MA International Relations

Master Thesis

The digital panopticon: media, state and cultural hegemony in the case of the revelations made by Edward Snowden

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Abstract

Nowadays the internet domain has become indispensable in modern society. As technology is accelerating and developing, cyber culture is becoming ever-more dominant in the field of politics. As such, various actors' ability to upend the global political order by electronic means is increasing, as well as states are able to exert power in a less coercive way. With this in mind, this paper seeks to examine the revelations made by Edward Snowden with regard to US surveillance practices. The disclosures by Snowden have generated a large discussion around surveillance with regard to the digital panopticon and the imperialistic nature of the US. This paper examines the role of US media in their effort to continue to be globally dominant. The study employs a qualitative method and critical interpretive approach to answer the research question, by applying the theory of cultural hegemony to explain how the American media co-opts the US state by using framing. As such, this is achieved by normalizing surveillance practices by focusing the attention towards Snowden and the fear of another 9/11.

Key Words: media framing, digital panopticon, Snowden, US surveillance, cultural hegemony;

INTRODUCTION

Today cyber culture has become one of the most significant aspects of modern societies, especially in the field of global politics. The cyber space, more than the real world, has increasingly become a place to be active. The internet domain has created a platform for people to exchange information, opinions, and ideas. In the era of ongoing globalization and the ICT revolution, one can observe the compression of time and space (Harvey, 1999). Nevertheless, despite all the advantages of the cyber space, there are disadvantages that come with it. Today the global order is no longer challenged only by states, but also by non-state actors in the shape of organizations and individuals. Edward Snowden is an example of an individual who has challenged the global political order by revealing secret information from the National Security Agency (NSA) of the United States (US) with regard to their surveillance activities. Snowden is a former subcontractor of the NSA. In 2013 he fled to Hong Kong where he met with the filmmaker Laura Poitras and journalists from *The Guardian*. He disclosed to them documents of the NSA, which exposed how they were monitoring American citizens. Based on this, the US government charged Snowden with violations of the Espionage Act ("Edward Snowden", 2016). Further information on the Snowden's disclosure will be provided in chapter one.

These revelations have ignited an extensive discussion on privacy, interstate relations and the global political order. The prevalent debate revolves around how surveillance is a way of controlling the society. Moreover, in the current discourse it is often compared to the Foucauldian panopticon, which is a circular prison and the inmates are unaware whether they are being watched. Foucault's s work on Bentham's panopticon asserts that the panopticon is not just a building, but an embodiment of a set of principles. Essentially, the more power in terms of information one has over the other, the more pervasive it becomes (Foucault, 1977). The news of Snowden's revelations was a hot topic in media outlets. Today, media plays an important role in one's understanding and perceptions of reality. Snowden's revelations have generated a large debate around state surveillance, especially with regard to exercising power over society by a non-coercive manner. Thus, the

discussion on surveillance has become central with regard to making an analogy for the surveillance by the state as a digital panopticon for perpetuating power.

With this in mind, this paper seeks to scrutinize the following research question:

How can media framing be regarded as instrumental for reinforcing the political interests of the US in the case of the revelations made by Snowden with regard to US surveillance?

This paper seeks to examine whether mainstream US media networks propagate narratives that conceal the dynamics of the US surveillance system as instrumental for preserving power and control.

Methods and Approach

This paper is going to apply the approach of critical interpretive theory in order to examine and analyze the conditions under which the US media networks conceal the dynamics of the US digital panopticon. This approach was chosen, due to the fact that it concentrates on investigating issues such as power relations and asymmetries. The critical interpretive approach examines organizational and social reality (Deetz, 1982). In order to scrutinize the research question, this study will engage with both primary and secondary sources. In terms of primary sources, the paper will review and analyze news items, and official documents such as the Snowden testimony. The secondary sources, which are examined in this study, are namely books, scholarly journals, reviews, etc. by various scholars.

In order to build this case in the analysis, the paper will scrutinize the research question by analyzing how the concept of cultural hegemony explains why the media frames the events of revelations in a way, which reinforces the political interests of the United States. The research employs a qualitative method, using a case study approach, focusing on the revelations made by Snowden in the year of 2013. This case study has been chosen because of its significant impact on the global political order.

After laying down the foundation in section one, discussing the Snowden revelations and how they have changed the perspective of the US in terms of state security measures, the way it complies with privacy, namely in the discussion of the

US as a digital panopticon. The paper will look at the discussion, which these revelations triggered, namely, surveillance as an instrument of power and the imperialistic nature of the US. Therefore, in order to demonstrate how the US media engaged in a cover up of the US digital panopticon, the third section of the paper will analyze newspaper articles. In order to build the case, articles from the top ten most read newspapers in the United States, as well as articles from other less popular newspapers will be examined. The articles chosen were all published shortly after Snowden revelations. The reason these articles were chosen is that it is important to examine and analyze what the most read newspapers discuss as well as what less popular newspapers contribute to the discussion. In this section the concept of cultural hegemony will be employed in order to understand why and how media agencies use framing to perpetuate US power, portraying Snowden as a failed individual, rather than what the US state has implemented in terms of disrespecting the privacy of individuals, by drawing public attention towards the fear of another 9/11.

Nonetheless, it must be noted that there are potential limitations of this research. The revelations by Snowden were relatively recent. Hence, the scholarly discussion on the subject is limited to a certain extent, which creates a challenge for positioning the approach. In the interpretive approach the potential limitations revolve around bias, subjectivity, and the fact that it cannot be generalized (Wu, 2005). Another potential limitation to the chosen approach is the fact that the interpretive method inevitably creates normative frameworks. It is unable to fully engage with the complexity of the individual, in terms of the structural, historical and economic impacts upon one's experience (Wu, 2005). Nonetheless, choosing the critical interpretative approach does have strengths as well, namely producing new knowledge and offering a new perspective and information for future research (Wu, 2005). By employing the critical interpretive approach, this paper will seek to provide insight for future research and show the relevance of the power of media, as well as on the discourse on state surveillance practices in the contemporary world.

Theoretical framework

The aim of this paper is to examine how media framing is instrumental for reinforcing the political interests of the US with regard to Snowden's disclosure about state surveillance practices. Thus, a theoretical framework will be established.

This part seeks to stipulate the main arguments and hypothesis as well as demonstrate the correlations between variables. Moreover, the main concepts and theories will be analyzed for a better grasp of the research puzzle.

The main argument of this paper revolves around the following three theoretical concepts: cultural hegemony, imperialistic nature and media framing. This paper seeks to demonstrate how media is able to influence and shape opinion to the extent that it can conceal the imperialistic nature of the US with regard to NSA surveillance. The hypothesis that this paper tests is whether the US surveillance, stemming from their imperialistic nature, was concealed by American media in the case of Snowden, by focusing the attention on Snowden. As such media agencies perpetuate US power by castigating Snowden and portraying him in a negative way. Meanwhile the discourse in the media about the surveillance practices of the NSA are to an extent justified and normalized by using the fear of terrorism, mentioning 9/11 in the majority of news articles. This will be demonstrated later in the analysis by using the concept of cultural hegemony. The way the main argument will be assessed is in the following three steps.

The first section of the analysis will discuss the revelations by Snowden with regard to NSA surveillance practices. The line of argument there will scrutinize the implications of Snowden's revelations in relation to the broader understanding of US power. Working from the position that the Snowden scandal is a turning point, it will raise the discussion on surveillance and digital panopticon. Therefore, this will be discussed in the second section of the analysis. The aim is to examine the political interests of the US, namely: the imperialistic nature of the US and the relation to power and surveillance, and also analyze surveillance as an instrument of power, looking at US interests as critical in pursuing the surveillance system. Finally, the third part of the analysis will examine the role of media and how the media framed the scandal. The function of this section is to assess how the media treated the scandal by employing the concepts of framing and cultural hegemony. The idea is that the US

government does not force the media to frame the news in such a way, but rather they co-opt each other in mutual way. In the final section, the conclusion of this paper will answer the research question and test the hypothesis.

Cultural Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci is known for developing the concept of cultural hegemony. His theory is based on the work done by Karl Marx about his theory of how the leading ideology of society mirrors the interests of the ruling class (Adamson, 1983). Although cultural hegemony is not directly defined by Gramsci, in the literature what is often cited as a characterization of this idea is the following: "The spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (Crehan, 2002, p.102). In other words hegemony refers to the process of when a dominant group sets particular norms and beliefs, which are followed by the majority of population.

Artz defines hegemony as a "system of power that has the support of the subordinate" (Artz, 2000, p.3). He further explains that hegemony concentrates on how particular social practices, structures, and relations are conveyed by different social forces (Artz, 2000). Artz and Murphy's understanding of hegemony is that it offers a template for understanding why one participates willingly in practices, which may not be in his best interest, however a tangible benefit is observed (Artz, 2000). Such hegemonic structures and relations are supported by the mass media, government agencies, educational institutions, etc. Hegemony reflects on the question of how the circumstances of society shape individual's mind (Artz, 2000). "Hegemony is about hierarchical relations and vested interest" (Artz, 2000, p.4).

The articulation put forth by Altheide of Gramsci's concept reads: "media hegemony refers to the dominance of a certain way of life and thought and to the way in which that dominant concept of reality is diffused throughout public as 'well as private dimensions of social life" (Altheide, 1984, p.477). Thus, in the analysis cultural hegemony will be used to illustrate how media co-opts with the US political interests by way of framing in the case of Snowden's scandal, shifting away the attention from the imperialistic surveillance practices of the US and focusing on the revelations.

Imperialistic nature

The next crucial theory for solving the research puzzle is that of imperialistic nature. Naturally imperial comes from empire and according to Lo empire can imply many things such as power, territory etc. Individuals often assume empire to be "something physical, characterized by the projection of hard power, and expansionist in spirit" (Lo, 2015, p.101). There are also several other ideas of empire that are as valid as this one. For instance, others argue that an empire is an "introspective entity, uninterested in territorial expansion" (Lo, 2015, p.101). Imperialistic nature according to Terrill is defined by an inborn feeling of an empire in a nation-state that has historically had an identity that goes beyond just part of a nation state and has all the mechanisms supporting such a structure (Lo, 2015). Moreover, imperialistic nature is the belief that a country is "more than just another external player- or ex-empire"; that the state is a potential hegemon (Lo, 2015, p.102). Another crucial indication of imperialistic nature is the way other countries especially major powers view the particular state (Lo, 2015). Having established the concept of imperialistic nature, the analysis section will elaborate on how it plays an important role in the framing of the Snowden scandal.

Media framing

Another theoretical concept that has to be clarified in this paper is that of media framing. Media framing refers to the process of communication vehicles being able to construct or shape the reality, or a certain event in a way that is beneficial for certain party. According to Nelson "framing is the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy" (Nelson, 1997, p.567). His point seems to be that media can shape political opinion by framing issues in a particular way (Nelson, 1997). The purpose of framing is to center the attention for a particular effect; to influence opinions rather than the simply cover the issue. Scholars argue that frames can be seen as story lines, which provide consistency to a delicate information (Nelson, 1997). The overarching discourse is that media frames are independent variables. However, according to Zavestoski media frames are intervening variables, in the sense that they have great

influence. They can impact the formulation of definitions of social issues and recognized stances on controversial issues (Zavestoski, 2004).

Scholars also define framing as the "process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation" (Entman, 2007, p.164). Entman identifies four functions of frames namely "problem definition, causal analysis, moral judgment, and remedy promotion" (Entman, 2007, p.164). He emphasizes on how frames shape and amend one's understandings and preferences. This is done through priming, which refers to the process of frames turning the attention to the apparent prominence of certain ideas by "activating schemas" encouraging the specific target to decide, think or feel in a desired way (Entman, 2007, p.164).

Literature Review

Today the importance of cyber space is imperative; the society is constantly dependent on the Internet for daily life. Large amount of data information on individuals is online and can be traced by higher powers. After the revelations made by Snowden accusing the NSA of monitoring American citizens, a great debate on privacy started. Snowden has advocated more transparency by the state however, his act has been treated controversially. There are many who see him as a traitor rather than a hero. Such impressions are mainly shaped by the representation of these events by media. Nowadays, media framing has a major influence when it comes to constructing and shaping events. The debate also touches upon whether the surveillance practices of the NSA are a demonstration of power, by a state that is imperialistic in nature and if so, how does the media conceal such an image by moving public attention to Snowden. Therefore, this literature review seeks to examine what the scholarly debate on imperialistic nature, cultural hegemony and media framing has been.

This literature review will be organized as follows: first it will touch upon the discussion of the political interests of the US, focusing on their imperialistic nature. Secondly, it will discuss the concept of cultural hegemony and the scholarly debate on it in terms of understanding its function in the relationship between media and state. Then, the discussion will turn to how the media is involved in the justification of imperialistic actions implemented by the state, using the technique of media framing.

Imperialistic nature

This part of the literature review examines how states with an imperialistic nature are more likely to pursue control and preserve power. The case of the US is taken due to its relation to the general topic of discussion, namely surveillance. Sakellaropoulos argues that the American foreign policy is an example of modern imperialism. His point is that elements of Marxist theory of imperialism serve as an explanation of the current foreign policy of the US. Moreover, he investigates how after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the United States have been able to retain their hegemonic position in the imperialist chain. He traces this path from armed 'humanitarian' interventions to pre-emptive military aggression to counter potential threats (Sakellaropoulos, 2008).

After the Bush doctrine and the occupation by the US of Iraq, there is a growing discussion on the topic of whether the US acts as an imperial power. One of the scholars debating on the imperialistic nature of the US, Niall Ferguson, contends that the US is an empire and Americans should no longer deny it (Ferguson, 2005). He urges the US to "give up its reluctance to be imperial" (Tønnesson, 2004, p.332). Kaplan expresses the same views as Ferguson on the subject. In his book *Warrior Politics* he looks at realist thinkers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Churchill, and thereby he defines imperialism as, "that most ordinary and dependable form of protection for ethnic minorities and others under violent assault" (Kaplan, 2011, p.147). Albeit in the public discourse, imperialism has been delegitimized and the US is building an anti-imperial tradition, "an imperial reality already dominates [US] foreign policy" (Kaplan, 2011, p.147). Kaplan often makes a comparison between the US and the Roman Empire. The scholar Max Boot, a military historian, also shares the views of Kaplan and Ferguson. He propagated the notion of imperialism in the US and he advocated that the US should not be anxious to fight 'the savage wars of peace' as long as it means enlarging the 'empire of liberty' (Boot, 2014, p.352). It should be also noted that Boot argues that the US should embrace the label of an empire. Moreover Boot asserts, "We are going to be called an empire whatever we do. We might as well be a successful one"(Klassen, 2014, p.34).

There are other scholars in the field who are not looking at the imperial mindset of the US through the lens of the realist approach. Specifically they are just

looking at the US's military capacity and the interests of their imperial power. Ignatieff discusses the paradox that imperialism is currently a precondition for democracy. He argues in favor of a 'temporary imperialism', which is "hegemony without colonies, a global sphere of influence without the burden of direct administration" (Ignatieff, 2010, p.2).

Samuel Huntington on the other hand holds starkly different views. Huntington discusses how America's imperial impulse was fueled by its supremacy; however, he rejects the idea of a dominant state or an empire. His point seems to be that cultures are fundamentally diverse and they are not supposed to aim at dominating or transforming each other. He completely rejects the imperialistic nature of the US. According to him the US is not an empire, it is a state with its own specific culture (Huntington, 2004).

The prevailing discourse in the scholarly work on the imperialistic nature of the United States suggests that the US acts like an imperial power. Although the US is building anti-imperial tradition, research contends that the US foreign policy is an example of modern imperialism.

Cultural hegemony

In contemporary discourse the term hegemony is widespread in various contexts and the interpretation of the term varies. Nowadays it is often associated with dominance. According to Gramsci, hegemony is not "simply a process of indoctrination, nor merely another term for ideological and cultural activity. Rather, hegemony appears as a consensual culture and politics that meet the minimal needs of the majority while simultaneously advancing the interests of the dominant groups" (Artz, 2000, p.20).

Hegemony offers an approach towards understanding how knowledge, social relations and cultural practices are shaped (Artz, 2000). Artz argues that media spreads the leading ideologies of the hegemon (Artz, 2000). In the contemporary world, media is the primary place to promote political ideologies (Artz, 2000). In light of this argument, Stuart Hall also argues that the dominant ideology drives media practices according to the dominant political interests. His argument revolves around the idea that mass media practices in the today aim to justify the US dominance on a global level (Artz, 2000). Artz's point seems to be that in the US, dominant class

forces construct cultural hegemony through popular culture (Artz, 2000). Agreeing with Condit's argument Artz contends that cultural images and practices are always linked to existing social relations in a certain way (Artz, 2000).

In Altheide's view, hegemony is essential in modeling ideology, beliefs and the culture of society. He further engages in a discussion on how US journalists tend to emphasize certain negative stereotypes of other countries while presenting pro-American coverage and by implication, promote the American ideology and control, through what he refers to as information imperialism (Altheide, 1984). Cultural hegemony is a process achieved not through manipulation but through legitimation. Essentially, by using public discourse ideas, beliefs and values of the dominant group are validated (Lears, 1985). Carragee provides a critique of recent research, which tends to neglect the relationship between media framing and political issues. He argues that framing is central to political issues with regard to power and thereby central to hegemony (Carragee, 2004). Mueller talks about hegemony and his point seems to be that norms and ideas will be influenced to a great extent by the dominant ideology (Mueller, 1973). Gans also shares the same opinion. He argues that the dominant class influences norms and values and therefore, it is inevitable that journalists stay neutral and thus independent from the culture constructed by the dominant class (Gans, 1979). Chaney argues that despite the fact that journalists claim that they are autonomous from the state, they promote the ideology of the dominant group, and this is due to the cultural hegemony (Chaney, 1981). Thus, the media co-opts with the state by way of subconsciously promoting the ideas produced by the state.

Media framing

"The sociological imagination, I remind you, in considerable part consists of the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, and in the process to build up an adequate view of a total society and of its components" (Mills, 1959, p.211). There is a large discourse on media and how it shapes opinions across societies. Building up on Mills' argument, Altheide argues how media is a part of what he calls "problem-generating machine geared to entertainment" and "the quick fix" rather than the understanding and social change envisioned by Mills (Altheide, 1997, p.647). His

argument is that problems are constructed through a process of communication and the relation between information technology, different types of communication and social activities (Altheide, 1997). In his work he addresses the emergence of the 'problem frame' and how its existence is what he calls a 'generic fear machine' presented in the media. His arguments are made on the basis of materials of several pieces of research, where he presents how the problem frame was stimulated by communication formats, and this led to 'fear' being spread through American society (Altheide, 1997, p.648). Altheide's point is that promotion of the discourse of fear as a consequence of the problem frame could be defined as "pervasive communication, symbolic awareness and expectation that danger and risk are a central feature of the effective environment" (Altheide, 1997, p.648). Moreover, according to Altheide the link between mass media and public perception is "inexorably linked" (Altheide, 1997, p.648).

Therefore, media plays a crucial role in shaping opinion. The idea is that by taking the approach of framing, media can influence people's beliefs and thereby it could be used as a tool for justifying certain actions taken by the government or other non-state actors. For instance, from research executed by the Los Angeles Times, Aletheide concludes that American society is a fearful one. It is believed to be one of the most anxious societies in history. The reason that Altheide proposes is the effect of media coverage.   For example, if crime related news is the focus of media coverage, then it is highly likely that people will feel more anxious and frightened (Altheide, 1997). "Format and frames shape mass media content" (Altheide, 1997, p.650). Nelson also shares the opinion of Altheide; that framing political and social issues in particular ways depicts people's reasoning on the subject matter (Nelson, 1997). Other scholars investigate and argue that frames serve as an alternative for formulating decision-making tasks (Nelson, 1997).

Gitlin researches how mass media plays a significant role in the formation of public attitudes, moods, and assumptions. Mass media is able to shape the way the public makes sense of situations (Gitlin, 2003). In her research she contends that media in a corporate capitalist society works well in formulating and conveying national ideology. Therefore, media could be seen as instrumental for instance for the government to shape public opinion (Gitlin, 2003). Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that in such cases liberal capitalist society would take into consideration "certain popular currents and pressures, symbolically incorporating them, repackaging

and distributing them throughout the society" (Gitlin, 2003, p.11).   Gitlin's point seems to be that media can be used either in support of/in opposition to the authorities.

According to other scholars media fails to offer a venue for freely expressed ideas, and rather offers a socially constructed reality, which benefits only those in the higher stratums of society (Luther, 2014). In Luther's view media is only allowed to pose a debate as long as it does not upend the national security and stability of the state (Luther, 2014). Framing differs from bias. Reese's view is that framing is a more sophisticated concept, which goes beyond the views of favorable or unfavorable, pro or con. "Convincing others to accept one's framing means to a large extent winning the debate" (Reese, 2001, p.96). Reese emphasizes the importance of framing by claiming how media is powerful enough even to the extent of overthrowing a president (Reese, 2001).

Overall the academic literature on media framing largely emphasizes its importance in shaping public opinion and it admits its power as instrumental for authorities.

The literature review on the concepts of an imperialistic nature, cultural hegemony and media framing has laid the foundations for the research problem by providing different scholarly approaches and perspectives. By way of comparing and contrasting diverse approaches and exploring relationships in the literature, this section has also identified some gaps of the research in line with Ignatieff's argument about the paradox of how imperialism is a precondition for democracy. With regard to cultural hegemony, a gap found in the research concerns the concept of media hegemony. The term is ambiguous and as such, the extent to which it dominates on both a domestic and foreign level is not utterly evaluated. With regard to media faming, the literature relies on social psychological basic knowledge, thus it narrows down the understanding of media framing. The idea is that nowadays the amount of media is extremely large and the individual receives a huge amount of information. Hence, the models analyzing media framing do not take into account the complex reality. Therefore, a suggestion for future research is to broaden the scope of research and look for more complex strategies to analyze media framing.

SECTION I – *Snowden's revelations, Surveillance and the Digital Panopticon*

1.1- *Snowden's revelations*

This section seeks to lay the foundations for answering the research question. As such it will discuss Edward Snowden and how the revelations made by him have created a discussion on the US digital panopticon. As such, the chapter will start with sketching the sequence of events and thereafter will continue with a discussion on the panopticon as a mechanism and its significance when analyzing surveillance.

Edward Snowden's Background

Edward Snowden is an American former Center Intelligence Agency (CIA) employee and a former subcontractor for the National Security Agency (NSA). In 2013 he leaked classified information from the NSA into the public domain. The information he leaked detailed numerous top-secret surveillance programs on both a global and local level. Snowden obtained this while working for the NSA, when he started copying top-secret documents on their surveillance practices. As such, he found these practices invasive and disturbing. In May 2013 he asked his NSA supervisor for a permission to take a leave of absence due medical reasons. Having complied with a large amount of documents revealing NSA activities, he flew to Hong Kong, and met with journalists from the British news agency, *The Guardian*, together with the filmmaker Laura Poitras. On the 5th of June the British media released the documents provided by Snowden ("Edward Snowden", 2016). These documents revealed an order from the NSA to the Verizon telecommunication company, to assist in tracking the phone activities of American customers. Moreover, the following day, *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* released information about the NSA program known as PRISM, which allowed the collection of real-time information gathered electronically ("Edward Snowden", 2016). In the following days a flood of information steadily revealed more of the NSA's activities, resulting in domestic and international debates about the actions of intelligence agencies.

In the immediate aftermath, the US's legal response to these revelations was ambivalent. With regard to the response to PRISM, officials from the NSA claimed

that PRISM was not a surveillance program, but a, "way to gather and organize information under the guidance of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA)" (Belmas, 2015, p.61). Further to this, a request by the office of the Director of the NSA was made to "correct the inaccuracy" of the story written by *The Guardian* (Belmas, 2015, p.61). Less than two weeks after *The Guardian* announced the revelations by Snowden, the US federal prosecutors issued a charge for Snowden with theft of government Property ("Edward Snowden", 2016). Snowden was charged with "violation of the Espionage Act, including unauthorized communication of national defense information and willful communication of classified communications of intelligence information to an unauthorized person" (Belmas, 2015, p.61). Thus, a warrant for his arrest was issued, asking the authorities in Hong Kong to detain him while the request for extradition to the USA was being filed. However, before the extradition request was filed, Snowden fled to Moscow to seek asylum there (Deiseroth,2014,p.38).

It should be also noted that the European Parliament has also been involved in the events by inviting Snowden to deliver testimony for their inquiry into the Electronic Mass Surveillance of EU Citizens. In this testimony Snowden has expressed his main arguments for revealing top-secret information. The prevailing discourse in the testimony was about the implications of surveillance. He contended that surveillance can also lead to less safe environment. He further elaborates: "By squandering precious, limited resources on "collecting it all," we end up with more analysts trying to make sense of harmless political dissent and fewer investigators running down real leads. I believe investing in mass surveillance at the expense of traditional, proven methods can cost lives, and history has shown my concerns are justified" ("Introductory Statement", 2014, p.1). He further discusses his legal authority to monitor communications worldwide. He emphasizes the way mass surveillance violates people's rights, and threatens one's safety and life. "If liberal states decide that the convenience of spies is more valuable than the rights of their citizens, the inevitable result will be states that are both less liberal and less safe" ("Introductory Statement", 2014 p.2). Analyzing the language he uses, discussing the liberal state in which mass surveillance exists, creates a paradox; the idea is that the US state does purport its stance as a liberal democracy, but within this discourse, discussions of its imperialistic nature arise. This will be further elaborated in the

upcoming section on political interests of the US. On the other hand the justification of the US foreign and domestic policies is argued to be 'the war on terror'.

After 9/11 the fear of terrorism has led to new restrictions on American civil liberties. As such the so-called USA PATRIOT Act was established. The acronym stands for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Interpret and Obstruct Terrorism" (Belmas, 2014, p.57). This law gave the federal government more power such as to monitor "telephone and Internet communications and authorized the attorney general to detain any foreigner believed to threaten national security" (Belmas, 2014, p.57).

The surveillance measures carried out by the NSA outside of US territory are not any less illegal when the US refers to US legislation such as the USA PATRIOT Act and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act in an effort to justify themselves. Moreover, the national US law is not a legitimate justification for breaching law and crimes outside of the USA (Deiseroth, 2014, p.40).

The disclosure made by Snowden has demonstrated that there are technically no restrictions on the surveillance practices carried out by US agencies. This said, according to section 702 of the FISA, US intelligence agencies are allowed to "acquire foreign intelligence information, which the Act defines as including all information with respect to a foreign based political organization or a foreign territory that relates to the conduct of the foreign affairs of the United States, and insofar as it concerns a US citizen, are necessary for this" (Deiseroth, 2014, p 39). As such, political surveillance also complies with this law. Furthermore, the US law empowers US intelligence gatherers to designate breaches with regard to fundamental human rights and international law. This said, it appears that surveillance measures take place in various ways worldwide. One way is through the program PRISM, which gathers all kinds of data from global internet traffic, conveyed by IT corporations such as Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc. (Deiseroth, 2014). Moreover, there is the program Upstream, which taps both public and private networks "at landing points of transatlantic fiber-optic cables and the hubs which control the internet traffic between the largest providers, as well as tapping of undersea cables by US submarines" (Deiseroth, 2014, p 39). The list goes on, detailing encryption techniques and X Keyscore systems, which analyzes collected digital data (Deiseroth, 2014, p 39).

The abovementioned programs used for tracking information on both a local and global level violate fundamental human rights. By revealing top-secret information about the surveillance practices of the US, not only has Snowden become the subject of controversy over whether he is a hero, traitor or a whistleblower, but he has also fueled great debates about government secrecy, mass surveillance and information privacy within national security.

The Snowden case scandal is a turning point. Surveillance practices by the US go against their liberal rhetoric and respect of privacy. Snowden's disclosure helps one to engage in the broader understanding of US power. This case changes one's perspective of the US in terms of state security measures, and with its human rights commitment. It could be argued that the main shock has not been the foreign surveillance practices, but rather the domestic ones. The US federal government is now spying on its own citizens. One of the main implications of the Snowden scandal is how such practices can be understood as an exertion of US power in a panopticized society. It also raises questions of how media agencies conceal this imperialistic nature by co-opting with the state in order to shift the focus to Snowden as a traitor, pull away from his revelations and the threat this poses to American human rights.

1.2 *Surveillance and the Digital Panopticon*

The revelations made by Snowden have generated vigorous debates over whether US surveillance is an example of a digital panopticon. With this in mind, this subsection will provide an analysis of surveillance practices seen as part of the digital panopticon. The concept of the panopticon has been one of the most widely used terms used for analyzing surveillance in various settings. A Greek neologism, panopticon means "all-seeing place" (Lyon, 1994, p.63). Although the panopticon is an idea proposed by the theorist Jeremy Bentham during the late 18th century, this idea is now mediated to society by the works of Michel Foucault. It is argued that while many historians over the years have recognized the potential of the panopticon, this idea only gained popularity after Foucault showed interest in it (Lyon, 1994, p.62). The British philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham published his plan for the panopticon in 1791. The original idea was for the panopticon to be a

model prison. Bentham regarded this project as a great instrument of government; he believed such an institution would be an effective "instrument of reformative management" (Lyon, 1994 p.63). Essentially the idea of the panopticon was derived from a building, on a semi-circular pattern with cells around the perimeter. At the center is an "inspection lodge" (Lyon, 1994, p.62). The architectural design is planned in a way that by carefully arranging the system of lighting and use of wooden blinds, the guards would be invisible to the inmates. Therefore, control would be maintained amongst the inmates by the constant sense of being watched. "Not knowing whether or not they were being watched but obliged to assume that they were, obedience was the prisoner's only rational option" (Lyon, 1994, p.63). Now turning to the current discourse on the panopticon, Foucault's understanding of Bentham's panopticon was that inmates are caught in a situation of power where they themselves are the keepers (Lyon, 1994, p.66).   In Foucault's work, the panopticon is a metaphor for "continuous, anonymous and all-pervading power and surveillance operating at all levels of social organization" (Barker, 2004, p.121). Thus, one may argue that the panopticon stands as a metaphor that implies discipline and domination. Over the last decades, surveillance has increased in modern society. The purpose of this section is to start the discussion on what Snowden's revelations triggered as a discourse. One of the key debates, which arose after Snowden's disclosure, is about US surveillance practices as a way of perpetuating their power.

After the disclosure by Snowden the panopticon, as a model for analyzing surveillance, has become omnipresent in the debate. Just like in the case of surveillance practices by the NSA, the ordinary citizen is unaware of whether he is being watched or not, but after the revelations awareness of the possibility of being watched has spiked. As such, one may behave in a more disciplined way, knowing that their phones, cameras, laptops may be under observation. One may argue that in the center, the role of the watchman within the concept of the panopticon is played by the NSA, and the rest of the world is under close observation. Now that people are aware of their own surveillance by the panopticon, the idea has been completed. Moreover, as Foucault argues the panopticon is also about discipline. Referring to the revelations, the PRISM program could also be argued as an example of the panopticon. The information, which PRISM collects from the largest IT corporations, is immense.

Prior to the revelations, one could argue that the surveillance practices of the state also represent a discourse on the panopticon in terms of exercising power in a less visible way. The panopticon "is a diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form" (Foucault, 1977, p.205). As scholars argue, the panopticon points to how power instills social relations (Lyon, 1994, p.78). One could argue that the metaphor of panopticon holds a premise for the understanding of computer-based surveillance.

In the immediate aftermath of the disclosure by Snowden, commentators, scholars, and journalist engaged in a debate over whether they see the NSA's surveillance practices as Foucault's model of the panopticon (Miller, 2017). The debate does not only revolve around surveillance but also about power, state and knowledge. The purpose of creating an analogy to the NSA's activities through the panopticon is to show how the state gains power through knowledge.

The purpose of this section was to provide an insight into what the revelations were about and what debates they have triggered. Panopticon has become the dominant metaphor for analyzing surveillances. As such, the panopticon is a mechanism, which shows how surveillance can work. Moreover, scholars argue that after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the US has been exercising global power by strategically engaging in surveillance activities.

SECTION II - *Political interests of the United States*

Following the discussion on the panopticon's relation to the NSA's surveillance activities, this section will engage in an analysis of the political interests of the US. The following chapter aims at examining surveillance practices as an instrument of power driven by the imperialistic nature of the United States. The idea is that the imperialistic nature of the US asserts their goal of exerting power. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how, because of the American imperialistic nature; the US has been involved in surveillance practices. This said, the first part of section two will analyze surveillance as an instrument of power and refer to the concept of panopticon. The second part will focus on the imperialistic nature of the US and its pursuit of maintaining the position of a hegemon.

2.1- Surveillance as an instrument of power

Snowden's revelations, heavily covered by media outlets, have generated a great deal of discussion on the US as a global surveillance apparatus. The previous section examined and analyzed the revelations as well as the large debates, triggered by thoses disclosures, namely panopticon as a concept for analyzing surveillance practices. As such, the discussion of the panopticon applied to the NSA's monitoring activities leads to a debate on power and politics and the use of surveillance as instrument of power. Another large area of debate, which arose from these revelations regarding the idea of power, is that of the political interests of the United States. As such, a debate on imperialistic nature as a political interest of the US has been a widely discussed. Some have argued that the US global surveillance apparatus serves as an instrument for exercising and thereby projecting US power. Thus, there is a growing discussion on how surveillance aids implementing such imperial power.

In surveillance practices, power relations are essential. Nowadays it has become part of state politics. With the establishment of the USA PATRIOT Act, the US state gained more power with which to monitor phone and internet communications. Once in a state, there is legitimation of cultural and normative assumptions as in the US case, the state is able to achieve power (Clegg, 2015). By way of creating legitimate rules on the monitoring of communications, soft

domination is achieved through enforced obedience of the USA PATRIOT Act. Nevertheless, this law was not enough for the administrations of Bush and Obama, who decided to initiate covert monitoring activities of various private communications. After the success of the NSA in gaining access to most of the world's communications, in 2008 at the end of Bush era, all these illegal programs were legalized by congress. Moreover, laws prepared the NSA for the future by letting them develop surveillance programs unchecked (McCoy, 2014).

Surveillance in the US case is a way of reinforcing power. As such, the information obtained by the monitoring of communications is instrumental. The US government is pursuing its imperialist goals by panopticizing the society. One could argue that surveillance is as an instrument of power and the panopticon as a metaphor for power exercised by the state. Scholars contend that surveillance has become one of the "key weapons in Washington's search for global dominion" (McCoy, 2014, p.70). "Not surprisingly, in a post-9/11 bipartisan exercise of executive power, George W. Bush and Barack Obama have presided over building the NSA step by secret step into a digital panopticon designed to monitor the communications of every American and foreign leader worldwide" (McCoy, 2014, p.70). Surveillance therefore is a way of projecting power without the state being overtly coercive.

After the 9/11 attacks, US surveillance practices became the central strategy for combating terrorism (McCoy, 2014). Surveillance provides the US state with critical information, which therefore creates the opportunity for it to act as a global hegemon (McCoy, 2014). Central to the point is that Foucault's model of panopticon incorporates the idea of a liberal democracy, which has strong surveillance by the state (Milller, 2017). As such, the state is able to exercise power in less observable and lighter ways instead of being coercive. "The NSA's global panopticon thus fulfills an ancient dream of empire" (McCoy, 2014, p.71). Researchers also argue that apart from surveillance practices providing advantageous conditions for the state, such as trade relations, such practices also give the opportunity for states to acquire sensitive information, which could be used as leverage in particular settings (McCoy, 2014). Moreover, McCoy makes an argument about the political interests of the US. Namely, one key goal of the NSA surveillance is not national security, but rather political blackmail. The documents leaked by Snowden, show that the NSA was monitoring leaders from more than thirty-five nations on a global level including the

Mexican, Brazilian and Indonesian presidents, as well as the Chancellor of Germany (McCoy, 2014).

One could argue that in the digital age, states are looking for new ways to exert control and power. As such it could be argued that the US state has a crucial diplomatic advantage. "With a few computer key strokes, the agency has solved the problem that has bedeviled world powers since at least the time of Caesar Augustus: how to control unruly local leaders, who are the foundation for imperial rule, by ferreting out crucial, often scurrilous, information to make them more malleable" (McCoy, 2014, p.71).

As mentioned earlier, surveillance analyzed through the metaphor of the panopticon comes close to the American aspiration of empire. The idea is that the NSA's technology is omnipresent and omniscient and it is a greatly pervasive and at the same time cost-effective strategy in comparison to any other way of projecting global power. One could argue that such technology is revolutionary and exceptional. Such technology allows a state to project power and maintain its hegemonic status without using approaches of hard power. Panopticizing a society by implementing surveillance provides critical information, which is necessary for dominating others. Moreover, the following sentence further supports this argument. A document from the NSA reads: "In the future, superpowers will be made or broken based on the strength of their cryptanalytic programs" (McCoy, 2014, p.75). Analyzing this statement one can see the link between surveillance practices and the desire for power. Furthermore, it is crucial to emphasize that the NSA was not only spying domestically but also on a global level. Therefore, one could argue that striving for such power stems from the imperialistic nature of the United States. Therefore, the next subsection will provide an analysis of the imperialistic nature of the US and its relevance to surveillance practices.

2.2- Imperialistic Nature: The Paradox and Liberal Empire

Murphy compares the United States to the ancient Roman Empire, claiming that such a comparison is familiar and natural to the extent that "it comes to mind unbidden" (Murphy, 2008, p.5). "When a reference is made to an 'imperial presidency', or to the president's aides as a 'Praetorian Guard', or to the deployment

abroad of 'American legions', no one quizzically raises an eyebrow and wonders what you could possibly be talking about" (Murphy, 2008, p.5). One could argue that such claims support the idea of the imperialist mindset. The fact that there is a common understanding of such terms amongst the American population asserts the idea of their awareness that they are compared with an empire. Moreover, such choice of language, namely, "Praetorian Guard" and "American legions" demonstrates the imperial mindset of the US.

Murphy also points out the richness of references to the Roman Empire in American popular culture and national identity (Murphy, 2008, p.6). The examples he presents vary from books about Rome, which became bestsellers, to films such as Star Wars, and Batman. His point seems to be that Star Wars represents a "Rome-and-America amalgam, about the last remnant of a dying republic holding out against the empire that would supplant it" (Murphy, 2008, p.6). It should be noted that comparison between Rome and America is not something new. A group of "triumphalists" claim that America has imperial responsibilities, bringing the discussion to the level of global Pax Americana, which is again in comparison with Rome and Pax Romana (Murphy, 2008, p.7). Furthermore, it is argued that involvement of the US in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, North Korea, and Afghanistan is the price of being the hegemon (Murphy, 2008, p.7). Analyzing these claims one could argue that America does carry imperialistic nature, it is ingrained in their culture, in their politics and it is part of their global power ideology. The US does not only try to exert power within their state; they go beyond. One could contend that they want to be internationally involved and dominant. Historians like Niall Ferguson state that the world needs a state actor that does the 'imperial chores'; he seems to believe that currently the only state capable of implementing them is the US (Murphy, 2008, p.8).

The paradox of the imperialist nature of the US is that they have a liberal image and simultaneously work towards an anti-imperial one. Nonetheless, one could argue that they aim at being the hegemon and as such must carry out the imperial chores. As mentioned earlier the US, as part of the international community, is highly involved in regions like Iraq, Iran, North Korea, etc. Thus, one could argue this supports the idea that they are aware of their goal of completing imperial chores, which it is part of their foreign policy.

Following the discussion on the American, anti-imperial image and its paradox, there is the notion of liberal empire. Ferguson asserts, "I believe the world needs an effective liberal empire and the United States is the best candidate for the job" (Ferguson, 2005, p.301). Here it is important to ask how those terms go together; how can an empire be liberal. A definition of empire is necessary to proceed with such a debate. According to the Oxford English Dictionary an empire refers to "an extensive group of states or countries ruled over by a single monarch, an oligarchy, or a sovereign state" ("Empire"). Hardt and Negri go in detail about what empire stands for. According to them the concept of empire is categorized as lacking boundaries and limits. They emphasize on the fact that this concept suggests rule "over the entire 'civilized' world (Hardt, 2001, p. xiv). They define empire as an order that suspends history; their point is that empire is a regime that does not have temporal limits (Hardt, 2001, p. xiv). Essentially empire stands for not only managing a territory and population, but it also regulates human interaction, and thereby the society (Hardt, 2001, p. xv).

With regard to regulating human interaction and the society, the surveillance activities performed by the NSA are examples of such an act. By way of tapping cellphones, monitoring communication both domestically and internationally, the NSA is able to regulate interaction. As such, one could argue that surveillance fulfills the imperialistic drive of the US.

The Invasion of Iraq and the imperial mindset

After stipulating the definition of empire, it is time to return back to the discussion on the hypocrisy of the notion of a liberal empire. Looking at events such as the invasion of Iraq by the US there is a strong counter position to the liberality of an empire.

The United States invasion of Iraq in 2003 could be seen as an imperialist project. The US justifies this act as part of the war on terror; the Bush administration interpreted the attacks of 9/11 in an unscrupulous manner to use to as a campaign 'war against terrorism' and especially against Saddam Hussein. In spite of this, the Iraqi regime led by Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with the attacks on September 11th; the discourse that prevailed was that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. Hence, a pre-emptive war was the way to achieve peace (Tuathail, 2003). Despite the

thin support of the United Nations Security Council, the uncertain policy consistency and dubious national security basis, the "war against Iraq as a war against terrorism" received American public support (Tuathail, 2003, p.857). Tuathail explains this support by drawing attention to what he calls "a product of pain projection" (Tuathail, 2003, p.857). The idea is that the American media network projected on all levels (TV, newspapers, social platforms) the pain, trauma and loss of the horrific attack. Subsequently, the legitimacy of the Bush administration actions was extensively challenged worldwide (Tuathail, 2003). In the early months of 2003, people across the globe protested the war with Iraq (Tuathail, 2003). Tuathail contends that America's invasion of Iraq was simply a political response to the disrespect the United States was shown through the events of 9/11 (Tuathail, 2003). His argument stems from what he calls Jacksonian values. Jacksonianism is an American political ideology. "Originated from frontiersmen in the middle of colonial 'Indian Wars,' this nativist discourse imagines the United States as an exclusive ethno-religious community of white Christians" (Cha, 2016, p.83).

The two core values of this philosophy are honor and respect (Tuathail, 2003). One argument that supports the symbolism in the situation is the fact that the attack was on the World Trade Center, a "global symbol in a global city that took the lives of people from 86 different nations" (Tuathail, 2003, p.861). However, these elements are ignored, because this event has been completely Americanized. It is argued that the attack was a display of disrespect for America and its power. Hence, from the viewpoint of Jacksonians the answer is simple and direct. In this binary approach there is "true evil in the world", "people who hate the United States of America", and "the rule of law must triumph over the law of the jungle" (Tuathail, 2003, p.862).

This Jacksonian notion is another example of the deeply imperialistic nature of the US. Another scholar who supports the Jacksonian views writes: "The United States must be vigilant, strongly armed. Our diplomacy must be cunning, forceful, and no more scrupulous that any other country's. At times we must fight preventative wars. There is absolutely nothing wrong with subverting foreign governments or assassinating foreign leaders whose bad intentions are clear" (Tuathail, 2003, p.862). Such claims illustrate the imperialist disposition. Furthermore, it also justifies such imperialist violence and aggression by portraying it as necessary.

The idea here is that, by discussing the invasion in Iraq and the discourse surrounding it, the imperialistic mindset of the US is demonstrated. The invasion of Iraq, despite the thin support from the UN and the heavy criticism from the international community, to the US it was seen as a necessary part of their imperial chores. The idea is that the US wants to preserve its power and to do so they shall do what is necessary. Furthermore, the invasion of Iraq and other places is an example of the controversy of the US anti- imperial image. As such International Relations (IR) theory offers an approach of understanding US hegemonic drives.

One could argue that the Realism provides an explanation of the political interests of the US with regard to their imperialistic nature. Walt argues that one of the strengths of this approach is the fact that it offers an explanation for various international phenomena such as war, imperialism and difficulties when with regard to cooperation (Walt, 2005). Realism explains the US imperial drive, because it is state centric. As such it focuses on the balance of power; the more power a state has the more assertive it becomes (Walt, 2005). The case of US invasion in Iraq is an example of projection of power. Firstly, the US had thin support by the UN to get involved, nevertheless, they still did. Secondly, within the framework of Realism, the power of the state is increased when either there is a new powerful ally or the internal legitimacy of an opponent is disrupted, as was the case in Iraq (Walt, 2005).

SECTION III – *Cultural Hegemony, US Media and the State*

This chapter will explore the relationship between the media and the US state by applying the theory of cultural hegemony. The purpose is to demonstrate how because of cultural hegemony, the US media is co-opting with the US government and therefore frames the conflict in a way that takes it out of the field of attention of surveillance practices and shifts the focus to Snowden as a traitor, as well as normalizing surveillance practices by highlighting concerns over the national security of the state.

Several news articles were chosen to demonstrate in what ways the media has framed the Snowden revelations, with the intention to conceal US imperialistic political aims. As such, this chapter will argue that media framing in the case of Snowden is done in order to shift the focus from the US leviathan and its imperialistic political interest, to the individual who revealed their secret surveillance missions due to cultural hegemony. In order to test this hypothesis this chapter will provide articles from the top ten most read newspapers in the United States, as well as examples from other, less popular media outlets. As such all the news articles chosen for the analysis were published shortly after the revelations made by Snowden.

In order to engage with analysis, first this section will engage more in depth in a theoretical analysis and discuss how media framing is relevant to cultural hegemony and thereby, start an analysis within the particular case study of Snowden's revelations.

3.1 Theoretical Analysis – Media framing and Cultural Hegemony

Maeseele argues that media framing should be examined in the context of a powerful tool for conveying ideology and maintaining a hegemonic position (Maeseele, 2010). As such, one can develop an argument that the media is instrumental in maintaining a dominant ideology, which comes from powerful agents. In the case of Snowden's revelations, the argument revolves around the idea that media is acting under the perceptions of the hegemonic actors and as such, co-opts the state. In scholarly discussion, framing is the concept through which media content "works ideologically to reinforce dominant ideas, beliefs, and interests by

legitimizing and naturalizing them through their media representations as natural and unavoidable (or ''common sense'')" (Maeseele, 2010, p.281). Thus, media framing is linked to the process of distribution of political power in a society. Frames represent a story line, which accounts for hegemonic ideologies. Thereby, framing constructs meaning by integrating events into an interpretative manner (Maeseele, 2010).

Therefore, framing is key for forming the story around a controversial subject. Through framing, the story provides meaning to this controversy and advocates the essence of the issue (Nisbet, 2006). Through this, scholars contend that frames are "devices for packaging complex issues in persuasive ways by focusing on certain interpretations over others, suggesting what is relevant about an issue and what should be ignored" (Nisbet, 2006, p. 10,p.11). Giving more attention to certain factors or actors than others, frames in news coverage guide the individual through how to evaluate the consequences of a particular issue (Nisbet, 2006). This said frames act as interpretations, which convey constructed social meaning. In the arena of media, "pure facts" do not exist (Carvalho, 2007, p.225). Furthermore, so called "truth claims" are presented and thus embedded within a particular ideology or viewpoint and judgment (Carvalho, 2007, p.225).

A meaning is constructed to serve and support a particular actor in a powerful position. This is where the idea of ideology appears and forms the relationship between cultural hegemony and media framing. Ideology is central to examining interpretations of the media. Carvalho identifies the ideological implications of frames. She contends that as ideology is a system of beliefs, ideas, norms and political preferences, it has political power. Thus, ideology is instrumental in justifying one's judgments and ideas of how a certain thing should be done. Carvalho argues ideologies are normative and political (Carvalho, 2007). Furthermore, media and ideology are "mutually constitutive" (Carvalho, 2007, p.225). As such media frames are a result of ideological standpoints. However, on the other hand, a media frame is also an important agent to either challenge or reproduce a certain ideology (Carvalho, 2007). Nonetheless, in either case media frames either support the ideology provided by the hegemon, or they construct another one. The power of the media, whether it constructs or conveys an ideology is clearly present in the Snowden case. As such, it is inevitable that media agents are objective because of cultural hegemony. Cultural hegemony therefore, is the answer to why one participates willingly in particular

practices. Altheide talks about media hegemony and how the dominant concept of reality conveyed to the public. Thus, it is central to modeling beliefs and options of the society (Altheide 1984).

In the case of the US, American ideology and control are an example of informational imperialism. Cultural hegemony is seen as the process achieved by way of legitimation.

The essence here is that media framing in the case of Edward Snowden's disclosures illustrates how cultural hegemony works in practice; media co-opts with the political interests of the United States, focusing on the act of revelations itself and castigating Snowden as a traitor while refraining from discussion on the imperialistic nature of the US. This is achieved through the idea of conveying the ideology of the dominant actors. Public discourse is instrumental for validating ideas and beliefs. As such, media framing is central to politics in terms of power and cultural hegemony. Despite the fact that journalists tend to claim they are autonomous; it is inevitable to be neutral and independent from the culture construed by the dominant group (Chaney, 1981). The essence of cultural hegemony is its value in making sense of how media actors in this case, are under this cultural hegemony and as such, co-opt the US government. Furthermore, scholars assert that contemporary media outlets support and help justify the US government practices and US dominance (Artz, 2000).

3.2. Source analysis

In US media discourse, one can observe that in many of the articles there is a common pattern that prevails. Despite how liberal or conservative the news article is towards Snowden, and whether it describes him is a traitor or a whistleblower, the prevailing discourse in most articles, focuses on 9/11 and national security motives. Thereby, the media shifts the attention from the surveillance practices, to Snowden and whether his act was one of a man who is dangerous or a man who believes in privacy rights of the society. Emphasizing on 9/11 is a way of reminding people of what terrorism can achieve. As such in a crude way it demonstrates why certain anti-liberal practices are necessary. Thus, one will be more inclined to forget about the imperialistic mentality of the US and normalize the idea of surveillance practices.

Moreover, as concluded by Altheide, the American society is a fearful one, emphasizing on terrorism and 9/11 has a strong influence on Americans' understanding of Snowden's scandal (Altheide, 1997).

Also, as discussed by Connolly there is the phenomenon of somatic markers. This term refers to a "a culturally mobilized, corporeal disposition through which affect-imbued, preliminary orientations to perception and judgment scale down the material factored into cost- benefit analyses, principled judgments, and reflective experiments" (Holland, 2012, 93). The essence of this concept is the idea of a collective memory and the feelings that such memory triggers. As is the case in the US, the 9/11 attacks are an example of collective experience of loss, pain and trauma for all American citizens. This was achieved through the media, in the sense that it was projected repeatedly on all media networks even months after the attacks. Thereby, the American citizen has it imprinted in his mind (Tuathail, 2003). Holland also discusses how the events of 9/11 and the somatic marker are instrumental for justifying different policies. Collective memories full of trauma and pain, such as 9/11 are held by a large portion of Americans who experienced it as viewers. These memories have been triggered many times in order to proceed and justify the War on Terror. The essence here is that people, who have this shared memory, are inclined to feel disturbed in terms of feelings, actions and interpretations, when new circumstances trigger a return to this collective memory. Therefore, the somatic marker generates a set of feelings, actions and perceptions, which are instrumental for the state. As such, the state can use this set in order to promote certain policies while disregarding others (Holland, 2012).

Thus, speaking about 9/11 or the War on Terror, instantly triggers and invokes all the pain, trauma and fear of terrorist attacks. Media mentioning the events of 9/11 as a justification for surveillance practices, invokes this collective memory of trauma and therefore shifts the focus to Snowden's personal integrity and whether he is a traitor or a whistleblower. Moreover, it frames him more as a traitor conveying the notion that security is placed higher than one's privacy.

According to one of the leading global providers of public relations, media software services and companies, *Cision*, in the list of top 10 US daily newspapers, one can find USA Today, The New York Times, Los Angelis Times and others ("Top 10 US Daily Newspapers", 2017).

In an article published by *USA Today,* which is the most-read newspaper in the US*,* the headline reads: "Is Snowden a traitor or a public servant". The article begins with the statement, "How you view Edward Snowden probably has a lot to do with how much you care about the threat of terrorism and how much you care about online privacy" (RickHampson, 2013). Here, such a statement, one could argue, puts an emphasis on terrorism and that people should care about it. Furthermore, that people should be more worried about terrorism rather than privacy.

Another example of emphasizing the 9/11 somatic marker is an article published by the fourth most-read newspaper, the *LA Times*. Starting with the headline, "Hero or criminal?", the article discuses the revelation made by Snowden, while describing who he is and what he has done. The piece makes sure to mention that Snowden, "acknowledged with no apparent regrets that he was responsible for providing journalists at the Guardian and the Washington Post with evidence of what he called an "architecture of oppression" (Board, 2013). Later on the article also mentions a petition demanding that Snowden should be forgiven, however the piece takes strong opposition stance, claiming Snowden does not qualify as a whistleblower. Therefore, one could argue that they take a negative stance on Snowden. Furthermore, the author does not forget to mention 9/11 in the discussion in the context of post 9/11 surveillance discussions. Not only do they mention 9/11 again as a traumatic collective memory, but also they claim, "it was widely known that the government was using a loosely worded provision of the Patriot Act to acquire so-called business records, including information about the sources, destinations and duration of telephone calls" (Board, 2013). Here, one could argue that such claims are thereby instrumental for attempting to justify and normalize the surveillance practices and again put the attention onto Snowden. Another element is that there was a poll created within the article which reads: "Should Edward Snowden go to jail?", the choice of words here also asserts a negative view on Snowden.

Building upon this framework of the somatic marker, the second most-read newspaper in the US, *The New York Times*, also mentioned in its news article, the events of 9/11 with regard to Snowden. The headline of the article reads, "Prosecuting Edward Snowden Is Not the Top Priority". The main point of Adler's article is that secrecy is crucial for national security programs, but agents should be accountable to their deeds. He expands on the fact that within the contemporary society of "big data", for security agencies it is inevitable not to pursue access to a large amount of

information. What is important to be mentioned is that like other US media sources, this one also justifies NSA surveillance practices. "That is understandable: national security agencies can develop tunnel vision, losing perspective as they strive to protect our national security"(Adler, 2013). "Fear of another 9/11 – and the political consequences of failing to see such an attack coming – can cause agencies to err on the side of security rather than privacy and accountability" (Adler, 2013).

The HuffPost, a liberal American newspaper, which is not in top ten most read but it is still a popular source, has also expressed a negative stance towards Snowden's revelations, discernable from the headline "Whistleblower or Traitor, Snowden Must Shut Up". The use of the word 'must' entails a very strong opinion on Snowden. In the article, the author describes Snowden's story as incoherent and Snowden as a "kid in his twenties"(Harwood, 2013). Such a claim asserts doubt and uncertainty on his revelations. Moreover, again employing the somatic marker theory, the author refers to terrorism and justifies surveillance practices with the aim of combatting terrorism. The central point of this article is not whether he is a "selfless patriot or a narcissistic nihilist. It is how we convince him to stop" (Harwood, 2013). Here, one could argue that again, the focus is on Snowden, instead of the surveillance apparatus, digital panopticon of the US, its imperialistic nature, or its disrespect for privacy.

Going back to the discussion on cultural hegemony, here one could observe that in the abovementioned articles, journalists tend to either shift the focus to Snowden and whether he is a traitor, a whistleblower or a criminal. Media frames here construct the issue in a way that justifies and normalizes surveillance practices. As such, media agencies co-opt with the state, concealing the US's imperialistic nature due its hegemonic position. Here cultural hegemony offers an understating of how these cultural practices are shaped. As argued by Artz, media spreads leading ideologies of the hegemon, in this case the US (Artz, 2000). Furthermore, this ideology, conveyed by the media agents, is a reflection of political interest. Also, it should be noted that cultural hegemony is achieved by legitimation. Media outlets using approaches to justify and normalize such practices for the sake of national security further legitimizes the actions of the NSA. It should be also noted that as Gans has argued, it is inevitable to stay neutral and independent from the dominant

ideology and culture (Gans, 1979). To further support this claim, despite the statements by media journalists that they are autonomous from the state, they do uphold the ideology of the leading group – in this case the US government and national security agencies – through cultural hegemony (Chaney, 1981).

In an article by the Daily News, number nine in the ranking, the headline reads "Edward Snowden, traitor" (Kirchick, 2014). The article by the Daily News expresses extremely negative views on Snowden's revelation, portraying him as a traitor and disloyal to his country. The author of the article portrays Snowden as impudent and absolutely oblivious to all the damage he has caused saying he "breaks his oath, deceives his colleagues, filches top-secret documents, flees to Red China, and then whines about how the people whom he lied to and stole from tried to prevent him from getting away with it" (Kirchick, 2014). Furthermore, the article mentions US Russia relations in the discussion, regarding Snowden being in Russia as a propaganda victory. "And Snowden either doesn't care about, or is completely oblivious to, the propaganda victory he has handed the Russians by allowing them to portray themselves as gracious hosts to a courageous "whistleblower" exposing the ravages of America's national security state" (Kirchick, 2014). Analyzing this statement, firstly, one could argue that it represents an embodiment of post-Cold War tensions between the US and Russia. Secondly, since the Cold War, in the American perspective, the Russia has been usually seen as a more of an authoritarian state, whereas the US is a democratic and liberal place where freedom of speech is central. Clearly in this statement the author ironizes the Russians by claiming that they are seen as "gracious hosts to the whistleblower" (Kirchick, 2014). Thirdly, one could argue Kirchick uses irony when describing Snowden by putting whistleblower in quotations. This article is framed in an extremely negative manner, constructing his deeds as betrayal of the country, a betrayal in terms of cooperation with Russia, breaking his oath and deceiving his colleagues.

Hence, the idea here is to demonstrate how the 9/11 attacks and the War on Terror in American discourse serve as a justification for the US to start using high levels of technology for surveillance practices for their digital panopticon. In US media discourse this is all sold to the public and presented as the only way to find protection from terrorist groups. Thereby, the media frames the revelations by

Snowden in a negative manner, asserting the negative implications of his actions. After these revelations, terrorist groups will have some idea of how the US actions its strategy for protection. It is not important whether Snowden is a traitor or a whistleblower, the main argument is that all the attention is shifted towards him and his disclosure while the digital panopticon executed by the US's imperialist nature is concealed by media framing due to cultural hegemony.

CONCLUSION

In the contemporary world the cyber domain has become central in global politics. States are no longer only challenged by other state actors, but also by non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations or individuals. This paper examined and analyzed a particular individual namely Edward Snowden, who was able to challenge the global political order and the US state. The former subcontractor of the NSA exposed government secrets, such as monitoring and tapping communication on both a domestic and foreign level. These revelations have created a great discourse on privacy matters, human rights and interstate relations. Furthermore, the disclosures by Snowden have triggered a discussion on the surveillant state, acting as a body that controls the society. Many scholars have researched the surveillance practices of the US and have debated that they have created a digital panopticon and thereby exercised power. Hence, the research question of this paper was: ***How can media framing be regarded as instrumental for reinforcing the political interests of the US in the case of the revelations made by Snowden with regard to US surveillance?*** The purpose of this paper was to examine whether media agencies were propagating narratives, which tend to conceal the dynamics of the US surveillance systems, instrumental for preserving control and power. The paper has employed the approach of critical interpretive theory for examining and analyzing the conditions under which these surveillance practices are concealed by the media. Both primary and secondary have been used in order to scrutinize the research puzzle. The research has employed the qualitative method, and in the analysis, the theory of cultural hegemony was central in explaining why media co-opts with the state. The theoretical framework was built upon the concepts of cultural hegemony, imperial mindset and media framing. In the literature review, the scholarly debate on the imperialistic nature, cultural hegemony and media framing was discussed in order to build the basis for this research.

With regard to the imperial mindset, the prevailing discourse in the scholarly discussion has suggested that the US acts as an imperial power. Despite them building anti-imperial image, researchers argue that US policies are an example of modern imperialism. Moving on to cultural hegemony, scholars contend that it is inevitable that one can be neutral and independent from the dominant ideology. Therefore, cultural hegemony offers a framework of how knowledge, ideas and beliefs are

shaped by the dominant group and conveyed through media. With regard to media framing the scholarly debate has demonstrated that media agents play a central role in shaping opinion. Thus, framing is instrumental for influencing one's beliefs and thereby could be a tool for justifying or normalizing certain events, ideas or perceptions. Consequently, media framing is instrumental for authorities.

The purpose of section one was to build the foundations for resolving the research question. The chapter discussed Edward Snowden, and how his revelations started a discussion on the idea of a state-driven digital panopticon. As such it argued that the Snowden scandal is a turning point. Firstly it raised a large debate about government secrecy, mass surveillance, national security and privacy. Moreover Snowden's disclosure helps one to understand US power in the broader context. Thus, one could argue that surveillance is a way of exercising US power by way of panopticizing the society. There is a large discussion on US surveillance as a way of preserving power. As such, the metaphor of panopticon offers understanding for computer-based surveillance. The NSA's activities fit into this framework in the sense that the panopticon is about power, knowledge and the state, so the NSA gains power through knowledge.

Following the discussion in section one, section two engaged with the political interests of the US. The purpose was to investigate surveillance practices as an instrument of power driven by the imperialistic nature of the United States. The first part of chapter two discussed surveillance as an instrument of power. The discussion revolved around how surveillance provides critical information to the US state and thus it gives the opportunity to act as hegemon. In the digital age, states look for new ways to exercise power and control. Surveillance examined through the metaphor of the panopticon, completes an ancient dream of the US of being an empire.

The second part of the chapter engaged in a discussion of the imperialistic nature of the US. The central point of the second part of was to demonstrate the imperialistic nature of the US by providing the example of the invasion in Iraq in 2003. As such the US maintains its imperialistic nature and finds it necessary to carry out the 'imperial chores' as pointed out by Murphy.

Chapter three discussed the relationship between the media and the US in the context of cultural hegemony. It argued that the US media promotes a frame for the

Snowden disclosures that shifts away the focus of surveillance practices and places it on Snowden as a traitor. Thereby, the US media promotes a framework in which surveillance is normalized while concerns over national security of the state are highlighted. This was implemented by first engaging in a theoretical discussion on media framing. Secondly, five news articles from US newspapers were analyzed. Three of them came from the top five most read newspapers in the US, and the other two were less well-known but nevertheless still very popular newspapers. The prevalent discourse in the articles was a discussion on 9/11 and national security motives. One could argue that in the media news articles, discussion of the events of 9/11 is instrumental for justifying surveillance practices. The idea is that 9/11 acts as a somatic marker for the Americans. It is a collective memory of trauma, pain and fear. Discussing 9/11 instantly triggers traumatic feelings and thereby works towards normalizing and justifying surveillance, meanwhile putting more attention on Snowden, rather the imperialistic actions of the US. The US media co-opts with the state by conveying the dominant ideology. The essence is that although media agents claim they are autonomous from the state; it is inevitable that the ideology of the leading group (the state) will not be upheld. Thus, the purpose of chapter was to show how the 9/11 attacks and the War on Terror as somatic markers serve in American discourse as a justification for surveillance practices. This is implemented by way of media framing.

Having provided a summary of the three sections, now this conclusion will turn to answering the research question. The analysis made in this paper shows that media framing can be regarded as instrumental for reinforcing the political interests of the United States in the case of revelations made by Snowden. By way of using somatic markers in the articles, US media provides a framework for the Snowden's scandal, which normalizes and justifies NSA surveillance activities. Furthermore, media framing is achieved through cultural hegemony. Media agents are inexorably co-opting with the state. It is inevitable that journalists will stay autonomous from the dominant ideology. The analysis demonstrated that US media agents propagated narratives, which conceal the imperialistic image of the US, or the overall dynamics of the US surveillance systems. These dynamics are instrumental for preserving power and control.

This subsection will outline the implications of the research as well as suggestions for future research. The outcome of this research can help one understand how media is instrumental in shaping opinion, conveying the dominant ideology and therefore be central for the state to justify and normalize certain events, which are in the interest of the state. As concluded earlier, media agents claim that they are autonomous from the state, but in reality the cultural hegemony is crucial and it is inevitable that media will not be influenced from the prevailing beliefs. Regardless of whether media is state-owned or corporate, they mediate the dominant ideology. Therefore, nowadays in the digital age, society is significantly more dependent on making sense of world events through the discourse that media conveys. Thus, a suggestion for future research is to examine to what extent society is manipulated by the media to accept norms and support political actors. How can one make an informative decision on electing a political actor or obeying a law in relation to the ideology that is conveyed through the media?

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