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Between Hollywood glamour and bureaucratic grayness: film as a means of influencing the public opinion determinant of foreign policy

Abstract: Film represents a powerful instrument capable of influencing public opinion. This paper therefore examines this medium and its impact on shaping foreign policy and determining the course a state pursues in international relations. Furthermore, it explores how different models of film vary in their influence on public opinion, as well as how they affect public attitudes toward specific issues. The theoretical foundations of foreign policy determinants, public opinion, and film are presented with the aim of identifying their common intersection—that is, the ways in which the cinematic medium can indirectly, through public opinion, influence foreign policy. The hypothesis positions film as one of the most significant factors in shaping the public-opinion determinant of foreign policy, while also partially addressing the effects it may have on the public.

Keywords: foreign policy analysis, determinants of foreign policy, public opinion, film, media

Introduction

The best way to predict the future is to design and direct it, and foreign political intentions are served well by foreign policy analysis (FPA). Based on the information begotten by such an approach, it is much easier for the planners to channel intentions of their state and create an itinerary. The analysis of foreign policy decision-making (FPDM) is also emphasized as an important component of strategic planning. Some authors view this approach as useful in identifying both unique and general patterns of decision-making that cannot be established through classical foreign policy analysis (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010, p. 5).

While offering individual insights, certainly very important ones, the observation of decision-making processes cannot encompass everything that foreign policy analysis entails. The most general classification of the factors influencing foreign policy

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would divide them into external and internal factors (Kaarbo, Lantis, and Beasley, 2012, pp. 1–26). Among internal factors, public opinion constitutes a fundamental subject of interest in foreign policy analysis (Boucher, 2024, pp. 249–266). Given the very nature of the possibilities for shaping and directing public opinion, which will be discussed in a later section of this paper, it is important to examine how it influences foreign policy. Since the media represent the primary channel through which public opinion is shaped, and at the same time the main platform for communicating policy, this research will examine film and its influence on the public-opinion determinant of foreign policy.

Initial assumption claims that film is one of the essential tools the state can use to influence the public's opinion of foreign policy. Public opinion does not develop organically in all matters. Through certain instruments, in this case film, it can be influenced and sometimes subjected to state politics in any given moment.

The first part of the paper addresses the issue of public opinion in foreign policy, specifying and generalizing its terminological definition its influence on foreign policy, which is achieved through abstraction. The entire paper draws on public opinion theory, film as a media phenomenon, and the application of foreign policy analysis within a conceptual framework. The second, central chapter discusses the impact of film on the public-opinion determinant of foreign policy. The final section of the study represents an attempt to use qualitative analysis and synthesis to present selected films and the ways in which they influence public opinion. By analyzing empirical material, the paper addresses the question of the importance of properly articulating film. At the same time, it illustrates a two-way process of film production: on the one hand, to empower the public in relation to the external sphere, and on the other, to enable foreign policy to gain the support of public opinion that challenges it.

The public opinion tradition within foreign policy

An old Jewish saying holds that it is not important who rules Judea, but who rules the hearts of its inhabitants. Achieving such power is a Nietzschean struggle for power in which two groups confront one another - the ruling elite and the masses who are governed. Although there are authors who "interpret the indifference of the masses toward political issues as the stupidity of the masses, the lack of the ability to manage public affairs as the absence of competence, and the willingness of the masses to vote as a refusal of the masses to govern" (Šušnjić, 2011, p. 84), their aspirations must nevertheless be taken into account, because the ruling elite will "more easily keep under its control a city accustomed to living in freedom by governing it with the support of its inhabitants than in any other way" (Machiavelli, 2003, p. 46). Of course, it is possible to govern a state in other ways, but these most often come at the cost of much bloodshed.

The term "mass" has a severely negative connotation due to the lack of the capability to articulate higher goals and its strive for destruction: "We often speak of the mass's desire for destruction. This is the first thing we notice about it, and we cannot deny that this desire exists everywhere, in all kins of countries and cultures" (Canetti, 1984,

p. 13). Gathered out in the streets, the mass will influence the start or an end of a war through the pressure it exerts, make a ruler abdicate, which is true all over the world. One influences the masses to influence the public opinion. This is where the need to understand film in this context stems from.

On the other end stands the civil public, which "can first be understood as a sphere of private individuals who, gathered together, constitute a public; they need a public regulated by the authorities' rules and from the outset oriented against public authority itself, in order to settle accounts with it regarding the general rules of interaction in a fundamentally privatized yet publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation is specific and historically unprecedented: public reasoning" (Habermas, 2012, p. 81).

The two groups exert different types of pressure on the determination of foreign policy, even though they are motivated by some form of idea or opinion. This further complicates the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, which is already complex due to the very fact that it is difficult to determine who and how influences its formation (Day and Hudson, 2020, p. 161). It is important to adequately monitor trends in public opinion, as it is known that it can direct extreme actions in foreign policy, such as the use of force, escalation of conflict, or the severing of relations (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010, p. 131). Although such phenomena align with mass pressure, they do not preclude changes in attitudes, as the public is not a static category.

Deconstructing the social system as a determinant of foreign policy, Ivo Visković notes: "The social structure would include: the basic economic–class structure, national structure, social stratification, and the ideological–political organization of particular classes, strata, and groups. The political system, as a group of determinants, would encompass: the political institutions of a given society, forms of relations between government and other social structures, political tradition and culture, as well as forms of political communication" (Visković, 2007, pp. 69–70). Within this categorization, public opinion can be observed at all structural levels. The masses influence foreign policy when multiple "groups" intersect around a common interest. At that point, even political determinants become involved in some way. The role of film in such cases is evident - it mobilizes members of different classes and, through emotional appeal, easily transforms them into a mass. Confirmation of this is also found in Đuro Šušnjić: "Structural analysis of the mass reveals that the mass is composed of classes and that each class is, as a rule, capable of critically judging and condemning messages arriving from various sources" (Šušnjić, 2011, p. 84). Beyond insight into what can influence the formation of the public, a unified finding emerges that the mass is, in some way, determined by the most dominant class.

If they do not turn into masses, classes possess critical reasoning because they bring together a number of similar individuals. By embodying their views, a class forms public opinion that "on the historical stage becomes an active subject, capable of overseeing the actions of the government" (Gozzini, 2011, p. 10). Film language addresses the conative and affective dimensions, so that classes, in part or in whole, are transformed into a mass that ultimately influences foreign policy. The importance

of this becomes greater when the complexity of foreign policy analysis is understood, as well as the historical differences in the functioning of agents and structure (Carlsnaes, 1992, pp. 245–270). While the discourse of foreign policy has changed, public pressure has remained largely consistent, along with the position of the media.

Determining a precise definition of public opinion is a more complex process. In their research, Zoran Pavlović and Dragomir Pantić, comparing more than fifty different definitions, identify several common points: "the breadth of consensus among the subjects of public opinion; the object of public opinion and citizens' interest in that content; the new quality of public opinion (collective versus aggregative); the nature of the public; and the type and strength of the subjects' expression through public opinion" (Pantić and Pavlović, 2007, p. 138). This definitively justifies the position of public opinion as a determinant of foreign policy. In the foreground of this paper are the object of opinion and people's interest, which is logical when discussing politics in any form. From state to state, these two variables fluctuate considerably. When foreign policy is placed in focus, interest may increase or decrease, but the key point is that public opinion is passive and influenced by governments or professional opinion shapers (Lippmann, 1998, pp. 253–255). By adding the notion of a "phantom public," it becomes clear that public opinion is constructed (Lippmann, 1993, pp. 4–5). Film, of course, serves professionals as a tool for shaping influence and generating interest, so in direct relation to foreign policy certain issues become more compelling.

Regardless of whether interest exists naturally or is manufactured, it will always be smaller and greater. The traditional wisdom about the marginal influence of public opinion on US foreign policy, known as the Almond–Lippmann consensus, reflects a lower level of public interest, while Leslie Gelb's post-Vietnam perspective challenges the notion of an uninterested public (Rosati and Scott, 2010, pp. 329–330). These views extend well beyond the boundaries of the United States and represent two poles between which the public can be observed.

Film is often used in politics to secure agreement, which could be derived from the attitudes of individuals toward mass media (Lippmann, 1998, p. 248), and there are those that afford them the key place in the production process (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, pp. 1–2). Public opinion, observes in that way, is not interested or disinterested, nor is its interest a subject of influence, but it rather accepts or does not accept a certain foreign policy initiative that put to a vote indirectly. Media today has become a kind of a square that dialectically synthesizes public opinion, but, above all, what is needed is the individual's freedom to access that square: "Formally, subjective freedom for individuals as such to have and express *their own* judgements, opinions, and advice on general affairs appears within the community that is called public opinion" (Hegel, 1989, p. 441).

By understanding the categories of interest and consent, it is confirmed that the mobilization of the public occurs only after it has become interested. In both cases, film occupies a very important place. Whether it targets interest or consent, when so engaged it influences foreign policy. Its language is the same as that of television, which is "necessary for war in order for it to emerge from the anonymity

of the slaughterhouse and to be adorned with that title" (Remondino, 2002, p. 17). The process is clear, emerging from the hall of shadows requires encompassing the broadest possible public, and in this way television gathers support or creates enemies. Film does the same. "Critical political theory has established that mass media are decisive institutions for the manipulation of opinions," writes Ljubomir Tadić, unequivocally pointing to how much film helps direct public opinion, and thus its influence on foreign policy, in a particular direction (Tadić, 1993, pp. 471–482). All of the above is relevant given that there are US presidents who, with regard to the use of force, act to a large extent in accordance with prevailing public attitudes (Brulé and Mintz, 2006, pp. 157–173).

"Film" influence on determinant of foreign policy

In studying foreign policy analysis, some authors identify the role of the media as a connecting link between the public and the state, and acknowledge their influence on shaping public opinion in foreign policy (Kaarbo, Lantis, and Beasley, 2012, pp. 1–26). Zoran Jevtović recognizes their primordial influence in the process of generating public opinion: "With the emergence of the press, few people were aware of the importance of a medium essential for the formation of public opinion, so with the expansion of the right to vote, which is the basis of political decision-making, a race began to capture the spiritual nature of every individual" (Jevtović, 2003, p. 30). The importance of the media is evident in the process of mobilization, which is logical because "opinion is formed in the clash of arguments over a current social problem" (Jevtović, 2003). It should also be added that domestic policy is shaped on the basis of the attitudes of both the elite and the masses (Hudson, 2005, pp. 1–30). More precisely, it is created through the synthesis of pressures from both groups, for which there is no better arena than the media.

Film, on the other hand, does not allow for the crossing of opinions. The elite or the mass both tell their story from their own viewpoint. A film about the interview between Robert Forst and Richard Nixon is experienced differently than the interview that took place on television. It is evident that both media speak the same language, but they differ in their freedom of interpretation. The specific advantage of film compared to television lies in its degree of involvement. Marshall McLuhan) dissects this incisively: "[...] a hot medium such as film and a cold one such as television differ according to one crucial principle. A hot medium is one that extends a single sense in "high definition". High definition is a state of data saturation," adding that "hot media do not leave the audience with much to fill in or complete" (McLuhan, 1971, p. 58). The goal of a film is not to consider a question, but to set an angle. Through television, a filmic expression can be observed: "It also succeeds in what needs to be shown, but in such a way that it is not in fact shown, or is rendered insignificant and trivial, or is constructed so as to assume a meaning that does not correspond to reality at all" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 34). Both media are capable of achieving this thanks to a wide spectre of expression tools at their disposal. Everything in film, shots, scenes, camera angles, are subordinated to transmitting

the desired message. Attention is directed, or, in Heideggerian terms, there is an attempt to divert it "toward something on the path that thinking is only intimated on the way, to draw attention to something of the path that shows itself to thinking and yet eludes it" (Heidegger, 2003, p. 7). It is important to maintain a constant state of uncertainty by pointing attention to elusive signs. The cross on the tower of a red-brick Adventist church, whose outline appears in the window frame of a neighbouring house during a scene of interaction between the actors, may go unnoticed by many, yet it carries a message - nothing in film is accidental. Some researchers therefore observe: "Film material is thus encoded according to the way people experience their social reality, which underlies its popularity. Although the viewer consciously understands the unreality of what unfolds on the screen, they relate to the content as if it were a real event, sometimes even emotionally" (Labaš and Mihailović, 2011, pp. 95–122). In its engagement with media content, film offers the possibility of intensifying affective influence on the public-opinion component, which places a greater burden on foreign policy. There is a correlation between an increased number of reports on threats posed by the USSR to US security in The Washington Post and heightened support for larger defence budget expenditures (Entman, 2004, pp. 134–135). If simple textual content has contributed to increased support for a given issue, the potential of film is even greater.

The emotional moment is the most important here. Very often, it produces a reaction that generates stronger public pressure on foreign policy. This is aided above all by the careful use of the sign: "So what is attributed to those persistent bangs? Quite simply, they are the emblem of Romanitas. We see, in fact, how the main lever of the representation operates openly here, and that is the sign. The bangs on the forehead bombard us with obviousness, so no one would doubt that they are in ancient Rome" (Barthes, 2005, p. 25). If we accept as correct the definition of a sign as a mental image intended to provoke the creation of another image for the purpose of communication, then the bangs on the forehead, as bearers of meaning, generate the perception of a Roman in its full sense (Giro, 1976, p. 26). Such a representation was reinforced by films like *Ben-Hur*, *Spartacus*, or *Quo Vadis*, and the modern era simply adopted it, for which the film *Gladiator* provides sufficient evidence. According to this model, during the Cold War, films offered hints of how the Soviets would be perceived. The same applied in the case of Iraqis, Vietnamese, and even Serbs during the 1990s.

Such statements are drawn from real life and are very often shaped through a binary logic of dividing characters into good and bad guys (Despotović & Jevtović, 2019, p. 161). A prime example is the fight between Rocky Balboa and Ivan Drago, while in reality the Cold War was experiencing its hottest moments. Hollywood has been and remains one of the greatest repositories of stereotypical narratives (Dej, 2004, p. 48). The danger of cinematic representation lies in two extremes: when a sympathetic Russian, with a nose and cheeks flushed from vodka, is turned into a highly trained, cold-blooded killer whose only sacred institution is the KGB; or when a good-natured, chubby German with a beer stein and Bavarian sausages is transformed into a blue-eyed, blonde Aryan in a black leather coat with two thunderbolts on his epaulettes. "For most

The film "Rocky IV" as an example of the use of cinema for propaganda purposes during the Cold War.
Photo: Guliver image

Americans (and this generally applies to Europeans as well), the branch of the cultural apparatus that delivers Islam mainly includes television and radio networks, daily newspapers, and the mass weekly press. Films are, of course, important, if for no other reason than because the visual sense of history and distant lands informs our own, which is often shaped by films. This powerful concentration of mass media can be said to form the public core of interpretation, giving a particular image of Islam and, of course, reflecting the interests of power in society as presented by the media. That image, which is not only an image but also a transferable set of feelings about that image, is accompanied by what we might call the overall context," observes Edward Said, adding a note of religion to cinematic

stereotyping, which today is also highly important in influencing public opinion in the shaping of foreign policy (Said, 2003, p. 35).

The true name of this phenomenon is stigma. "As a stranger stands before you, he may showcase characteristics that make them different from the rest in the category of persons offered for them, and that they are a less desirable kind – to the extreme view that the person is entirely bad, dangerous, or weak. This is how they are reduced in our mind from a whole and usual individual to someone who is bad and worthless. This characteristic is stigma, especially when the effect of discrediting is strong; sometimes it is also called failure, shortcoming, or a handicap," writes Gofman (Gofman, 2009, pp. 14–15). From the above, the coherence of cinematic expression and stigma becomes clear, particularly when a film provides a category through which to think about a character. In doing so, it retains the quality of "hot communication," continuing to demand a high level of sensory engagement. An additional argument can be found in the process of stigmatization, where Milan Krstić usefully synthesizes the positions of numerous authors and observes that in the role of actors are states, international institutions, and, finally, individuals, who constitute the building blocks gathered into the "society of the normal," as the author vividly expresses it (Krstić, 2020, pp. 24–27). If a film stigmatizes, and the film is supported by the state, the process of influencing public opinion and securing support for a particular foreign policy issue becomes evident.

There is clear evidence of this: "By operating in 136 USIS units across 87 countries, the Film Service had at its disposal an enormous distribution network. With abundant government resources, it was virtually a "producer," fulfilling every need. It employed producer-directors who were thoroughly vetted and made films that articulated the goals the United States wished to achieve and that could best reach the prepared audiences that we, as a film medium, had to engage. The Service advised secret bodies, such as the Operations Coordination Committee, on films suitable for international distribution" (Saunders, 2013, pp. 246–247). The influence is not exerted only on the domestic public but also on public opinion of other countries, thus exerting pressure on public opinion as a determinant of foreign policy. Certainly, this is not limited to the United States. Examples could include the Film Center of Serbia, as well as any other institution seeking to use film to advance the interests of its state. The situation is likely the same in France, Russia, Germany, China, Turkey, India… Media, including film, are not directly controlled by formal state structures, but their reach is significant, and they can influence the shaping of foreign policy (Alden & Aran, 2017, p. 63). Film is far too powerful a tool to be left unchecked, and its role in a state's efforts to mobilize public opinion, generate consent, or stimulate interest is clear.

Types of films in relation to public opinion

The role of the Creel Committee in mobilizing public opinion during entry into the Great War is well known (Tomić, 2016, p. 239). This was not a unique example in history, as many intellectuals participated in mobilizing public opinion during the Second World War as well, and there were examples

even before that, though they are not relevant to this paper. The Committee on Public Information, which was the official name of the committee, was a pioneer in using new media to influence public opinion. Under its guidance, a Film Section was established within the committee in 1917, which merged with the Picture Division by 1918 (Axelrod, 2009, p. 93). At that time, the film medium had only recently come of age. Its potential was recognized from the very beginning. Perhaps this was influenced by *The Birth of a Nation*, which had already made a strong impression on American sentiment in 1915. This set the stage for everything that would follow with Nazi propaganda.

Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* remains a symbol of those films that the state promotes to consolidate public opinion. The Nazis came to power in 1933 after a tight electoral race, and the following year saw sharp upheavals that culminated in the Night of the Long Knives, which makes 1935, and the moment in which this work was realized, particularly indicative. One could argue that this concerns public opinion and domestic policies more than foreign policy, but that is only one side of the coin. The other side is that the film, in part, focused on the contribution of the Nazis to restoring Germany's status as a great power, which is relevant when discussing the international order. A clearer example of this type of film is Frank Capra's series, which sought to strengthen public opinion in favour of American participation in the Second World War. The accuracy of such claims lies in the existence of various forms of domestic pressure on foreign policy, among which are the media, and thus film, public opinion, and interest groups (Breuning, 2007, p. 120). Regarding Capra's films, either the filmmaker responded to public sentiment and created films that would appeal to it, or, the option closer to the truth, an interest group, through the media and film, sought to direct public opinion and secure consent for entering the war.

After the end of the war, former allies formed Cold War blocs and commenced latent fighting for the role of the global hegemon. "The United States and the USSR utilized propaganda extensively during the Cold War. Both parties used print, film, television, and radio programs and other media to influence their citizens, each other and third world countries", Radenko Šćekić observes (Šćekić, 2012, pp. 389–401). This was even mor important, especially due to changes in relations between the two countries. Both the USSR and the US productions adhered to the official policies.

Media simply offer an image of the world: "Nobody possesses direct knowledge about the entire globe. Excluding personal experience, what we know originates from school, discussions – but primarily from media. For ordinary people, the majority of lands, people, and topics not covered by the media simply do not exist" (Bertrand, 2007, p. 18). The things an ordinary citizen sees, in accordance with the above, is conditioned by the way the media present topics.

To more precisely establish a group of films which are employed to influence public opinion aspirations in foreign policy, media agenda establishment needs to be considered. First and foremost, this stems from the function of the media in determining relevant topics within social discourse (Rus Mol, 2014, p. 47). If reality is considered carefully, regarding the discourse, it is obvious that this is the main function of film. Films *Barbie* and

Oppenheimer generated additional shows, texts, and generally speaking, their emergence took up a lot of the public discourse, which testifies to the creative power of the public, given that it gave rise to the neologism (Bahr, 2023).

Given that people most often encounter a world they have not personally seen when it comes to films dealing with themes that enter the domain of foreign policy, it is possible to speak of such films as providers of "second-hand reality" (Kunczik & Zipfel, 2006, p. 154). John Street argues that "to the extent that the mass media are responsible for the circulation of certain ideas and images, and to the extent that they shape thoughts and actions, they are considered to possess discursive or ideological power" (Street, 2003, p. 197). Simultaneously, in generating this type of power, films are profiled as educational and mobilizing in their influence on public opinion attitudes toward foreign policy. In parallel, they also generate interest in particular topics. The Barbie doll may have been a cultural commonplace, but widespread knowledge of Oppenheimer the scientist certainly did not exist in the same way prior to the film's release. By placing a particular topic under the public spotlight, film influences public opinion and creates a buffer zone around foreign policy.

Attention should be paid to a more significant phenomenon in which the issue is neither classical mobilization nor the production of consent. This can be illustrated by Kosovo and the way it was represented in the film The Battle of Kosovo. "I am a devout patriot, but when I compare these two images — the misery of a café in Đakovica and the splendour of a café in Belgrade — I clearly feel as if some mysterious voice is commanding me to rebel against every social order, be it created by God or by Government," writes Puniša Račić, concluding: "And if I knew that I could improve it, I would truly try, even if I were labelled an unbeliever or a traitor" (Imami, 2017). By recording these words in a letter to King Alexander, Račić indirectly conveys the reality of how important Kosovo was to the public at the time. It did carry a sentimental weight, but it was nowhere near the level of priority it holds today. In his extensive study, Ivan Čolović concludes that the topic of Kosovo, classified by the author as a "myth," was revived in the 1980s, which is also when his interest in the issue began (Čolović, 2016, p. 14).

Račić's lines and Čolović's reference to the eighth decade of the twentieth century are separated by some sixty years during which Kosovo was not at the centre of Serbian national consciousness. That Čolović is correct regarding the beginning of the revival of the Kosovo narrative is evident from the very project *The Battle of Kosovo*. The importance attached to realizing this work can be inferred from the testimony of director Zdravko Šotra about the hastily executed project of the film *The Battle of Kosovo*: "We received funding for a TV drama. Such projects are filmed over six months and prepared for a year. We threw together *The Battle of Kosovo* in one month. Happy are the nations that do not have great histories like ours" (Danas, 2023).

Obviously used to define a Serbian identity forgotten in a failed state, the film opened Pandora's box from which misfortunes continue to emerge even today. The spectacular rediscovery of the lost Serbian spiritual being on Vidovdan in 1989 was further marked by the gathering at Gazimestan. At that moment, the overall effect of the film was

concerned exclusively with internal divisions and the consolidation of Serbian identity. What the creators did not anticipate was that the fire they were playing with could rage out of control. Compared to Vietnam, the Cold War, and both World Wars, Kosovo constituted and continues to constitute an integral part of the Serbian struggle. By reviving the collective unconscious through phrases still quoted today—referring to "entering the battle for the sacred site being defended", "paying with one's head for the heavenly kingdom," or that "Serbia is not a handful of rice for every crow to peck at"—a paradigm was revived that perhaps occupies the most important place in Serbian discourse. The fact is that the heads lost at Kosovo were not sacrificed for state-building, since Serbia soon fell under centuries-long and brutal Ottoman rule, but they laid the foundation of the Serbian ethnos. Zdravko Šotra had a correct understanding of the magnitude of Serbian history, and it is certain that Kosovo alone represents a history unto itself.

This type of film, which is rare, should be approached with the utmost care due to its destructive power and can rightly be called films of emotional cult. Although there are many other works of the seventh art that could be placed in this category, there is none more fitting for this study than *Boj na Kosovu* because of its timelessness. Three and a half decades after the creation of the aforementioned film, the issue of Kosovo remains an iron grip influencing Serbia's maneuvering space in foreign policy, and there are even announcements of a new film on the same topic (Mondo, 2022).

Dragan Simić and Dragan Živojinović artistically note that "democracy, the free market, and globalism are no longer the only successful models for organizing the state and society, and power no longer resides only in the skyscrapers of New York and the appeal of Apple and Microsoft, but also in the gleaming high-rises of Shanghai and the growing popularity of Lenovo and Huawei" (Simić and Živojinović, 2021, pp. 17–55). It is clear that Washington and Moscow no longer have a monopoly on film departments. Every state that aspires to the status of a great power has its own Hollywood, and even small countries like Serbia take film very seriously, as it remains influential in shaping public opinion, which in turn affects its foreign policy, and can also be used to subtly shape the foreign policy ambitions of other states.

At the end of the discussion, it is entirely appropriate to say that the film was the most significant cultural resource of the 20th century and will continue to be so in the 21st century, as it still occupies a "central place in managing impressions and defining social positions and status" (Lou, 2013, p. 35). Ultimately, opinions on the connection between the powerful, power itself, and the management process are illuminated not only by the place of the film in that hierarchy but also by its strength in influencing public opinion, and thereby indirectly shaping foreign policy (Weber, 1999, p. 165).

Conclusion

Starting primarily from the assumption that film is a fundamental tool of the state in shaping public opinion, this research fully confirmed that premise. From this follows the confirmation of the film's influence on the public-opinion determinant of foreign policy. As long as state financing of film

production exists, such influences will remain commonplace. As shown in this paper, this is not only the case for superpowers but also for small states, which have their own means of guiding public attitudes toward foreign policy through film funding.

Public interest and disinterest rarely arise organically, making it clear how effectively states understand the significance of film influence. Using powerful language, states shape public opinion domestically and internationally through institutions. Film production is only seemingly free; it is truly free only when the subject matter does not touch on state affairs. This research provides a different insight into how films can generate consensus and engagement.

The study describes ways in which film can shape specific foreign policy, although the classification of films according to how they are produced remains unresolved. It is possible to distinguish between films that are produced or supported by the state and those that emerge organically from public opinion due to the relevance of a particular topic. In the first case, their influence is controlled, calculated, and predictable; in the second, it is marginal, and such films tend to arise more as a reflection of an era, usually surfacing post-factum. This does not mean that the latter are less powerful, but rather that they do not have an immediate impact on shaping foreign policy. The limitation of this study is also its weakness, as films that emerge "from public opinion" need to be examined more deeply, especially regarding the "pacification" of foreign policy or specific withdrawal from a particular issue.

Above all, film remains a tool for guiding public opinion. The popularity of individual works serves as a kind of barometer of public sentiment. This makes it clearer to policymakers what needs to be done to implement a given initiative. Potentially, a lack of public consent could lead to temporary or permanent abandonment of an action. By bringing films into focus and examining the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, this study provides, along with the confirmed hypothesis, a theoretical foundation for further research on the use of not only film but also other media and art in foreign policy.

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