



HOLLYWOOD WAR FILMS PROPAGANDA: FRAMING
IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WARS

A thesis

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Prepared By

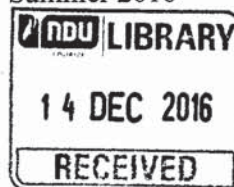
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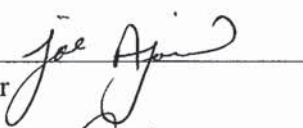


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Abstract

Using framing theory, this study will examine how the United States (U.S.) government uses film as propaganda to justify its unsuccessful encroachment of Iraq and Afghanistan. After the U.S.'s failure to achieve its goals in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has been using the film medium to frame the images of the U.S. soldiers and represent them as patriotic and sacrificial, while distorting the image of both Iraqis and Afghans. The propaganda film has always been used as a tool for mass manipulation by many nations, among them the U.S.. The Films *American Sniper*, *The Hurt Locker* and *Lone Survivor* portray the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and justify in an indirect way the reasons behind the U.S.'s invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by creating sympathy among the audience with the American soldiers and generating hatred against the Iraqis and Afghans.

This research utilized framing theory to examine how the movies *American Sniper*, *The Hurt Locker* and *Lone Survivor* have been used to glorify the U.S. soldiers and demonize the Iraqis and Afghans. Quantitative content analysis was conducted on the three war films produced by the U.S after the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The results of the study revealed that American soldiers, Iraqis, and Afghans are framed in their representation. Americans soldiers are portrayed as powerful, patriotic, sacrificial through cinematic techniques frame, humanitarian frame, duration frame, words frame, and sacrificial frame, while Iraqis and Afghans are depicted as terrorists and villains through the same frames.

Hollywood War Films Propaganda: Framing Iraq and Afghanistan Wars

Chapter 1: Introduction

“In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies” (Winston Churchill, 1942). Not only is truth precious, but it is also rare when depicted in times of war and turbulence. On February 5, 2003, former U.S. secretary of State Collin Powell made his famous presentation in the United Nations about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD). He gave what he called “evidence” that Saddam’s regime possessed WMD during the Gulf war. However, the evidence provided turned out to be a fabrication because these weapons were never found (Kord & Krimmer, 2011). Consequently, the U.S. declared war on Iraq, and the American military troops entered the country on March 19, 2003 (Schwarz, 2013). The result of this war was the destruction of another country and the shattering of millions of peoples’ lives. Hence, the U.S failed not only in its invasion for its direct cause which was finding the WMD, but had also failed in its indirect cause for invading Iraq (Bolger, 2014). The U.S. had used WMD and capturing Saddam Hussein as an excuse (Davies, 2010). The U.S. wanted the oil that Iraq possessed in addition to weakening Iran which had been a threat to it ever since the Iranian revolution in 1979 (Emery, 2013).

However, before the United States entered Iraq, the U.S. was already occupied with another war in Afghanistan. When the terrorist attacks occurred on the two twin towers in New York on September 11, 2001, the U.S. government directly accused Al Qaeda’s founder Osama Bin Laden of the incident without carrying hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11- according to Rex Tomb who was the Bureau’s Chief of investigation official speaker (Kelly, 2011). Following that, Taliban repeatedly refused to expel Bin Laden and his group from Afghanistan, which ultimately drove the U.S. and its partners in the anti-terrorist coalition to

declare war on Al Qaida (Nyrop & Seekins, 2001). On October 7, 2001, the U.S. military troops entered Afghanistan and built their military camps to obliterate Al Qaida and Taliban. However, Seth Jones (2010) the author of "*In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*" argues that: "Instead of defeating Al Qaida and Taliban in 2001, the U.S. led-Coalition merely pushed the core leadership of Al Qaida and Taliban from Afghanistan to Pakistan" (p. xxiii). This outcome was not inevitable. Rather, it was the outcome of America's inability to finish the job it had started and to provide the requisite attention and resources (Jones, 2010). The government considers that the mission was accomplished ten years later when the U.S. Navy Seals captured Bin Laden in Pakistan.

In spite of the fact that the main reason for entering Afghanistan was to eliminate Al Qaida and capture Bin Laden, the U.S. had another goal to fulfill. Afghanistan's strategic location has always made it alluring to great powers since the days of Alexander the great in 500 B.C. (Jones, 2010). Afghanistan's strategic value was of central importance to trade route, and for invading neighboring countries such as India (Jones, 2010). Wedged between Iran, China and the Soviet Union, Afghanistan's geostrategic location was of great interest to the United States especially with regards to Iran. In an interview with Amy Goodman in 2007, General Wesley Clark -retired 4-star U.S. Army General and Supreme Allied Commander of NATO- stated that President Bush told him in 2001: "We're going to take out seven countries in 5 years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran" (Clark, 2007). Hence, starting a war is never a result of present circumstances; it is the result of long studies, strategies and tactics before any country declares a war on the other. As noted earlier, the U.S. has always considered Iran a threat from the beginning of the Iranian revolution. As years passed by, Iran grew stronger and its power stretched to reach Syria, Lebanon and Iraq and the

first enemy of Iran was Israel (Katz, 2012). The U.S. on the other hand had two major interests in the Middle East: Israel's welfare and the oil in the Gulf region (Blight, Lang, Banai, Byrne, & Tirman, 2012). Iran was a threat to both because it was aiding Palestinians and the deceased Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to fight the Israelis, and it was creating alliances with Iraq, Syria and Lebanon and hence threatening the U.S. to hold power over the petroleum. Nevertheless, the U.S. did not succeed in fulfilling any of its purposes in invading Afghanistan.

After their failure in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. had to justify and invoke sympathy from the world especially that both wars caused thousands of deaths among the Iraqi, Afghani, and U.S troops , in addition to using American tax dollars to pay for every bomb, missile, and bullet (Davies, 2010). This is where media and more precisely war movies perform their job by altering and brightening the image of the U.S. and distorting the image of the others. After all, movies "shape our understanding of the past and are vivid testimony to the politics of the present" (Kord & Krimmer, 2011). Hollywood movies such as *Black Hawk Down*, *Saving Private Ryan* and *Pearl Harbor*, among others are propaganda films that fulfill the agenda of the American government to wipe the negative image that people might hold against the U.S. (Kord & Krimmer, 2011).

Further, media are considered one of the most powerful tools in mass manipulation and may be used to shape people's attitudes. The viewers must be aware of the messages and ideas behind each film since they indirectly influence viewers' perception of certain issues without them being fully aware of that. Most war films have become a means to fulfilling political agendas and propagandistic platforms for persuasion (Haas, Christensen, & Haas, 2015).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study analyzes how films are being used to fulfill certain political agendas. While many communication scholars have examined how the Americans use film as propaganda during the two world wars and the Vietnam War, little work has been done to examine how Americans used propaganda films to justify their war on Iraq and Afghanistan by distorting the image of Iraqis and Afghans. Moreover, the viewers should become aware of the messages behind the films, because films may be used to influence people's attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Frames used in a film are usually intended for a purpose, this may be achieved through the dialogue between the characters or the cinematic shots, angles taken of those characters; the tone of the message, the background and accompanying music. Such frames shape the viewer's attitude unconsciously. This is why it is of significance to understand how the two wars, Iraqi and Afghani, were represented in films. Additionally, this study contributes to the communication discipline through offering an in-depth analysis of the significance of American propaganda in politics and its portrayal through the medium of film.

This thesis, then, examines through quantitative content analysis how the U.S. used film propaganda to justify the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. A content analysis will be conducted on three Hollywood blockbuster, or top grossing, war films that were produced after the U.S. invaded Iraq and Afghanistan. The research will utilize framing theory as the theoretical foundation to examine how it is being used as a tool for mass manipulation.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This study is divided and organized into seven chapters. Chapter two presents the literature on the history of media propaganda by defining what propaganda is and what different scholars have written about it, with a focus on film propaganda. The chapter also reviews how film propaganda was utilized in WWI, WWII, Hitler, Bolshevik, and the U.S. and how

propaganda was paramount during the two great wars. Also, a review on Hollywood's war films propaganda is addressed by examining prominent Hollywood propaganda films that have left a mark in the history of Hollywood, to end the chapter by tackling the three films under study through discussing their plot and reviewing the existing literature on them.

The Third chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. Framing theory is discussed in-depth. The chapter reveals how framing has been used in different media and how it can be applied to the medium of the film. It also unveils how framing is manipulative and how it affects the audience's perception on certain news. The chapter ends with the research question and hypotheses stated for the study.

Chapter four presents the research design and the methodology of this study. An explanation of the research method used, content analysis, sampling selection, coding procedures, and unit of analysis are introduced and defined. Coder trainer and reliability assessment are defined and conducted to reach inter-coder reliability. The chapter then proceeds to data analysis based on the findings.

Chapter five reports the results of the study. The results of four frames (cinematic, humanitarian, words (semantic), and sacrificial) will be reported according to percentage statistical findings. The duration frame, on the other hand, will be measured through the adding up of the time duration of American soldier's portrayal versus Iraqis/Afghanis' portrayal.

Chapter six includes an analysis on the results of the study. The chapter includes an interpretation and discussion of the five frames, a comparison between the difference in portrayal of American soldiers versus Iraqis and Afghanis, and the implications of framing the image of Iraqis/Afghanis on the audience's perception.

Chapter seven provides the limitations and the future suggestions of the study. The chapter also includes the conclusion of the study, summarizing the research findings and presenting the theoretical and practical implications of the results.

But first, the literature on how film propaganda has been used throughout history and by Americans, in addition to the three movies will be examined to set the foundation and the contest of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on the history of propagandistic media with the focus on the medium of film, in addition to the U.S. use of war films from the beginning of World War I till the present time. The history of film propaganda is useful to understanding how propaganda has been used by governments especially those which have waged a war or have taken a part in one. One of these governments is the American government that has always considered media as a powerful tool to deliver its messages. Following this, an exploration of the three movies under study is discussed by giving a brief on their plot and examining previous literature written about them.

2.1 Propagandistic Media and War

Devastation, destruction, migration, death, and brutality are what wars are about. It is the domination and hegemony of one country or nation over another to fulfill its purpose- whatever it maybe. War has existed from the days of Pharaoh when he conquered the northern region of Egypt (Keeley, 1996). There is no doubt that the abstract notion of war is difficult to comprehend by those who have not experienced it. Hallin & Gitlin (1993) argue that:

War is an enormously appealing symbolic terrain, a source of images and stories that can be extremely seductive to its audience - and certainly also to those who are in the business of selling images and stories (p. 412).

People who never experienced war will never grasp the true meaning of the fear and the anarchy of a war. Consequently, people who have not experienced war will rely on representations of it (Clearwater, 2006). People then will have different points of view about what is a just war and what is not. But of course, all this does not stand alone because it is all related to politics and politicking. Clausewitz and Rapoport (1982) claim that war and politics are complementary by stating: “the political view is the object, war is the means” (p, 119). This means that when a

country engages in a war, its main purpose would be achieving its political goals. Clausewitz (1982) viewed war as a conflict between nations or states; others such as Hugo Grotius and Thomas Hobbes, however, view war as discord between humans (Moseley, 2002). But the most common thread that ties war and politics all together is the use of propaganda. Propaganda could create a war, win a war or even lose a war. It is used as a key tool utilized by nations for a variety of reasons mostly for motivating soldiers, cultivating hatred for the enemy, and soliciting support from people about the righteousness of the war. The U.S. certainly knows how, when and where to use propaganda and has been exploiting it ever since World War I (WWI). To demonstrate why Americans fight, government leaders “translate war aims into propaganda” (Brewer, 2009, p. 4). The most employed tool during the times of war is propaganda and it is perhaps one of the most powerful tools used to reach and influence large number of people. But before delving into a discussion of propaganda, it must be defined to understand it in the context that it will be applied in throughout this research.

Lasswell (1927) was one of the first scholars to define propaganda in his book *Propaganda Technique in the World War* in which he describes it as “the control of opinion by significant symbols, or, to speak more concretely and less accurately, by stories, rumours, reports, pictures, and other forms of social communication” (p. 9). Few years later, Lasswell (1973) altered the definition by suggesting a new interpretation for propaganda “Propaganda in the broadest sense is the technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations. These representations may take spoken, written, pictorial or musical form” (p. 521).

However, Lasswell’s definition was considered too broad by other scholars. Brown (1968) took the definition a step further by differentiating between persuasion and propaganda.

He believed that persuasion and propaganda are identical on many levels, yet the major difference that exists between them is that propaganda benefits the source but not the receiver, whereas persuasion might be for the benefit of the receiver. Similar to Lasswell and Brown's propaganda, Lippmann (1922), a predecessor of the two scholars, believed that the media has the ability to manipulate events or present limited information to the public, yet this information might not match how the public perceives that event. In the case of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, media manipulated the content through several media including film to control the masses with the information that the U.S. wants the public to perceive. Lippmann believes that:

We must remember that in time of war what is said on the enemy's side of the front is always propaganda, and what is said on our side of the front is truth and righteousness, the cause of humanity and a crusade for peace (Nutt, 2011).

The perception of an enemy or an ally then is simply a matter of perspective and how that perspective is propagated by the media. In World War II for example, both Germany and the U.S. used propaganda to justify their war and to instigate hatred against one another. So the main issue here is that propaganda, which is usually addressed to the public in a certain geographic location, will impact that public through the media. So perceiving the "enemy" as an enemy becomes justified since the public is given ample justification to implicate or associate the enemy with certain undesirable behaviors or traits.

Propaganda of Integration developed by Ellul (1973), shows how modern social systems use propaganda to promote acceptance and support among its citizens, for that system.

Silverstein (1987) examines Ellul's theory by stating that integration propaganda is promoted in the main channels of communication of which movies are one. He adds that: "it is difficult to recognize it because of its omnipresence, particularly because it is based upon ideals and biases that are accepted by most members of the society" (Silverstein, 1987, p. 50). Silverstein's

argument build upon the notions of symbolization and stereotype since a society cognitively and unconsciously employs such symbolizations to attribute to a certain group. To assert that, Lippmann (1922) argues that people apply stereotypes on a certain group as soon as they detect the first familiar sign of that group. Iraqis for example are portrayed in media especially in films as terrorists that must be abolished. And when this idea is being repeated over and over across many media platforms, the public accepts the idea regardless of the truth behind it. Another noteworthy example of how media institutions manipulated news during the Vietnam War is illustrated by Silverstein:

In late 1963, Charles Mohr and Mervyn Perry were in Vietnam to report on the war for Time magazine. The article they submitted, which said, in the words of the lead sentence, "The War in Vietnam was being lost", was rejected by Time editors and replaced with one that said, among other things, "Government troops are fighting better than ever" (Silverstein, 1987).

This is an interesting overview of how politics dictates what the viewer sees; the manipulation of truth- by encouraging American patriotism and boosting the morale of the masses as a propaganda element- is justified by governments because they believe it is for welfare of the masses and betterment for the image of the government.

The Propaganda Model proposed by Herman and Chomsky (1988) is concerned with exploring relationships between ideology, communicative power, and social class interests. More specifically, the basic argument put forward in the propaganda model is that structural and political elements influence overall patterns of media performance (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). This is interlinked with the propaganda theory as a tool to manipulate the masses by misrepresenting or framing facts. Herman and Chomsky (1988) went even further to address the link between who uses propaganda, how it is used and to whom is propaganda being used to fulfill its goals. But most importantly, the propaganda model disputes the idea that media serves

the public interest and is liberal. Rather, the model proposes that within the capitalist, liberal-democratic societies, media are inclined to serve propaganda. Chomsky and Herman (1988) proclaim that:

If ... the powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear and think about, and to 'manage' public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns, the standard [liberal-pluralist] view of how the media system works is at serious odds with reality(p. x).

Essentially what Herman and Chomsky are trying to say is that the democratic media that the most powerful societies glorify should be the voice of people directed to the people; however media has become dominated by the elite to meet their goals. McChesny (2004) addresses the issue of media domination by corporate entities as the latter make use of political legislation and media to reinforce the capitalist system in society. In the same manner, Klaehn (2009) concurs with Herman and Chomsky's model and believes that their assertions are validated as ordinary citizens have become dominated by the elite interests through the impact of corporate and political influences on news media. In the manifest, the media is independent from the government, and in the latent, official sources dominate the media (DiMaggio, 2010). DiMaggio (2010) believes that: "Sometimes media and government propaganda are one and the same, as in the case of uncritical dissemination of speeches outlining U.S. foreign policy from government officials" (p. 14). Comparably, this was the case of Iraq and Afghanistan wars or following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, in which the media's main function was to deliver the presidential propaganda of George W. Bush. Many studies have found that the American public was rarely exposed to peaceful proposals to avoid the war in Afghanistan because the media outlets marginalized the prospect of peaceful resolution with Afghanistan; considering that peace would have been conceivable if the U.S. found evidence linking Bin Laden to 9/11 attacks in order to bring him to trial in the U.S (DiMaggio, 2010). This proves that Herman and Chomsky's

propaganda model is sound although many critics have attacked the theory, disclaimed it, or simply ignored it. Mullen and Klaehn (2010) give evidence of how the mainstream media has marginalized the propaganda model given the nature of the latter and its premises. DiMaggio (2010) agrees with Mullen and Klaehn that the vast majority of academics have attacked Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model in order to falsify the authors' arguments and evidence. He believes that the reasons behind the attacks are apparent: "Most scholars reject any personal responsibility of challenging a media system that serves a concentrated political and economic power" (DiMaggio, 2010, p. 18). This is another evidence of how politics can even have an effect on academia in terms of politicizing it to fit the interest of politics, and disregard or even attack the scholars whose studies result in the manifestation of political turmoil and political hegemony.

Psychologists Pratkanis and Aronson (2001) discuss propaganda, its devices and its psychological effects, in order to prevent its impact. They considered propaganda as a clever deception and an abuse to persuasion (Pratkanis & Aronson, 2001). In a series of case studies, Pratkanis and Aronson exposed propaganda strategies such as "withholding vital information, invoking heuristic devices, using meaningless association, and other strategies of questionable ethics" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2006, p. 5). Basically, such strategies can be applied on Hollywood when it comes to the script and dialogue of film. Sometimes, these strategies are all amalgamated in one film especially war genres, since filmmakers frame information, evoke doubtfulness and ethical questions due to obscenity of scenes- meaning the actual occurrence of such historical incidents- and portray the war from their outlook.

Other scholars also agree with early studies about the concept of propaganda and its purpose. Carey (1997) regards propaganda as "communications where the form and content is

selected with the single-minded purpose of bringing some target audience to adopt attitudes and beliefs chosen in advance by the sponsors of the communications” (p.20). Further, Chomsky, noted in Carey’s book *Taking the Risk out of Democracy: Corporate Propaganda Versus Freedom and Liberty* “that Carey believed “the twentieth century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy” (Carey, 1997). However, Carey (1997) argues that one of the most significant achievements in the twentieth century is that we have become free of propaganda because the latter has been persuading us for so long. But how could this argument be true and propaganda’s powers have been expanding? Carey’s allegations might be considered illogical because even though the audience has become familiar with propaganda techniques, however it is not resilient to its power due to the fact that propaganda is still on the rise in all media platforms. Conceivably, audience ought to understand that media is not innocent, but because propagandists understand the audience now more than ever, their deceptive, ambiguous techniques have developed to a point that the public’s ideas, tastes and preferences have become molded by the media.

2.2 The Two Prominent Eras of Propagandistic Film

This section provides a historical overview of the two main eras of the propagandistic film. It starts with the Bolshevik era during which the cinema was introduced to the Bolsheviks as a powerful tool for mass persuasion to convince them of the importance of a revolution. *Battleship Potemkin* and *Intolerance* films are examined in this section due to their eminence as propaganda films during the Bolshevik era. The second part of the section demonstrates the significance of film propaganda during the third Reich and how crucial it was for Hitler’s rise to

power. *Metropolis* and *Triumph des Willens* films are reviewed as they were considered two of the most prominent propaganda German films.

The basic belief of Marxism was the premise of a revolutionary transformation of capitalism into socialism that would establish a society free from alienation. Socialism was conceptualized as a society in which freedom of humans prevail and a society that grasps the potential of all its citizens (Reeves, 1999). Propaganda for the Bolsheviks was a basic tool to achieve their revolution and transform capitalism into socialism, and it was the main apparatus for taking power over Russia in 1917. To teach people the “truths of Marxism-Leninism”, propaganda became the central root for enlightenment (Reeves, 1999). The Bolsheviks did not attempt to conceal propaganda during the First World War, unlike the British government that camouflaged its propaganda activities during and after the war. Brandenberger (2012) argues that Lenin and Stalin’s USSR is often cited as the world’s first propaganda state. Cinema, for the Soviets was substantial in creating a single ideological space; and Soviet leaders recognized its powerful force as propaganda. Widdis (2003) states that cinema for Lenin was the “most important of all arts” and a powerful means of communication with illiterate population (Widdis, 2003, p. 13).

In his book *Power of Film Propaganda: Myth or Reality*, Reeves (1999) uses the quote of Anatoli Lunacharsky- the first head of people’s commissariat of enlightenment- to articulate how the Bolsheviks viewed the film as a medium for mass propaganda. Lunacharsky said:

Cinema’s strength lies in the fact that, like any art, it imbues an idea with feeling and with captivating form, but unlike other arts, cinema is actually cheap, portable, and unusually graphic. Its effects reach where even the book cannot reach and it is, of course, more powerful than any kind of narrow propaganda (Reeves, 1999, p. 4).

The Bolsheviks were convinced that the transformation in the hearts and minds of the ordinary Soviet citizens -which led to the success of their revolution-, was due to emergence of the new mass medium - which was the cinema (Reeves, 1999). Widdis (2003) discusses how the Bolsheviks, directly after their revolution, became obsessed with the “process of self-representation” (p. 3). They wanted to propagate the convenient images of the new world in a revolutionary form (Widdis, 2003). So the enticement that cinema created for the Bolsheviks was due to the fact that it was a new technology and was a symbol of industrial modernity. Hence, during the civil war in 1918, footage shot at the front was sent back to Moscow edited by volunteers (including the famous Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov), and the material was distributed across the territory to motivate citizens for support. This movement remained after the civil war ended, and over a thousand “travelling cinemas” were active in the Soviet Union; especially documentary films (Widdis, 2003). The purpose behind this was to create “cinefaction that aimed to cement ideological control over the periphery” (Widdis, 2003, p. 14).

The Bolsheviks believed in the power of cinema to the extent that it would take out the narrow-mindedness of a peasant and raise him to a higher cultural level that would bring him closer the laborer. The slogans that were conveyed to the population were so powerful that despite of the desperation they were encountering, made them lend their support to Lenin and other leaders of the cause. Slogans like “All power to the Soviets” and “Bread, Peace, Freedom” were all part of the compelling propaganda campaign that touched the hearts and minds of thousands of the population (Reeves, 2004).

One of the most influential propaganda films of all time is that of Sergi Eisenstein’s (1925) movie, *The Battleship Potemkin*. The silent movie tells the story of real life mutiny of officers inside a Russian Battleship and the dramatic events that followed this mutiny (Eisenstein

& Bliokh, 1925). The film is famous for its powerful political message that is utilized by using drama and powerful emotions that affect the audience's sympathy with Russian rebels of the ship. Cook (2003) believes that Eisenstein composed every single frame with a painter's eye for the "distribution of light, mass, and geometric design" (p. 128). Joseph Goebbles "Propaganda Minister" appointed by Hitler in 1933 said that: "in the cinema world, anyone who had no firm political conviction could become a Bolshevik after seeing this film" (Welch, 1983). This is an indication of the effectiveness of film propaganda in its early days and how films could actually influence one's ideology. *Battleship Potemkin's* success relied on the fact that it was "a new movie" with new techniques especially montage and a powerful patriotic message to the Russian people.

Another powerful movie that left its signature in the history of film is *Intolerance* (1916) for the director David Llewelyn Wark "D.W." Griffith. Even though the film was not shown exactly the same in Soviet Union as in other countries due to political and ideological reasons, the film had an electrifying effect on the Soviet Union (Russell, 2009). *Intolerance* was the first film to ever use parallel editing portraying four separate stories in separate historical eras. Jacobs (1999) claims that unusual structural technique is still considered ahead of its time, and has rarely been used ever since. Drew (1986) who wrote a book on *Intolerance* notes how the movie was of great interest to Lenin to the extent that he asked Griffith to become the head of the Soviet film industry. Drew (1986) writes that "Lenin recognized Griffith's brilliant use of cinema for political agitation and wished to enlist his expertise to help the Soviet cinema industry achieve the same effect" (p. 138). The success of *Intolerance* received critical acclaims all over the world and established cinema as a "mass medium capable of directing thought rather than being merely vulgar form of mass entertainment" (Russell, 2009, p. 42). David Lloyd

George, former British prime Minister, said about Griffith that “he had the greatest power in his hands for the control of men’s minds that the world has ever seen” and that “it was only a question of time when governments would recognize this and subsidize pictures that would help them nationally and internationally (Russell, 2009, p. 42).

Not only did film propaganda accomplish its goals during the Bolshevik revolution, it was also the main tool for Hitler’s success in delivering his message to his people (Stout, 2011). In his book *Mein Kampf* (1999), Hitler writes two entire chapters about propaganda; the book provides an insight to his mind and to his ideas on ruling people during struggles. Hitler (1998) demonstrates how propaganda should be used to regulate the citizens and how it has been influential in the success of the Allies during WWI. Hoffman (1996) argues that the British and American propaganda destroyed the image of Germany throughout WWI, and Hitler (1999) condemned the leadership in his book for not using propaganda in a meaningful way. Hitler was not the only one who believed that the Allies propaganda in WWI was effective, former German General Erich Ludendorff (1919) also wrote in his *War Memoirs 1914-1918* that German’s defeat in the war was the result of enemy’s propaganda that spread among German population. As noted earlier, propaganda can win a war, or lose one; WWI and WWII are a testimony of that.

Hitler appointed Dr. Joseph Goebbels as a Propaganda Minister who achieved great success during Hitler’s rise to power in the 1930’s which continued through the first years of WWII (Stout, 2011). Welch (1983) reports that Gobbles declaration in his first speech as Minister was bold since he announced that German cinema’s mission was to conquer the world as a vanguard of Nazi’s troops. Gobbles believed in the power of cinema to influence people’s thoughts and beliefs, if not their actions (Welch, 1983). Similarly, Kershaw (1987) considers that

Goebbels' propaganda achieved one of its greatest goals: a media cult surrounding Hitler. This success in propaganda was one of Hitler's greatest advantages as a ruler (Stout, 2011).

However, Goebbels' propaganda and famous strategy illustrated in his well-celebrated quote "if you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it" lost its credibility and was perceived as a lie by the German people when the Germans lost in Stalingrad and the Wehrmacht were dreadfully defeated in 1943. This raises an issue of propaganda credibility and how the truthfulness when using propaganda greatly influences the attitude of the public. Thus, propaganda becomes a lie when the "unaltered truth" prevails and becomes obvious that no form of media campaign or political action might regain people's trust. Hitler's propaganda technique was simple and obvious; it stressed on conveying messages to the people that Hitler was their hero and that the enemy must be abolished to minimize the threat. Both radio and film were crucial media to Hitler's propaganda campaign. Radio came under strict state control when Hitler rose to power in 1933 (Stout, 2011). However, it was Goebbels and Hitler's love for film that distinguished it and gave it significant power in the third Reich. Goebbels considered film as "one of the most modern and far-reaching media that there is for influencing the masses today" (Tegel, 2007, p. 18). Rentschler (1996) believes that almost 1,100 films were made during the twelve years of the Reich all through which were considered as elements of propaganda. Hitler made sure that almost all films should be political with powerful message for the public.

Two of the most prominent German films that are still considered a masterpiece are Fritz Lang's (1927) *Metropolis* and Leni Riefenstahl's (1934) *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*). *Metropolis* (1927) reflects a society that longs for class equality and deterrence of class rank all within a fascist state. The film revolves around a majority of workers who are forced

into hard labor in fascist society while a rich minority of rich people dwell in comfort and peace. This remains until a woman called Maria addresses these workers about freedom and equality thereby causing a rebellion by the workers and the overthrow of the fascist state (Lang & Pommer, 1927). According to propaganda minister Goebbels, Hitler was a big fan of Lang, and he “loved” *Metropolis* and Lang’s other movie *Die Neibelungn* which caused Hitler to weep (McGilligan, 1997). Hitler admired Lang’s work to an extent that he wanted him to serve as the “head of a new agency supervising motion picture production in the Third Reich. He would become the Fuhrer (Father) of film” (McGilligan, 1997, p. 175). *Metropolis* is a movie about oppression and revolting on that oppression and perhaps the metaphors used to illustrate such messages is what generated its success. The fact that it indirectly affected the audience perception towards their reality and the motivation to change is what compelled Hitler to appreciate the movie’s techniques and message; but most importantly, convince the audience that they need to revolt against oppression and follow a leader-“Maria” in the case of *Metropolis*, Hitler for Germany.

Almost a decade after *Metropolis* was made, German movie *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*) (1935), directed by Leni Riefenstahl became another work of art in the history of cinema. The movie is about the German society battling international oppression guided by Hitler in order to regain world power. Riefenstahl (1935) portrays Adolf Hitler in a powerful manner, as Hitler gives emotional speeches to thousands of people using different camera shots and angles that depict power and authority. The film is considered one of the most influential propaganda films created during the Third Reich (Stout, 2011). The strength of the film lies in how the portrayal of Hitler affected how the Germans perceived him, and as a result, the film reached its aim and altered the perceptions of people. Susan Sontag concurs with this

idea that the film was the most successful, pure propagandistic film ever made (Winston, 2009). Boland (2010) regards *Triumph des Willens* as a propaganda reinvention of *Metropolis*, where Hitler is the hero to his people. Kelman(2003) claims that *Triumph of the Will* surpasses *Battleship Potemkin* “as the ultimate in cinema propaganda”(p.1). Both films use propagandistic strategies to affect the audience psychologically and that is why they are still considered one of the most powerful films after almost a century.

2.3 The U.S. and Film Propaganda

From the inception of the United States till our present days, the world recognizes the U.S. as the most powerful nation that has ever existed, mostly due to its continuous engagement in warfare and military power. Even though the U.S. was involved in two wars at the same time in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 21st century, it was the 20th century that was considered turbulent for the U.S. being absorbed in the most devastating wars that ever took place - WW I, WW II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War. In WWI, President Woodrow Wilson’s committee on Public Information (CPI) enrolled the film industry to support their war. George Creel, Chairman of the CPI believed that the movies had a role in “carrying the gospel of Americanism to every corner of the globe.” (Lévesque, 2014). It was then that the U.S. began the militarization of Hollywood.

Before directing the film *Intolerance*, Griffith created one of the most controversial political movies in the silent era, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). The film had a tremendous impact on the audience because of the explicit genuine political messages it contained, and it succeeded in the persuasion of intellectual elites of the U.S. that films were more than entertainment for the public (Haas et al., 2015). What apprenticed the audience so deeply in the movie was the fact that it was the first movie to ever use creative cinematic techniques (various

angles, shots, fades, tracking, and other techniques), in addition to its three hour duration making it the longest film made in the history of U.S. films up to that time. President Woodrow Wilson said that the film is “like history written in lightening” (Haas et al., 2015, p.65).

Peterson and Thurston (1933) conducted an experiment to study the effects of the film *Birth of Nation* -that depicts the Ku Klux Klan as a heroic force and black people as aggressive and unintelligent. Their study led to the results that the movie altered the perceptions of black people among the audience creating more negative opinions towards African Americans. Similar studies were conducted on similar movies to uncover that watching many films with the same viewpoint reinforced the attitudes against African Americans (Peterson & Thurstone, 1933). Hence, Griffith’s use of stereotypes especially on African Americans was reinforced in the movies created afterwards. And once the audience is exposed to a certain invigorated idea by the media, the idea becomes cultivated; this ultimately leads to perceiving the reality differently and therefore acting accordingly. Change of perception, attitude and action are some of the major repercussions of propagandistic media.

WWII united the Americans in frustration and anger following the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. It was then that Americans sense of patriotism emerged as a reaction to the devastation that occurred within their lands and death of 2,403 American. Propaganda’s purposes would be justified because the enemy was at the doorstep, and something had to be done to provoke those who were still against the U.S. involvement in WWII. After the U.S. entered the war, the federal government established a propaganda program that would benefit the citizens and soldiers in the war. Founded in 1942, the Office of War Information’s (OWI) objective was to connect with audiences in the U.S. and foreign countries about the aim of the America’s involvement in the war and communicate moral principles to the domestic audience

that might create a post-war peaceful feeling (Winkler, 1978). One of the major propaganda devices that was employed was the film. Laswell (1927) notes that: "Not bombs nor bread, but words, pictures, songs, parades and many other similar devices are the typical means of making propaganda" (Nanavati & Innes, 2010, p. 83). However, propaganda in modern times has been transformed to a tool of warfare (Lasswell, 1927). Thus according to Winkler (1978), about eighty million Americans used to attend the theaters throughout the country during WWII. President Roosevelt gave the film industry special importance and believed that it would make a very useful contribution to the whole war effort (Winkler, 1978). Indeed, Koppes and Black (1990) state that the U.S. government carried out intensive unprecedented effort to mold the content of Hollywood feature films because it was convinced that movies had extraordinary powers to mobilize public opinion. The OWI Bureau of motion picture supervised Hollywood film production by publishing numerous guidelines and regulations for standard format of movies. Accordingly, the government's propaganda agency, issued a constantly updated manual instructing Hollywood studios in how to assist the war effort. The manual included reviewing the screenplay of every major studio, pressuring the movie makers to change scripts, and even scrap pictures when they found objectionable material to an extent that they sometimes wrote the dialogue for key speeches of the movies (Koppes & Black, 1990) These movies were the combination of heroism, patriotism, and propaganda (Fyne, 1994). Fyne (1994) writes that movies contained almost the same themes which were "military strength, home front sacrifices, ethnic harmony, underground resistance, individual heroism, and Allied cooperation all flickered on the screen, and attested to the total victory motif" (p.10). Interestingly, these themes are still being applied in our present days in many Hollywood films where American patriotism and sacrifice are key elements. Apparently, the U.S. government in collaboration with Hollywood

has not abandoned the idea of such recurring themes and their efficiency in influencing the audience. Perhaps WWII was the beacon of Hollywood that dictated how film propaganda will come in the following years. Fyne (1994) believes that “no other period in cinematic history equaled the output of propaganda films produced during the Second World War. Hollywood's efforts contributed to the nation's morale by capitalizing on America's love affair with the movies” (p.13). Moreover, he explains that President Roosevelt mentioned Hollywood for its role during the war, right after the Pearl Harbor attacks. Roosevelt declared that the motion picture was the most effective medium to inform the nation” (Fyne, 1994, p. 9). Indeed, President Roosevelt’s confidence in the power of film was justified. However, was the film an effective medium to inform the masses, or shape the attitudes of the nation? Of course, Roosevelt would not admit that Hollywood was of great assistance to the U.S. government as a means of propaganda were it not. Furthermore, Snow (2004) states that “Hollywood in wartime was a propaganda weapon for the Roosevelt Administration” (p. 65). Harry Warner one of the founders of Warner Bros. understood the intersection between Hollywood and Washington before and during the Second World War. Propaganda was a crucial weapon in the ideological struggle with totalitarianism in which the United States was engaged, manipulation of the mass media- and particularly motion pictures- was essential to the war effort (Snow, 2004).

On the same note, Raiti (2007) conducted a study on the propaganda portrayed in Disney’s animation during World War II. He argues that mainstream cartoons are not being used today for propaganda like they were being used during World War II. Film cartoons were politicized during the war to send out hidden messages to the audience. Disney used racial representations in cartoon films that contained latent ideologies whereby symbolic goods empower certain genders, races, or classes. Their aim was to empower the people and

governments of South America over African Americans and South Americans (Raiti, 2007). This indicates how political agendas affect the content of film, and how such agendas exploit any imagery that could be useful to reach its audience. On this note, it is important to point out that propaganda exists profoundly in all genres of movies and not only in war films. Propaganda is, briefly, the manipulation or framing of certain facts to persuade the public with a certain idea. Therefore, this concept might prevail in any type of film including Disney's cartoons aimed at children. It is simply advertising any idea to the audience to sell it. Hence, Vltcheck (2013) believes that propaganda is advertising and vice versa (p.49). Most of the movies that the audience views is propaganda in disguise and this is how propaganda is empowered as one of the most powerful tools that could alter a whole nation's way of thinking.

Buruma (2001) compares American and Japanese propagandistic elements used in films. Buruma states that "Japanese wartime propaganda, unlike the western kind, tended not to stress the villainy of the enemy...because the enemy was not the main concern. The real themes were "duty", "courage", and "sacrifice". This is why Japanese propaganda was often more realistic than its western counterpart. American movies on the other hand, stress on distorting the image of the enemy to create a negative connotation assessed to the latter. Yet, that does not mean that Hollywood does not affiliate the soldiers in war movies with valor and courage. Such movies stress on every aspect that might empower the warriors or troops and misrepresent the enemy. Giglio (2005) demonstrates how the content analysis conducted on WWII movies revealed that Hollywood had a stronger bias towards the Japanese than Germans and Italians; racist images were portrayed against the Japanese on the screen at that time. On the other hand, the war waged against the Germans was against the government- the Nazis- and not the German citizens (Giglio, 2005). Brands (1998) suggests that: "If a single theme pervades the history of American

thinking about the world, it is that the United States has a peculiar obligation to better the lot of humanity” (p. vii). The American soldier portrayed in American movies always saves the day and better the lives surrounding him by eliminating terrorism wherever it may be. Even more, American war movies usually focus more on the American soldiers whereby these characters are depicted the most in the movies, unlike their enemy which is usually shot when fighting scenes occur. This indicates how American movies portray the war from their own point of view neglecting the enemy’s view in the war.

Journalist Margret Kimberly (2013) claims that Hollywood helps Americans accept that they are part of an empire that kills other people at will, in a way that advocates violence and war caused by the U.S. government. She gives examples of award winning movies *Argo* and *Zero Dark Thirty* and how both movies used propaganda to distort events that occurred in Iran and Afghanistan. Yet, in both movies, the filmmakers added climatic but completely fictional scenes that would “agitate the viewers to hate the enemy more” (Kimberley, 2013). Greenwald (2012) agrees with Kimberly that the most dangerous propagandistic aspect of *Zero Dark Thirty* movie is not its “pro-torture message”; it is the depiction of only one perspective of the world which is the CIA’s perspective. The term “dangerous aspect” that Greenwald uses is evident to distinguish the ramifications of propaganda on the public. However, Greenwald does not illustrate why propaganda in this movie is dangerous; she could have used other terms that describe the effect of propaganda such as ‘serious’ or ‘significant’; Greenwald obviously understands what a film with propagandistic message could achieve. The method of how both Americans and Muslims are portrayed in the 2012 movie is also propaganda. She argues that “the intelligence and military agencies- are heroic, noble sacrificing crusaders devoted to stopping terrorists; their only sin is all consuming, sometimes excessive devotion to their task. Almost every Muslim and Arab

in the film is villainous...and part of a Terrorist network” (Greenwald, 2012). On the other hand, Bazelon (2012) advocates the movie as she considers that torture during interrogation was useful because it led the Americans to identify the location of Osama Bin Laden. Haas et al. (2015) argue that the film begins on a cause-and-effect, retributive or “just war” note, the 9/11 attacks justify, even call for, the use of torture. Many critics considered it a pro-torture, propagandistic movie while other critics considered it righteous and based on facts considering that the torture led to the most wanted terrorist. Although these critics focused on the torture scenes and the pro-American messages, however they never discussed why the U.S. government through the help of CIA provided such secretive and valuable information to its director Katherine Biglow and writer Mark Bia. Yet, Cohn (2013) claims that the opening statement of the movie “based on the first-hand accounts of actual events” is misleading because the viewer might believe that the story is factual. What this statement actually meant is that CIA helped Hollywood with some information about events depicted in the movie (Cohn, 2013). So the real question is why would the creators of *Zero Dark Thirty* begin with such a deceptive statement? Based on a true story or true facts could have been used instead, but the fact that this movie is not all based on facts required the filmmakers to deceive the audience and write something similar that would have the same psychological effect as “based on true events”. This statement however, is a full insight to what propaganda really is. They wanted the viewer from the very first frame to believe that the movie is based on true events even though it was not the case.

Similarly, the movie *Argo* is a propaganda film that conceals the truth about the Iranian hostage crisis (Sepahpour-Ulrich, 2013). The Oscar winning movie gained negative critical acclaims concerning its propagandistic context and framing of real events. Thus, conspiracy theorist and author Kevin Barrett claims that *Argo* is a “covert operation disguised as a movie,

likewise, Barrett believes that the actor “Ben Affleck”- the director and lead actor of the movie- may very well be a war criminal (Sieczkowski, 2013). On the other hand, those who support and defend the movie such as screenwriter Chris Terrio argues that once the context of the movie is understood, it becomes easier to grasp without giving it bigger dimensions (Zakarin, 2012). Also, Zakarin (2012) regards *Argo* as a “backdrop for smaller story”, one that represents bravery, political will and Hollywood’s contribution to national affairs. But perhaps the biggest surprise was Michelle Obama’s awarding *Argo* the Oscar for best movie. Ex-CIA agent Bob Baer probably best describes this situation through his quote “There’s a symbiosis between the CIA and Hollywood” (Lévesque, 2014).

It is crucial to comprehend the idea of Hollywood as the propagation of ideologies, principles and concepts and not regard it only as a billion-dollar entertainment industry. The ideas that Hollywood spreads on a large scale have been alarming especially that re-creating historical events portrayed in movies serves the U.S. politics and justifies their failure in many wars. As McCrisken and Pepper (2005) claim, “American filmmakers are frequently condemned for rewriting history, for providing an arrogant distortion of the historical record or even for the rape of the U.S. history” (p.1). Movies such as *Wind talkers*, *The Patriot*, *Rambo*, *Black Hawk Down*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Jarhead*, among many other movies from different genres are propaganda movies that represent the U.S. side of a war. The visuals used, the music, the effects, the dialogue, and the plot create a beautiful cinematic movie that attacks the person’s psych regardless of pre-judgments that he carries towards such wars. It is what a film can do to the viewer that is daunting because it consumes the viewer with certain ideas in an effective way to make him a believer in the American cause and oppose those who are against the U.S.. Vltchek (2013) admits that:

After living on all the continents of the world, I actually believe that the “Westerners” are the most indoctrinated, the least informed and critical group of people anywhere on earth...But they believe the opposite: that they are the best informed, and the “freest” people (p. 45).

The U.S. citizens believe that they are well informed and the freest people and yet who could deny otherwise if all the media they're exposed to is controlled by their government. But what freedom the Americans really possess if most of what they know and have been taught is spoon-fed by their government. The current mindset of the American citizens could be resembled to the process of religious education, whereby each person is brought up in a house that follows a certain religion and is educated accordingly by ingraining ideologies. As this person grows older, he becomes consumed by and convinced of his religion. It is the same for the Americans who are brainwashed by the notion of freedom and liberty and yet they lack both because they have no choice to think for themselves; the media does it for them. The public is protected all over the world from “Uncomfortable truths by the work of brilliant propagandists. They manufacture public opinion, ideology and perceptions” (Chomsky & Vltchek, 2013, p. x).

2.3 The Common Denominator of the War Films

Before *Zero Dark Thirty*, Director Katherine Biglow directed, *The Hurt Locker*, another award winning movie that also dealt with war, only this time in Iraq. The *Hurt Locker*- produced in 2010- was also controversial especially that it won the “Best Motion Picture” at the Oscars against *Avatar* although many movie critics thought the latter would win. The movie grossed approximately 50 million dollars worldwide and thus is not considered as powerful in reaching audience as *Zero Dark Thirty*. Yet, due to the success and publicity it gained after winning at the Oscars, the movie became famous and the DVD sales highly increased.

The movie revolves around U.S. soldiers who have one of the most dangerous jobs - disarming bombs (improvised explosive device-IED) in Iraq. In the midst of chaos and combat, a

new sergeant, James, joins the team and conflicts with his subordinates due to his weird behavior and indifference to death (Biglow, Boal, Chartier, & Shapiro, 2010). The movie begins with the quotation “The rush of the battle is often a potent and lethal addiction, for war is a drug”, when the viewer first sees this quote, he would presumably connote it negatively and understand that the movie as anti-war one. However, after watching the whole movie, the viewer might assimilate is more likely to reach a different conclusion- war is a drug addiction- and once you take part in it, there’s no turning back, because nothing is more pleasurable than wars and nothing is less dull than our mundane lives - at least for the hero of the movie who enjoys disarming the bombs.

In the first scene of the movie, and when a soldier is trying to disarm the bombs, an Iraqi butcher standing near the site of the bombs holds his cell phone, the other soldier sees him and shouts to him to put his phone down, the butcher waves back and then presses a button on his phone after which the bomb explodes killing the soldier, denoting that the butcher was responsible for that. This beginning is propaganda by itself because it discreetly positions the viewer in a mindset that the soldiers in Iraq who are putting their lives at stake to rescue those who are killing them are heroes, whereas the others are the enemy, even though they are there to help the enemy. Smith (2010) reveals that *The Hurt Locker* is an extremely political film, largely because of what it chooses to omit, masquerading as apolitical in order to disarm the viewer. He adds that the movie is pro-war propaganda. If the movie portrayed the truth about America’s ongoing imperial adventure in Iraq, it would have never won in the Oscars (Smith J. A., 2010).

Kord and Krimmer (2011) consider that *The Hurt Locker* is not a propaganda film as much as emphasis of the enormous cultural rift that separates the U.S. soldiers from their environment and the portrayal of their actions during this isolation. The authors are neutral in

analyzing the movie's direction because they believe that in the movie, the experience of the war relies on what the audience makes of it, whether it gives life meaning or terrifying threat (Kord & Krimmer, 2011). McKelvey (2009) notes how the film draws comparisons between a combat zone in Iraq and the dreariness of American life. Indeed, in the last scenes of the movie, the main actor who returns home to the U.S., finds himself in the supermarket, trying to decide what kind of cornflakes he should buy, in a wide shot frame, where the actor's size looks small compared to the numerous cornflakes products in the frame. This connotes the extent to which American consumerism has become enormous. , We then see him spending time in his house doing dull chores to end the movie with him returning to Iraq gratefully. McKelvey (2009) believes that this movie is one of the most effective recruiting vehicles for the U.S. Army. This allegation is resonant and the contradiction between the drama and liveliness in the midst of the war in Iraq with the dull life in U.S. is possibly an indication to that. On the contrary, Gardiner (2010) believes that the movie was patriotic and pays tribute to the courage of American troops serving in Iraq. He regards *Avatar* as an overtly anti-American and anti-military bias and the most "left-wing film in the history of modern American cinema" (Gardiner, 2010). Ritzenhoff and Kazeck (2014) analysis of the movie led to their result that it "represents the U.S. Military's strategic goal for disarming a suspected improvised suspected devices (IED) on an Urban Iraq street as just that nothing more and nothing less" (p. 156). Ebert (2009) believes that the movie is a great, intelligent film that clearly depicts who everyone is and what they are all doing (indicating the role of U.S. soldiers versus the Iraqis). Bradshaw (2009) asserts this idea by stating that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan never got their moment in Hollywood, until *The Hurt Locker* that supports military action openly. Although critics have praised *The Hurt Locker* visually and most arguments concentrated on its embedded propaganda, however criticisms did not include the

elements of propaganda used in the film mostly because Biglow used indirect messages to send out to the audience through certain cinematic techniques such as the background music, camera angles, camera shots, and other techniques.

Another Hollywood Blockbuster movie was the *Lone Survivor* (2014) that tells a story of U.S. SEAL team who went to Afghanistan in 2005 on a secret mission to kill the Taliban commander Ahmad Shah. However, after being spotted by goat-herders in the mountains of Afghanistan, the team decided to follow the rules of engagement and release goat herders. One of the goatherds tells Taliban about the SEALs and the fighting (open fire) between the soldiers and Taliban begins. The soldiers were outnumbered by the Taliban leading to the death of three soldiers and the survival of the only soldier Marcus Luttrell (Berg, 2014). Presumably, the most interesting component of the movie is the juxtaposition between an “Afghani’s death” and the “American soldier’s death”, in such way that when an Afghani is shot, he directly falls, whereas each member of the four SEALs gets shot many times and yet they never yield from fighting. In addition, when each member of the SEALs dies, their death is cinematically glorified, as they are shot in slow motion and with lightening techniques that deifies their death. The symbolism of embellishing their death does more harm to the movie than actually rendering it more important because there is a thin line between what is acceptable to common sense and what is not. Despite the fact the movie is based on true story and on a book written by Marcus Luttrell (portrayed as the leading role in the movie), the movie with its over-exaggeration leaves the viewer with confusion.

O’hehir (2014) notes that both, the visual symbolism and the iconography of the movie, are not apolitical or ideologically neutral. The movie is trying to tell the viewers that regardless of the torture that the CIA or military troops committed during their invasion to Afghanistan,

they were was sacrificing their lives for the United States (O'hehir, 2014). According to Haas et al. (2015), *Lone Survivor* brought Hollywood war movie back to its propaganda roots. They note that "Its critical reception links *Lone Survivor*'s cartoonish depiction of the Taliban enemy and it attempts to scrub itself clean of politics and pro-war propaganda" (Haas et al., 2015, p. 250).

Nicholson (2013) complies with the idea that the movie is political and presents a justification of the U.S. war on Afghanistan to the American audience. She believes that the story is simple and the context is clear - "Afghani people are bad, whereas the Americans are good" (Nicholson, 2013). Indeed, the movie portrays the Americans as typical heroes who put their lives at stake to save the day; as for Taliban, they are depicted in a negative, villainous way; they need to be eliminated. This is justified since Taliban is portrayed as a terrorist organization that uses religion as an excuse for murder and destruction. However, the filmmakers of *Lone Survivor* should not be praised for portraying Taliban as villains because this is reality. Hence, in the last scenes of the movie, Afghani citizens who are also in conflict with Taliban help out Marcus Luttrell. The significance of such different portrayals of Afghani people is important because the movie does actually differentiate between the citizens not linked to Taliban and those who are involved with Taliban. But even though the film distinguishes between the two types of citizens, the stereotypes prevail in the movie. The point of view of the Afghanis is neglected and the portrayal of Afghani versus the American soldiers is naive. Edelstein (2014) concurs with the idea that the makers of the movie are perpetuating the kind of propaganda that sent the heroes of SEAL team to their deaths. The film is brutally effective, created by filmmakers who believe that they are serving the U.S.; but that only leads the audience to more egocentrism (Edelstein, 2014).

The author of *Rise of ISIS: A Threat We Can't Ignore*, French (2014) attacks critics who regard the movie as pro-war and propagandistic in nature. He responds to such criticisms by stating that:

the suffering and death of honorable men is qualitatively different from the suffering and death of men who murder, rape, and terrorize as a matter of course and as a matter of jihadist religious principle - especially when the honorable men die in an effort to protect others from terror” (French, 2014).

He concludes his criticism by stating that there are no perfect men- there is good and evil- and the SEALS who are the good people were acting against the evil (French, 2014).

The conflict here is that movies are analyzed differently according to one's own perspective of politics and war; meaning is never static. The movie is propagandistic to some people not because they are Anti-Americans, but because they take the scenes of the movie to another dimensions and the most prominent dimension is of course politics. Others who regard it as patriotic and a typical war movie-where there is the good and there is the bad- consider that being aligned to the Americans is an unquestionable manner because one cannot align with the vicious enemy. Still, critics fail to ask the questions about the wider political reasons behind such war movies, especially that almost every year, a war movie hits the cinema, grosses hundreds of millions of dollars worldwide- \$149.3 million for *Lone Survivor*- and creates a buzz, whether it is politicized and has an agenda to fulfill, or it is a simply a movie that depicts real life heroic incidents.

Like *Lone Survivor*, *American Sniper* (2014) is a contentious movie that critics opened fire on, the moment it hit the theaters. The movie grossed \$ 547.3 million worldwide making it the highest-earning war movie of all time (Child, 2015). The movie revolves around a cowboy Chris Kyle who joins the U.S. army SEAL and becomes a soldier to fight terrorism in Iraq. Kyle's courage and strength makes him save countless lives and he becomes renowned as one of

the lethal snipers in the American history. Yet, when Kyle returns home to his wife and kids, he struggles to adapt with his mundane life and reality because he cannot leave the war behind (Eastwood, Lorenz, Lazar, Cooper, & Morgan, 2014). The movie begins with a powerful scene depicting Kyle aiming at young boy holding an improvised explosive device (IED) and running towards American platoon, flashback takes the audience to Kyle's childhood where he is being taught by his father how to aim and shoot. The flashback continues to portray Kyle's life and how he meets his wife and what leads him to decide to join the war. The decision is not easy since his first victim would be a child. Tensed and indecisive whether to pull the trigger or not, Kyle shoots the boy believing that the act is terrible but is right. This is how the audience gets introduced to the hero of the movie, an emotional humane person but also a tough soldier who does anything to support and protect his team. Devon (2015) believes that the movie is perceived differently by whoever is watching it. She attacks the critics who demonize the sniper or the movie by stating that those who entered the war (meaning the U.S. government) are the ones that should be criticized. Devon (2015) adds that we have to be critical when it comes to Kyle's job because what would anyone do if the enemy is a child with an IED? The lack of experience doesn't put one in Kyle's shoes to claim such judgments about him (Devon, 2015). Those who argue that the movie is also pure propaganda consider that "Kris Kyle" is nothing but a killer and rapist of another country (Gordon, 2015). As noted by West (2015), the movie raises disturbing questions about which, why and whose stories the audience chooses to evaluate as truth, and how the use of such stories in entertainment might affect the audience. While many Hollywood movies are based on real stories or real characters, the motives behind the imagery is questionable especially in war movies that have always been used throughout the history as a means of propaganda. Macnab (2015) argues how the film does not attempt to portray the

suffering Iraqi people; the focus of the film is the main character Kris Kyle who does not question the political reasons behind the war on Iraq because he views himself as the protector of his country, comrades and his family. Nonetheless, Kane (2015) contradicts the allegations made against American Sniper. He opposes those who consider that the movie shows Iraq's invasion was a direct response to 9/11 and that the movie does not do enough to show the true reasons behind this invasion. Thus, the movie is

told from a very specific perspective- that of a soldier on the ground, who believes it is his patriotic duty to protect his country and fellow soldiers..., it's not about whether invading Iraq was justified or not. It isn't about our foreign policy at all (Kane, 2015).

Collins (2015) asserts Kane's idea that Kyle's experience of war is made of endless extreme close-ups. Even though the movie focuses on the life of a soldier in a war, one cannot disregard the circumstances that surround him (the actual war, Iraqis, the nature of his job), and the way the circumstances are depicted play a huge role in how the message reaches the audience. Yet, how could filmmakers create a war movie without being politicized or at least, emphasize on one side more than the other. It would be almost impossible not to have a stand with one group in a war; in the case of this paper, the Americans against Iraq and Afghanistan. This is due to the fact that such movies utilize the political agenda of the U.S.; so that the producers and directors role in a movie are somewhat justified because their job-other than producing an artistic film- is to deliver a message. Buzzle (2015) states that Kyle is more complicated than his portrayal in the movie and so is war. Buzzle (2015) also attacks critics as he regards their criticism as a stand with either the soldier or with the terrorists; their criticism is based on whether Kyle was a hero or was a hate-filled-killer. Other critics such as Nolte (2015), regards the movie as a masterpiece and a "proof of what Big Hollywood has been arguing for more than six years. The movie is emotionally complex, patriotic, heartbreaking and rousing (Nolte, 2015). Yet, what is lacking in

the criticism of the movie is how the soldiers were portrayed in comparison to the Iraqis.

Additionally, there has been no research on how this film and the other two films under study focus on the American soldiers and disregards the enemy's point of view.

Therefore, this thesis aims to examine how the U.S. government uses film propaganda to justify its wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. By analyzing three Hollywood war movies *American Sniper*, *Lone Survivor*, and *The Hurt Locker*, and correlating them to the American political agenda, the present study attempts to fill this hole in the literature. The following step would be discussing the theoretical foundation of this research – framing theory- in order to understand how framing in film works, what techniques are used, and how the U.S. government politically uses framing.

Ch. 3 Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses framing, the theoretical framework used to analyze the three films, which form the case study for this thesis. It first defines the meaning of framing, then discusses the dimensions of framing through the visuals and text used in different media, and then examines how framing affects the ingrained attitudes. The chapter ends with the research question and hypotheses.

3.1 Definition of Framing

Scholars have long understood the important role that media plays in influencing people's attitudes, perceptions, and actions. Media in all its forms is considered a valuable source of information and a powerful mode in communicating messages. Much of what people know and understand on different events that occur around the world is powered by the media. However, the type of information that is proliferated throughout media to the audience is sometimes framed to meet the goals of the providing source or the governments.

Framing theory has been the focus of many researchers since the early 20th century. Walter Lippmann (1922) believes that media's framed reality of events around the world creates the public opinion which is based upon the images inside people's heads. Goffman (1974) was one of the first scholars to consider framing as a form of communication and assume that people use media to analyze and interpret their life experiences. Yet, it was Entman (1993) who presented framing as complete theory of mass media. He defined framing as a process by which media "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in a way that can promote a certain definition, interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation" (Entman, *Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm*, 1993, p. 52). Tankard (2001) agrees with Entman by arguing that framing is

suggesting what the issue is to a central organizing idea for news content, by selecting and emphasizing this idea. He adds that “news framing can eliminate voices and weaken arguments; the media can frame issues that favor particular side without showing explicit bias...” (Tankard, 2001, p. 95). Scheufele (2000) believes that framing influences audience not by giving an issue more salience, but by invoking interpretive schemes that impact how the audience interpret the information.

At this point, it is important to draw distinctions between framing theory and agenda setting. According to Weaver, McCombs & Shaw (2004), agenda setting is the way that media places an issue in an order of importance, whereas framing is how these issues are portrayed and then relayed to the audience. Thus, “agenda setting serves as the first function of framing as it defines the problems worthy of government attention”(Entman, 1993). Not only do newspapers and TV networks apply framing; film medium has always applied framing since WWI where not only certain scenes and dialogues are given more importance than others, but also the depiction of characters in a movie, and the visual effects used among other things, affects the communicated message and how the audience will interpret such messages. Accordingly, it is important to distinguish framing from the second-level of agenda setting since both theories focus on how the media portrays an issue. The difference is that framing includes “more cognitive processes such as causal reasoning, moral evaluations, appeals to principles and recommendations for treatment of problems, while second-level agenda setting focuses only on salience of attributes” (Weaver D. H., 2007, p. 146).

Borah (2011) proposes that the sociological foundation of framing is attributed to the tools that media producers exploit when creating stories and how during the creation process the stories are manipulated. Druckman (2001) refers to these “tools” as “the words, images, phrases,

and presentation styles ... called frames in communication” (p. 227). This suggests that when creating movies, producers can distort reality as part of framing to fulfill a certain agenda. Similarly, Entman (1993) believes that influencing the audience’s perception about a certain reality can be accomplished “by choosing and giving some part of noticed reality- the elements in a message” (p .52). Borah (2011) agrees with Entman (1993) that individuals might interpret issues differently according to highlighted or neglected frames. This reaction between the highlighted frames and the interpretation of such frames by the audience is called framing effect.

Framing effect is an important concept for this study because filmmakers distort or manipulate reality when referring to certain historical events in addition to distorting the image of the enemy (Afghani or Iraqi) to meet the goals of the American agenda. Druckman (2001) defines framing effect as the process by which “frames in communication shape frames in thoughts” (p.228). Frames in thought are considered as audience frames whereas frames in communication are the framed elements (Borah, 2011). There are two types of framing effects according to Druckman (2001) - equivalency framing effect and emphasis framing effect. Equivalency framing is concerned with different terms that influence people in making alterations in their choices, while emphasis framing deals with emphasizing part of potentially relevant considerations; a speaker can affect how individuals will focus on the considerations when it comes to constructing their opinion (Druckman, 2001). In other words, individuals will concentrate on the emphasized elements in the message in emphasis framing. For instance, if war movies frame Iraqi and Afghani people negatively, the audience frame will be shaped by those negative attributes emphasized in the movies. Cissel (2012) believes that “framing is a tool used by media and politicians to make salient points that would direct their readers to a desired frame of mind” (p. 69). Indeed, politicians have been using media in all its forms to deliver their

messages and inform the masses with information that best suits their interests. As Haas et al. (2015) argue that films seek to persuade the public of many issues, but most importantly they seek for support of war-making efforts. This effect that politicians exert on the masses can be simplified by the framing effect. This process could be considered as one of the most powerful and deceptive techniques of propaganda, and filmmakers who succeed in changing audience's perception of such concepts could be considered propagandists.

3.2 Dimensions of Framing: Visuals and Text

Kuypers (2002) explains how the media news presentation shapes the public by stating that

The media use frames which are composed of certain keywords, metaphors, concepts and symbols; they work by highlighting some features of reality over others. In short, they make some facts rather than others more salient or relevant to the person exposed to the frame (p. 11).

Entman (1993) argues that there are four locations of frames in a communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. First, communicators create their framed-judgments based upon their own beliefs of the message to be communicated. The second location, the text- which contains the frames- is manifested by the existence or non-existence of certain ideas and concepts in order to reinforce those ideas or alter pre-existing facts. D'Angelo (2002) considers that frames affect how individuals perceive reality. Frames have the power to impact cognition and change public opinion (Entman, 1993). And therefore, the most powerful location of frames is the text itself. In the third location, the receivers use these frames to process information and interpret the message in their own culture -which is the fourth location. Thus, according to Entman (1993) "framing in all four locations includes similar functions: selection and highlighting, and use of the highlighted elements to construct an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution" (p. 53). It should be noted here that these four

locations might apply on film where the communicator is the filmmaker, the text is the war movie itself where certain concepts are emphasized and through certain dialogue and visualizations, the receiver is the audience in any culture the movie is being viewed in.

Iyengar(1991) proposes the concepts of episodic and thematic frames as he believed that news about political issues is manifested in either frames. He states that: “The episodic news frame focuses on specific events or particular cases, while the thematic news frame places political issues and events in some general context (Iyengar, 1991, p. 2). Hence, Iraq and Afghanistan wars are portrayed by using thematic frames which according to Iyengar attributes responsibility to societal/political forces. The episodic frames tend to put responsibility on specific individuals or groups (Iyengar, 1991). In this context, thematic framing is manifested through the execution of the two wars by the U.S. in order to eradicate terrorism in both Afghanistan and Iraq. How and why these wars took place is where the framing occurs because the truth is manipulated to fulfill the U.S. agenda.

Several studies have been conducted to understand and analyze framing in news media. Studies of the coverage of the 1991 Gulf War revealed that the American media coverage has a tendency towards “self-glorification, neglect for the destruction of war, and the call to rally around the flag” (Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams, & Trammell, 2005). Other research discovered how the CNN coverage of the first Gulf War was extremely biased towards the U.S. military actions (Dimitrova et al., 2005). Dimitrova et al. (2005) give many examples of how media has been framing events around the world. However, they stress how the “self-referential” frame has a powerful effect in shaping the viewers attitudes. Self-referential frame is the “tendency of the media to insert itself into the story as more than a reporter of the action, but as a player/ actor who influences the process or unfolding of events” (Dimitrova et al., 2005, p. 27). Accordingly,

film medium uses “self-referential” frame since whatever is included in the composition of each frame of the movie is decided by the filmmaker. The introductory quote used in films especially those depicting historical events such as “based on true story/true facts” is never accurate because the basic detail (such as shot techniques) in a frame can affect the whole scenario of the movie. Portraying a medium shot of an American soldier means differently than portraying him with a close-up shot. Therefore, the movie is portrayed through the eyes of the filmmakers firstly, and then implementing the actual historical events (but also through the eyes of the filmmaker) in the movie. Hence, the film as a medium is certainly a player when it comes to narratives. Film has the capability of twisting facts and transforming them into superstition and vice versa, so when it comes to depicting true events such as conflicts and wars, movies frame the stories to reach their aim. Nonetheless, little research has been conducted on this frame and its correlation with war coverage.

Ghanem (1997) identifies four major dimensions of framing: 1) the topic of the news item, 2) presentation (size and placement), 3) cognitive attributes (details of what is included in the frame), and 4) affective attributes (tone of the picture). These dimensions have also not been exercised on film medium. Therefore, it is significant to apply these dimensions in this study to analyze how framing works in film. The topic, presentation, tone, and details in every scene of a war film could be considered as the tools for framing and consequently manipulating the message to fulfill certain agendas. The basic idea behind message attributes is to understand how the object (for example, the enemy in a war movie) is portrayed and how certain characteristics (or attributes) of that character are emphasized through the medium, all of which are interlinked with the agenda.

In “*Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House's Frame after 9/11*”, Entman (2003) claims that naming post 9/11 policy a “war on terrorism” was a questionable but “effective framing choice” (p.416). Similar to Chomsky’s and Herman’s propaganda model, Entman’s (2003) “cascading activation model” suggests that the White House activates interpretive frames and these frames are spread to non-administration elites and on to news organizations and interpretations feedback from lower to higher levels. In other words, politicians use interpretive frames that are activated and enforced by the media organizations, and they make use of the feedback frames they get from the public. Entman’s (2003) allegations are thought-provoking especially that he identifies such frames in his introduction by discussing the White House approach in framing. After the terrorist assaults of September 9/11, President George W. Bush and other officials such as former Vice President Richard Cheney and former Secretary of State Collin Powell, used certain words such “war”, “terror” “evil” in their speeches to unite the country behind a solution which was war against terror, and the military intervention in Afghanistan was the initial tactic. Bush’s announcement is worth-mentioning in this context as he says:

The deliberate and deadly attacks which were carried out yesterday against our country were more than acts of terror, they were acts of war...this will require our country to unite in steadfast determination and resolve. . . . This will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil, but good will prevail (p.415).

The use of simple emotional and agitating terms was part of the Bush administration’s strategy of framing September 11(Entman, 2003). Such emotional frames were crucial to the public because they were a justification to the actions that followed- invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. The significance of Bush’s administration of framing conveys how the latter is compelling on the psychological level of the public; words, not images shaped the public and it made them accept

the notion of entering a war. So the question raised in this context is, if simple words can alter peoples' perceptions of war, what could films achieve? Even more, what could emotional/agitation words and images achieve when combined together?

Hence, in addition to all the cinematic techniques that filmmakers use to send out embedded political messages, the dialogue created for the characters that carries simple yet emotional or agitating words also for the same reason- send out or reinforce ideas and concepts. As Bowers et al. (2009) put it:

Speeches provide insight into agitation, but something more is required for agitation rhetoric to exist and to be successful. Speeches and essays are important and give voice to ideologies of agitating groups, but other actions may be more central or important to the agitation (p.5).

Words that describe the enemies as savages, villains, terrorists, evil, bad guys, and many other similar words with the same connotation, affect the audience frame negatively on the psychological level. Likewise, words that describe the heroism of American soldiers as warriors, protectors, patriots and others evoke positive feelings among the audience. This is why it is important to address the emotional versus agitating terms used in the films of this study in order to draw correlations between the dialogue of the film and the kind of emotions that filmmakers intend to stimulate among audience.

3.3 Framing and Ingrained Attitudes

On the same note, Kinder & Sander (1996) believe that frames exhibit a double life. Frames are "interpretive structures embedded in political discourse where they function as rhetorical weapons" generated and implemented by political elites to empower their ideologies and concepts (Kinder & Sanders, 1996, p. 164). This is carried out by the media that attempt to elucidate rather than persuade. Conjointly, frames are cognitive structures that exist inside the mind of the public to conform with the issues of the political life (Kinder & Sanders, 1996). So

the fact that the public already holds a pre-existing frame about an issue is an indication that a person is brainwashed from infancy; children are easily manipulated and once an idea is ingrained within them, it grows with them until a strong affective manipulative frame distorts whatever judgment they carry. Arguably, most Americans have certain stereotypes against Arabs; some of them true, others are false, but the undeniable truth is that these stereotypes are cultivated and sharpened by the media. Regardless the fact that Americans consented with the decision of the Bush administration's war on terror and what followed concerning Iraq and Afghanistan wars, however, it was media (with framing as a backbone and under the propaganda flag) as the devil's advocate that embellished the idea of declaring wars on the two countries. Even more, the spectacle of war films has made wars more alluring to the public but with justifiable ends because Iraq and Afghanistan wars almost failed costing thousands of lives. Only those who lived in and fought the wars will truly comprehend the endless misery and communicate what truly goes on in a war. Framing of war in films has always been the case since WWI, and whether or not the filmmakers work directly for the political elites, perhaps they consider it as their patriotic duty to glorify their country and soldiers- bearing in mind that this still falls under the propaganda banner. But when the movie portrays incidents from the view of the filmmakers and dehumanizes those who are against the American soldiers without portraying their point of view, this is where manipulation of the minds of the public takes place.

Accordingly, De Vreese (2005) understands how framing can have an effect on the individual and societal level of the public. On the individual level, people's attitudes might be altered due to the exposure of certain frames, whereas the societal level is altered by the modification of social level process due to frames exposure (Vreese, 2005). Social level process might include decision-making, political socialization and collective actions. As a result, framing

in film can affect the public on both individual and public knowledge regarding political ideas and historical sense. Regardless the predispositions that a viewer of *The Hurt Locker*, *Lone Survivor* or *American Sniper* might carry before seeing any of these movies, the viewer's perception and attitude towards the war in Iraq or Afghanistan, or his attitude towards Iraqi or Afghani citizens, might be altered. Consequently, the alteration in attitude will lead to the modification of societal level because his attitude might determine his actions. To illustrate that, a study conducted to explore the relationship between viewing television news coverage of the September 11, 2001 attacks and perceptions of violence initiated by people outside the U.S., negative personal emotions and personal relationships. Results suggested that the more hours individuals watched TV news coverage following the terrorist attacks, the more negative emotions they reported and the more negatively they expressed towards Islamic peers (Lett, DiPietro, & Johnson, 2004).

This is how attitudes can be shaped by media, and what is more detrimental is the reinforcement of these attitudes because of the constant bombardment with certain ideas and concepts. The fact that the American public depends on the media (whether news or entertainment) to become informed or entertained is the major issue because their attitude, beliefs and behavior are shaped by the media without the knowledge of such alteration; all in the interest of politicians and political agenda that encompasses propaganda and believes that that latter sells ideologies.

3.4 Research Question and Hypothesis

The literature review discussed for this thesis as well as the theoretical framework lead to the formation of the main research question from which several hypotheses will emerge. The research question is:

Research Question 1: How does the Hollywood film industry, through the movies *American Sniper*, *Lone Survivor*, and *The Hurt Locker*, frame American soldiers versus Iraqi fighters, Iraqi civilians, Afghani citizens and Taliban in the aftermath of the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan respectively?

Though many studies have examined framing in media and specifically in print and television media as well as online websites, little work has been done on film framing of wars – and more specifically on the framing of the non-American parties in war movies. Therefore, based on the above research questions and the variables derived from both literature review and theoretical framework, the following hypotheses will be addressed.

H1: American war films glorify American soldiers and demonize Iraqi and Afghani citizens through cinematic techniques.

H2: American war films portray the American soldiers as humanitarian with Iraqi and Afghani citizens.

H3: American war movies establish their own point of view in Iraq and Afghanistan wars by giving more salience to the American soldiers through depicting them in most of the scenes while portraying the Iraqi and Afghani citizens mostly in fighting scenes.

H4: American war films use emotional words to evoke sympathy to the American soldiers and agitating words to evoke hatred to the Iraqi and Afghani citizens.

H5: American war films portray the families of the American soldiers or depict discussions between the soldiers about their families in order to represent the soldiers as sacrificial people.

Chapter 4 Methodology

This chapter provides the methodology implemented to conduct the study, including the content analysis employed, explanation of the sample selection, coding scheme, units of analysis, reliability of the research, and data analysis. Quantitative data are obtained to examine how American soldiers are portrayed versus Iraqi and Afghani civilians. The data also includes the use of emotional and agitating words in the dialogues of the films to determine in what ways and how the sample of movies framed the Iraq and Afghanistan wars by framing the image of American soldiers versus framing the image of Iraqi civilians, Afghani civilians, Iraqi fighters, and Taliban.

4.1 Research Design

The study utilizes quantitative research method which measures the variables and usually uses numbers to communicate the amount of variables under study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). Quantitative research quantifies the phenomena through using statistical techniques which some researchers believe would bring greater precision, and as a result, greater objectivity to the study (Keyton, 2010). The reason behind using quantitative research for this study is to measure the frames and represent the findings as frequencies in order have a better understanding of the variables chosen such as camera shots, angles, music type, and others. Another reason for choosing quantitative method is to compare between how American soldiers are portrayed versus Iraqis and Afghans through the use of frequencies of the same variables in addition to reporting the results of humanitarian frame, sacrificial frame, and words frame frequencies (although the priority in analyzing these frames relies on their actual existence and their connotation giving less significance to their frequencies). The purpose is to provide a more measurable and quantifiable approach to a recurring phenomenon and prove through quantifiable measures that it

is recurrent enough to make it worth examining, besides generating quantifiable results that can lead to measurable conclusions and set the grounds for future studies.

4.2 Research Sample

The study consists of a content analysis of three Hollywood war movies that were produced after both wars in Iraq (2003) and in Afghanistan (2001). This period was chosen because the study is based on the movies that were created after the U.S. launched its war on Iraq and Afghanistan. War movies genre has always been popular among the audience for many purposes, mostly for addressing narrative historical conflicts and for the spectacle of wars.

Nonetheless

American film, from its beginnings, has attempted to hide itself, to make the invisible telling of its stories, and to downplay or deny the ways in which it supports, reinforces, and even sometimes subverts the major cultural, political and social attitudes that surround and penetrate it (Kolker, 2011, p. 12).

Stratified random sampling has been conducted in this study to ensure that the sample is drawn from a homogenous subset of the population. The population includes six war movies about the American war on Iraq and Afghanistan. The selected sample is based on the criteria of top grossing war movies worldwide; in other words, movies that reached to a large number of people. Yet, it must be noted that *The Hurt Locker* did not gross as high as the other three movies (\$50 million worldwide), but it won the Oscar for best movie and director that year against *Avatar*, and so it became popular after the Oscars, this is why the movie has been included in the sample study. Thus, according to Carter (2010), the movie's earnings were compensated through DVD sales due to the popularity it gained after it won the best movie at the Oscars.

4.3 Data Collection: Content Analysis

A quantitative content analysis was conducted for this study, in order to understand how the Iraqi and Afghani wars were framed in the three war films chosen for the study. According to Neuendorf (2002), content analysis maybe briefly defined as “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (p. 1). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) believe that content analysis is appropriate for studying current issues, comparing media coverage of similar events, and “mass-mediated representations of historical or current events” (p. 228). Thus, content analysis has become an expanding technique in the world of quantitative research (Neuendorf, 2002). This technique examines how characters in media interact with one another and how these characters are portrayed in TV commercials, films and novels (Neuendorf, 2002). Berger (1991) asserts that content analysis is a research technique that measures the amount of something (violence in movies, negative portrayals of an issue, among other things) in a “representative sampling of some mass-mediated popular art form” (p. 25). This content analysis explores five frames: cinematic frame, humanitarian frame, duration frame, words frame, and sacrificial frame.

4.4 Coding Procedures and Units of Analysis

A code book was created to collect the data that demonstrates the difference between character portrayals of American soldiers versus Iraqis and Afghans in the three films. The code book was used to record data on the frames selected for this study which are cinematic techniques frame, humanitarian frame, duration frame, words frame, and sacrificial frame. These frames are selected because according to the literature and framing theory, these frames basically represent how filmmakers frame the image of American soldiers versus the Iraqi people, Afghani people, Iraqi fighters, and Taliban.

4.4.1 Cinematic Techniques

When coding for cinematic techniques frame, five categories were used: camera shots, camera angles, music type, action portrayal of Iraqis/Afghanis, and the wardrobe color of Iraqis/Afghanis. Thirty shots from each film were selected as a sample to code for cinematic frame from both Americans and Iraqis/Afghanis. These shots are representative of the scenes of the movies since they draw comparisons between the difference in the portrayal of American soldiers and the Iraqis/Afghanis. However, it should be noted that the shots selected on the American soldiers' portrayal are selected from the longest shots of all the scenes of the movie without neglecting any scene. The main objective behind this frame is to show -as noted earlier- the difference between American soldiers and Iraqi/Afghani portrayal; thus, the fact that the Iraqis/Afghanis are mostly portrayed doing the same action and almost shot from specific angles and camera shots have contrasting impact when compared to the connotative shots and angles of American soldiers. Camera shots category includes the following variables: Extreme long shot, long/wide shot, medium shot, and close up. Camera shots are crucial in creating meaning in a film; for example, a close up shot on a character portrays different meaning when taken in a medium shot, since close ups are more personal and demonstrate the emotions of the character. Likewise, camera angles depict certain aspects of the character/s since they position the viewer in a certain angle that shapes the meaning of the frame. The variables of camera angles are: eye-level, low angle, high angle, tilted angle, and birds-eye view.

Music is also taken as a framing variable in the analysis. The variables for music are: patriotic music, dramatic music, scary music, suspense, no music, and other. The importance of the category lies in the fact of how significantly music affects the emotions of the viewer. Fischhoff (2005) believes that music in film makes us feel rather than know, thus

music is the simplest and most direct way of making a statement, even though it is often registered subconsciously, since a viewer, paying attention to events taking place on screen, hears but ordinarily does not (consciously) listen to the accompanying score (p.3).

For instance, if Iraqis/Afghans are portrayed with scary or suspense music and the American soldiers are accompanied with a patriotic or dramatic music depending on the action they are performing; this will affect the interpretation of the scene and create contrasting judgments among the audience for both American soldiers and Iraqis/Afghans.

As for the action portrayal of Iraqis/Afghans, the category includes: Carrying a weapon, aiming the gun at the American soldier (whether close or from a distance), shooting at the soldier, gazing at the soldier (whether close or from a distance), gazing at the soldier while carrying a weapon, talking with the soldier, walking/running, walking/running while carrying a weapon, walking/running while shooting at the soldier/s, and other (specify). The significance of this category is that it manifests how the filmmakers want the viewers to perceive the action of Iraqis/Afghans, whether violent and threatening, or not.

As for the wardrobe color of the Iraqis/Afghans, the category includes dark color clothes and light color clothes. Different colors have different significations; the wardrobe of the character creates a feel to that character among the audience, as Elliot & Maier (2014) believes that: "Color can carry important meaning and can have an important impact on people's affect, cognition, and behavior". However, the reason behind not including a category on the wardrobe of the American soldiers is because they are mostly shot wearing their Army uniform.

4.4.2 Humanitarian Frame

Humanitarian frame was selected to find out whether the American soldiers are depicted as humane with the enemy. The importance of this frame is that it reveals how films twist the stories in favour of the American soldiers to present the audience with the humanitarian side of these soldiers in an attempt to camouflage the atrocities they committed in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Whereas not coding the humanitarian side of Iraqis and Afghans is due to the fact that they are hardly portrayed humane with others, because as noted earlier, filmmakers concentrate on distorting the image of Iraqis and Afghans negatively, in contrast to American soldiers. However, any shot that represents the Iraqis and Afghans humane with the American soldiers will be analyzed in the findings section. All the shots that portray the soldier's humanitarian side will be coded. This category includes: grieving for the death of the Iraqi/Afghani, helping out the Iraqi/Afghani, socializing with the Iraqi/Afghani, and saving the Iraqi/Afghani from death.

4.4.3 Duration Frame

For the duration frame, the length duration of Americans portrayal in each film was timed versus the length duration of the appearance of the Iraqis and Afghans. At the end of each film, the times will be added together. This frame illustrates how war films usually portray the point of view of the Americans neglecting the other, in addition to the type of action the Iraqis/Afghans perform when they are portrayed.

4.4.4 Word Frames

As for the words frame, all the shots that include agitating words and emotional words will be coded. Emotional words are used in order to evoke sympathy from the viewers to the soldiers and to reveal the heroic, sacrificial side of these soldiers. As for agitating words, they provoke hatred to the enemy and a justification to the war. For instance, when calling an Iraqi or

Afghani a terrorist, this negative frame psychologically affects the viewer's perception, in a sense that it either asserts an already held assumption on Iraqis/Afghanis, or it provokes feelings of hatred towards them. The emotional words used in the code book are: freedom, protect, liberty, sacrifice, protect my family/ friends/ comrades/ brothers, defend, patriot, brother/hood, fighter, other (emotional words that are not listed in the codebook). Whereas the agitating words are: terrorists, killers, villains, murderers, criminals, evil, against the U.S., enemy, fucker/mother fuckers (taking the context it is said in into consideration), and other (agitation words that are not listed in the cookbook). The reason behind choosing these words as emotional and agitation is based upon Entman's selection of these words and their synonyms in his study *Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House Frame after 9/11*. Moreover, Hitler's emotional words in his speeches were also used as a reference for the selection of the emotional words in the study.

4.4.5 Sacrificial Frame

The sacrificial frame demonstrates how the soldiers sacrifice their lives in order to join the war and defend their country, and that means leaving their families and loved ones behind. This affects the perception of the viewer on how these soldiers are sacrificial on many levels. All the shots that portray the sacrificial frame will be coded. This category includes: whether the soldier's family is portrayed with or without the soldier (yes/no), if the discussion between the American soldier and his family is emotional (yes/no), if the discussion between the American soldiers about their families occurs (yes/no), and if the discussion between the American soldiers is emotional or not (yes/no).

4.5 Coder Trainer and Reliability Assessment

In order to foster reliability of content analysis, the methodology requires another coder to collect data. Hence, reliability examines the extent to which the instrument gives consistent

results in other contexts (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). Therefore, two coders must conduct the content analysis to reach agreement on reliability (Neuendorf, 2002). So in addition to the primary researcher who conducted the coding of the films, an independent coder assisted the primary researcher in coding of a random sub-sample from the population. The coder received training and instructions on how to code using the war film "Saving Private Ryan" as an example. The coder was trained on the different types of camera shots and angles, in addition to coding for the other categories. The coder had no difficulty in the implementation of coding since she understood well enough on how to assess each category.

After practicing coding, both the primary researcher and the coder coded the same film about the Iraqi war *Green Zone* directed by Paul Greengrass. The primary researcher instructed the coder on what to code; the shot duration was given to the coder for cinematic frames (sixty shots), whereas the coder coded all the shots for all other frames.

Inter-coder reliability was calculated using Cohen's Kappa, 100% agreement was reached between the primary coder and second coder for the following variables: Character in frame, Wardrobe of Iraqi/Afghani, discussion between soldiers about families, emotional discussion between soldiers about families, portrayal of families, emotional discussion between families and soldiers, humanitarian side of the soldier, emotional words, and agitations words. The agreement reached on action portrayal of Iraqi/Afghani is $Kappa=0.901$ due to the fact that the characters might be performing many acts at the same time such as running, shooting and gazing at the American soldier, hence this might be perceived differently from two people by neglecting one aspect of this action. As for camera shots ($Kappa=0.682$), music type ($Kappa=0.612$), and camera angles ($Kappa=0.700$), these variables are not as manifest as the other variables and therefore it was expected to generate different results between the two coders due to their

ambiguity. Some camera shots fall between the close up shots and medium shot category, as for music type, a coder might consider a certain background music as suspense while the other might consider it scary so it is indeterminate, and the camera angles-like camera shots although calculated higher agreement- misleads the viewer in some shots in a way that the camera might be positioned between an eye-level and low angle. However, these three variables, although had a moderate agreement level, were important for the study because they are primary aspects in cinematic framing since camera shots and angles are basic variables in a shot, and music is crucial to the shot since it adds an emotional dimension to it, and for these reasons these variables were kept.

Variable	Kappa=
Variable 1: Character in frame	1.0
Variable 2: Camera shot	0.682
Variable 3: Music type	0.612
Variable 4: Camera angle	0.700
Variable 5: Wardrobe of Iraqi/Afghani	1.0
Variable 6: Action portrayal of Iraqi/Afghani	0.901
Variable 7: Discussion about families	1.0
Variable 8: Emotional discussion about families	1.0
Variable 9: Portrayal of families	1.0
Variable 10: Emotional discussion between family and soldier	1.0
Variable 11: Humanitarian side of soldier	1.0
Variable 12: Emotional words	1.0

Variable 13: Agitation words	1.0
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4.6 Data Analysis

This study is an analysis of the dependent variables cinematic frame, duration frame, humanitarian frame, words frame and sacrificial frame. The independent variable is the war film. The first hypothesis deals with the cinematic framing by using certain cinematic techniques. Hence, camera shots, angles, wardrobe of the Iraqi/Afghani, action of the Iraqi/ Afghani, and music type are the categories used in order to validate this hypothesis. Thus, the percentage of the variables “camera shots, camera angle, and music type” was compared between American soldiers and Iraqis/Afghanis, while the color wardrobe and the action portrayal of Iraqi/Afghani were analyzed according to their own percentage without comparing them to American soldiers. For example, the percentage of medium shots and close-ups portraying American soldiers was compared to the percentage of medium shots and close-ups portraying Iraqis/Afghanis (the focus of this variable is on medium shots and close ups). For camera angles, the focus was on comparing low angle shots and high angle shots for American soldiers and Iraqis/Afghanis respectively. For music type, the focus was on comparing the use of patriotic music, scary music, and dramatic music for American soldiers and Iraqis/Afghanis. For the wardrobe color of Iraqis/Afghanis, the importance of this category was to examine the percentage of light color clothes versus dark color clothes worn by Iraqis/Afghanis. For action portrayal of Iraqis/Afghanis, the focus was on comparing the percentage of the violent and threatening actions conducted by the latter versus non-violent actions.

As for the second hypothesis, although the humanitarian frame was coded by viewing how many times and what type of humanitarian act did the American soldiers perform with the Iraqis/Afghanis. However, this frame does not rely solely on the number of the performance of

these acts but rather on the existence and non-existence of these shots, and the type of humanitarian act.

The third hypothesis was examined by adding up the duration of the American soldiers' portrayal versus the Iraqi/Afghani portrayal, with a focus on the action of Iraqis/Afghanis in the limited duration they were portrayed in.

The fourth hypothesis coded for all the shots that portrayed the American soldier saying agitation and emotional words. The focus was on the words spoken and not on the number of times these words were spoken because a film might include one powerful emotional or agitation word that might affect the context of the scene, and therefore the existence and meaning of these words is what matters.

As for the fifth hypothesis, the sacrificial frame was examined through four categories. The first category codes for each time the family members (or friends) of the American soldiers were portrayed, whereas the second category codes for whether an emotional discussion between the American soldier and his family occurred or not. The third category codes for the conversation between the American soldiers about their families back home occurred or not, and the fourth one codes if the discussion between soldiers about their families was emotional or not.

SPSS software was used to obtain descriptive statistics to validate each hypothesis posed earlier. For H1, H2, H4, H5, frequency distribution data was collected for the camera shots, camera angles, music type, wardrobe of Iraqis/Afghanis, action portrayal of Iraqis and Afghanis, emotional and agitation words, humanitarian and sacrificial shots. The third hypothesis was tested by adding the duration of American soldier's portrayal versus Iraqi/Afghani portrayal.

Chapter 5 Findings

This chapter presents the results of the study. The results presented in this chapter examine the five frames obtained from the three war films *Lone Survivor*, *American Sniper*, and *The Hurt Locker*. The frames are cinematic frame, duration frame, sacrificial frame, humanitarian frame, and words frame

5.1 Cinematic Frames

H1: American war films glorify American soldiers and demonize Iraqi and Afghani citizens through cinematic techniques.

Cinematic frames include five variables which are: camera shots, camera angles, wardrobe of Iraqi/Afghani, music type, and action portrayal of Iraqi/ Afghani. For camera shots, the results of American soldiers are mostly portrayed using close up shots 38.9 %(35 shots), then medium shots 25.6% (23 shots). As for the portrayal of more than one American soldier, medium shots are mostly used with 16.7% (15 shots) and 3.3% (three shots) for close ups.

The highlighted parts of the tables demonstrate the important frequencies and percentages that are significant for the study and interpretation of the results.

			Camera Shots			
			Extreme long shot	Long shot	Medium shot	Close-up shot
American soldiers	1.0	Count	0	6	23	35
		% of Total	0.0%	6.7%	25.6%	38.9%
	2.0	Count	1	7	15	3
		% of Total	1.1%	7.8%	16.7%	3.3%

On the other hand, Iraqis are mostly portrayed by using medium shots 18.9% (17 shots combining the shots with American soldiers), long shots 8.9% (eight shots), and close ups 7.8% (seven shots). Iraqi fighters are mostly portrayed by using close ups 11.1% (10 shots), long shots

7.8%, and medium shots 6.7% (six shots). As for Afghani citizens, they are portrayed using 6.7% (six shots) medium shots, 5.6% (five shots) close ups, and 2.2% (two shots) long shots. Taliban are portrayed with 6.7% (six shots) medium shots, 5.6% (five shots) long shots, and 2.2% (two shots) close ups.

		Camera Shots					
		Extreme long shot	Long shot	Medium shot	Close-up shot	Extreme close-up shot	
Iraqi/Afghani	1.0	Count	0	0	0	1	0
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
	3.0	Count	1	7	14	6	0
		% of Total	1.1%	7.8%	15.6%	6.7%	0.0%
	4.0	Count	0	1	3	1	0
		% of Total	0.0%	1.1%	3.3%	1.1%	0.0%
	5.0	Count	1	7	6	10	2
		% of Total	1.1%	7.8%	6.7%	11.1%	2.2%
	7.0	Count	0	2	6	5	0
		% of Total	0.0%	2.2%	6.7%	5.6%	0.0%
	8.0	Count	0	0	1	0	0
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	9.0	Count	0	5	6	2	0
		% of Total	0.0%	5.6%	6.7%	2.2%	0.0%
	10.0	Count	0	0	2	1	0
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	1.1%	0.0%

For camera angles, the results indicate that American soldiers are mostly portrayed using low angle 61.1% (55 shots) whereas eye-level angle is used 37.8% (34 shots).

American soldiers camera angles	Camera Angles		
	Eye-level	Low angle	Birds-eye view

American soldiers	1.0	Count	24	39	1
		% of Total	26.7%	43.3%	1.1%
	2.0	Count	10	16	0
		% of Total	11.1%	17.8%	0.0%

Whereas Iraqis are mostly portrayed with eye-level angle 13.3% (12 shots), low angle 10% (nine shots), and high angle 6.7% (six shots). When Iraqis are portrayed with American soldiers in the same shot, 4.4% (four shots) are eye-level, 1.1% (one shot) is low angle. Iraqi fighters are mostly portrayed using eye-level angle 14.4% (13 shots), low angle 10% (nine shots), and high angle 3.3% (three shots). Afghani citizens are also mostly portrayed with eye-level angle 7.8% (seven shots), low angle 3.32% (three shots), and high angle 3.3% (three shots). As for Taliban, they are portrayed mostly with eye-level angle 7.8% (seven shots), low angle with 4.4% (four shots), and high angle with 2.2% (two shots).

			Camera Angles			
			Eye-level	Low angle	High angle	Birds-eye view
Iraqi/Afghani	1.0	Count	0	1	0	0
		% of Total	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	3.0	Count	12	9	6	1
		% of Total	13.3%	10.0%	6.7%	1.1%
	4.0	Count	4	1	0	0
		% of Total	4.4%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	5.0	Count	13	9	3	1
		% of Total	14.4%	10.0%	3.3%	1.1%
	7.0	Count	7	3	3	0
		% of Total	7.8%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%
	8.0	Count	1	0	0	0
		% of Total	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	9.0	Count	7	4	2	0
		% of Total	7.8%	4.4%	2.2%	0.0%

10.0	Count	3	0	0	0
	% of Total	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

As for the music type, American soldiers are mostly portrayed with no background music 55.6% (50 shots), 28.9% (26 shots) with suspense music in the background, 8.9% (eight shots) with patriotic music, and 6.6% (six shots) with dramatic music. Iraqi citizens are mostly portrayed with no music in the background 15.6% (14 shots), 8.9% (eight shots) with scary music, and 5.6% (five shots) with suspense music. When an Iraqi citizen is portrayed with an American soldier, 4.4% (four shots) have no background music. As for Iraqi fighters, 15.6% (14 shots) are portrayed with scary music in the background, 7.8% (seven shots) with no background music, and 5.6% (five shots) with suspense music. Afghani citizens are mostly portrayed with background music 5.6% (five shots), 4.4% (four shots) with scary music, 2.2% (two shots) with dramatic music, and 2.2% (two shots) with suspense music. Taliban are mostly portrayed with scary background music 7.8% (seven shots), 5.6% (five shots) with no background music, 1.1% (one shot) for suspense music, and 2.2% (two shots) have scary background music when both Afghani citizen and Taliban are portrayed in the same shot.

		Music type				
		Patriotic music	Dramatic music	Suspense music	No music	
American soldiers	1.0	Count	5	4	20	35
		% of Total	5.6%	4.4%	22.2%	38.9%
	2.0	Count	3	2	6	15
		% of Total	3.3%	2.2%	6.7%	16.7%

	Music Type
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			Dramatic music	Scary music	Suspense music	No music
Iraqi/Afghani	1.0	Count	0	0	0	1
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
	3.0	Count	1	8	5	14
		% of Total	1.1%	8.9%	5.6%	15.6%
	4.0	Count	0	1	0	4
		% of Total	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	4.4%
	5.0	Count	0	14	5	7
		% of Total	0.0%	15.6%	5.6%	7.8%
	7.0	Count	2	4	2	5
		% of Total	2.2%	4.4%	2.2%	5.6%
8.0	Count	0	1	0	0	
	% of Total	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	
9.0	Count	0	7	1	5	
	% of Total	0.0%	7.8%	1.1%	5.6%	
10.0	Count	0	2	0	1	
	% of Total	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	1.1%	

As for the wardrobe color of Iraqi/Afghani, they are mostly portrayed wearing dark color clothes 81.1% (73 shots), while 17.8% (16 shots) in light colors clothes.

Wardrobe of Iraqi/Afghani	Frequency	Percent
Valid 1.0	73	81.1
2.0	16	17.8
3.0	1	1.1
Total	90	100.0

For the action portrayal of the Iraqi/Afghani, they are mostly portrayed talking with the American soldier 18.9% (17 shots), performing other actions 18.9% (17 shots) such as six shots from *The Hurt Locker* portray Iraqi citizens working, six shots from *Lone Survivor* portray

Taliban and Afghani citizens fighting with one another, and 5 shots from *American Sniper* portray Iraqis crying for their dead family, Iraqi fighter screaming at the Iraqi citizens, an Iraqi talking on the phone, and Iraqi people walking and shouting. Iraqis and Afghanis are also portrayed gazing at the American soldier whether close or from a distance at 16.7% (15 shots), aiming the gun at the American soldier whether close or from a distance at 14.4% (13 shots), walking/running while carrying a weapon at 11.1% (10 shots), walking/running while shooting the soldier at 5.6% (five shots), carrying a weapon at 4.4%(four shots), running or walking at 4.4% (four shots), shooting at the American soldier at 4.4% (four shots), and 1% (one shot) for gazing at the soldier while carrying a weapon.

Action portrayal of Iraqi/Afghani	Frequency	Percent
Carrying a weapon	4	4.4
Aiming the gun at the American soldier	13	14.4
Shooting at the soldier	4	4.4
Gazing at the soldier	15	16.7
Gazing at the soldier+ carrying a weapon	1	1.1
Talking with soldier	17	18.9
Walking/running	4	4.4
Walking/running + carrying a weapon	10	11.1
Walking/running + Shooting at the soldier	5	5.6
Other	17	18.9
Total	90	100.0

5.2 Humanitarian Frame

H2: American war films portray the American soldiers as humanitarian with Iraqi and Afghani citizens.

Humanitarian frame shots exist in *Lone Survivor* and *The Hurt Locker*, whereas there were no humanitarian shots in *American Sniper*. In *The Hurt Locker*, 12 shots portrayed humanitarian shots through which six shots portrayed the American soldier socializing with the Iraqi citizens, four shots portrayed the American soldier grieving for the death of an Iraqi boy, and two shots portrayed the American soldier carrying the body of a dead Iraqi boy. As for “Lone Survivor”, one shot portrayed the American soldier saving an Afghani citizen from death, one shot portraying the American soldier helping out an Afghani citizen, and one shot portraying the American soldier kissing and hugging an Afghani boy.

Humanitarian shots	Frequency	Percent
Valid 1	4	1.4
2	1	.4
3	6	2.1
4	1	.4
5	4	1.4
6	264	94.3
Total	280	100.0

5.3 Duration Frame

H3: American war movies establish their own point of view in Iraq and Afghanistan wars by giving more salience to the American soldiers through depicting them in most of the scenes

After timing the duration of Americans portrayed versus Iraqis and Afghanis in each film, the duration was added. These are the following results:

For the film *American Sniper*, the film’s duration is 133 minutes. The duration of Americans portrayed in the film is 122 minutes (91%) whereas the duration of Iraqis portrayed is 11 minutes (9%).

For the film *Lone Survivor*, the film’s duration is 121 minutes. The duration of Americans portrayed in the film is 106 minutes (87%), whereas the duration of Afghani citizens and Taliban is 15 minutes (13%).

And for the film *The Hurt Locker*, the film’s duration is 131 minutes. The duration of Americans portrayed in the film is 121 minutes (92%), whereas the duration of Iraqis portrayed in the film is 10 minutes (8%).

5.4 Words Frame

H4: American war films use emotional words to evoke sympathy to the American soldiers and agitating words to evoke hatred to the Iraqi and Afghani citizens.

The words frame is divided into emotional and agitation words. The results of the emotional words are: three times the word “protect” was spoken, one time the word “freedom” was spoken, four times the word “brother/hood” was spoken, and three emotional words (phrases) that are not listed in the code book were said; these phrases are: “I’ll die in the line of duty, proud and strong” in the film *The Hurt Locker*, while in *American Sniper*, these emotional phrases were spoken: “I lay down my life for this country” and “It’s the greatest country in the world, I’d do anything to protect it”. The Following table displays the emotional words results.

Emotional words	Erequency	Percent
Valid 2	3	1.1
7	1	.4
8	4	1.4
10	3	1.1
11	269	96.1
Total	280	100.0

As for the agitating words, the results are: “terrorists” was spoken one time, “evil” was spoken one time, “against the U.S.” was spoken one time, “enemy” was spoken twice, “fucker/motherfucker” was spoken six times, and there were ten words that were spoken that are not listed on the code book. These words are: From “American Sniper”, “I want to get the bad guys”, “they are savages”, “savages”, “you bought it from savages”. From the film “Lone Survivor”, the words are: “bad guy”, “they fucking hate us”, “that’s not a kid, that’s a soldier that’s death, look at death”. The following table displays the agitation words results

Agitation words	Frequency	Percent
Valid 1	1	.4
6	1	.4
7	1	.4
8	2	.7
9	6	2.1
10	7	2.5
11	262	93.6
Total	280	100.0

5.5 Sacrificial Frame

H5: American war films portray the families of the American soldiers or depict discussions between the soldiers about their families in order to represent the soldiers as sacrificial people.

In the three films, the soldiers talked about their families and loved ones 18 times, 13 of which were emotional discussions. As for the family portrayal, the three films portrayed the soldier’s family. In *American Sniper* 28 shots portrayed an emotional discussion between the soldier and his family, mostly his wife (27 shot with his wife, while the other shot was the mother of a dead soldier). In *Lone Survivor*, 7 shots portrayed the families of the soldier’s mostly through depicting their pictures with dramatic music in the background. And in *The Hurt Locker*,

two shots portrayed an emotional discussion between the soldier and his wife and between the soldier and his son.

Discussion about families between American soldiers

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	18	6.4
	2	261	93.2
	10	1	.4
	Total	280	100.0

Emotional discussion between American soldiers about family

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	13	4.6
	2	267	95.4
	Total	280	100.0

Family portrayal of the America soldier

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	37	13.2
	2	243	86.8
	Total	280	100.0

Emotional discussion between the American soldier and his family

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	32	11.4
	2	248	88.6
	Total	280	100.0

Chapter 6 Discussion and Analysis

This chapter presents the interpretation of the results of the study. The existence or non-existence of cinematic frame, duration frame, words frame, sacrificial frame and humanitarian frame are discussed in relation to the findings, framing theory, as well as the literature review. The discussion will reveal where the findings converge and diverge from the findings of the literature review.

6.1 Cinematic Frame

Cinematic frame include five categories that are camera shots, camera angles, music type, wardrobe color of Iraqi/Afghani, and action portrayal of Iraqi/Afghani.

For camera shots, American soldiers were generally portrayed with close-up shots, whereas Iraqis and Afghans are more portrayed with medium shots. It is important at this point to draw comparisons between the medium and close up shots and discuss their significance and impact on the frame. Medium shots allow the viewer to pick up on the character's movements, actions and certain emotions, while also portraying the surrounding setting of the character in the frame. As for close-up shots, they emphasize the character's face over the setting, displaying emotions of the character and giving the shot a dramatic effect. Hence, the portrayal of American soldiers with more close-up shots than medium shots (when one soldier occupies the frame) reveals the emotional state and dramatic tension of the soldier and allows the viewer to become more engaged with the character. When an American soldier is portrayed in a close-up, he is viewed as the hero of the narrative, giving him salience over other characters; of course this applies on Iraqis and Afghans when shot in a close-up; however, with different connotations. In *American Sniper* for example, Chris Kyle is always shot in close-ups when aiming the rifle at the Iraqis and shooting them; sometimes the close-up focuses on both Kyle's tensed face and the

rifle. Thus, the viewer becomes immersed in the dramatic moment of the soldier when he is about to shoot someone; nonetheless, the shot changes from Kyle to an Iraqi who is either carrying a gun or about to shoot someone and then changes back to Kyle as he pulls the trigger- a sort of justification to the latter's actions. Consequently, the montage of the images- what shot comes before the other and what shot follows- has an impact on the narrative of the scene and is usually illustrative of the American soldier's actions (shooting the Iraqis). On the other hand, portraying the Iraqis/Afghans with a medium shot while they are running, walking, carrying a gun or gazing at the American soldier indirectly assigns less significance to their actions in the film's narrative. For instance, Iraqi fighters in *The Hurt Locker* are portrayed with only two close-up shots, while all other shots are medium and long shots. However, *American Sniper* mostly uses close-up shots to portray "Al Kassam" who is one of the main targets of Chris Kyle and is portrayed as the villain in the film for many reasons discussed in the sections to follow. The use of close-up shots along with scary music, black wardrobe, and the action of Al Kassam who is either shooting at the soldiers or aiming the gun at them, assigns the "Villainous characteristics" to the character through creating feelings of unease and hatred towards him among the audience. Hence, framing effect occurs in this case due to the negative frames assigned with the portrayal of Iraqis and these negative frames as Druckaman (2001) believes, in return, shape the frames of thought among the audience.

The close-up shots, then, signify and mean differently when it comes to depicting Chris Kyle and Al Kassam. As noted earlier, when Kyle is shot in a close-up, either the music is suspense or there is no music and the previous shot and the shot that follows always justify why he pulls the trigger. The combination of cinematic frame categories, then, must be taken into consideration when assessing how Iraqis/Afghans are framed in each film. In *Lone Survivor*,

both Afghani citizens and Taliban are mostly portrayed with medium shots giving significance to their surroundings. However, when the Taliban leader of the group “Ahmad Shah” is portrayed in the film, he is mostly portrayed with close-up shots, specifically when he is killing someone or when someone is about to kill him, thus- like “Al Kassam”- his fierce face takes up the whole frame accompanied with scary music, black clothes and then his violent actions that follow. Likewise, framing effect might occur because of the negative elements attributed to Taliban and Afghani citizens, which consequently affect the audience frame by reinforcing pre-held judgments on both Iraqis and Afghans, or shaping the audience’s perception towards them.

With respect to camera angles, American soldiers are mostly portrayed with low angles 61.1%, and then with eye-level 37.8%, with no portrayal in high-level angle, while Iraqis and Afghans are mostly portrayed with eye-level (13.3% for Iraqis and 7.8% for Afghans) and then low angle (10% for Iraqis and 3.3% for Afghans) and high angle (6.7% for Iraqis and 3.3% for Afghans). Eye-level angle puts the viewer on equal footing with the character in frame. As for the high angle, the camera looks down on the character making the latter seem small and powerless; conversely, the low angle looks up to the character and positions him as powerful and dominant. Since American soldiers are mostly portrayed with low angle, this impacts the context of the frame because they would be perceived powerful, unlike Iraqis and Afghans that are sometimes shot from a high angle -which is never used in the case of American soldiers. Laswell (1973) believes that propaganda in the broadest sense is the technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations; but of course before the human action is influenced, human’s perception must be altered, and that is what filmmakers usually focus on by distorting the enemy’s image (whether Iraqi, Afghani, or any other enemy of the U.S.) and embellishing the image of the American soldiers. The fact that American soldiers are portrayed

more with low angles than eye-level angles in the three films is an indication of how cinematic techniques are agents of framing and propaganda.

Interestingly, Iraqi fighters are portrayed mostly with eye-level angle, and then with low angle empowering them- negatively- by using other cinematic techniques that would villainize them; techniques such as scary music, dark wardrobe, and dark lightening, especially in the case of *American Sniper* where “Al Kassam”, “The Butcher” and other Iraqi fighters all wear black, with scary music in the background, with close-up shots, and while performing violent action like aiming the gun or shooting. The same applies for Taliban in *Lone Survivor* who are mostly shot with eye-level angle and then high angle. The constant use of such cinematic techniques among films reveals how critical it is to distinguish between different shots, angles, music type, lightening, and other techniques. As stated previously, *Triumph des Willens* (1935) success relied upon the image framing of Hitler through camera shots, angles, heroic music type, and montage among other things. Most of the shots portrayed Hitler from low angle with close-up shots and heroic music. The same techniques that rendered the film as one the most propaganda films in the history are still being employed in Hollywood films. *Triumph des Willens* achieved its goal which was brightening the image of Hitler and creating a Hitler cult, and *American Sniper*, *Lone Survivor*, and *The Hurt Locker* might have achieved their aim too in distorting the image of Iraqis and Afghans, brightening the image of the U.S. soldiers, and justifying why American soldiers have killed Iraqis and Afghans.

With regards to the music used, American soldiers are mostly portrayed with no background music, then with suspense music, patriotic music and dramatic music, and with no portrayal of scary background music. Fischhoff (2005) believes that: “music enhances, accentuates, completes psychological effects because there is just so much that an actor can

express with his face, body, and dialogue.” (p.8). Indeed, music provides a representation of the scene’s mood and the emotional condition of the character which prompts a certain emotional reaction from the viewers. Hence, when American soldiers are portrayed with no background music, the focus is on their actions, but when they are portrayed with patriotic music, the music complements the scenery and establishes a connection with the characters as patriots, powerful and heroic. For example, at the beginning of *Lone Survivor*, the music switches between the dramatic music and patriotic or heroic music- dramatic music is audible when the soldiers are talking with their families or when discussing their families with one another . The music shifts to patriotic when two soldiers start racing portrayed in long shots and from low angles to represent their strength and heroism. Suspense music in the three films is used when the soldier is in contact with the Iraqi/Afghani or is about to engage in a shooting or when the soldiers are talking with each other about the Iraqis/Afghanis.

Also, both Iraqi citizens and Afghani citizens are mostly portrayed with no background music yielding prominence to their appearance, shots, angles, and actions. However, scary music is used with both Iraqis and Afghanis in many shots. As noted before, the type of music insinuates a certain emotional response from the viewer, so when the character is accompanied with a scary music, the audience becomes nervous, associating this character with evil. Thus, in *The Hurt Locker*, scary music accompanies the Iraqi citizens who gaze at the soldiers from the buildings. When accompanied with scary music, the action, which is only gazing becomes, troublesome and creates a negative image in the audience’s mind. Therefore, the use of scary music in the background with Iraqi and Afghani citizens negates the neutrality in their depiction. It is important here to return to Dimitirova’s (2005) argument on self-referential frame which is the tendency of the media to insert itself into the story as more than a reporter of the action, but

as a player/ actor who influences the process or unfolding of events. In other words, the filmmaker's intention by using scary background music with Iraqis and Afghans is perhaps to create unease with these characters and ultimately affect the audience's perception about them. The filmmaker's use of certain types of music with certain cinematic shots is how self-referential frame works. As for Iraqi fighters and Taliban, they are both mostly portrayed with scary music directly associating them to villainy. "Al Kassam" and "The Butcher" and Iraqi fighters in *American Sniper* are mostly portrayed with a scary music in the background, except for when they are engaged in open fire with American soldiers, in which case, suspense music is used. Taliban are also portrayed with scary music except for the fighting scenes with American soldiers, whereas the seven shots that portray Iraqi fighters in *The Hurt Locker* mostly in long shots have no background music because the longest shot is about two seconds, giving salience to the American soldiers in every scene the fighters are depicted in.

As for the color of the Iraqis/Afghans wardrobe, they are mostly portrayed wearing dark color clothes 81.1% while 17.8% in light colors clothes. The wardrobe color could be significant in giving a positive or a negative image of the character. American soldiers are mostly portrayed wearing their Army uniform whereas Iraqis/Afghans are mostly portrayed in dark color clothes because this is another form of communication to send out implicit messages to the viewers about the "dark" characters of the film, as Smith & Smith (2012) point out: "Costumes are invaluable in providing information to the audience about the story and the character being presented" (p. 5). Perhaps then, the costumes importance signifies the perceptions that the audience would instill in formulating their opinions and/or attitudes about the characters, such that dark colored clothing in the contextual settings presented would emphasize that the characters themselves are dark or in other words "bad," "evil" or "sinister." Thus, in such cases

the creators of these films seem as if they are purposely creating this image in order to influence and emphasize particular attitudes such as invoking fear or negativity towards the Iraqis/Afghanis and inversely promoting the "goodness" of the American soldiers.

With respect to the action portrayal of Iraqis/Afghanis, they are mostly portrayed talking with the American soldier or aiming the gun at the American soldier, gazing at him, carrying a weapon. They are infrequently portrayed talking amongst each other or fighting with an Iraqi fighter or Taliban in the case of Afghani citizens. At this level, it is crucial to note again how representation of cultures, societies, and people shape the perception and opinion of the viewers of these groups of people. Branston & Stafford (2006) discuss how the term "representation" in the media reinforces certain images, stories, and situations over and over again making them seem natural while excluding other images making them seem unfamiliar or even threatening. In *American Sniper*, Iraqis are represented either as terrorists, barbaric or collaborating with the enemy. "The Butcher" who is the main enemy of Kyle uses a drill to drill the head of an innocent Iraqi child to deter other Iraqis from cooperating with the U.S., but in reality, does the butcher really drills the heads of children, or is his existence in the film a justification to the actions of the U.S. to create a narrative that is often found in war films- the black and white narrative. This also applies to an Iraqi sniper "Al Kassam" who is eventually killed by Kyle. Moreover, an Iraqi family who offers Kyle and his comrades to dine with them (and the only Iraqis who are portrayed humane with American soldiers) turn out to be collaborating with Iraqi fighters by hiding weapons for them in their rooms. Furthermore, at the beginning of the film, Kyle shoots a young boy in front of his mother who was about to throw a bomb on the U.S. troops. The mother does not reveal any signs of sorrow but rather, she continues the quest and attempts to throw the bomb again. So how would the viewers perceive such actions? In reality, any mother whose son

is shot down right in front of her, would immediately fall down and weep, so what kind of barbarism is the filmmaker trying to portray the Iraqis with? In brief, the action portrayal of Iraqis in *American Sniper* is dehumanizing, representing them as a terrorist threat, distorting the image of all Iraqis by portraying them this way. This of course contradicts critics such as Devon (2015) who argues that Kyle should not be criticized and demonized by other critics; rather, the U.S. government is the one that should be criticized. It is true that the U.S. government failed in its goals in invading Iraq, however, it is the filmmaker that perhaps portrays Kyle and Iraqis as the U.S. government believes to fit its political agenda. In other words, the U.S. government- in some films- directs the filmmaker on how to entertain the millions out there while also bombarding them with (distorted) hidden messages.

Further than this and ironically, both *American Sniper* and *The Hurt Locker* have similar opening credits that constitutes the Muslim prayer call overlapped with an alarming, unpleasant fast pace sounds, portrayed with wide shots of Iraqi people and U.S. soldiers in a destroyed landscape (semi-destroyed in *The Hurt Locker*) thereby creating a feeling of tension, unease and nervousness towards those who practice their faith. Often, the first scene of the films creates a general idea of the main theme of the film; beginning both films in such similar manner indicates the mindset of the filmmaker- glorifying the U.S. soldiers and demonizing the Iraqis- and this potentially might become the approach of the audience in viewing both Iraqis and U.S. soldiers. *The Hurt Locker* as noted earlier is not concerned with fighting Iraqis but rather removing the bombs planted in Iraq. Yet when Iraqis are portrayed, they are mostly depicted gazing at the soldier from a distance or are about to perform a terrorist act such as explosions and shooting the American soldiers. The only positive encounter the viewer sees between a soldier and an Iraqi is between the lead actor and an Iraqi boy called “Beckham” who is eventually killed with bombs

planted in his body -at the hands of Iraqi people according to the American soldier. The shots that portray the socialization between the main actor and Beckham were a connotation of the fatherhood that the soldier is compensating because he left his son back in the U.S. Yet these shots end negatively by pointing out that Iraqis were the reason for such barbarism, and the quest of the soldier to find out who his killers are begins.

As for *Lone Survivor*, the first encounter with Afghani citizens “an old man and two boys” is also negative as they are portrayed collaborating with Taliban, and are cinematically portrayed inferior and threatening to the U.S. soldiers as they are depicted from high angles, with close-up shots, and suspense music in the background. Despite the fact that Afghani citizens in *Lone Survivor* are also fighting with Taliban, nevertheless they are portrayed threatening and barbarians. Only one Afghani citizen helps the American soldier “Luttrell”, while the other Afghani citizens oppose the Afghani man for helping him and consider the American soldier an enemy. And therefore the majority of Afghani citizens are portrayed as a threat especially that they are mostly portrayed while carrying a weapon, or running or gazing at the soldier. Consequently, the representation of Iraqis/Afghanis in these films is negative as they are portrayed as a threat to the U.S. soldiers, contrary to how the Americans are glorified in their portrayal, and how their actions are justified in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Apparently, the U.S. has not altered its approach in film propaganda as recurring themes of American patriotism and the distortion of the enemy’s image are being still used in many war films. Thus, as noted earlier, Fyne (1994) writes that movies in WWII contained almost the same themes which were “military strength, home front sacrifices, ethnic harmony, underground resistance, individual heroism, and Allied cooperation all flickered on the screen, and attested to the total victory motif” (p.10). Also, George Creel, Chairman of the committee on Public Information (CPI) believed that the

movies in WWI had a role in “carrying the gospel of Americanism to every corner of the globe.” (Lévesque, 2014). Obviously, this role has not changed since WWI and WWII because the same elements of propaganda are still being utilized for the same goals “spreading the American gospel”

Combining the factors that frame the representation of Iraqis/Afghanis and American soldiers, it can be deduced that Iraqis and Afghanis are dehumanized and demonized while American soldiers are glorified and are portrayed as heroes.

6.2 Humanitarian Frame

Even though the shots that portray the humanitarian side of the American soldiers are few, however, these shots exist explicitly in *The Hurt Locker* and *Lone Survivor* and implicitly in *American Sniper*. Again, it is not about the number of shots; rather, it is about the existence of latent messages in such shots. Thus, when American soldiers who occupied Iraq and Afghanistan are portrayed as humanitarian with Iraqis and Afghanis, this highlights the hypocrisy in their depiction, because it was the U.S. that invaded both Iraq and Afghanistan and caused destruction and chaos. Every person has a humanitarian side irrespective of their detrimental actions; murderer, rapist, or a terrorist carry an emotional side that inevitably manifests upon a certain occurrence. Yet, the filmmakers know that attaching humanitarian aspects to the main characters (heroes of the film) will get the empathy and sympathy of the viewers, making the audience neglect that fact that Americans are killing Iraqis and Afghanis as an obligation to their country, and demonstrating to the viewers how their humanity transcends the boundaries of the enemy.

In *The Hurt Locker*, the main American soldier is portrayed socializing with a young boy “Beckham” many times during the film as he plays football with him, buys DVDs from him and even hugs him. But when “Beckham” is killed, the soldier grieves over the death of this Iraqi boy

as he weeps and carries his body in a wide shot, long angle heroic type of shots as an indication of his humanitarian side.

As noted earlier, *American Sniper* does not include explicit humanitarian scenes, but there are many shots that portray the main American soldier “Chris Kyle” sometimes having qualms before shooting women and children because he does not want to kill anyone who is not a threat. Eventually, he pulls the trigger on a child when the latter throws a bomb on his comrades, but does not shoot another kid who was holding a weapon and suddenly throws it and runs away. Hence, the message behind such shots signifies the actions of the U.S. soldiers against anyone who threatens them; they are compassionate but the use of force is a must when threatened. In his autobiography, Kyle (2013) writes how he hated Iraqi people, how they didn’t matter to him, and how he enjoyed and loved what he did- killing the “savages”. Kyle was also known for his hatred towards the black race and he even killed 30 black people in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina occurred. Ironically, Kyle is a hero and a legend to the U.S. public and Clint Eastwood in his film *American Sniper* glorified him by choosing to omit some of Kyle’s own words and feelings towards the Iraqi people, nonetheless, Eastwood represented Kyle as an Iraqi hater but with justifications to such hatred.

Likewise, in the last scene of *Lone Survivor*, the main soldier “Luttrell” is rescued by the U.S. troops as they would return him back to the camps, but before Luttrell leaves, he kisses the son of the Afghani man who rescued him from Taliban and he urges him to go with him to the camps, however the Afghani man refuses. It is true that an Afghani man saved Luttrell and they became friends -according to Luttrell’s biography, but the fabrication and the dramatization of how Luttrell was able to walk after all the bullets he took, after falling over the cliff many times and being affected physically; to be able to walk, talk, and kiss the boy with all firefight between

Taliban and the American troops in the village, is only a falsification and a dramatization for the scene's purpose " reveal the humanitarian aspect of Luttrell with the Afghani people".

Nevertheless, director Peter Berg succeeds in portraying the narrative of the film that is based on a true story, but he fails in his surrealistic depiction of human's endurance to gun shots and physical pain, which ultimately leads to the image framing of American soldiers to represent them as surreal heroes while demonizing Taliban and presenting Afghani people as primitive and barbaric.

6.3 Duration Frame

American soldiers are given more salience in war films than Iraqis or Afghanis. They are portrayed approximately 90% in each film while 10% portray the Iraqis/Afghanis. However, it is not the fact that Iraqis or Afghanis are hardly portrayed in the film, it is how they are portrayed that frames their image to the audience. They are mostly portrayed while carrying their weapons, or shooting, or gazing at the American soldiers, or talking with the American soldiers mainly about other Iraqis or Afghanis. They are never portrayed alone in their homes, what they talk about, and why they are fighting the American soldiers or simply "defending their country". In this limited duration they are portrayed in, they are represented as violent people or terrorists who carry around their weapons and shoot the American soldiers when they see them. In *American Sniper*, Iraqi citizens are portrayed talking to American soldiers to give them certain information about a person called "The butcher" who is supposedly the right hand of "Abu Musab Al Zarkawi". "The Butcher" – as previously stated-is the typical villain who always wears black, is portrayed with scary background music, uses a drill to drill the head of an Iraqi child and is mostly portrayed aiming the weapon or shooting at the soldiers. This representation of the butcher and Al Kssam is nothing more than an assertion of the "villainous image" of the

enemy in the audience's mind and a justification of the actions of the American soldiers. Hence, critics of the film such as Macnab, Collin, and Kane (2015) who argue that the focus of the film is only Chris Kyle, not the suffering of Iraqi people nor the reasons behind the invasion of Iraq, overlook the distortion and misrepresentation of both Kyle and Iraqis. They advocate for the American soldier without seeking to analyze the drastic fabrication of Iraqis portrayal and what that provokes.

In *Lone Survivor*, the filmmaker attempts at some point not to villainize the Afghani citizens, but insists on representing the barbarism of Taliban. However, not only does the audience view little of the Afghani citizen's situation with Taliban, but the filmmaker depicts these citizens as primitive people who can communicate only through force, with the exception of one Afghani citizen who helps the American soldier "Luttrell" and saves him from Taliban. Thus, Afghani citizens are portrayed only when Taliban is threatening them and killing one of their own. On the other hand, the four American soldiers are portrayed as typical heroes who are gunshot many times and still continue to fight. The film never questions what the American soldiers are doing in Afghanistan or better yet, why Taliban destroys other Afghani villages and whether or not the Afghani citizens themselves are resisting and fighting Taliban presence. After all, the U.S. created Taliban to destroy the Soviet Union, but Taliban grew stronger and became the number one enemy of the U.S.

In *The Hurt Locker*, most of the scenes portray the Iraqi citizens as observers, gazing at the American soldiers through the windows, from the roofs of buildings creating a threatening feeling accompanied with suspense music. The major theme of the film is how American soldiers risk their lives to disarm the IED, the film- like *Lone Survivor* and *American Sniper*- never questions who planted these IED and for what purposes. The film is more concerned with

heroism, masculinity, and fatherhood and sends out latent political messages. For this reason, both Iraqi citizens and Iraqi fighters are not the main focus of the film, unlike *American Sniper* and *Lone Survivor* in which the enemy is apparent “Iraqis and Afghans (in particular Taliban)”. Nonetheless, when portrayed, Iraqis are portrayed as a threat to the soldiers, and as a primitive, and violent people. Critics such as Ritzenhoff and Kazeck (2014) who believe that the movie represents the U.S. military’s strategic goal for disarming a suspected (IED) and nothing more are mistaken because the techniques implemented in the film suggest otherwise. This is the main predicament that this study investigates - the image distortion of the Iraqis/Afghans even when they are not considered the enemy, and the reason is that one of the filmmaker’s duty is to glorify the American soldiers and attempt to tarnish the image and representation of those who are considered an enemy to the U.S.. The mentioned example in the literature review on the effect of stereotypes in film reveals how dangerous it is to constantly reinforce stereotypes on certain groups. The experiment was conducted by Peterson and Thurston (1933) to study the effects of the film *Birth of Nation* (1915)-that depicts the Ku Klux Klan as a heroic force and black people as aggressive and unintelligent. Their study led to the results that the movie altered the perceptions of black people among the audience creating more negative opinions towards African Americans. Similar studies were conducted on similar movies to uncover that watching many films with the same viewpoint reinforced the attitudes against African Americans (Peterson & Thurstone, 1933). This means that ideas cultivated in the minds of the viewers about a group of people or cultures is based upon their portrayal in films, and the dangerous aspect is acting upon such ideas. This confirms De Vreese’s (2005) argument on how framing can have an effect on the individual and societal level of the public. On the individual level, people’s attitudes might be altered due to the exposure of certain frames (negative frames of

Iraqis/Afghanis' and positive frames of American soldiers), whereas the societal level is altered by the modification of social level process due to frames exposure (Vreese, 2005). Social level process might include decision-making, political socialization and collective actions. As a result, the constant framing of historical events along with character framing can affect the audience on the individual level, their political knowledge, and their historical knowledge.

6.4 Word Frames

In their book *The Fine Art of Propaganda*, Lee and Lee (1939) define the common seven devices of propaganda; among them are “Glittering Generality” and “Name Calling”. Both of these devices employ the use of words, in particular, emotional words and negative words. Glittering Generality means associating something with an emotional phrase or words with valued concepts and beliefs without examining the reason behind it (Lee & Lee, 1939). In other words, Glittering Generality uses emotional words to appeal to recipient, words such as family, patriotism, peace, freedom, honor, liberty, etc...Hitler used this device to convince the Germans of his vision, words such as freedom, independence, pride, among others, made him gain more mass support because he knew the power of emotional words and what it can achieve to gain mass support.

Among the three films, *American Sniper* mostly uses Glittering Generalities or emotional words that evoke the emotions of the viewer and create a subconscious justification in the mind of the viewer for the actions of the American soldiers. Words that are mostly used in *American Sniper* are “protect”, “brotherhood”, “freedom”, and “family”. Entman (2003) believes that “the more resonance and magnitude (the words), the more likely that framing is to evoke similar thoughts and feelings in large portions of the audience” (p. 147), thus the significance of Entman’s discussion is that words can affect the audience in the similar manner they are spoken

in. Given the context of *American Sniper*, the purpose of such words is to stimulate the empathetic emotions of the viewers towards the soldiers (and Kyle precisely) as they protect their families and country from the enemies, which is also a justification to the actions they commit. The use of emotionally charged phrases and words in almost every scene of the film asserts Entman's argument about the resonance of words-in particular emotional ones- they evoke similar emotions. In *The Hurt Locker*, the most prominent emotional phrase said by an American soldier is "I'll die in the line of duty, proud and strong". This phrase has emotional influence because the soldier is stating that he would sacrifice his life for the obligation he has towards his country, and thus would create an emotional resonance to the viewer who knows that "martyrdom for one's country is an honorable act". On the other hand, how does disarming the bombs in Iraq affect the U.S. citizens in the U.S.? How is it relevant to patriotism and martyrdom if not for one's own country? As noted earlier, the film is a vehicle for recruiting soldiers for the U.S. army and it constructs this idea by exhibiting how war is addictive, juxtaposed with the mundane life back at the U.S.; nevertheless the filmmaker includes many elements that latently justify the presence of the U.S. soldiers in Iraq and why considering Iraqis a threat is reasonable. Comparably, Reeves (1999) notes that the Bolsheviks lend their support to Lenin and other leaders of the cause because of the powerful slogans that were conveyed to the population, despite the desperation they were encountering. Slogans like "All power to the Soviets" and "Bread, Peace, Freedom" were all part of the compelling propaganda campaign that touched the hearts and minds of thousands of the population and ultimately made them choose Lenin as a leader (Reeves, 1999). Ergo, emotional words have been crucial since the Bolshevik revolution, and the use of such simple words still exists in many films to elicit emotions.

On the other hand, “name calling” – another propaganda device- is describing or giving an enemy or opponent a negative connotation to make the viewers reject or condemn the idea without supporting the evidence; two current examples of name calling are terrorists and terrorism (Lee & Lee, 1939). In other words, negative words are associated to certain ideas or people to create negative emotions to these people or ideas among the audience, thus, name calling could be considered agitating words- negative words that agitate the audience. Like emotional words, *American Sniper* used agitation words the most among the three films. Words such as “evil”, “terrorists”, “savages”, “enemies”, “bad guys”, are considered “name calling.” These agitating words create negative reactions among the audience and assert the claim of dehumanizing the Iraqis. When Kyle and his comrades say these words, they refer to Iraqi people and not to Iraqi fighters or those who are associated with Al Qaeda in the film. Consequently, attributing these words to Iraqi people taints the Iraqis negatively and creates negative feelings towards them. In *Lone Survivor*, the word “motherfuckers” was said many times during the film when referring to Taliban. Although the word is inadequate and is usually said in different contexts, but its use in the film was a hateful remark in a moment of anger. It is unknown if this word might affect the perception of the viewer because it is highly used in many films, but it is a negative word and might create a negative resonance among the audience. In addition to that, the phrases: “they fucking hate us”, “that’s not a kid, that’s a soldier, that’s death, look at death”- said by a soldier referring to a young Afghani boy whom they captured in the mountains. As noted before, the film attacks Taliban and not Afghani people (manifestly), however referring to an Afghani boy as death connotes that this boy will grow up and fight them as Taliban is doing. Moreover, the phrase “they fucking hate us” also refers to two Afghani children and one old man

who were only gazing at the American soldiers. This also creates negative emotions among the viewers and a justification to the action that follows after this scene.

6.4 Sacrificial Frame

In the three films, discussions between soldiers about their families occurred, in addition to portrayal of their families, whether through pictures, or the actual shooting of the families. What is more important than their portrayal or soldiers' conversing about them is the dramatization of such shots. Most of the shots that portray this frame are dramatized through the use of emotional discussions and certain cinematic techniques such as dramatic music and close up shots.

Additionally, the three films depict how the soldiers leave their family and loved ones behind to participate in the war, and thus sacrificing their families for their duty towards the U.S.. Indeed, any soldier who takes part in a war sacrifices his family and his life, but when it comes to how the filmmaker chooses to represent this sacrifice, this is where framing takes place.

In *American Sniper*, the film portrays the upbringing of Chris Kyle in the first scenes of the film, how he grew up to become a soldier and how he met his wife, following the reasons that led him to join the war in Iraq. Kyle and his wife "Taya" are depicted many times in the film, either when Kyle returns from his serving tours, or when he is talking with his wife on the phone while he is in Iraq. The shots are always emotional in a sense that they either revolve around their kids, or how he has become a changed man because of the war. The juxtaposition between Kyle holding a weapon among the chaos of destruction in Iraq and holding the phone in his other hand while talking to his pregnant wife about her pregnancy reveals the kind of sacrifice that he makes; not to be with her in such circumstances because he is in another country. It is important to point out the contradictions between the emotional conversations between Kyle and his wife, and Kyle and his comrades, and the non-existence of any emotional shots between Iraqis. The

audience does not see any emotional conversation between one Iraqi and another Iraqi; rather, the filmmaker chooses to highlight the tragedy of those who have destroyed the lives of the Iraqis. In *Lone Survivor*, the family of the American soldiers are never portrayed live, but only through pictures (at the beginning of the film) and through discussions between the soldiers. As the film begins, and before the viewers are introduced to the four American soldiers, close-up shots of family pictures are portrayed with dramatic background music, after which an American soldier wakes up and directly chats with his wife on the internet telling her he misses her, followed by other shots of an American soldier who receives an email from his fiancée about the wedding gift she desires and he converses with another soldier about the gift. Like *American Sniper*, the viewer is always being reminded that these soldiers left their homes and their families and have sacrificed their lives to eradicate the world from terror, in order to create more sympathy and compassion to these soldiers. In *The Hurt Locker*, when the soldier returns to his home in the U.S., a few shots portray his girlfriend and his son, among them are two emotional shots that depict why he wants to return to Iraq although he does not want to leave his son and girlfriend behind. The soldier is addicted to war, and so he has to leave the dull life of his home to return to Iraq where he feels more like himself. And yet his girlfriend urges him not to return and he explains to his toddler why he has to go back and leave him, portraying the kind of sacrifice a soldier has to make once he becomes involved in a war. This notion of sacrifice has always existed in war genres; the reason for its inclusion in a repetitive pattern in almost all war movies is to insinuate sympathetic emotions amongst the audience. This belief among the audience might have become ingrained and is constantly being augmented in films. Thus, Silverstein (1987) believes that “propaganda is difficult to recognize because of its omnipresence, particularly because it is based upon ideals and biases that are accepted by most

members of the society” (p.50). Just like the humanitarian frame, the sacrificial frame is one of these ideals and biases that have been cultivated in the minds of the public so that the viewers might disregard and neglect the unjustified actions of these soldiers and focus on their positive achievements

6.5 Chapter Summary

The focus of this study was on three war films, *American Sniper*, *The Hurt Locker*, and *Lone Survivor*. The results of the study reports that negative framing of Iraqis and Afghans in war films exists, and the glorification and heroism framing of America soldiers also exists. The cinematic frame that includes camera shots, camera angles, and music type reveals how filmmakers choose to portray American soldiers as dominant and heroic, while portraying the Iraqis and Afghans as inferior and a threat. The dark wardrobe complements the “dark” portrayal of Iraqis and Afghans, and their violent action represents them as violent, barbaric, threatening people. The humanitarian and sacrificial frame of American soldiers gives them more glorification, and an assertion to their humane and sacrificial facet. The emotional words frame evokes the viewers to sympathize with the American soldiers and their justified war on Iraq and Afghanistan, and the agitation words stimulates the hatred of the viewer towards the Iraqi and Afghani. This difference in the portrayal of American soldiers and Iraqis/Afghans has severe ramifications on how the rest of the world would view these two cultures. In his argument about the “framing effect”, Entman (1993) believes that individuals might interpret issues differently according to highlighted frames or neglected ones, and Druckman (2001) complements his theory by adding that “framing effect is the process by which frames in communication shape the frames in thought” (p.228). This is the basis of framing and one of the main reasons the filmmaker use framing in their films. Thus, the distorted representations of

Iraqis and Afghans in the film serves many goals among which are justifying the Iraqi and Afghani war, dehumanizing the image of Iraqis/Afghans as a further justification to the war, so that the core message would be abolishing the world from such terrorists, and glorifying the American soldiers as they sacrifice their lives to protect their countries from those terrorists, all of course in favor of the American agenda. Therefore, attributing positive (glorifying) frames to the American soldiers and negative (dehumanizing, demonizing) frames to the Iraqis and Afghans activates the framing effect.

Ch. 7 Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to analyze the framing techniques the filmmakers employ in films to propagate certain messages, and to indicate the propaganda techniques used to persuade the audience of certain ideas or reinforce the pre-held judgments among them. As has been demonstrated in the preceding pages, Hollywood is allegedly controlled by the U.S. government, and has been used as a tool to deliver certain ideologies, ideas and political biases ever since World War I. Propaganda is so powerful that it can create a war, win a war, and even lose a war by creating certain messages and disseminating these messages over large populations. Film medium- the “propagation” of societies- has been controlling the opinion of the people from the 20th century, and this mass manipulation might not cease. The study revealed the kind of framing techniques that filmmakers employ to twist the image of Iraqis and Afghans. The study focused on war genres, but what is startling is the use of endless hidden messages in all genres. This constant manipulation of the mindset of the viewer becomes at some point, the collective mindset of groups, cities, and societies until it becomes a common notion accepted by many people in the world, including those who are framed in their image representation such as the Arabs. This is what propaganda does, it unites people from all over the world behind unrealistic realities created by leaders of the world and catered by the media. Reality is not accepted anymore because it is grotesque to an extent that if one would thoroughly comprehend how many people have lost their lives, and how many countries have been destroyed because of one leader’s endeavors, it would still be unrealistic. This powerful force that masks the carnage committed by the leaders of the world is propaganda.

Every year, hundreds of films are being produced, most of them are Hollywood films that are “inclined to serve propaganda” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Most of these films carry

hidden messages regardless the genre; it could be political, social, cultural, and ideological. It is substantial and is becoming more and more urgent for the audience to comprehend and understand what latent messages these films carry. If the youth is not educated about the notion of propaganda and its use in media, especially Disney and Hollywood films, this generation will be susceptible to this constant bombardment of corrupted ideas which will result in further prejudices among cultures, further stereotypes towards certain communities, and discrimination between the Americans and Non-Americans in the world. Joseph Gobbles said that: “propaganda becomes ineffective, the moment we become aware of it”, the predicament lies in “becoming aware of propaganda” because it is deceptive, but if the public especially the youth are educated and become informed of the type of hidden messages broadcasted in films and Cartoon, they might become immune to such distortions.

7.1 Limitations of the Study

The study has a number of limitations that can be cited. These limitations include the inability to generalize, limited variables, content analysis and framing theory’s limitations.

First the results might not be generalized to other Hollywood war movies that might be produced in the future. In other words, the results might be limited in their external validity because the variables used in the study might not be applicable on other films, thus other films might use different variables in framing certain wars. Further, the research focuses on Hollywood war movies and not on other films that are created by independent American productions studios, hence, more research could be done on independent films that portray the Iraqi and Afghani wars and explore if framing occurs within these films, or if these films are neutral in their depictions of Iraqis and Afghans and American soldiers.

Additionally, this study investigates certain frames that highlight how framing potentially occurs within war films. Future research could acquire more insight on different framing techniques that occur in scenario, frame composition, montage, and the actual plot of the film.

Also, this research coded the longest shots from all the scenes, this means that there are other shots that were not coded for which might include different portrayals of the frames selected for the study.

As for content analysis, its major limitation lies in the fact that it does not reveal how much the audience is affected by the message because it is focused only on describing the message (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013), yet, although analyzing the content does signify how the audience might perceive the message; which is in this case, the film. Hence, it cannot claim if the audience is affected by the messages behind the war films. Moreover, the results of content analysis are limited to the framework of the categories and definitions used in that analysis. So, other researchers might add to the pr-existing definitions as a result of the findings of this study.

Likewise, some limitations exist to the framing theory as the theoretical background for this research. Framing of manipulating messages affects the audience only when audience is vulnerable to such manipulation. In other words, if the audience holds a solid preference about a certain subject, they become resistant to framing. According to Lodge and Taber (2000), audiences with strong attitudes are least susceptible to new information to an extent that they might counter-argue against contrary information. If that is the case, then the audience might not be affected by the war films; however many previous experiments that were conducted on audiences revealed that film propaganda is effective and is one of the most powerful manipulative tools. This study suggests that films are continuously used as a propaganda technique.

7.2 Contributions of the Study

This research will open doors for researchers who are interested in discovering the effects of film propaganda. Perhaps future research might complement the present research by investigating and conducting experiments and surveys to examine if the audience is persuaded by such films; in other words, did these movies succeed in persuading the audience that the war in Iraq and Afghanistan is justified and that American soldiers are heroes and Iraqis and Afghans are villains? This also can be applied on other war films that portray different wars such as World War I, II and Vietnam War, as the focus would be on the comparison between the portrayal of American soldiers and portrayal of Germans, Russians, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Also, film was the only form of media used for this study; future research might include other forms of media such as magazines, newspapers, online sources, TV programs and series that are used as propaganda tools for the U.S. government. Moreover, future research could examine how the war films do not portray women soldiers- knowing that there are many women soldiers in the U.S. army. This contribution is related to another idea which can also be investigated and that is how Iraqi/Afghani women and children are represented in the three films and what are the repercussions of these representations.

This study adds to the existing body of literature by analyzing a sample that has not been studied before and demonstrating that film is one of the most powerful manipulative tools in media because it artistically and indirectly persuades the audience of its message. This research might serve as reference point for future studies related to film framing and government's use of propaganda. Also, the variables conceptualized and coded for might provide a template for the variety of frames that are included in war films and that can be utilized along with other frames to effectively study and analyze film medium. The integration between the media and politics in

this research relies on contemporary issues that are persistent because the political agenda of the U.S. may not change, and the use of film as a means for propaganda will continue. Hence, the concept of this study is significant in understanding media as a major manipulative tool used by the leaders of the world. These leaders govern our daily lives in some aspects regardless of the attitude we hold. They dominate our ideas in many spheres-political, social, ethical, cultural...-perhaps to possess our mind and the public is blinded to the truth because of the leaders' deceptive techniques through which propaganda becomes omnipotent to the extent that it would be arduous to grasp. The most alarming truth about propaganda is that it has been effective ever since WWI and people have realized its existence, but what type of new techniques would the leaders choose to continue to remain in control of the public's mind? Unfortunately, the inculcated ideas and prejudices that media have been communicating have become moral beliefs and values among the public, but as noted earlier, the next generation could become resilient to the power of media propaganda through education.

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Appendix A: Codebook

Coders:

- 1- Coder 1
- 2- Coder 2

Movie:

- 1- American Sniper
- 2- Lone Survivor
- 3- The Hurt Locker
- 4- Green Zone

Length of the film: _____

Length Portrayal of Americans: _____

Length Portrayal of Iraqi/ Afghani: _____

1- Character in the shot:

- 1- American soldier
- 2- More than one American soldier
- 3- Iraqi citizen
- 4- Iraqi citizen and American soldier
- 5- Iraqi fighter
- 6- Iraqi fighter and American soldier
- 7- Afghani citizen
- 8- Afghani citizen and American soldier
- 9- Taliban
- 10- Taliban and American soldier
- 11- Other, specify

2- Camera shot:

- 1- Long/wide shot
- 2- Medium shot
- 3- Close up
- 4- Extreme close up

3- Music type:

- 1- Patriotic music
- 2- Dramatic music
- 3- Scary music

- 4- Suspense
 - 5- No music
 - 6- Other
-
- 4- Camera angles:
 - 1- Eye-level
 - 2- Low angle
 - 3- High angle
 - 4- Tilted angle
 - 5- Birds-eye view
 - 5- Wardrobe color of the Iraqi or Afghani:
 - 1- Dark color clothes
 - 2- Light colors
 - 6- Action portrayal of Iraqi or Afghani:
 - 1- Carrying a weapon
 - 2- Aiming the gun at the American soldier (whether close or from a distance)
 - 3- Shooting at the soldier
 - 4- Gazing at the soldier (whether close or from a distance)
 - 5- Gazing at the soldier while carrying a weapon
 - 6- Talking with the soldier
 - 7- Walking/running
 - 8- Walking/running while carrying a weapon
 - 9- Walking/running while shooting at the soldier/s
 - 10- Other, specify
 - 7- Discussion about families or loved ones between American soldiers
 - 1- Yes
 - 2- No
 - 8- Emotional discussion between the American soldier and his comrades about his family or friends:
 - 1- Yes
 - 2- No
 - 9- Family portrayal of the American Soldier (with or without the soldier):
 - 1- Yes
 - 2- No

10- Emotional discussion between the American soldier and his family:

- 1- Yes
- 2- No

11- Humanitarian side of American soldiers:

- 1- Grieving for the death of the Iraqi/Afghani
- 2- Helping out the Iraqi/Afghani
- 3- Socializing with Iraqi/Afghani
- 4- Saving the Iraqi/Afghani from death
- 5- Other, specify

12- Emotional words said by American soldier/citizen:

1. Freedom
2. Protect
3. Liberty
4. Sacrifice
5. Protect my country
6. Defend
7. Patriot
8. Brother/hood
9. Fighter
10. Other, specify

13- Agitation words said by American soldier/citizen:

- 1- Terrorists
- 2- Killers
- 3- Villains
- 4- Murderers
- 5- Criminals
- 6- Evil
- 7- Against the U.S.
- 8- Enemy
- 9- Fucker/ motherfuckers (depending on the context)
- 10- Other, specify