were banned in Pakistan either due to misleading content or due to rising tensions between states. The state's aim has been to stop propaganda from influencing the public mind.

With the rising popularity of NETFLIX, AMAZON PRIME and other popular streaming sites, the role of state censorship has been rendered useless (Bharti, 2020). This transition cannot be solely blamed on the Covid 19, the struggle between television and NETFLIX and AMAZON PRIME had been going on silently for some time now. What Covid did was that it accelerated the transitions between the two mediums (Broe, 2020). All efforts made by the state to stop entertainment-based propaganda from influencing the future generation was effectively stopped, 64% of the population formed of the youth is extremely vulnerable to propaganda that can one day lead up to disturbing results. With movies and social media working side by side, information warfare moves on to a new level of warfare leading up to Noam Chomsky Manufacturing consent thereby creating consent for hegemons to easily intervene in the domestic affairs. As Jenkin writes

"... the CIA is interested in 'educating' the public about its successes to keep public support up, but the Agency may ignore   and even hide its failures. ..."   (Jenkins, 2013)

Travelling labels and its affects

Another noteworthy illustration that clearly highlights the patterns set by hegemons to control issues in the international stage is the ongoing war in Ukraine. It has been established that the international played an important role in demonizing the invading Russians and the villainous President and the heroic defense put up by the Ukrainians with their courageous President in the lead. In this context, **The Foreign Press Association** site office in Africa (Kenya) issued a document on 1st March condemning the western way of covering events differently in different

situations. In the current conflict how Ukraine conflict is treated as highly imperative issue while their coverage on other conflicts like those in Africa never received the same treatment. Clearly calling out to the hegemonic ways of reporting, the racist elements of journalism fail to provide the world with the real image, consequently all this can be considered as fallouts of the notions such as the West and the Rest, the white and other (The Foreign Press Association, 2022)

While Kashmiris, Palestinians, Yemenis are termed terrorist, for fighting for their rights and paying with their lives, the Ukrainians glorified as fighters, fighting for their freedom. This is the way the hegemons manipulate the media in to creating their own narrative and spreading it in the international globe to sustain their superiority as well as dominance.

Main Argument

The media has been used aggressively by technologically savvy nations to influence the minds of the youth by creating glitzy narratives about their way of life and shedding poor light on the culture and society of the others.

For maximum outreach powerful nations or the hegemons controlling the media stream and social media use movies to shape the minds of the younger generations. It is done in a subtle manner to move them away from a belief in their own way of life and make them lose faith in their own value system and way of life. This can overall create unrest within the society and distrust against the state. Thus, giving the hegemons a chance to intervene in the domestic politics of the state and undermining the progress of the state. This study would specifically focus on the US movies industry and social media including the video streaming platforms in creating misleading and false narratives to subvert the minds of the youth. This study would examine the process of psychological operations being carried out by the external media on the minds of the youth.

Objectives

- To track how social media assisted by movies has re-shaped historical events and thereby creating national identities.

- To check the extent to which minds of the youth have been influenced by all kinds of media.

- To check the extent of polarization in the society through mainstream and social media.

Research question

1. How is social media (supported by movies) being used as a platform by so-called hegemons to legitimize their actions and destabilize societies and causing unrest against the state?

2. How is social media and movies being used to glorify the image and status by Great Powers/hegemons?

3. How are the hegemons using the mass media to conduct psychological warfare in hopes of creating polarization within societies other than theirs?

Research methodology

The study follows the exploratory approach to study the relationship between hegemony and media's role in sustaining it. How media is being used by hegemons to re-write narratives to suit their interests. It traces how media turns false perceptions into realities for global dominance. Strategizing the old and costly techniques of colonialism to low cost and effective means digital colonialism/neo-colonialism. This research follows the qualitative research employing qualitative data collection. Techniques to make the study even more impactful. Using the questionnaire as the tool for data collection with open-ended questions. It traces the distorted historical and contemporary reality. It then explores the impact of social media backed with the symbolic bullets of the entertainment industry through the experts/ researchers of various thinktanks and organization. Lastly analyzing and interpreting the data from sources to present a comprehensive result.

Structure

This study has been divided into five chapter, the first chapter explores the technological evolution of media and its link in influencing audiences by introducing distorted/ manipulated realities. From cinemas to televisions then online streaming sites lastly to social media, how these are used to create environments beneficial to the hegemons of the world.

The second chapter brings in the context of literature. Using literature to bring the work and research relevant to media and its role in sustaining power through soft power rather than costly and blood-filled hard power.

The third chapter lays the theoretical framework. Using the concept of symbolic bullets and stimuli presented by the political propaganda theory and linking the influence of media. Then bringing in the context of the theory of Spiral of Silence establishing its relationship to the phenomenon occurring on the social media in context to soft power and propaganda. Providing with the theoretical basis of how the youth could be provoked towards a distorted attitude or manipulated action.

The fourth chapter works on the data collection and analyzation and interpretation of the collected data

The fifth chapter presents the conclusion as well as the recommendations for the study.

Chapter 2

Literature review

Cultural imperialism and media

The agreed notion of cultural globalization basically pertains to the international realm being sculpted into the image of western culture (mostly American). In contemporary and qualified discourse, the influence of products such as Big Macs, American music e.tc is considered unmistakable. Essentially pointing to prophecy fulfillment of McLuhan's Global village. In this context of cultural globalization mass media is considered as the driving force, the reason being the mass media has become a tool that allows a teenager sitting in Argentina, turkey or India be aware of Western popular cultures such as NIKE or Coca Cola. Thus, pointing to the power of media in terms on influence in this phenomenon of cultural globalization.

If we refer to the influencing power of the media, the cultural imperialism theory developed by Herb   Schiller (1973) emphasized greatly that media messages emitting from developed western states carried great influence for the global audience. In the initial stages of research in cultural imperialism, states were considered as the main participants in the international realm. They revealed that wealthy and industrialized states of West forcibly infused their cultural and socio-values on the weak and less developed states. Their claim was supported by deep research, research that grounded in the assertion that both News and entertainment media were quite biased in the favor of the powerful West. This idea was clear both in quantity and quality context as the developed nations were the major exporters of the media thus covering the quantity while in terms of quality the developing and the underdeveloped states received the most prejudiced quality of the content (Kraidy, 2002).

One of the major ontological assumption that the theory of cultural imperialism gave to the world is that humans/ the audience do not processes the choice of free will regarding different feeling ,actions or even their own lives ,they only believe what the media /television projects and since they do not carry any other relevant comparison ,they immediately compare the shown reality to their own lives (communication capstone, n.d.).

With technology progression, the most fought for resource of oil gave some of its imminent status to data making it the new oil for the international realm. This new resource is being driven by the corporate businesses and media giants. Pointing out to the fact that in the contemporary era neo-colonialism and media imperialism thrives the means of googolopoly (google-monopoly) and Cyber management. As in the past colonial giants used the techniques of physical invasion to capture lands but today through these media giants such as Netflix, Apple, Google e.tc, they are able to seize the minds of masses all around the world with just the media. Thus creating "packaged consciousness" that are beneficial to these giants and influence people like magic bullets through fake news and propagandas.

This version of neo-colonial digital imperialism is credited even more perilous than physical attacks or conquest. The reason being that this does not just involve the hegemony of knowledge but rather elements like spread of propaganda and fake news to information warfare, cyber-attack to intrusion of privacy and the most dangerous one of all controlling or molding of public narratives (Augustine ,2020).

At present cultural imperialism focuses on the US part as cultural hegemon dominating the world. Hollywood's counterparts have failed in achieving the same level of success in movies as Hollywood, this is not only due their great economic models and corporates but rather Hollywood has become the trend setter internationally (Libraries, n.d.).

Roots of propaganda

The technique of using emotional messages to influence audience, to change and distort value systems, beliefs is formally termed as propaganda. Propaganda does not function with inter-personal communication rather machine assistance communication reaching to a broader audience. Therefore, for propaganda to function it requires a certain medium (mass media) to act as its driving force to achieve it desirable effects. In terms of nature propaganda is always deliberate and intentional, trying to spark either belief change, or action envisioned by the sender. It is common fact at this point that propaganda is not something that will disappear rather it will get even stronger as times moves forth. At present the preeminent way out to this issue, would be to find ways to counter it effectively. Emphasizing on this notion Jacques Ellul

(French philosopher, sociologist and lay theologian) wrote in 1957, "Propaganda will always triumph over information … Wherever there is propaganda, information, if it is to survive, must utilize the same weapons. It must engage in a struggle against the inaccuracy of the facts proclaimed by propaganda." (Snow, 2019)

In the First World War, both the opposing parties i.e., the allied forces and the central powers used the platform of media against each other. They used print media to not only get the required support domestically but internationally as well. Both parties shaping narratives and perceptions favorable to their situations. For instance, the framing of the Germans emperor as somewhat of a beast figure, tactfully presented by the allied forces towards the international world. In contemporary times, media still plays a very dominant role in creating dominant perceptions that hold the public captive as well as setting the temperament around conflicts (Warrich & Haider, 2015).

During World War I, to stop such malicious foreign propaganda from infecting the public, governments would jam radio signals. As technology brought a boom by connecting the world in the web of the internet. Propaganda can easily be circulated all around the globe even to the most private households. As media took a new platform on the worldwide, freeing itself from the authoritarian rule of governments, malicious and sometimes disturbing and illegal messages started penetrating a boarder audience across the world.

Tracing back dangerous nature of propaganda, the World War I serve as one the greatest specimens. Where major conflict rose out of the national level propaganda being spread against the monarchs of Austro –Hungarian in Herzegovinian and Bosnian states. To penalize the Serbians for this act which in turn sparked many other controversies (OSCE, 2015)

Reality VS perceived reality

With new technologies replacing the old, internet freedom to the long restriction media, giving it a platform with propagandas and distorted perception could be spread in all forms, be it information or entertainment. Thus, adding the flavor of persuasion in the mix of media. With

this instrument being used readily CNN, framed the year 2013, as the "year of the online Hoax". Illustrating the impact of media combined with the platform on internet, a video on the internet went viral, where a young women got physically hurt while performing an act (2014) even the mainstream media outlets like MSNBC, Fox News and The View TV show became victim of it. Later it was revealed to be a hoax, when the same woman was introduced during a show (Jimmy Kimmel live) as stunt women, consequently pointing out to the perilous nature of the media (Hobbs &McGee, n.d.)

Bringing forth the gap that persists between reality and the perceived reality, Walter Lippmann presented the case of an island in 1914 where individuals of three different nations (British, German and French) lived in harmony with each other. Over the span of 60 days merchants' ships came for trade and supplies, as well as the news of the world. As the World War I broke, the inhabitants of these nationality for six weeks lived in peace only. To be told that they were not really friends rather. This destroyed the harmony of the island. Compared to that era, information now is available readily, we perceive directly what we are shown (Lippmann, 1921). In simpler words Lippmann through this idea, that propaganda is basically the window between the actual situation and its audience. As in most situation individuals are not physically present at the scene of the event therefore depend on the media to understand and create the reality of the event. Thus, the picture depicted by the media in its own narrative and biased perceptions becomes the reality or the actual environment for the people (Snow, 2019).

Justifying through cinema

Hegemons have often fought through media such as cinema despite the fact the US is the only country to have used nuclear weapons, killing thousands of innocent citizen, it is portrayed as the leader of the so-called Free world that acts as the guardian that protects the world from the use of nuclear weapons by so-called rogue state. This State which clearly used this devastating mechanism in Japan, then acts international police and tries to hinder or stop countries such as Iran, North Korea from developing such nuclear capabilities. It was found out through a survey conducted on the American public that most population believed that usage of nuclear bomb to stop Iran from developing such capabilities was justified. Among other

forms of media, cinema can be seen as force to alter people's perceptions and narratives. Thus, in context of the above notion, films and cinema can serve the purpose of justifying wars. Through films states can legitimize their actions in the international stage (Emamzadeh &Sabbar, 2017).

To justify their actions in conflicts and wars, the US has over time used the media specifically war movies and cinema in presenting an alternative perspective, thus justifying their actions and intentions to the international world. Form Iraq to Afghanistan they have been rewriting history in their own perceptions to gain sympathy from the world. Propaganda infused movies like *Pearl Harbor*, *Saving Private Ryan* to *Black hawk down* e. t. c. They tried to reshape themselves as the good guys while the others were depicted as the baddies. Since World War I, the US as actively used this tool of propaganda through various entertainment platforms to exploit situations towards conditions favorable to them. Propaganda became a tool that can give birth to conflicts, spark them, or even make them lose a conflict (Majed, 2016). If refer to Hollywood movies made in 60s (China Gate 1957, The *Quite American 1958*, and *The Ugly American* 1963), the general narrative was anti-communist in nature and showed the US as innocent state, trying to fight the communist beast in hope of bringing peace in the region. The CIA was so focused to provide their narrative that they asked writer Garham Greene (*The Ugly American 1963*) to write an alternate ending showing the communist involved in bomb plantation in Saigon (Birkhold ,n.d.).

Focusing on *China Gate* in detail, through a soldier's tale, the French were depicted as champions that were fighting the brutes of communism. Greatly showing the communists as inhumane creatures ready to kill women and children to achieve their gains. Another movie worth mentioning here is the *Green Berets*, it is considered as the most controversial films on that time. This film tried to justify US's involvement in the Vietnam by portraying as locals as brutes who just raped and killed innocents and the US was trying to stop this ideology from taking the world as its victim. Due to the strikes at that time, this film was met with great criticism domestically, still produced great results in the box office. Then comes the narrative of showing themselves as a superior nation, movies such as *WE WERE SOLIDERS* clearly projected

the American military as technology and development wise superior to others (Väyrynen, 2019).

Movies, Psychological operations, and the state

Within the board spectrum of division (economic, political, and military) of the US, psychological operations play a crucial role. From being utilized as a tool to demoralize an enemy rank to reducing their efficiency in combat, to creating polarization and turning the civilian population against the state, is the work of psychological operations. At present the basic aim of the United States in using psychological warfare is to create a glorified image of themselves as well as their actions for the international audience (Goldstein, 1996).

Psychological operations work with the basic function of stimulating or reinforcing certain international attitudes and actions with the instigators aims and objectives. Some experts of psychological operations often present with the notion that the PSYOPs should be employed at local level supporting military operations at tactical level. However, the section JP 3-53 of the Joint publication emphasizes of influencing international audiences at the highest level rather than just at village level (Munoz, 2012).

> *"Military Information Support Operations (MISO) missions involve sharing specific information to foreign audiences to influence the emotions, motives, reasoning, and behavior of foreign governments and citizens. This can include cyber warfare and advanced communication techniques across all forms of media".*

(Go army, n.d.)

The above concept is from the US ARMY website, section (careers) psychological operations

Covert propaganda is considered the most influential and convincing type of propaganda in the larger context of psychological operation. Considering that the US army rarely involves itself with the entertainment industry would be an understatement. In reality thousands of films are produced with their support, the number is so great that many of that do not even get produced. Content from all genres of the entertainment industry get narratives and notions from the military be it variety shows to series. There exists an entertainment office in the

Pentagon and CIA that not only tell the audience how to react to notions of conflict and peace but to a greater extent shape favorable realities for audience that that little information of the international realm (Swanson, 2022)

Since the agency was founded, it has tried its best to maintain great relations with celebrities, producers, and script writers with aim of getting them to paint glorified image of their operations and image to the audiences. CIA in the mid-1990s took the role of entertainment media seriously and opened a public relations liaison office for the betterment of their image, but during President Clintons time, their objective drastically took turn for the creations of myths. At that time Veteran agent like Brandon Chase were brought back to create favorable relations with Hollywood. To be on set as an advisor on series such as "**Alias"**, a movie based on the post 9/11 perspective. According to retired CIA officer John Kiriakou, producers and celebrities like Ben Affleck were given open passes inside Langley with the aim to gather favorable image. Their hard work paid in the film **Argo** (2012) produced by Ben Affleck, based on true events of the American hostage situation in Tehran, the events were deeply distorted than the actual happenings and this film won three academy awards (Schou, n.d.)

A redacted CIA document was obtained by Vice, that revealed the role of CIA in Oscar winning movie "**Zero Dark Thirty**" (2013) were extreme torture was shown as method of extracting information in the search of Osama Bin Ladin. The data also included the records (2014) from CIA office with the title "Alleged Disclosure of Classified Information by Former D/CIA", then a report (September 2013) with the title "Potential Ethics Violations Involving Film Producers" (Rob, 2015). As writer Birkhold concluded the take away points from the movie Zero Dark thirty and its links with the CIA, he said "fiction . . . can be a powerful force" (Birkhold ,n.d.).

Another information in that document was the opportunity given to the screen writer (Mark Boul) to attend a secret award function by CIA director Leon Panetta just after the span of few weeks, take down of Osama bin laden. The writer has been part of another film (**Hurt Locker**) that glorified the American army in Iraq in. When the killing of Osama Bin Ladin was announced on 1st oct 2011, the said writer was already working on the script of Osama bin Ladin get away from Afghanistan with the CIA (Rob, 2015).

Islamophobia and Muslims as the Evil stereotype

Confronting other forms of entertainment, series and dramas have also been used as tool to propagate distorted realities. Especially after 9/11 another variable became part of the propagated perceptions i.e., Islam phobia. Many series such as *The West Wing* as well as *Homeland* have been propagandized in nature. The in-built issue all these series that spread the concept of Islamophobia was that they talked about this concept with regards to American national security thus creating a horrific picture for the audience. Among other The West Wing became one of the first series to bring forth the concept of Islam and Islamophobia in light favorable to the US. Especially its episode "Isaac and Ishmael," brought forward complex ideological propagandized narrative to its audience and creating Islam in a distorted version (Findlay, 2020)

After 9/11 in the context, new identities and propagandas started to rise. Hollywood began to Muslims as terrorist. As a result, Muslims were ostracized institutionally as well in western societies. Through these movies Muslims generally were defined as barbaric, uncivilized brutes that conducted terrorist attacks on innocents. Author Edward said, reinforced this notion with his idea of orientalism. Orientalism projected mysterious protagonists created by the west to disgrace the eastern culture while at the same time reinforcing their western principles.

It's not that Muslims or Arabs suddenly became a figment of bad depiction for film makers, in pre 9/11 era. They were always depicted as uncivilized brutes chasing after women. One such example is the Movie *SHIEK* released in 1921 where an Arab sheikh is bewitched by the charms of the beautiful Diana and kidnaps her. Other than this many other portrayals have been made to firmly distinguish the West from other identities (Senanayake, 2020). With the identity of Muslims constantly being scrutinized, it did not take long for Hollywood to distort reality once more by publicizing Muslim women as being oppressed part of the society. From series such as the *Elites*, where it is showed how Muslim women are oppressed by their religion and only seek freedom by disregarding it by removing her headscarf and drinking alcohol. Then in the most iconic action movies such as *Iron Man 3, where* the protagonist saves a niqab observing woman admits the actual plot. Thus, projecting to the world that Muslim women are oppressed,

mistreated and covered and the only liberation that they can achieve is through the white male coming to their aid, clearly degrading not only Islam but the Muslim society as well (The Muslim Lady, 2019).

Concerning the serious misrepresentation being faced by Muslims all around by world spread through Hollywood's narratives, British actor Sajid Varda expressed his views "It was all very much about faith [after that]," Varda said. "The narrative was more around Muslims, Islam, and negativity … [and] faith was almost used as a weapon to create misrepresentation, with negative associations." (Child, 2021) highlighting on these concepts of mere entertainment is necessary as these film industry produces cultural notions that end up affecting the societal norms. Movies take inspirations from news and thus become capable of spreading ideological beliefs across audiences. Movie's relay and create meanings thus they become powerful mechanism of spreading different types of stereotypes in receiver. In this context Martin and Ostwalt assert:

> "Films, as with other cultural forms, have the potential to reinforce, to challenge, to overturn, or to crystallize religious perspectives, ideological assumptions, and fundamental values. Films bolster and challenge our society's norms, guiding narratives, and accepted truths."

In the series "**Homeland**", the main CIA character has been reckless and imperfect, still were in the end he turns out to be the hero while on the other hand the antagonist, a fanatic and irrational Islamic extremist. Writer Gansa of Homeland worked before on the series "24" (Fox) in its 7th and 8th season where he vindicated torture as an appropriate tool for torture in their chase of terrorism, to the point of normalizing collateral damage for the sake of the nation (Schou, n.d.).

It is quite interesting to see that pre-9/11 the Arab or Muslims women, the Orients were seen as mysterious and veiled individuals, some examples are that of *Indiana Jones and the Raider of lost Ark* 1981 to the *Thief of Damascus* 1952. How it became an obligation for the western men to look into the mystery's hidden deep within the Orients. Linking the cinema to politics that

when the US relations with the Middle East were favorable, they were not degraded in perceptions while things changed when political situations changed (Ramji, 2005).

Russians the Forever villain

Though Hollywood has never been short of imagination, but their forever villain in most of their films and TV series have been the Russians, ranging from being a KGB spy against the Marvel super-heroes of *The Avengers* to the immoral villain in the *Die-Hard* franchise. Hollywood script writers have always portrayed and demonized the Russians in one way or the other through their movies.to the point that Russian started boycotting Hollywood films and started a motion to stop distribution rights in the upper chambers of national Russian assembly. This depiction was not born during or after the Cold war, even before it, it was clearly depicted as security threat to the West (Brook, 2014). Even as the Russian threat decreased with the fall of the USSR, still Hollywood kept its propaganda active in movies such as the *Equalizer* with Denzel Washington to *November Man* staring Pierce Brosnan, where Russian are always shown to be interfering within the geographical constraints of the US. Either be it power hungry Russian politicians to inhumane Russian gangsters; they serve as the go to villains for most films. With pervious hostilities aside the question stands that why Russians are the only nationality that fit into this character, and the only possible answer is that America's deep hatred for Russians economic system as well as their ideological system (communism), the US government does not act on this account even with the serious threats from Russia (Queenan, 2014).

Hollywood's take on Pakistan

While Russians might be the forever villains in Hollywood, Pakistani Pakhtoon have been added to this category now. Some efforts have been made to dispel this image through Pakistani movie Janaan. The director in interview said that this movie was an effort to clear the misunderstandings that west had created not only internationally but domestically as well. Showcasing the real beauty and loving nature under the misrepresented label of a Pakhtoon and clearly pointing out the distorted terrorist perceptions that the international community has of Pakistan as utterly false (Raza, 2016).

Hollywood's lens for Pakistan often ends up changing from being a villain, this industry has repeated also projected Pakistan as failed state, where terrorist parade on streets as well as a

that incapable of protecting their nuclear weapons. The second installment of the G.I Joe films serves as the perfect example of their framing (Tribune, 2013)

While this industry flourishes with its various genres, Pakistan as a state is almost always shown in negative light, like how in *Zero Dark thirty*, Abbottabad is shown as a waste land while in reality it is scenic beauty worth visiting (Ghaznavi, 2015). In the film the CIA even sought to give the floor plans of Abbottabad to the screen writer to portray their distorted narrative (Schou, n.d.). Then the definition of Pakistani man, is that of having a beard and being uncivilized brute while it is different in reality and lastly the aspect of guns on streets (Ghaznavi, 2015).

Hybrid warfare and fifth generation warfare

The term hybrid warfare despite being employed in strategic doctrines, came to formally known to be in the early 2000s. This type of warfare, brought about an array of kinetic as well as non-kinetic techniques, generational warfare into one combined dogmas of warfare. From a combination of soft power comprising of disinformation campaign, information warfare, and propaganda to hard power of proxy wars, cyber-attacks and economic coercions. As this warfare comes with being cost effective as well as creating more efficient results than traditional or conventional warfare, the powerful readily enshrined this hybrid warfare into their military dogmas. Using the opportunity provided by this warfare states have readily tried to etch these towards their political goal. In context to Pakistan, being at the status of developing nation, with ethnic, identity concerns to poor governance and weak economy easily becomes a victim of hybrid warfare protracted by the powerful states (Aneel, 2021).

The concept of information warfare and psychological operations have existed for a while, from being used by hegemons to influence the weak. Identifying social media as "Eco Chambers" used by foreign elements to distort public narrative thus steering it towards a certain attitude or idea. As today the platform of social media presents individual access to millions of people across the globe, this platform became great soft power weapon in managing and reinforcing perceptions. In contemporary times most cases of Xeno-centrisim, cultural extinction as well as public hate are ignited and manage through the psychological operations being carried out through social media (Rugge, 2018).

While internet might be the new flag bearer of both information and entertainment, through analysis it was concluded that individuals still referred to electronic media to form their opinions, so it can be considered that both mediums reinforce each other (Quattrociocch & Conte, 2011).

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are widely seen as to influencing various political situations some like the Arab springs. Around 2011 using ICTs pertaining mainly to twitter, it was seen causing distrust and public hate towards governments leading to riots in countries like Yemen, Egypt, Bahrain, Tunisia and Algeria. Due to twitter's role in provoking these riots' media practitioners termed it as the twitter revolution. The Arab region was not the first victims of social media influence rather evidence prove that it all started form Iranian election in 2011, also to the pointing to the idea that social media only aided those revolution rather than starting them. (Jaitner, 2012)

The case of Kenya demonstrates the power of social media when an organization "tcktcktck" brought together 4500 social influencers/bloggers to raise issues such as environmental and climate change to the international platform. As technology is neutral so its power can be used for both for the greater good of the world or just for the greater good of one power hungry hegemon (Kimutai, 2014).

The famous Stuxnet virus attack of Iran should serve as the biggest evidence for psychological operations. At first the attack was considered as cyber but later to be revealed as an insider job. Multiple suspected double agents very arrested to crime of planting a 32 MB drive into system of nuclear facility (Green, 2012).

Social media: Sustaining hegemony

In context of 5th generation warfare, one critical example to quote is that of the ban faced by Facebook for its free basic service and then criticism faced by a tweet by Facebook's Marc Andreesen (board of director) "Anti-colonialism has been economically catastrophic for the Indian people for decades "'Why stop Now" commenting on the tweet MIT center for civic media (Ethan Zukerman) said that" I see the project as both colonialist and deceptive".

Despite Facebook's claim of this service being for the poor, it was later revealed by Indian researchers with substantial data that number of people that started to use the Facebook after this service who did not have before had the facility of the internet were very few, pointing out that the actual target of this service were not the underprivileged but the students and youth that were there for surfing it (LaFrance , n.d.)

Then let's not forget famous Facebooks involvement in 2016 US elections, where Facebook (Andrew Bosworth close friend of Mark Zuckerberg), itself admitted that it was responsible for the win of Donald Trump in an internal memo which was later leaked out to the media (BBC, 2020).

In the contemporary context of the Ukrainian conflict, it was reported by *Reuters* that, the meta-Platforms would allow Facebook and Instagram users to freely call for violence aimed against the Russians under the theme of the Ukraine invasion by temporary changing its hate speech policy. To the point of even allowing   death threats posts to the Russian president Vladimir Putin and the Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

In response to this act, Russian embassy in US insisted to stop Meta's "extremist" activities. They further added

> "Users of Facebook & Instagram did not give the owners of these platforms the right to determine the criteria of truth and pit nations against each other".

(Vengattil &Culliford ,2022)

For quite a while, social media platforms have been working to stop the cycle of hate speech and agitation and basing on this very notion they banned Donald Trump from social media sites, who at that time was the president of the United States. Emphasizing that no one was an exception in this aspect. However, their dual standards became clearly heighted in case of Russia in the Ukrainian conflict while at the same time they block all kinds of criticism against Israel in the Palestinian context.

If this policy of the social media giants was based on impartiality, then why are Palestinian not given the chance to raise their opinion against the monstrous activities of the Israeli soldiers that been occupying their land for decades (Cook ,2022).

Same duality comes in context of Kashmir as well, where many journalists and activist accused Facebook of censoring content related to the atrocities being carried out by the authorities on the Muslims of Kashmir. As users posted horrifying images and videos of violence and injuries of the banned pellets guns, their accounts were simply de-activated or banned. The giants suppressed the content to the point where a Kashmiri solidarity page which was created by a Kashmiri student in New York, which did not spread hate speech rather just shared stories of the Kashmiri ended up being removed (Lakshmi ,2016).

Corona-racism became rife, after the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic through the use of social media, sparked against the Chinese by the use of the term "Chinese virus" by the former US president Donald Trump. The use of this term on the social media, incited hate against all Chinese communities internationally. A study conducted at the University of California, showed that, close to 700,000 tweets used the hashtag of #CHINESEVIRUS. These tweets were grossly racist in nature (Yakovlev& Jeanné ,2021)

 In this age of technology there is a need to counter foreign elements who use media to achieve their goals, it needs to rethink its strategies and joins hands with media in order to counter. Military and media have had very hostile as well as difficult relations in the past. The only similarity both share is the element of the public without which neither can survive. As these organization never had a very promising relationship, but their cooperation is need of the present time as states have shifted form hard power to soft power, everything is now depended on technology and therefore information warfare takes advantage of this. Their relationship will benefit the state against all kinds of attack conducted by foreign elements as well as using it to achieve their own goals. (Ramić, 2015)

Chapter 3

Theoretical framework

Media through its propagation skill supports hegemons in sustaining and strengthening their political power in the international stage. this statement can be considered substantial by drowning its argument in the theory of political propaganda. The notion that combined the behavioral aspect of humans to Freudianism, to better understand the activities that take place in political landscape. With these borrowed notions, Harold Laswell introduced the context of propaganda being used in the political landscape to achieve collective attitude. Laswell was one of the first American political scientist that urged the academia to look beyond a specific message to the more eminent issue of the susceptible state of mind of the audience. Thereby bringing the concept of propaganda to a more psychological based inferences rather than looking through the narrow scope of single message. Highlighting the idea that situations such as economic crises as well as conflicts/security threats made the audiences state of mind more susceptible to even the weakest form of propagandas (Naveed, 2016)

In this scenario almost all developing or underdeveloped states face either economic or security crises, then according to this theory, the populations would be more vulnerable to propaganda and easy to manipulate towards certain ideals. Pakistan being a state that has suffered from security as well development nexus for long time, may more be vulnerable and easy targets of influence and propaganda through media.

The Political Propaganda theory

This theory projects the concept of propaganda as a method of supervising collective attitudes by manipulating specific symbols to create desirable attitudes. The author here clarifies that by attitudes, he refers to actions taken based on some sought of value system. Rather than actions being solely based on experience they are more based on certain significant symbols that create meaning to their values. Symbols manipulated to carry certain notions that arise out in

situation creating another perspective then than actual reality. Thus, creating value systems based on these symbol patterns to be used as references during cognitive processes. These symbols or symbolic representations range from being body gestures, facial expressions to voice or something written. These significant symbols serve the purpose of the propagating various narratives or ideals through the public.

Since propaganda serves the purpose of creating or altering the value system, it is considered to be similar to education, as education is also a process of inculcating certain values and beliefs in the population.in terms of differentiating between deliberate attitudes and those manipulated one's called the propagandist attitudes, deliberate attitudes for instance in terms of looking towards a specific problem would be objective while looking for a solution. While propagandist attitude would rather emphasize for a specific solution, a specific narrative (Laswell, 1927).

Arthur Ponsonby in his book "Falsehood in War-Time: Propaganda Lies of the First World War", elaborates that when governments use propaganda to inculcate a certain idea to either alter public opinion or disregard on opinion, it is the most ominous way of educating the public

> *"With* eavesdroppers, letter-openers,
>
> decipherers, telephone tappers, spies, an intercept
>
> department, a forgery department, a criminal investigation department,
>
> a propaganda department, an intelligence department, a censorship department,
>
> a ministry of information, a Press bureau, etc., the various Governments
>
> were well equipped to "instruct" their peoples*".*

while many other political scientists tried to explain the concept of propaganda, Ellul (French Philosopher) also emphasized on the notion that propaganda not only instructed the audience but also carried some meanings that could either alter or create new value systems. In contrasting ideas, for Ellul propaganda created the public mind/opinion on the other hand in Ponsonby case propaganda role was only restricted to instructions. For Paul Linebarger propaganda was the strategic use of media used at mass level to inculcate certain notions into

the audience either for economic, military or political aims. While for other political scientist propaganda may just a systematic act of persuasion. (Rodríguez, n.d.).

In cultural terms, the approach that propaganda focuses on can easily be explained in the stimulus response language. So, in a simpler term's propaganda is basically the multiplication of those response stimuli that could be employed to produce desirable actions or attitudes, at the same time disregarding those stimuli that could produce response that may not be favorable to the propagandist. Applying the same illustration to that of social recommendations, the role of the propagandist would be to magnify the number of recommendations suitable to the propagandist goal while constraining the unfavorable ones.in the above context, recommendations are not employed in individuals' terms of accepting an idea without any cognitive obstacle rather the cultural values with implicit connotations (Laswell, 1927).

Films as instrument of Symbolic Representation

Keeping films in context, films became instruments for propaganda during world war I. When there were great human and economic losses. The states of the allied forces came to conclusion that this war could not just be won by military means. Thereby resorting to films to propagate certain narratives to the domestic as well as the international audience. Through films they sought out to justify their actions has reasonable at the same time portraying the opposing party as the significant enemy. Among the allies the United States of America was the first state to achieve these motives. This situation basically highlighted the importance of film propaganda. Learning the lessons from the world war I, both Soviet Union (1920s) and Germany (1930s) carefully re-structured their mass media to employ this tactic in their strategies. With the concept of propaganda through mass media spread in the world, the US to counter such threat established the institute for propaganda analysis to counter as the perceived threats from their adversaries. While this may be the case, Laswell model of stimulus response in communication became readily used in advertising to propagate certain ideas (Streich, 1990).

While the US may deny of not employing propaganda in their entertainment industry, there still traces of how using symbolic representations they have inculcated certain meanings into the audience at home as well as abroad. One illustrations of symbolic representation of

propaganda would be the forever Russian villain in Hollywood productions. Through the concept of Laswell, it can be easily established that, the term or symbol villain would naturally refer to the enemies of the US, also known as the Russians. In similar context when the term slaves rise, the symbolic representations bring forth the concept of Africans. With repetition of these symbolic representation with some inherent meanings attached, realities become distorted. as in at the international level, one person sitting far end of the actual situation would readily accept the reality presented to him be it in the form of series or films.

The films *Blind side* serves as one such example where the white savior concept is highly propagated while at the same time, clear distinctions are drawn between the white and the black. the black people have been in one way, or the other been abused either institutionally or physically as the continuous symbolic representation becomes a part of the value system thus over time invoking stimuli to produce response. This representation in the US, itself it not just limited to films through many other forms of mass media. According to research conducted on this very issue writer Hughey (1987-2011) found around fifty films that reinforced the white savoir concept, while at the same time distinguishing the white people as the developed superior race while the black for one step down slaves not to equated to the status of the white. While the white savoir may not perceived as important rather its inherent meaning ends up portraying a different picture in the cognitive processes of its audience. As Vera and Gordon try to explain this representation "the great leader who saves black from slavery or oppression, rescues people of color from poverty and disease, or leads Indians in battle for their dignity and survival" (Fikzia, 2019).

Effects of inculcated symbols in reality

The idea to understand is that the West have constantly used their entertainment industry, to successfully inculcate certain ideas or symbols in the form of images and text to propagate their narratives in the rest of the World. So, no opposing state would be able to challenge its motives or actions in the international stage, as it portrays itself the policing authority of the maintaining peace and security in the world. while it may be the only state to have used the nuclear bomb on thickly populated civilian cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki just because they

wanted to make an example out of them, are the same US that stop other states from going nuclear in the name of peace. All possible because they constantly distort deliberate attitudes to propagandist attitude favorable to their national and foreign policies.

Another significant change to notice in films is that after 9/11, Muslims are became stereotyped as terrorist. Islam portrayed as the radical religion that slaughters innocents without a conscious and keeps their women in the worst and most harsh conditions. In series such as *The Elites* which dominated Netflix greatly portrayed Islam as a rigid religion and liberation could only be achieved by disregarding it, also that liberation also came in the form of the white savoir thus solidifying the symbol of Islam as rigid as well as giving high status to the white race (The Muslim Lady, 2019).

The efficacy of symbols on a certain audience, has been one of the most difficult questions in mass communication research. This question of how and what extent symbols were able to influence the cognitive process of the human brain still stands much ambiguous. Researcher for some times have started to incorporate social psychology in an attempt to answer the ambiguity of this case. Areas such as advertising, T.V and public opinion polls have contributed significantly to this research. One of major contributions were *The Television and Human Behavior* and *The High Culture &Popular Culture.* In 1948, two major mass communications scientist Lazersfled and Merton, to explain the media as an instrument introduced the phrase of *"Status Conferral Function".* This phrase basically set out to claim that media indeed served the function of giving the relevant status to different issues, movements and opinions. Allotting them the required legitimacy and recognition among the population. To further polish this notion Maxwell McComb and B.C Cohen introduced the concept of agenda setting. In which they noted that they may not have been successfully in telling the target audience what to think but it was quite powerful in terms of instructing them about to think about (Real, 1980).

Coming back to the point that through such symbolic representation's media was able to make their audience inherent certain meanings against significant symbols or situation. Like how Hollywood has stereotyped the bearded Muslim Man wearing Shalwar Kameez as terrorist, and therefore when people with propagandist attitudes are confronted with such a person ,their

brain immediately starts stereotyping and they deal with the same attitude ,thinking of a normal Muslim person as wicked terrorist, In context to Pakistan, another stereotype has been forced on to our population that is that their state is not good enough for them ,and the only prosperity and liberation they seek is in the West. This stereotype is greatly affecting our 64% youth, as they would rather be Third class citizens in the West doing menial jobs rather than working better jobs in better environments in their own state. This the most significant success that through media the powerful West has been able to achieve colonialism without actually being there, through media they instruct the international stage to their will, thus sustaining their hegemony.

Social media used as stimuli response against symbols invoked by Films

Once these symbols become a part of audience value and belief pattern, they then act according to those values patterns rather than experience as said by Harold Laswell. So, when films act as the inculcating device, can social media be considered as the tool to invoke those symbols and turn them into actual actions. Films as the instrument of adding propagandized system into the audience while the social media would reinforce those narratives or symbolic representation. Making a two-step process first through films/movies and then the second reinforcing them through social media to create the desirable attitudes, thus achieving neo-colonialism.

With the idea of symbols being stimuli's invoking responses by Laswell, came forward a more in-depth notion of the symbolic bullets employed by the media. This idea is also linked to the hypodermic needle theory and magic bullet theory. Basically, this model, calls media messages as symbolic bullets that hit the attitudes, beliefs and values of the audience thus become embedded in his cognitive process. Referring to the effects as direct and powerful. Even though this theory was criticized for its statement of being direct, this theory still holds an influential status in the mass communication circle (Esser, 2008).

Since this model was held accountable for not having that of a direct impact but still in context of films and social media can be said that with over time inculcation of propaganda, social media could act as a stimuli response mechanism on the basis of the symbolic representation

carried out by the films. Here films are considered the first step as people have been victim of screen propaganda for a long time and social media is still 21st century creation.

One of the major examples of this, can be seen in timeline of current Ukrainian conflict. Where a Russian community center in Canada was vandalized badly by the locals, this center had absolutely no ties to the Russian government or state (Marques, 2022). Since the symbolic representation/bullet was there, the post from social media acted as stimuli that turned such behavior into actions.

As mentioned above, films have been constantly stereotyping Muslim women and Islam as a result the Aurat March of 2018, that was finally stimulated by the *Me-Too campaign* of the foreign states, to act upon. Forgetting the Islamic values on basis of which their state was formed and thus challenging them, turning against their own faith. The issue just does not just stop here, through these events foreign propagandist is given opportunities to further exaggerate the issue like how *The New York Times* published an article on the same further creating false narratives. Consequently, solidifying the false narratives towards the audiences or population who can see the world only through the lens of the media thus providing evidence against the claims of hegemons of the radical Islam that they had created more time.

Another illustration that may support the model's claim about media's direct influence, would that situation that occurred on 14th august 2021 at Minar-e-Pakistan (Lahore) where a supposed video of harassment ended up affecting almost the entire online community without verifying the actual facts. Where on the basis on just this short clip, all the hidden feminist perspective came out of social media to demonize the state in name of not being a safe place for women. Within an hour of the video being released the social media was caught on fire with this issue. This incident my opinion resonates with the alien invasion broadcast (H.G. Wells Novel) where the media message became symbolic bullets with direct impact. In contemporary times, incidents such as these clearly prove that media in some situation indeed carries direct impact, which was one of the major criticisms of that time.

Spiral of silence theory

While considering the context of public opinions on the social media and propagandized attitudes multiply on a rapid rate, Elizabeth Noelle Neumann theory of spiral of silence tends to explain the phenomena through social psychology. She states that human are social creations therefore are afraid of social isolation thereby end by acting accordingly. In situation or debates that comprise a highly emotional element, people due to fear of social pressure accept the dominant opinion. Without expressing their opposing views, they jump on the bandwagon of the dominant opinion thus silencing any opposing moving into a spiral of silence. As role of mass media in conferring certain status to issues has been clearly explained by *The Agenda Setting theory*, according to Neumann when the mass media supports a certain narrative the spiral of silence would eventually end winning against any opposing views on the mass level (Ennadmin, 2015).

So, it can be conceptualized that while propaganda introduces inherent meanings to certain symbols, text or images also reducing the opposing opinion on through entertainment industry, the spiral of silence also ends up favoring the propagandist by silencing the opposing narratives/opinions. Consequently, making the narrative even more dominant and easily influencing the audience. As Noam Chomsky said in one of his interviews that propaganda is of two types, and both differently manufactured. One for the 20% of the educated population that would become future leaders of the state while the rest 80% working class that would blindly follow the dominant opinion of the 20%, as they consider them as the legitimate and authentic sources. Thereby of the propaganda can influence the 20% the rest of the population would easily follow either in the fear of the public scrutiny or just accepting things without any cognitive process involved.

Considering the case of Pakistan, where 64% of the population is comprised of the youth and due to the rapid technological development as well as the Covid 19, people's dependence of media has tripled. Another aspect to considered here is that due to rise of social media, inter-personal relations have greatly decreased while in tern machine assisted communication has increased. Bringing to the point that people today are more concerned about their online

appearance and presence rather their actual one. So, in order to keep a certain online presence, instead of giving an opposing opinion and face backlash from the social media they would rather jump on the bandwagon of the dominant opinion deny themselves of having their own narrative, at the same time ignoring their cognitive process and following the spiral of silence.

So, with so much exposure to movies and social media filled with propaganda our future leaders will surely become slaves of neo-colonialist West and end up benefitting their national agenda more than our own.

Measures of States against these stimuli invoking propaganda

Another reason that adds to the propaganda spreading on rapid rate, firstly since the US became a Hegemon after the end of the Cold war, due to the un-equal distribution of power and wealth the Mass media of the US skyrocketed in the international realm. Other powerful states like Russia were dealing with the after math of the Cold war, while China was more focused on development, the rest were allies of the US, so there was no opposing authority. Hollywood reached to new heights, so stop propaganda from reaching their population many governments used to ban certain entertainment content from screening but eventually that hurdle for the propagandist was solved with the advent of the internet. Still government saved major part of their population as only the most privilege had access to the internet, but with the pandemic affecting every facet of life, those movies that were once banned form screening became readily available through streaming sites such as Netflix, Disney +, Amazon Prime etc. Consequently, removing the barriers set by governments to deal with foreign propaganda.

Netflix in terms of streaming and as well producing now challenges the top media conglomerates of the US, making them re-think their strategies and investing their deal of finances to deal with this now considered top media conglomerate (Littleton, 2018). Netflix surpasses all governmental bans and thus cycle of the West induced propaganda continues.

In context of Pakistan, while the West may be at the top of the pyramid, India being regional super-power is not far behind. It has also used its media to spread certain narratives that aid

them in the international stage, especially creating grounds for countering an attention towards Kashmir. Through their Bollywood the world now recognizes them as an artistic state of color and art instead of state that has been brutally abusing the Muslims in the Indian occupied Kashmir. This scheme would largely have stayed hidden if not for the exposure of the EU-disinfo lab. 15 years' worth of propaganda to propagate a peace-loving image, to disregard anything against their treatment in Kashmir as well propagating certain narratives with across the border.

Bollywood has had a great influence in Pakistan, when the government due to growing propaganda and tensions banned Indian movies, internet provided the solution to that obstacle and at the moment Pakistan is a victim of all hegemons be it the US or India, and these hegemons through their media are propagating false narratives to justify their claims and motives to the world.

Chapter: 4

Methodology

To portray an in-depth picture of the phenomena, this study employs the tools of mixed method research. Combining intricacies of both qualitative and quantitative method to better answer the research questions at hand. Since this study involves the considering how entertainment media is being used as a tool to sustain hegemony as well as looking at its impact on the youth of the Pakistani nation in the form of symbolic bullets, mixed method approach was deemed the most appropriate. The study encompasses an exploratory and inductive nature, in the sense of considering the rising polarization in the society and linking its origin to media being used as a political tool by hegemons. Media infusing symbolic bullets into the society to create distorted narrative that make a society unstable and, in the process, disintegrating the original culture and traditions of the nation. The main target audience of this study were the youth of Pakistan. The motive to achieve with this target audience was that Pakistan is among the nations that comprises of around 60-65% of the population as youth ranging from children to young adults. In this segment only 10-15% can receive education, and this small segment will end up influencing those other 50-45 % of the remaining youth. According to Noam Chomsky propaganda is divided into segments, one type of narrative for 20 % of educated population while another for the rest 80 %, as the rest mostly end up following the educated 20 %.

Pakistan as a developing nation with geo-strategic importance in the international realm, protecting the future minds from distorted symbolic bullets that could disrupt the development as well as the security of the state becomes imperative. As when these symbolic bullets as infused into the mindset of the youth from a very early age, their future behaviors and attitudes towards various situations and notions can be altered towards a specific narrative. In contemporary situation the pervious methods of stopping such content at state level have disintegrated with advent of internet and cheap streaming services such as Netflix etc. Essentially using the entertainment media industry as tool to infuse distorted narratives/ symbolic bullets within the subconscious of the target population, to triggering them through

social media to achieve certain behaviors and outcomes, the hegemons sustain their hegemony.

 qualitative approach will be employed by taking open-ended observations from 10 experts working and researching in the field. The source of the data for both qualitative and quantitative were primary.

The observation from the qualitative data will be interpretated into one combined verdict on the matter.

Qualitative analysis

Following questions were asked. The collective responses are tabulated below:

To what degree does social media re-enforce entertainment based symbolic representation to create polarization in the society?

The collective opinion that was received from the participants was that film propaganda does create stereotypical representation and generally depicts prejudices and leads to shaping public opinion. As the public is generally receptive to what is presented in front of them, rather than looking at the subject matter in a critical way. While electronic media may be considered more biased this type of infiltration occurs unconsciously giving birth to extreme extends of opinion in our society. Thus, movies and social media work in relation to each other and increase the cycle of polarization in the society whether be it in political, societal or religious affairs.

In what ways is the technological advancement in media (movies and social media) being used to re-write historical narratives to perpetuate cultural hegemony of the West?

 Since the West is a rich and industrialized region, it becomes the net exporter of media content leading to more viewership across the world. The big budget films with social effects attracts viewers. For example, US role in WWI and WWII has been glorified to the extent that people do

not have accurate information about the events of these wars. Then our youth gets the most understanding on international events from entertainment channels as international events are taught in our educational curriculum thus media becomes their only source of their opinion formation. In todays hybrid warfare new narratives are created to realign historical events with the contemporary aims and political objectives. In turn the cultural hegemony of the West has been normalized as such that the marketplace of ideas has been enhancing and promoting certain narratives and notions that persists the hegemony

In what ways is media in its various forms is being used to erode national morale and lower faith in own culture, language, and religion?

The consensus on the idea at hand is that cultural infusion because of globalization has been influencing the indigenous normative behavior. Starting from movies, season, Hollywood to other entertainment sources the role has been played to promote certain narratives. Quoting the Framing theory of the communication studies, media frames certain narratives or representations that create relevance to the audience so that they consider it and unconsciously believe in that narrative or symbolic representations.

To what extent do negative images portrayed by movies and social media, cause frustration among the youth and cause loss of self-esteem in the national institutions?

Influx of new ideas and narratives that are completely alien to youth has been causing the serious threat in context. If one is constantly shown one side of the picture, the viewer will be influenced by the portrayed messages. If national institutions are depicted in negative light constantly, the youth will lose their confidence in them. another aspect of this is that negative portrayal does cause frustration especially if it is portrayed distorted.

To greater extent, by targeting any religion, shakes the society from its root level damaging the self-nationalistic approach and portraying Muslims as a spying or terrorist in their content.

How does constant exposure to symbolic bullets infused in the content spread by entertainment media, influence the vulnerable elements of the society create internal instability?

It influences the preexisting beliefs and in the case of youth introduces them to a so-called new reality which is not factual but portrayed in a way that it looks like the truth. Constant exposure can negatively affect social values of people but then again people hardly consume the same entertainment media again and again. The subject expounds the agenda with sensational content that may provoke sentiments in certain groups of the society. In turn creating internal instability by the repetition of certain discourse.

Interpretation

The qualitative analysis also suggested that, through movies hegemons were able to realign historical events to a narrative beneficial to them. Moving to the qualitative side's experts suggested that if the audience were constantly shown one angle of the story, at first, they would become frustrated and then at one point they would start to believe that distorted reality is true and ultimately use faith in their own state and institutions.

Talking about propagandized movies produce a certain distorted narrative regarding Pakistan and Islam. Around of the respondents believed in their narratives as well believed that such movies did cause frustration among them, while the experts were of the view that when alien ideas come to the youth in age of learning it impacts their mindset greatly. As at an age where the youth is learning and building the foundations of their culture and logic new ideas start to merge with their foundations as they are still not mature enough to discern the right from the wrong. In turn elements of violence, drugs other aspect that do not belong in our culture become normal for them as they have been viewing them for a long time. Leading to the point that the original cultures and religion. Thus, through the literature as well as the data proving our assumption credible enough to be considered for future research.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Since primitive times, wars have a constant factor between civilizations, states, or groups. The need and greed for food, power, shelter has forced different states to go to war with each. So, War has been a constant element in this realm of human beings. The only difference that has occurred over different centuries is its process, its techniques, and strategies. starting from the first-generation warfare, to industrialized third generation warfare, fourth generation warfare of proxy wars to 5th generation warfare of cyber warfare (artificial intelligence and bots).

With the advancement in technology stats took on the cyber wing as their new arena for battles where that had to spend less to achieve great results. Less casualties of war and achieving physical results without even moving physically (Neo-colonialism). Employing the techniques of propaganda on a whole new level to fool not only the adversary's army but also to portray their distorted narratives to a larger audience to achieve their goals.

Starting from print to radio, to the entertainment industry and the social media of today, the hegemony of media is on the ascendance. The media has been used by the hegemons in injecting symbolic bullets in the minds of our youth and have caused large scale of discontentment in the society. This phenomenon needs extensive and in-depth research to study all the hidden aspects of the hybrid warfare.

 The first objective of realigning historical perspective through the entertainment industry is achieved through the literature review where evidence of CIA involvement with Hollywood in creating myths and distorting historical events has been quoted. To the point that CIA redacted reports and former CIA officers themselves justify to this claim. This objective was also facilitated with the quantitative findings where symbolic representations were traced in the respondents' surveys. Clearly pointing out to the fact that movies, films and series have been used a tool for psychological warfare or the creation of distorted reality that supports the hegemon's aims and objectives of cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism.

Moving towards the context of social media, major social media companies are owned by the West specifically the US, and for them to use the this as tool for warfare is quite easy. Facebook scandal of basic services in India proves their colonial strategies ,to the 2016 US elections fully prove that social media that have the ability to drive misinformation campaign as well as influence their audience towards a specific propaganda as Facebook executive during this scandal said that this was not the result of misinformation rather the political advertisement campaign was so strong on the platform that Donald Trump ,meaning that through this campaign a racist man was accepted by the people and elected. In other accusations Russia's involvement was also mentioned even though Facebook denied but in both the scenario the platform was used to convince and influence the public towards a certain narrative thus proving the power of the media, the magic bullet.

Our theoretical framework tries to support the assumption through the political propaganda theory and specifically the symbolic bullets to the stimuli response. Then further facilitating how this process reaches to a wider audience and most opposing view die with the foundations of the Spiral of Silence theory.

Lastly moving to the findings of both data collection techniques to facilitate and substantiate the research even more proving our assumption that movies and social media do reinforce each in other sustaining hegemony.

The need arises to understand the future of leadership of the state is constantly being brainwashed towards against their own national institutions as well as towards certain western narratives that support their hegemony. As cultural relativism projects that all our actions, attitude behavior stem out of our culture therefore all major decisions made by policy maker, military strategists are all based upon the strategic culture of that society. So, what happens when this very culture that decides every action of the state becomes a victim in the hands of the powerful. Our strategic culture with slowly start to benefit the goals of the hegemon instead of the state itself.

Recommendation

- Bringing flexibility in strategic culture to counter all hybrid warfare threats
- Requesting for state censorship in these social media and movie streaming sites (short term goal)
- Creating our own social media network (long term goal)
- Producing programs and content aimed at correcting the distorted image of the West by actually showing them the ground realities of these hegemonic state.
- Spreading awareness regarding source authenticity and deep Fake in context of social media
- Introducing the subject of prominent historical international conflicts at primary level to build up a strong foundation.

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Appendix 1

I Mahnoor Anwar, a post graduate student of the Peace and Conflict department (CIPS) at NUST, am conducting a research project on SUSTAINING HEGEMONY THROUGH MEDIA: (Re-enforcing Entertainment Industry based propaganda through social media to create unrest in the society). The purpose is to find out how social media reinforces movies-based propaganda to create archetypical images to influence the minds of the Pakistani youth (the Future Leaders). I would request you to respond to my questions, so we can seek solutions to counter this propaganda designed to create unrest in society

Your help and support will be highly appreciated.

Email*

Your email address

1.   To what degree does social media re-enforce entertainment based symbolic representation to create polarization in the society? *

2.   In what ways is the technological advancement in media (movies and social media) being used to re-write historical narratives to perpetuate cultural hegemony of the West? *

3.In what ways is media in its various forms is being used to erode national morale and lower faith in own culture, language, and religion? *

4.   To what extent do negative images portrayed by movies and social media, cause frustration among the youth and cause loss of self-esteem in the national institutions? *

5.   How does constant exposure to symbolic bullets infused in the content spread by entertainment media, influence the vulnerable elements of the society create internal instability?