

**International Journal of Policy Sciences and law**  
**Volume 1, Issue 1**

**Colonialism, Imperialism and White**  
**Supremacy**

**Hema Georgina Biswas<sup>1</sup>**

This Article is brought to you for “free” and “open access” by the International Journal of Policy Sciences and Law. For more, visit <http://ijpsl.in/>

To submit your manuscript, email it to us at [editorial.ijpsl@gmail.com](mailto:editorial.ijpsl@gmail.com) or [click here](#).

<sup>1</sup> *English Hons graduate, Jesus & Mary College, University of Delhi*

## **Abstract**

*The nexus between colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy is parasitic and eschews abrogation of thought or law. With historical evidence of an intimate, interdependent and intermediate relationship between these beliefs, the West has caused rampant destruction and formation to the now "third-world" countries. This research exposes the impunity of Western intervention with an emphasis on historical propaganda through communication channels and media's role in disseminating it to the masses. By acknowledging the corrupt manifestation of these ideologies in contemporary American society, this research aims to interrogate the capitalist ethic of a "democratic first-world" order that justifies hate and war crimes in domestic and foreign soil.*

**Keywords:** *American intervention, Capitalism, Colonialism, Colonization, Confederacy, Imperialism, International Communication, Market Revolution, Media, Media Control, Propaganda, US history, US Supremacist History, White Supremacy*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Colonialism stems from a place of domination and hegemony. This hegemon, the inflictor of violence, is morally deplorable. Their “supremacy” justifies subjugation of “inferior beings and territories” and this becomes a representation of a worldview known as imperialism. While the etymology of these two terms seem synonymous with each other, the latter is defined as a country that exercises power over foreign soil through settlement, sovereignty or indirect mechanisms of control (Margaret, 2017). The effects of imperialism and colonialism leads to the institutionalization of white supremacy. In *Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy*, there exists three primary logics of white supremacy in the context of the US. These include, "(1) slave ability/anti-black racism, which anchors capitalism; (2) genocide, which anchors colonialism; and (3) orientalism, which anchors war" (Smith, 2012).

The interdependent relationship between colonialism, imperialism and white supremacy has been a tacit manifestation in the US since its discovery. The colonization of foreign land by European migrants through mass elimination of indigenous natives became the root of American imperialism. In the early 19th century, the Market Revolution fostered a drastic growth towards

transforming the American economy and global trade. This monumental displacement of traditional control over production, distribution and exchange of goods, with market supply, demand and price was contributed by three colonial habits: pioneering, innovation and slavery (Larson, 2005). As the economy flourished under the symbiosis of capitalism and slavery, domination over enslaved African labour ushered forth the foundation of white supremacy. Lastly, the seizure of Southern states (Mexico, Hawaii, Arizona, etc.) contributed immense mineral wealth and opened valuable trade with Asia. With Latin America being invaded for over 35 times, the US established an "undisputed sphere of influence" (Weeks, 2015); or rather, a reign of terror that signalled a prolonged tryst with imperialist expansion.

The West's violent history is filled with instances of inflicting suffering and depravity. From politics to cultural influences, policies imposed on colonized countries has led to an imbalance of power and loss of identity. The colonial gaze of Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" woefully depicts the imperialist conquest of the African continent driven by the European obsession to "civilize the world". This gradual colonization not only looted the continent of its land, but also disrobed the indigenous natives and tribes of their language and customs (Achebe, 1958). Britain's colonization of India for more than three centuries left the country impoverished. The final British adieu motioned the Partition - the worst large-scale migration of the 20th century; and the repercussions of a divide that ails India-Pakistan relations till date. The West' interference in the Middle East is no less than a tireless tyranny. Through the Balfour Declaration in 1917, the United Kingdom established the Zionist aim of "a national home for the Jewish people". This declaration became one of the main catalysts of the *Nakba* - the ethnic cleansing of Palestine; and the principal cause of the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict (Tahhan, 2018). Furthermore, Napoleon's quest for the Orient resulted in thousands of cultural artefacts being looted. While America accounted for an import of more than \$10 million worth of Egyptian antiquities in 2013 (El-Geressi, 2019), the remains of Egyptian legacy is contained in "a museum without a mummy".

The ripple effects of American intervention is discernible by its ubiquitous presence across foreign soil. Apart from the usual capitalist agenda, the looming threat of communism in the 20th century was justification enough for American interventions in Cuba, Nicaragua, and other Latin American countries. In 1954, a covert operation by the US' biggest capitalist intelligence entity—the CIA—overthrew Guatemala's democratically elected President, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, under the pretence of a rising communist threat. Backed by multinational corporations in 2019, the CIA financed far-right-wing coups and overthrew Bolivia's first indigenous President, Evo Morales, to crush his leftist policies, social programs, and extend exporting lithium to the United States (Whitney, 2019). In a bid to sustain "American leadership" in Latin America, the US' lingering residence through diplomatic and military presence has granted them full access and arsenal to reign as a dictator. Furthermore, the annexation of Latin American lands, the nuclear attack on Hiroshima-Nagasaki, the intervention in Vietnam, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan have decimated lakhs of populations, left behind a humanitarian mess, caused widespread immigration, and is yet, only the tip of the iceberg to chronicle the nexus of US war crimes that wreaked havoc on foreign soil (Choi & James, 2016).

The history of international communications has been fraught with escalating conflicts through propaganda. According to *Global Communication and Propaganda*, propaganda in international communication spheres is executed in three ways. First, government leaders with a desire to shape public discourse on international issues that would influence the course of the country and its citizens. Second, propaganda used in an attempt to interfere with matters abroad; mostly to reinforce the said country's policies and perceptions to align with their needs. Third, non-governmental entities seeking to gain access to global communication channels in order to sway public opinion or affect public policy formation. The political beginnings of propaganda flourished with the creation of radio and television at the onset of the twentieth century, when global communication in the US registered a huge spike in commercialization of these two devices. As top billing government officials realised that public support was an indispensable tool, contending ideologies started making rounds throughout these media forums (Laswell, 1927). German propaganda minister & Hitler's right hand, Joseph Goebbels, claimed radio to be the "eighth great power" as he recognised the power of the technology to propagate anti-Bolshevik statements of Hitler, disseminate the Nazi and antisemitic ideologies, destroy Pro-

British sentiments and arouse German (Aryan) nationalism (Meier, 2019). The US utilized the medium of radio during the WWII with Roosevelt delivering his infamous Infamy Speech to declare war on Japan (Pearl Harbor). The Cold War saw false news items placated in the international press by both the CIA and KGB. The constant vitriol against Marxist and Communist ideologies stemmed during this period's radio propaganda. While US' RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) aroused nationalistic democracy and besmirched Communists, Russian's Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) instigated the union of Communist states to revolt against Anglo-American Imperialism (Vincent, 2006).

In contemporary times, commercial American television has been hailed as the "ideological behemoth". The modern media characteristics - to inform, propagandize and create consumers, grew out of the continental growth and expansion of the U.S. economy. *Manufacturing Consent* delves into the propaganda model which was/is religiously followed by communication channels and is dependent upon "(1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism" (Chomsky, 2002).

With media being prominently outsourced through radios and televisions, research on the impact of television unfolds a disturbing set of revelations. According to Gerbner, heavy exposure to media channels desensitizes viewers as they lose their grasp over reality and the ability to empathize, realize, resist and protest its manifestations. As a result, obsessive television viewers tend to normalize violence, and even consider it essential to tackle problems (Gerbner, 1988). In *Media Control*, Noam Chomsky states how the Creel Commission under George Creel & President Woodrow Wilson successfully "turned the pacifist population into a hysterical, war-mongering population..." within a mere six months during WWI. With war being credited as a "profitable business", this false consciousness thrust upon the gullible masses is a political propaganda fashioned to separate citizenry into divisive groups and keep all scrutiny off their printing Ponzi scheme. Glorification of war, military worship and justified weapons ownership

has been regurgitated through the over-arching presence of Hollywood across the globe. Manufacturing an over-abundance of uber masochistic white Americans with a serious saviour complex that combats terrorism and “third-world” criminal organizations, this interventionist heroism has created a wall which alienates and splits people into "us" vs. "them". Hollywood sensationalization has not only venerated war, but also conventionalized certain Oriental stereotypes that rationalize intervention of an imperial power and vindicate those that vehemently oppose it.

Even as the US is quick to criticize third world countries for their shortcomings, they turn a blind eye to the toxic channels that run astray in their own society. While Nazi Germany promulgated white supremacy based on the belief that the Aryan race was the *master race*, a similar movement had sprung forth in the US. White supremacy would find its lair in the early 20th century; where the ideology witnessed explicit and rogue depiction in miscellaneous media and communications channels such as feature films, documentaries, radio shows, etc. *The Birth of a Nation*, the 1915 silent drama film that followed the rising racial, economic, political tension that marshalled the genesis of Ku Klux Klan, is considered a classic till date. American television shows incited anti-black, anti-Semitic, anti-German and anti-Russian propaganda, while enticing white supremacist ties with the KKK (Klu Klux Klan) to win the ideological war against Russia. In the latter part of the century, social media platforms such as Stormfront (1996)—an alt-right portal for white supremacists—amplified neo-Nazi and confederacy symbols.

As right-wing attacks accounted for the majority—57 per cent—of all attacks and incidents in the United States since 1994, the threat seems to have grown significantly during the past six years (G. Jones et al., 2020). Although groups like the KKK have been banished out of mainstream media, top government officials refuse to openly condemn these sects that exist in plain sight. The Southern States fly confederacy flags with pride—a racist white supremacist symbol of a war that fought to sustain segregation (Cathey, 2020). Unfortunately, even highly elected officials continue to deploy divisive rhetoric and enact racist policies that affect marginalized communities like people of colour and migrants. This is evident through mass incarceration that holds millions of black Americans and illegal immigrants behind bars while corporations benefit off of legalized prison slavery. As political propaganda evolves to suit the

current atmosphere, hate speech and recruitment activities in social media escalates stereotype dissemination, identity degeneration and rampant discrimination. Repeated failures to hold perpetrators accountable has led to the loss of innumerable lives to white supremacist attacks in El Paso, Charleston, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Wisconsin, Portland, and other counties. The violence has also claimed victims abroad when an Australian Islamophobe and white supremacist carried out two terrorist attacks on Muslim institutions in New Zealand. Similar attacks against minorities have resulted in grave injuries and deaths across Australia, Germany, South Africa and Britain.

Amidst increasing political tension, mass protests by minorities and vocal social activism against crony capitalism, mass incarceration, war profiteering and police impunity, America has been losing its grasp over the heralded "capitalist utopia". People across the globe are finally acknowledging the history of America as a country seething with genocide, greed, and untold grievances; like a house corrupted from within but writhing forward in forgotten glory and grim. With citizens pledging loyalty to parties over policies, the result is a duplicitous President deemed as a fascist reincarnation of Hitler himself. Between infringement of human rights, racial unrest, and a dilemma to choose between the lesser of two evils - America grapples with its own set of problems; albeit not much different than it hath laden onto the world. Although, a conscious confrontation with its legacy of colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy could direct the US towards redemption; denial and amnesia seems like two attributes mastered by the most of the West. As Stokely Carmichael rightly said, "...In order for nonviolence to work, your opponent must have a conscience. The United States has none", never had, or has, a more befitting statement rung truer over the decades.

## References

Ahmadi, A. A. (2019, December 13). The nuances of repatriation: Should the British Museum return its Egyptian collection? Alaraby. <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2019/12/13/should-the-british-museum-return-its-egyptian-collection>

Cathey, L. (2020, July 9). Trump declares US in “culture war,” calls flying Confederate flag “freedom of speech.” ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-declares-us-culture-war-flying-confederate-flag/story?id=71656456>

Choi, S.-W., & James, P. (2016). Why Does the United States Intervene Abroad? Democracy, Human Rights Violations, and Terrorism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 60(5), 899–926. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714560350>

Chomsky, N. (2002). *Media Control, Second Edition: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda (Open Media Series)* (2nd ed.). Seven Stories Press.

Chrisman, R. (1983). The Role of Mass Media in U.S. Imperialism. *The Black Scholar*, 14(3–4), 13–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.1983.11414272>

Dowson, T. (2018, June 21). “A Museum Without a Mummy ....” *Archaeology Travel*. <https://archaeology-travel.com/history-of-archaeology/a-museum-without-a-mummy/>

El-Geressi, B. Y. (2019, August 16). Egypt Wants its Treasures Back. *Majalla*. <https://eng.majalla.com/node/73996/egypt-wants-its-treasures-back>

G. Jones, S., Doxsee, C., & Harrington, N. (2020, June 17). The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States. Center for Strategic and International Studies. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states>

Gerbner, G. (1988). *Symbolic Functions of Violence and Terror*. Emerson College.

Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (2011). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon.

Larson, J. L. (2005). The Market Revolution in Early America: An Introduction. *OAH Magazine of History*, 19(3), 4–7. <https://doi.org/10.1093/maghis/19.3.4>

Lasswell, H. D. (1927). The Theory of Political Propaganda. *American Political Science Review*, 3, 627–631. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1945515>

Lull, R. B., & Dickinson, T. M. (2018). Does television cultivate narcissism? Relationships between television exposure, preferences for specific genres, and subclinical narcissism. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 7(1), 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000107>

Margaret, (2017, August 29). *Colonialism* (*Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*). Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/>

Meier, A. (2019, February 18). An Affordable Radio Brought Nazi Propaganda Home. *JSTOR Daily*. <https://daily.jstor.org/an-affordable-radio-brought-nazi-propaganda-home/>

Operation PBSUCCESS: U.S. Covert Action in Guatemala. (2019, January 21). *Military Strategy Magazine*. <https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/operation-pbsuccess-u-s-covert-action-in-guatemala/>

Seigal, I. (2017). *The Economic, Health, and Psychological Effects of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Syracuse University. <https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2071>

Smith, A (2012). Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy. *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, 66–90. [10.1525/california/9780520273436.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520273436.001.0001)

Stevenson, R. L. (1992). Defining International Communication as a Field. *Journalism Quarterly*, 69(3), 543–553. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909206900302>

Tahhan, Z. (2018, November 2). More than a century on: The Balfour Declaration explained. Middle East News | Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/11/2/more-than-a-century-on-the-balfour-declaration-explained>

Vincent, R. C. (2006, January 1). (PDF) *Global Communication, and Propaganda*. ResearchGate; unknown. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305220829\\_Global\\_Communication\\_and\\_Propaganda](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305220829_Global_Communication_and_Propaganda)

Weeks, G. B. (2015). *U.S. and Latin American Relations* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Whitney, W. T. (2019, November 25). The coup in Bolivia has U.S. fingerprints all over it. People's World. <https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/the-coup-in-bolivia-has-u-s-fingerprints-all-over-it/>