1. World propaganda and personal insecurity: intent, content, and contentment

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BIG TENT PROPAGANDA

This chapter’s propaganda narrative is shaped by Harold Lasswell’s insight that elites constantly arise in social structures. They seek security, through ascendancy, by extracting values from and distributing values to the masses. The latter find security through receiving values. The main influence behind this search for security through ascendancy (on the part of elites) or dependency (on the part of the ‘masses’) is knowledge of mortality. Value-extracting elites/skill groups/influencers (Lasswell’s term is ‘influential’, but the term ‘influencer’ has become popular and is used in this chapter) possess military, economic, and communication skills. Influencing opinion is important for all three types (Lasswell, 1965; Chitty, 1992: 29; Chitty, 2017b: 20). In the cognitive revolution that transpired 70 000 years ago, humans learnt to describe physical and social environments they observed, as well as things they imagined. Rhetorical skills facilitated persuasion of large numbers to join groups (Harari, 2011: 3, 41; Chitty, 2017b: 13). Narratives – hunters’/warriors’ post-hunt/battle boasts; merchants’ trade promotion; and shamans’ tales of spirit worlds and their demands/boons – were early proto-propaganda.

Propaganda in the sense used here is all encompassing and meta-ideological, including all tangible or intangible artefacts that influence people. This is a big tent propaganda. The ancient Hindu Vedas constituted propaganda that shaped Indian social hierarchies as a Lasswellian political-economic pyramid. Sudras (service folk/non-influencers) were at the base. Vaishyas (merchants) were above them in the first influential layer. Above the Vaishyas were the Kshatriyas (warriors). Brahmins (priests) were at the apex (Chitty, 1992: 29). For Nicholas Onuf (1989: 79) this was an example of an ‘Indo-European tripartite ideology’. Ideologies are in some ways propaganda clouds or bubbles, developed from words of influencers, that can be promoted and adopted as the dominant organising ideational framework of a social system. They can be propagated by states inter alia through educational institutions and media while being counter-propagandised by ‘counter-apparatuses’ such as trade unions and political parties in liberal democracies (Therborn, 1980: 87).

‘Propaganda’ is a powerful word. This statement has a connoted meaning that is central to this chapter. Some kinds of propaganda can have and can be intended to have powerful effects. The question whether propaganda can be other than ‘powerful’ will be addressed: what is propaganda if disassociated from power? The reference here is to power being ‘intended’ influence (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950). Power is a type of influence in a binary based on intentionality and the lack thereof. What is power’s counterpart in a ‘bisected influence’ remains a question; a single powerful word such as ‘power’ is hard to imagine. Perhaps it is fitting that a descriptor of influence sans power would be a term sans power. The collocation ‘unintended influence’ is used here for want of a satisfactory single word under Lasswell’s dichotomisation. Inclusion
of types of propaganda that are disassociated from intention or direct intention impacts upon the meaning(s) of propaganda. Others look at the terms ‘power’ and ‘influence’ differently. Reich and Lebow (2014: 6–8) distinguish between materially based power and influence. If one were to use this distinction it would be necessary to speak of intended and unintended power and intended and unintended influence. Intentionality does not figure substantially in Nye’s discussion of approaches to power either. Nye undertakes a comparative analysis of literature on power but privileges preferred outcomes over unintended consequences (Nye, 2011: 7). ‘Unintended soft (power)’ is often a by-product of people’s daily lives. However, Lasswell and Kaplan would not see ‘unintended soft (power)’ as a type of power, hence my bracketing of power here (Chitty, 2020). Ellul speaks of intent but only in terms of hiding or lying about one’s intentions, affiliations, and values (Ellul, 1973: 57–61). Habermas (1979, 1987) and Habermas and MacCarthy (2004) develop a theory of communication action that normatively promotes dialogic rather than strategic communication. Dialogic communication has influenced theorisation of two-way interactive public relations (Grunig et al., 1995) and strategic and dialogic public diplomacy (Gregory, 2005; Chitty, 2011: 252–269; Izadi and Nelson, 2020: 391–404). As Lasswell introduces the notion of intended and unintended, his categories are selected.

DEFINITIONS OF PROPAGANDA

This section will introduce a few classical definitions of propaganda as well as a big tent view that consists of propositions, commissives, and directives (Onuf, 1989). Some of the propositions are interlaced as theory, in what Thomas Berger and Peter Luckmann (1991: 83) call ‘symbolic universe’. When Berger and Luckmann see being unable to have a theory accepted by another to be a ‘problem of propaganda’, the connection with propaganda in their minds is revealed.

According to Lasswell (1927: 9) the term ‘propaganda’:

refers to the control of opinion by significant symbols, or to speak more concretely and less accurately, by stories, rumors, reports, pictures, and other forms of social communication. Propaganda is concerned with management of opinions and attitudes by the direct manipulation of social suggestion rather than by altering other conditions in the environment or in the organism.

A further formulation crafted by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis, with which Lasswell was associated, states that ‘[p]ropaganda is the expression of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with a view to influencing the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends and through psychological manipulation’ (Ellul, 1973: xii).

Ellul identifies two domains of propaganda, political and sociological. Political propaganda ‘involves techniques of influence employed by a government, a party, an administration, a pressure group, with a view to changing the behaviour of the public’. On the other hand, sociological propaganda ‘is the penetration of an ideology by means of its sociological context’. It consists of ‘manifestations by which society seeks to integrate the maximum number of individuals into itself, to unify its members’ behaviour according to a pattern, to spread its style of life abroad, and thus impose itself on other groups’. While political propaganda attempts to ‘spread an ideology through the mass media of communication in order to lead
the public to accept some political or economic structure or to participate in some action’, in sociological propaganda ‘existing economic, political, and sociological factors progressively allow an ideology to penetrate individuals or masses’ (ibid.: 62–63). Propaganda facilitates social construction at the level of society.

Traditional international relations theory is propaganda either of a warrior world based on conflict, or of a trader/communicator/farmer world based on cooperation. The proponents consciously or unconsciously voice the perspectives of interest groups. Critical international relations theory is normative and reflective of various agendas: ‘a heterogeneous group of theories has been labelled as critical in international relations, including feminism, poststructuralism, critical geopolitics, critical security studies, critical international political economy, postcolonialism, and international historical sociology’ (Yalvaç, 2017: 1).

A CONSTRUCTIVIST WORLD PROPAGANDA

World politics is constructed through layers of social, institutional, state, and interstate behaviour that includes propaganda formation and distribution that shape the behaviour of these actors as well. Of the three salient paradigms in international relations – realism, liberalism, and constructivism (each with its variations) – constructivism sees ‘mind’ (through intersubjective structures) as the shaper of international politics, rather than material conditions, human nature, or domestic politics (Wendt, 1992; Chitty, 2017b: 14‒15).

Theoretical positions influence policy and the behaviour of the system, constituent states, and agents. Actors and propaganda practice within international relations are considered here. The state as a system, and its agents acting both inwardly toward sub-systems and outwardly toward horizontal external systems, and the institutionalised international system itself, are actors. The international system is accessed here through international regimes: these are diffused versus specific, formal versus informal, allow evolutionary change versus revolutionary change (Puchala and Hopkins, 1983: 64–65). Here the focus is on diffused regimes associated with salient periods in recent history. A regime ‘is a set of principles, norms, rules and procedures around which actors’ expectations converge … diffused regimes are normative superstructures, which are reflected in functionally or geographically specific substructures or regimes’ (Puchala and Hopkins, 1983: 61–64). My contention is that regimes are manifestations of propaganda under the big tent definition; they emanate propaganda and are battlegrounds for the use of instrumental policy spearheads of propaganda by competing states. Great powers have an impetus to engage in ‘diffusion of policies across national jurisdictions – policy transnationalization’ (Chitty et al., 2018: 1–20). Specific formal regimes have four substantive norms geared to their own issue areas such as food, health, human rights, and trade: these are non-discrimination, liberalisation, reciprocity, and safeguard (Finlayson and Zacher, 1983: 278–296). itself, are actors. The international system is accessed here through international regimes: these are diffused versus specific, formal versus informal, allow evolutionary change versus revolutionary change (Puchala and Hopkins, 1983: 64–65). Here the focus is on diffused regimes associated with salient periods in recent history. A regime ‘is a set of principles, norms, rules and procedures around which actors’ expectations converge … diffused regimes are normative superstructures, which are reflected in functionally or geographically specific substructures or regimes’ (Puchala and Hopkins, 1983: 61–64). My contention is that regimes are manifestations of propaganda under the big tent definition; they
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Impact on the meanings of propaganda is also evident. The term has been used to signify various practices by actors at different levels of analysis in several epochs. ‘Propaganda’ is a noun that refers to a type of communication as well as a type of content. Terms that overlap to one degree or another with propaganda include advertising, communication, cultural imperialism, hegemony, influence, information flow, persuasion, psychological warfare, public diplomacy, public relations, soft power, sharp power, and strategic communication. This is not a comprehensive list of overlaps under the big tent conception. Notably, while there is an aspect of will behind all types of human communication, the position taken here is that there can be influence sans intention to influence; in the case of propaganda as in the case of soft power (Chitty, 2017a: 454). Alternatively, there could be an intent not to influence, as in the case of a conscious espousal of dialogic communication in an ideal speech situation of communicative action (Habermas, 1987; Habermas and MacCarthy, 2004). In Ellul’s view sociological propaganda is organic and ‘not the result of deliberate propaganda action’. He gives the example of an American film producer who when he ‘makes a film, he has certain definite ideas he wants to express, which are not intended to be propaganda. Rather, the propaganda element is in the American way of life with which he is permeated and which he expresses in his film without realizing it.’ But though it may begin in an involuntary manner it can evolve to have the intention to be influential. The Motion Picture Association required American cinema ‘to promote “the highest types of social life,” “the proper conception of society,” “the proper standards of life,” and to avoid “any ridicule of the law (natural or human) or sympathy for those who violate the law’ (Ellul, 1973: 64‒67)., sharp power, and strategic communication.

So far, propaganda has been cast neutrally under a big tent conception. This is not to say that there are no sub-categories; and that there would be views of the virtue or villainy inherent in the propaganda of competitors, or even one’s own government or state. The way in which propaganda has been viewed has switched a few times since it was introduced into
the Congregation for Propagating the Faith (Congregatio de propaganda fide), established by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 and ‘which had jurisdiction over missionary work’ (Frederick, 1993: 230). Clearly its own propaganda was seen in a positive light by the Vatican, its outposts in the far corners of the world and by the Faithful in general. While successful in the Americas, there were twin failures in the Ottoman Near East because of ‘Muslim resistance to conversion … Christian conversion to Islam’ in a contest of proselytisation (Lee, 2012). Evangelisation can be viewed differently by the evangelist and rival communities of faith. There could be communities of religious or secular faith. Ideologies are the scriptures of communities of political faith. Whether propaganda is viewed negatively or not depends very much on how the source and content of propaganda are viewed, or villainy inherent in the propaganda of competitors, or even one’s own government or state. The way in which propaganda has been viewed has switched a few times since it was introduced into the Congregation for Propagating the Faith (Congregatio de propaganda fide), established by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 and ‘which had jurisdiction over missionary work’ (Frederick, 1993: 230). Clearly its own propaganda was seen in a positive light by the Vatican, its outposts in the far corners of the world and by the Faithful in general. While successful in the Americas, there were twin failures in the Ottoman Near East because of ‘Muslim resistance to conversion … Christian conversion to Islam’ in a contest of proselytisation (Lee, 2012). Evangelisation can be viewed differently by the evangelist and rival communities of faith. There could be communities of religious or secular faith. Ideologies are the scriptures of communities of political faith. Whether propaganda is viewed negatively or not depends very much on how the source and content of propaganda are viewed.

The social construction of world politics and the world political construction of society is a two-way process, so one could start at either end in a discussion. I will begin with larger social structures in international relations, the propaganda of which shape societies much of the time and transform them incrementally by evolution or radically by revolution. I have selected three periods and particular diffused regimes. The first is the Cold War period, where United States (US)-led Western political and economic ideologies were contested by the Soviet-led communist bloc. The second is the period of globalisation, where the contest between Western and Islamicist ideologies returned to saliency. The third is the current period, with its fractured globalisation and contestation of liberal democracy by authoritarian states such as China and Russia and their agents; an updated playback of the first period. Contesting communities of secular faith have arisen even within democracies in the 21st century. I will also discuss instigation to act and intent to act at the level of state actors, as well as analyse the content of propaganda drawing on rhetorical, propaganda, and soft power theory; and addressing the world political moment of the intersection of the ascendancy of China, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2020 US election. I will address propaganda in international relations, and actors’ intent and propaganda content. Examining propaganda can be disassociated from power. A classificatory framework that arises out of the previous section will appear in the conclusion. period, where United States (US)-led Western political and economic ideologies were contested by the Soviet-led communist bloc. The second is the period of globalisation, where the contest between Western and Islamicist ideologies returned to saliency. The third is the current period, with its fractured globalisation and contestation of liberal democracy by authoritarian states such as China and Russia and their agents; an updated playback of the first period. Contesting communities of secular faith have arisen even within democracies in the 21st century. I will also discuss instigation to act and intent to act at the level of state actors, as well as analyse the content of propaganda drawing on rhetorical, propaganda, and soft
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WORLD PROPAGANDA

In the interbellum years Harold Lasswell was preoccupied with the ‘dark side’ of political propaganda. The three selected postbellum periods associated with diffused regimes are the Cold War period, the period of globalisation, and the current period of fractured globalisation. In the post-war world of the 1950s Daniel Lerner focused on the ‘light side’ of the propagation of modernity (Chitty, 2005: 555–559). Lasswell and Lerner had been collaborators in propaganda studies at the Institute of Propaganda Analysis. Seventy years later, public diplomacy and development communication have been described as ‘Two sides of the same coin’ (Pamment, 2020: 430–437). My use of the terms ‘dark side’ and ‘light side’ to refer to political propaganda and propagation of modernity was shorthand, but the terms need further analysis. Some political propaganda, for example the promotion of democracy, could be seen as being on the ‘light side’ by liberal democrats. Liberal democrats could also see the propagation of Soviet or Maoist style economic modernisation, through collectivisation, as the ‘dark side’. Contrarian views would have been entertained by agents of the Soviet or Chinese states of the postbellum period. These opposing views resulted in contests of propaganda by these states and their affiliates. was preoccupied with the ‘dark side’ of political propaganda. The three selected postbellum periods associated with diffused regimes are the Cold War period, the period of globalisation, and the current period of fractured globalisation. In the post-war world of the 1950s Daniel Lerner focused on the ‘light side’ of the propagation of modernity (Chitty, 2005: 555–559). Lasswell and Lerner had been collaborators in propaganda studies at the Institute of Propaganda Analysis. Seventy years later, public diplomacy and development communication have been described as ‘Two sides of the same coin’ (Pamment, 2020: 430–437). My use of the terms ‘dark side’ and ‘light side’ to refer to political propaganda and propagation of modernity was shorthand, but the terms need further analysis. Some political propaganda, for example the promotion of democracy, could be seen as being on the ‘light side’ by liberal democrats. Liberal democrats could also see the propagation of Soviet or Maoist style economic modernisation, through collectivisation, as the ‘dark side’. Contrarian views would have been entertained by agents of the Soviet or Chinese states of the postbellum period. These opposing views resulted in contests of propaganda by these states and their affiliates.

Propaganda is easily identified with the state or organs of the state, with political propaganda being directed internally, externally, or in both directions. There is a spectrum of levels in which propaganda (as the propagation of ideas) is produced and received. I will simplify this to Waltz’s three levels of analysis in international relations – international system, state, and individual – with the addition of the group (Waltz, 2001). The international system is a theatre of contestation of actors’ influence. Indeed, contests of influence occur in all discourses as capillary power. Foucauldian power ‘forms a dispersed capillary woven into the entire social order’ (Barker, 2004a: 103; Chitty, 2017b: 10). Actors include groups of states,
states, institutionalised groups, groups of individuals, and individuals. Groups of states include the United Nations (UN) organization and sub and sister organizations. Other groups include corporations, ethnic groups, faith groups, and terrorist groups. 's three levels of analysis in international relations – international system, state, and individual – with the addition of the group (Waltz, 2001). The international system is a theatre of contestation of actors’ influence. Indeed, contests of influence occur in all discourses as capillary power. Foucauldian power ‘forms a dispersed capillary woven into the entire social order’ (Barker, 2004a: 103; Chitty, 2017b: 10). Actors include groups of states, states, institutionalised groups, groups of individuals, and individuals. Groups of states include the United Nations (UN) organization and sub and sister organizations. Other groups include corporations, ethnic groups, faith groups, and terrorist groups.

The UN, in its creation was a ‘normative consequence’ of European speech acts (and their interaction with countervailing speech acts from the soviet bloc) of three kinds identified by Onuf (1989) and applied here to a world order context – assertives (that describe world order or propose a new description of the present order without calling for transformation), directives (that lead to changes in world order or ordering) and commissives (that commit an actor to a desired world order that it projects). (Chitty, 2017b: 20)

The contests of influence mostly between states and groups of states (through geopolitics, geoeconomics, and international intercultural relations) construct widely accepted instances of normative superstructure (described immediately below), that shape the behaviour of states and other international actors either as adherents of the system or as recalcitrant actors. While backed by military, economic, and cultural assets, much of the contest is conducted through competing propaganda. The term is used here neutrally without the pejorative connotations affixed by actors when using the term on the external (and sometimes internal) messaging of their rivals.

The normative superstructures are akin to ‘diffused regimes’ as contrasted with ‘specific regimes’ in international regime theory. For instance, colonial expansion was a normative superstructure and regulated this diffused regime area (Puchala and Hopkins, 1983: 61–91). The colonial expansion diffused regime shaped different kinds of propagandist messaging. These included messaging on pseudo-scientific theories of racial superiority and a hierarchy of races; legal messaging on terra nullius; and economic messaging on acceptability of colonial exploitation. The normative superstructure was itself propaganda, that had the intention of justifying colonialism so that colonised races would accept their fates; and colonising states could manage competition within a balance-of-power regime. (Chitty, 2017b: 20)
COLD WAR, MODERNISATION, AND PROPAGANDA

Colonialism formally ended with the evolution of a diffused regime that was geared toward managing the balance of power between the victors of the Second World War: the United Kingdom, China, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. The Soviet Union and China (after the People’s Republic of China entered the Security Council) represented the Eastern bloc, and the US, France, and Britain represented the Western bloc. The other great divide was North–South. Apart from China the other great powers were in the more economically advantaged countries, described as the North. The two partly hybrid axes (the North including the West and elements of the East) provided kindling for the Cold War. While direct conflict between the two superpowers (the US and Soviet Union) was avoided in the Cold War, competition for hearts and minds in the South through propaganda was massive. Ideologies of political modernisation and economic modernisation were contested. The superpowers possessed nuclear weapons; alliances became important for external balancing. A third category, non-alignment, surfaced. Salient propaganda themes in the security arena were alignment with the West or the East, or non-alignment. While direct conflict between the two superpowers (the US and Soviet Union) was avoided in the Cold War, competition for hearts and minds in the South through propaganda was massive. Ideologies of political modernisation and economic modernisation were contested. The superpowers possessed nuclear weapons; alliances became important for external balancing. A third category, non-alignment, surfaced. Salient propaganda themes in the security arena were alignment with the West or the East, or non-alignment.

In the Cold War period the communist world sought to present itself in the West and the Global South with tailored propaganda. Its projected image in the West was one of industrially driven ‘planned social order’; the image presented in the Global South promised ‘an accelerated industrialization to come’ (Morris and Watnick, 1966: 282–292). And ‘[w]estern propaganda held political and economic liberalisation that would lead to modern developed societies’ (Lippmann, 1960: 468–486). The ‘Kitchen debate’ at the American International Exhibition in Moscow (in 1959), between the Soviet Premier and the US Vice President, brought into sharp and memorable focus the propaganda war between the US and the Soviet Union, with ‘Nixon demonstrating the advances of American technology while Khruschev defended the merits of communism’ (Sevin, 2017: 63). period the communist world sought to present itself in the West and the Global South with tailored propaganda. Its projected image in the West was one of industrially driven ‘planned social order’; the image presented in the Global South promised ‘an accelerated industrialization to come’ (Morris and Watnick, 1966: 282–292). And ‘[w]estern propaganda held political and economic liberalisation that would lead to modern developed societies’ (Lippmann, 1960: 468–486). The ‘Kitchen debate’ at the American International Exhibition in Moscow (in 1959), between the Soviet Premier and the US Vice President, brought into sharp and memorable focus the propaganda war between the US and the Soviet Union, with ‘Nixon demonstrating the advances of American technology while Khruschev defended the merits of communism’ (Sevin, 2017: 63).

Both sides invested heavily in propaganda directed internally, toward each other and toward countries in the Global South, many of which responded with their own position and propaganda of the Non-Aligned Movement, with its promoting of peaceful coexistence in an era beset by nuclear confrontation. The ‘broad anti-colonialist movement’ that sought ‘world peace by exhorting the powers to avoid a nuclear holocaust’ had grown to be ‘the advocate of’
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a new political and economic order on a global level’ (Singham, 1977: x). Mowlana credits Colin Cherry with recognising that ‘[p]ropaganda can be a vital factor in human emancipation’ (Mowlana, 1986: 184). Non-alignment addresses emancipation from the yoke of colonialism and lingering post-colonialism., with its promoting of peaceful coexistence in an era beset by nuclear confrontation. The ‘broad anti-colonialist movement’ that sought ‘world peace by exhorting the powers to avoid a nuclear holocaust’ had grown to be ‘the advocate of a new political and economic order on a global level’ (Singham, 1977: x). Mowlana credits Colin Cherry with recognising that ‘[p]ropaganda can be a vital factor in human emancipation’ (Mowlana, 1986: 184). Non-alignment addresses emancipation from the yoke of colonialism and lingering post-colonialism.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, dependency and world system theoretic positions were among the stimulants of countervailing propaganda. World system theorist Immanuel Wallerstein recognises a single ‘capitalist world economy’ and ‘so-called sovereign states defined by and constrained by their membership of an interstate network or system’. In this Cold War period the: positions were among the stimulants of countervailing propaganda. World system theorist Immanuel Wallerstein recognises a single ‘capitalist world economy’ and ‘so-called sovereign states defined by and constrained by their membership of an interstate network or system’. In this Cold War period the:

Hegemony in the system refers to that situation in which the ongoing rivalry between the so-called ‘great powers’ is so unbalanced that that one power is truly primus inter pares; that is, one power can largely impose its rules and its wishes (at the very least by effective veto power) in the economic, political, military, diplomatic, and even cultural arenas. (Wallerstein, 1991: 236‒237)

Dependency theory critiqued the centre–periphery North–South relations that allowed continuation of imbalanced flows of trade and information that began in colonial times. It generated emancipatory propaganda as well as strategies for counteracting the unfavourable flows. Dependency theory’s influence on diplomacy sought to improve economic opportunities for newly independent developing countries, through seeking changes to the trade regime. The discussion was conducted in the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The late 1970s saw the rise of cultural imperialism theories and recognition by developing countries that cultural domination and distorted information flows between North and South disadvantaged developing countries. ‘Cultural imperialism is said to involve the domination of one culture by another and is usually thought of as a set of processes involving the ascendancy of one nation and/or the global domination of consumer capitalism’ (Barker, 2004b: 38), and its close relative postcolonial theory is ‘[a] critical theory that explores the conditions of post-coloniality, that is colonial relations and their aftermath’ (Barker, 2004b: 148). A new international information regime was called for in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the shape of a proposed New World Information and Communication Order. theories and recognition by developing countries that cultural domination and distorted information flows between North and South disadvantaged developing countries. ‘Cultural imperialism is said to involve the domination of one culture by another and is usually thought of as a set of processes involving the ascendancy of one nation and/or the global domination of consumer capitalism’ (Barker, 2004b: 38), and its close relative postcolonial theory is ‘[a] critical theory that explores the conditions of post-coloniality, that is colonial relations and their aftermath’ (Barker, 2004b: 148). A new international information
regime was called for in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the shape of a proposed New World Information and Communication Order.

Communicators in the United States soon distanced themselves from propaganda. New approaches to influencing emerged such as public relations, advertising, persuasion, development communication, agenda-setting, and so on. It was not until the age of globalisation that these terms with their practices were adopted in post-communist and communist countries.

GLOBALISATION, TERRORISM, AND PROPAGANDA

With the sudden evaporation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) the propaganda war between it and its fellow superpower fizzled out. Francis Fukuyama (1993) announced prematurely that history had ended; liberal democratic ideology had won: ‘The totalitarian state hoped to remake Soviet man himself by changing the very structure and beliefs and values through control of the press, education, and propaganda’, but ‘[t]he most fundamental failure of totalitarianism was its failure to control thought. Soviet citizens, as it turned out, had all along retained an ability to think for themselves. Many understood, despite years of government propaganda that their government was lying to them.’ The history that had ended was that of the Soviet state’s propaganda about the efficacy of the Soviet system in bringing prosperity to the developed world. The Soviet Union’s leading successor state, Russia, continued within Wallerstein’s Western-led capitalist world economic system. (1993) announced prematurely that history had ended; liberal democratic ideology had won: ‘The totalitarian state hoped to remake Soviet man himself by changing the very structure and beliefs and values through control of the press, education, and propaganda’, but ‘[t]he most fundamental failure of totalitarianism was its failure to control thought. Soviet citizens, as it turned out, had all along retained an ability to think for themselves. Many understood, despite years of government propaganda that their government was lying to them.’ The history that had ended was that of the Soviet state’s propaganda about the efficacy of the Soviet system in bringing prosperity to the developed world. The Soviet Union’s leading successor state, Russia, continued within Wallerstein’s Western-led capitalist world economic system.

The 1990s saw the rise of globalisation theory and the diffused regime of globalisation. Northeast and Southeast Asian countries sped forward economically. China was admitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO) at the end of 2001. There was little to propagandise on the economic front. Capitalism or movement toward capitalism was widely accepted. Globalisation as a propaganda wave and material presence all over the world kindled fires of reaction in the Muslim world. As much as there had been Muslim resistance to conversion in the time of Pope Gregory XV, the new evangelisation around globalisation made some Muslims uncomfortable; and some among these were easily radicalised by al Qaeda and later Islamic State agents through propaganda and training programmes. The principal enemy was no longer Russia. Rather, Islamist terrorist organisations and their propaganda and violence dominated the international theatre. Jihad became the rallying call pronounced by Islamist influencers to trigger militant activity. It refers to struggles both internal and external to the individual, but it is the external military struggle that generally comes to mind: the notion has been exploited by Islamicist influencers (Karim, 2004: 108–109), theory and the diffused regime of globalisation. Northeast and Southeast Asian countries sped forward economically. China was admitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO) at the end of 2001. There was
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If ideologies are the scriptures of communities of political faith, scriptures are the ideologies of faith communities. Al Qaeda propaganda drew nourishment from the normative superstructure of Islam, even if there was no desire from peace-loving Muslim communities to be associated with its militant jihad. If one of Marxist thought’s attractions to academics is its political-economic-sociological provenance – that preceded the liberal slicing and dicing of political philosophy into politics, economics, and sociology – Islam’s attraction to intellectuals born into that tradition is that it is a comprehensive religious ideology, that incorporates guidance on the aforesaid societal areas. It was noted earlier that ideologies are clouds of propaganda that can be adopted as the dominant organising ideational framework of a social system and be propagated by state institutions. Islam does this for Muslim societies and its ‘ummah wahidah’ or community of believers. propaganda drew nourishment from the normative superstructure of Islam, even if there was no desire from peace-loving Muslim communities to be associated with its militant jihad. If one of Marxist thought’s attractions to academics is its political-economic-sociological provenance – that preceded the liberal slicing and dicing of political philosophy into politics, economics, and sociology – Islam’s attraction to intellectuals born into that tradition is that it is a comprehensive religious ideology, that incorporates guidance on the aforesaid societal areas. It was noted earlier that ideologies are clouds of propaganda that can be adopted as the dominant organising ideational framework of a social system and be propagated by state institutions. Islam does this for Muslim societies and its ‘ummah wahidah’ or community of believers.

9/11 led to media outrage and retributive plans by the Bush administration. The media played what many outraged Americans would have seen as an essential role. It was responsible for ‘forestalling of public doubt’ through ‘Mass mobilisation ... Vilification of culprit ... Ignoring alternative sources of culpability ... The great sell of a “wartime” president ... Neglect or manipulation of history ... Abandonment of journalistic curiosity ... Assimilating administration propaganda and compliance with controls’ (Boyd-Barrett, 2003: 37–48). These actions are akin to propaganda techniques, as will be seen in the next section. How does this square with America’s tradition of negatively viewing propaganda?
techniques, as will be seen in the next section. How does this square with America’s tradition of negatively viewing propaganda?

The other feature of this period that is relevant to this chapter is the much-heralded rise of China, through its spectacular economic performance after being admitted into the WTO, the institution that embodies the world trade regime. China sagaciously moved away from terms and ways that looked like propaganda, to public relations, public diplomacy, and soft power. It sought ‘to assure others of the benevolence and rectitude of its actions in international relations, actions that are associated in international relations theory with a hegemon’ (Chitty et al., 2018: 3). It professed a distaste for hegemony., through its spectacular economic performance after being admitted into the WTO, the institution that embodies the world trade regime. China sagaciously moved away from terms and ways that looked like propaganda, to public relations, public diplomacy, and soft power. It sought ‘to assure others of the benevolence and rectitude of its actions in international relations, actions that are associated in international relations theory with a hegemon’ (Chitty et al., 2018: 3). It professed a distaste for hegemony.

FRACTURED GLOBALISATION

This section examines the fracturing of the globalisation regime in the 2020s by populist reactions to Western working-class underperformance and Chinese overperformance, heightened by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Globalisation has been fractured through producing discontented losers and contented winners, within countries and among states. The United States and China are important to focus on here. It was its economic superiority that gave the US its strategic victory over the Soviet Union. The window was opened for the modernisation drive to amplify qualitatively and quantitatively, in order to sufficiently brand the post-Cold War epoch. The globalisation regime was born. Through astute management of its propaganda and policy transnationalisation imperatives in the United Nations systems, and particularly in the WTO, China grew rich and did so rapidly. are important to focus on here. It was its economic superiority that gave the US its strategic victory over the Soviet Union. The window was opened for the modernisation drive to amplify qualitatively and quantitatively, in order to sufficiently brand the post-Cold War epoch. The globalisation regime was born. Through astute management of its propaganda and policy transnationalisation imperatives in the United Nations systems, and particularly in the WTO, China grew rich and did so rapidly.

China’s propaganda messages included the following sentiments. China experienced a century of shame that needs to be remedied. Its rise is inevitable and peaceful. It should be given its due place in the international system. China is not and never will be a hegemon. It is a developing country and needs to be treated as such in the WTO, enjoying concessions afforded to developing countries. These are items of faith among Chinese nationals, and they are believed variously by some in the rest of the world. China is not and never will be a hegemon. It is a developing country and needs to be treated as such in the WTO, enjoying concessions afforded to developing countries. These are items of faith among Chinese nationals, and they are believed variously by some in the rest of the world.

In what Reich and Lebow (2014: 6–8) call a post-hegemonic world, an aspiring hegemon would need to shoulder three kinds of responsibilities. These are setting international agendas, managing international economic structures and processes, and sponsoring global initiatives.
World propaganda and personal insecurity

China has followed this playbook faithfully through setting up new international forums such as BRICS (Brazil–Russia–India–China–South Africa), financing institutions such as the New Development Bank and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): an incipient hegemon’s public diplomacy plexus. ‘The United Nations was an incipient hegemon’s security-economic-plexus (IHPDP). The Chinese IHPDP, BRI, is not of the same scale and scope of the UN system; it also inhabits and draws sustenance from parts of the UN’ (Chitty et al., 2018: 5). From a big tent propaganda perspective what BRI as a Chinese IHPDP does is propaganda. The BRI propaganda effort seeks to bring more and more countries under the BRI agreement. Messaging by Chinese media such as the China Global Television Network (CGTN) is viewed as a soft power tool (Li, 2020: 21–45).

China has developed its media hardware and content production that facilitates its media being latched onto BRI for propaganda purposes. A study shows that BRI messaging reflected in the newspapers of eight Indian Ocean littoral (IOR) countries (Australia, India, Indonesia, Iran, South Africa, Kenya, Singapore, and Pakistan) had been relatively effective. The ‘percentage of combined positive and neutral frames that have been registered by IOR newspapers must be heart-warming to China. However, there is mixed sentiment in Quad countries and Singapore where the Indian critique of aspects of BRI finds sympathetic audiences’ (Chitty et al., 2018: 17). The Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) is a strategic forum of four democracies: Australia, Japan, India, and the US. (Brazil–Russia–India–China–South Africa), financing institutions such as the New Development Bank and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): an incipient hegemon’s public diplomacy plexus. ‘The United Nations was an incipient hegemon’s security-economic-plexus (IHPDP). The Chinese IHPDP, BRI, is not of the same scale and scope of the UN system; it also inhabits and draws sustenance from parts of the UN’ (Chitty et al., 2018: 5). From a big tent propaganda perspective what BRI as a Chinese IHPDP does is propaganda. The BRI propaganda effort seeks to bring more and more countries under the BRI agreement. Messaging by Chinese media such as the China Global Television Network (CGTN) is viewed as a soft power tool (Li, 2020: 21–45).

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Globalisation had winners and losers in the United States as well. Unlike workers in declining industries, elites in the US and Europe benefit from globalisation. It follows that blue-collar workers blame elites for their misfortunes. They believe political correctness blocks a blunt addressing of problems dumped on them by globalisation and outsiders. As such, the blunt power of strongmen is attractive to these individuals. Rather than play with the potentially weak hands dealt to them, strongmen throw down their cards and demand a new game (Chitty, 2019), in the US and Europe benefit from globalisation. It follows that blue-collar workers blame elites for their misfortunes. They believe political correctness blocks a blunt addressing of problems dumped on them by globalisation and outsiders. As such, the blunt power of
strongmen is attractive to these individuals. Rather than play with the potentially weak hands dealt to them, strongmen throw down their cards and demand a new game (Chitty, 2019).

The new social media became a mechanism for the organic production and dissemination of propaganda picked up and amplified by talk radio and cable television. The propaganda of the postbellum society was challenged by a new propaganda that sought to jettison political correctness, monolithic notions of truth, and political propriety. ‘Blue collar individuals drift from “mainstream” media to more appealing social media influencers. Denigration of the rules of social propriety as products of “political correctness” leads to social collisions, and this erosion of civility removes gentle rule structures that avert outbreaks of hurtful behavior’ (Chitty, 2019). became a mechanism for the organic production and dissemination of propaganda picked up and amplified by talk radio and cable television. The propaganda of the postbellum society was challenged by a new propaganda that sought to jettison political correctness, monolithic notions of truth, and political propriety. ‘Blue collar individuals drift from “mainstream” media to more appealing social media influencers. Denigration of the rules of social propriety as products of “political correctness” leads to social collisions, and this erosion of civility removes gentle rule structures that avert outbreaks of hurtful behavior’ (Chitty, 2019).

The technological developments, coupled with the natural tendency (as seen in democracies across the world) for democratic electorates to cleave into left and right halves, led to party ideologies becoming akin to faiths. Importantly there is a political-economic aspect to the cultural cleavage into ideological faiths. The ideological faiths of the right and left peopled by over 70 million voters in each wing, according to the 2020 US presidential election results, make vote and audience banks of each group for politicians and media, respectively. The ideological faiths of the right and left peopled by over 70 million voters in each wing, according to the 2020 US presidential election results, make vote and audience banks of each group for politicians and media, respectively.

The dictum ‘all is fair in love and war’ has extended to politics as well. Politics is a kind of war after all. Machiavelli ‘has inspired political behaviour ever since the sixteenth century, exhorting the ruler to exercise fox-like cunning and leonine strength’ (Chitty, 2004: 60; Machiavelli, 1952). Politics is ‘a terrain dotted with half-truths, broken promises, and white lies’ (Chitty, 2004: 59). The imperative to protect vote and audience banks, associated with right and left ideological faiths, shapes the ideological stances and explanations of events, of media, and political actors on each side, who see the other side distributing false propaganda, fake news, and plain lies. Abraham Lincoln reportedly said, ‘you may fool people for a time; you can fool a part of the people all the time; but you can’t fool all the people all the time’ (Schwartz, 2018). Some influencers are happy to fool part of the people all the time. This internally directed propaganda is of immense consequence because the US is a superpower, and one half of the US propaganda cloud may be used by influencers to promote either populism or globalisation, unilateralism or multilateralism, isolationism or engagement. ‘has inspired political behaviour ever since the sixteenth century, exhorting the ruler to exercise fox-like cunning and leonine strength’ (Chitty, 2004: 60; Machiavelli, 1952). Politics is ‘a terrain dotted with half-truths, broken promises, and white lies’ (Chitty, 2004: 59). The imperative to protect vote and audience banks, associated with right and left ideological faiths, shapes the ideological stances and explanations of events, of media, and political actors on each side, who see the other side distributing false propaganda, fake news, and plain lies. Abraham Lincoln reportedly said, ‘you may fool people for a time; you can fool a part of the people all the time;
but you can’t fool all the people all the time’ (Schwartz, 2018). Some influencers are happy to fool part of the people all the time. This internally directed propaganda is of immense consequence because the US is a superpower, and one half of the US propaganda cloud may be used by influencers to promote either populism or globalisation, unilaterlism or multilateralism, isolationism or engagement.

However, the Lasswellian top-down model does not neatly explain sociological propaganda in an age when social media has fractured the elite–mass communication hierarchy. Challenging the power of the old influencers is the power of new influencers, who generate new clouds of propaganda through their social media communication. They have alternative theories about the origins of global pandemics; different notions of good actors and bad actors among international and national health organisations, nation states, and their political leaders; conflicting views on governmental and personal strategies for curbing the spread of the virus. In the contemporary era the so-called sudras are influential too, through the use of social media. When they find a populist political leader who expresses their views, he or she becomes their voice. If elected to office, the leader is able to seek to shape policy on their behalf. In an age when social media has fractured the elite–mass communication hierarchy. Challenging the power of the old influencers is the power of new influencers, who generate new clouds of propaganda through their social media communication. They have alternative theories about the origins of global pandemics; different notions of good actors and bad actors among international and national health organisations, nation states, and their political leaders; conflicting views on governmental and personal strategies for curbing the spread of the virus. In the contemporary era the so-called sudras are influential too, through the use of social media. When they find a populist political leader who expresses their views, he or she becomes their voice. If elected to office, the leader is able to seek to shape policy on their behalf.

In contrast the Chinese party-state has used its ideological apparatus (media, the education system, party cells) to promote ideological convergence. I discussed this promotion by apex influencers of ideological convergence among lower-level influencers – such as academics and journalists – as a superimposition on technological convergence, with a Chinese academic (13 January 2020). Promotion of ideological convergence under the party-state normative structure, together with parallel strategies of shepherding opinion on social media, allow traditional influencers (party-state officials) to maintain ideological stability, at least for the time being.

In communist states, ‘solidarity and achievement depend on ideological unanimity, and communication provides the model with which to conform’ (Yu, 1963: 259). Today, globalisation and social media have nibbled at ideological unanimity; the need to institute convergence is a response. I discussed this promotion by apex influencers of ideological convergence among lower-level influencers – such as academics and journalists – as a superimposition on technological convergence, with a Chinese academic (13 January 2020). Promotion of ideological convergence under the party-state normative structure, together with parallel strategies of shepherding opinion on social media, allow traditional influencers (party-state officials) to maintain ideological stability, at least for the time being. In communist states, ‘solidarity and achievement depend on ideological unanimity, and communication provides the model with which to conform’ (Yu, 1963: 259). Today, globalisation and social media have nibbled at ideological unanimity; the need to institute convergence is a response.
INTENT, CONTENT, AND CONTENTMENT

Propaganda as intended influence is used by all states, whether liberal democracies, authoritarian, or totalitarian. Authoritarian countries have been accused of engaging in sharp power in the guise of soft power. While sharp power shares some characteristics with techniques of political propaganda (and may be accompanied by a climate of propaganda), it is not propaganda. It involves coercion or inducement and is therefore not soft power either. It makes targets act in preferred ways that are to the advantage of the influencing state. Sharp power influence is likely to be subsumed under a larger propaganda effort such as eroding faith in liberal democracy. ‘The attempt at total manufacturing and control of opinion, positively through propaganda and negatively through censorship’ is a ‘major characteristic of totalitarianism’ with the goal of turning ‘the population from a potential threat into its pliant tool’ (Kautsky, 1962: 95). While Kautsky’s words refer to the Cold War, the following are from the 21st century:

Authoritarian influence efforts are ‘sharp’ in the sense that they pierce, penetrate, or perforate the political and information environments in the targeted countries. In the ruthless new competition that is under way between autocratic and democratic states … [t]hese regimes are not necessarily seeking to ‘win hearts and minds,’ the common frame of reference for soft power efforts, but they are surely seeking to manipulate their target audiences by distorting the information that reaches them. (Walker and Ludwig, 2017)

Employing techniques of propaganda implies intent to use propaganda; this is intended influence.

Recall that sociological propaganda is organic and ‘not the result of deliberate propaganda action’ (Ellul, 1973: 64–67). At the other end of the propaganda interface, social media usage at the molecular level can be organic but have significant impact when molar patterns emerge. Users of social media may or may not have an intention to influence, in the form of willingness to change others’ behaviour. Some may merely want to express views, react, or be noticed. However, their interactions can contribute to the generation of unintended propaganda that media, advertisers, and politicians can use in their own intended propaganda efforts. Clicking on ‘like’ can have an effect if something goes viral, if numbers are large enough for influencers to consider them to be of consequence. is organic and ‘not the result of deliberate propaganda action’ (Ellul, 1973: 64–67). At the other end of the propaganda interface, social media usage at the molecular level can be organic but have significant impact when molar patterns emerge. Users of social media may or may not have an intention to influence, in the form of willingness to change others’ behaviour. Some may merely want to express views, react, or be noticed. However, their interactions can contribute to the generation of unintended propaganda that
media, advertisers, and politicians can use in their own intended propaganda efforts. Clicking on ‘like’ can have an effect if something goes viral, if numbers are large enough for influencers to consider them to be of consequence.

Content refers to what is contained in a message whatever the medium, whether the medium is the human body and its organs, or extensions thereof. Contentment refers to consequences of message reception, whether the result is contentment or discontentment. Content maybe characterised by virtue and virtuosity. Virtue here consists of assertives, directives, and commissives that are drawn from the worldview of a propagandist, seen as such by a receiver with whom this worldview resonates (Chitty, 2017b: 20). Where there is resonance there is contentment. When the preferred worldview is politically operationalised, there can be contentment in the receiver. Virtue here consists of assertives, directives, and commissives that are drawn from the worldview of a propagandist, seen as such by a receiver with whom this worldview resonates (Chitty, 2017b: 20). Where there is resonance there is contentment. When the preferred worldview is politically operationalised, there can be contentment in the receiver.

Virtuosity, in relation to people’s tangible and intangible products, is related to excellence in crafting, signifying superlative technique. It is possible to admire the virtuosity of propaganda messages and be discontented by what a receiver may see as its lack of virtue (ibid.: 25–29). Rhetoric, as a means of crafting persuasive content, is meant to go beyond virtuosity of composition, to include ‘civic commitment’ (Crowley, 2003). The question is to whose civic commitment does this refer in a situation, as in the US after the 2020 election, where there are over 70 million people on two sides of an argument about what civic commitment might be.

Perceptions that prevail in a society colour views of internal and external propaganda. Propaganda was associated with German espionage and disingenuity during the First World War, but ‘by 1930, propaganda was understood to include efforts by just about anyone to influence public opinion – especially the US government’ (Sproule, 1984: 9). It was Sigmund Freud’s nephew Edward L. Bernays who sought to sanitise propagandist public relations by recommending an ethical professional framework (ibid.: 5, 10–12). As a term, ‘propaganda’ fell out of favour after the communists began to use ‘agitation propaganda’. But in times of war, ‘the need to win increases the appeal of and acceptance of propaganda. As peace looms ahead, American suspicions of propaganda resurface with a vengeance. Propaganda again falls out of favor’ (Zaharna, 2004: 222; Brown, 2008). Nancy Snow (2020: 422–429) and Louis Roth and Richard Arndt (1986: 723) have written about a ‘good’ American propaganda that will promote the values of the nation’s republican democracy. who sought to sanitise propagandist public relations by recommending an ethical professional framework (ibid.: 5, 10–12). As a term, ‘propaganda’ fell out of favour after the communists began to use ‘agitation propaganda’. But in times of war, ‘the need to win increases the appeal of and acceptance of propaganda. As peace looms ahead, American suspicions of propaganda resurface with a vengeance. Propaganda again falls out of favor’ (Zaharna, 2004: 222; Brown, 2008). Nancy Snow (2020: 422–429) and Louis Roth and Richard Arndt (1986: 723) have written about a ‘good’ American propaganda that will promote the values of the nation’s republican democracy.
CONCLUSION

This discussion shows that sociological propaganda includes instances of ‘unintended influence’, but that political propaganda is generally ‘intended’. The fundamental factor is influence and is constituted by power and ‘unintended influence’. Where intention is at play, hard, soft, smart, and sharp power are ways in which power is exercised, in terms of how associated resources are used: through coercion, inducement, or attraction. Hard and soft power could come into play unintentionally as well. Charisma, cultural imperialism, hegemony, and propaganda are associated with normative structures linked to influence. Communication is the broad concept associated with the operationalisation of both types of influence. Development communication, international public relations, marketing, persuasion, propaganda, and strategic communication are methods of communication through which intended influence can be exercised. This is by no means the final word. This chapter can only be a prelomenon to a comprehensive treatise on propaganda as influence. includes instances of ‘unintended influence’, but that political propaganda is generally ‘intended’. The fundamental factor is influence and is constituted by power and ‘unintended influence’. Where intention is at play, hard, soft, smart, and sharp power are ways in which power is exercised, in terms of how associated resources are used: through coercion, inducement, or attraction. Hard and soft power could come into play unintentionally as well. Charisma, cultural imperialism, hegemony, and propaganda are associated with normative structures linked to influence. Communication is the broad concept associated with the operationalisation of both types of influence. Development communication, international public relations, marketing, persuasion, propaganda, and strategic communication are methods of communication through which intended influence can be exercised. This is by no means the final word. This chapter can only be a prelomenon to a comprehensive treatise on propaganda as influence.

Unintended sociological propaganda is an important source of influence and is the feeder for intended political propaganda. It is doubly important today in the propaganda contest between the two superpowers, the US and China. New social media allows sociological propaganda to emanate from the base of the Lasswellian pyramid in the US, and to be voiced by influencers who disregard elements of the old normative superstructure (Lasswell, 1965). The result is a society with a split normative superstructure, two broad realities, and conflicting ‘truths’. The dynamic is strengthened because of political-economic advantages possessed by influencers. In China, on the other hand, the potential for the normative superstructure to be eroded by propaganda generated by social media is managed carefully. Clashing today are the normative structures of superpowers, as well as the elite-generated and mass-generated normative structures. is an important source of influence and is the feeder for intended political propaganda. It is doubly important today in the propaganda contest between the two superpowers, the US and China. New social media allows sociological propaganda to emanate from the base of the Lasswellian pyramid in the US, and to be voiced by influencers who disregard elements of the old normative superstructure (Lasswell, 1965). The result is a society with a split normative superstructure, two broad realities, and conflicting ‘truths’. The dynamic is strengthened because of political-economic advantages possessed by influencers. In China, on the other hand, the potential for the normative superstructure to be eroded by propaganda generated by social media is managed carefully. Clashing today are the normative structures of superpowers, as well as the elite-generated and mass-generated normative structures.
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