REGIONAL AND HEGEMONIC IMAGE OF THE UNITED STATES: ANALYSIS OF TURKISH AND FOREIGN STUDENTS' US PERCEPTION THROUGH TWO MOVIES

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ABSTRACT| The aim of this study is to understand and explain how the US instrumentalizes and perceives cinema for its own hegemonic policies. Our work is a qualitative one and is based around two Hollywood films. In this context, interviews and focus group interviews were conducted with Turkish and foreign, Muslim and Christian students and their opinions about two Hollywood productions were analyzed and the data obtained were analyzed within the framework of descriptive analysis and thematic analysis methods. The data obtained from the students participating in the study give an idea of how educated young people evaluate, perceive and use the relationship between cinema films and the global hegemony of the USA. In this sense, the results of our study is about the use of cinemanion in the presentation of the United States and how the situation is perceived and understood by young people from different regions, countries, religions and ethnicities.

Keywords: *American hegemony, Hollywood and politics, Movie analysis*
Jel codes: F51, F54, N40
Scope: *International Relations*
Type: *Review*

ABD'NIN BÖLGESEL VE HEGEMONIK İMAJI: TÜRK VE YABANCI ÖĞRENCİLERDE AMERİKA İMAJININ FİLMLER ÜZERİNDEN ANALİZİ

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ÖZ | Bu çalışmanın amacı ABD'nin sinemayı kendi hegemonik politikaları için nasıl araçsallaştırdığını ve bunun nasıl algılandığını anlamaya ve açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Çalışmamız niteliksel bir çalışmadır ve iki Hollywood filmi çevresinde kurgulanmıştır. Bu çerçevede Türk ve Yabancı, Müslüman ve Hristiyan öğrencilerle mülakatlar ve odak grup görüşmeleri gerçekleştirilmiş ve iki Hollywood yapımı film hakkındaki düşünceleri alınarak elde edilen veriler betimsel analiz ile tematik analiz yöntemleri ile analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerden elde edilen veriler sinema filmleri ile ABD'nin küresel hegemonyası arasındaki ilişkiyi eğitimli gençlerin nasıl değerlendirdiği, algıladığı ve kullandığına dair bir fikir vermektedir. Bu anlamda çalışmamızın ulaştığı sonuçlar, ABD'nin sunumunda sinemanın kullanılması ve durumun farklı bölgelerden, ülkelerden, din ve etnisitelerden gençler tarafından nasıl algılandığını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Amerikan hegemonyası, Holyywood ve politika, Film analizi*

JEL Kodu: *F51, F54, N40*
Alanı: *Uluslararası İlişkiler*
Türü: *Derleme*

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Hollywood movies are integral part of US hegemonic strategy and constitute one of the cultural instruments of hegemony[1] establishment devoted to soft power. As much as Hollywood contributes to expression and spreading of US policies and perspective, it also helps explain and spread criticisms directed at their government. In this sense "Since 1960, American culture, cinema and politics have been sources of intense political arguments… From this perspective, modern Hollywood can be understood as a representation contest and competition field where current social struggles and transforming political discourses are reproduced." (Kellner, 2010, p. 1-2). In fact, just as Hollywood movies supporting US government like Rambo, Black Hawk Down, Justice League, Hurt Locker, Zero Dark Thirty etc. exist, Hollywood has also movies like Fair Game, Redacted, In the Valley of Elah, Avatar that criticize the perspective and actions of US government.[2]

The binary opposition of us vs. them is processed and normalized in Hollywood movies as one of the most striking characteristics hereof. And this method has an impact that nurtures and normalizes historical and cultural ruptures all around the world. The binary opposition of us vs. them is processed and normalized in Hollywood movies as one of the most striking characteristics hereof. And this method has an impact that nurtures and normalizes historical and cultural ruptures all around the world. "Within both Hollywood cinema and US political culture, paradox is predominantly resolved in favour of the concept of America as a 'Redeemer Nation', rather than the less-vaunted notion that the United States is merely one nation among many. This particular brand of American Exceptionalism is by no means restricted to the realms of movies and politics (Coyne, 2008, p. 16)."

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[1] Further more for Hegemony Theory; Herrmann, Andrew. (2017). Hegemony In book: The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication, Edition: First, Publisher: Wiley, Editors: Craig R. Scott, Laurie Lewis, James R. Barker, Joann Keyton, Timothy Kuhn, Paaige K. Turner; Dirzauskaite, G.; Ilinca N. C. (2017). Understanding "Hegemony" in International Relations Theories. Aalborg University. https://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/260247380/Understanding__Hegemony__in_International_Relations_Theories.pdf; Lears, T. J. J. (1985). The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities The American Historical Review, Vol. 90, No. 3 (Jun., 1985), pp. 567-593. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1860957

[2] Further more Coyne, Michael (2008) Hollywood Goes to Washington American Politics on Screen, UK/London: Reaktion Books; Haas, Elizabeth (2005) Projecting Politics: Political Messages in American Films, New York: M. E. Sharpe

Distinctions and definitions like East-West, North-South , democratic states-unsuccessful states, developed countries-developing countries, civilized world-primitive world, modern world-third world are frequently discussed in Hollywood movies in social, historical, cultural, political and/or economical terms. These oppositions, allowed in Hollywood movies, are generally given meaning over a denoted good or ideal. The good, the right and also the ideal are always represented in a context where U.S dominates, which expresses the cultural dimension of its hegemony.

Binary oppositions and political messages of Hollywood movies are seasonal. These two movies, objects of our research within the same framework, reflect the atmosphere of the era and political attitude and position of US. In this respect, both movies (London Has Fallen and 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi) have been preferred in that they be productions parallel to US hegemony. In London Has Fallen, terrorist actions emerged in cities, the safe and sound places of modern states, and US attitude and position vis-a-vis these actions are narrated, while in the second movie, US attitude and position against unsuccessful states and terrorists arising from these states are narrated based on a true story. It is really eye-catching that both movies pay special attention to fictionalize their own stories in a close relationship with realities.

On the other hand, whether these messages of Hollywood movies have hit the target, whether a clear message is aimed at another target deep down inside and to what extent emerging results make contributions to current politics and hegemonic strategy of US are quite uncertain. We will try to reveal the emotions and thoughts these two movies (London Has Fallen and 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi), objects of our study, have cast upon students and indicate what kind of loads they, their binary oppositions and political burdens have left. The research focuses on how people from different countries with various cultural roots perceive and interpret these content packages that the called hegemony creates through movies. And accordingly, the essential point researched throughout this study is how target audience of Hollywood movies perceive the relationship between these movies and hegemony tried to be established. "The power of cinema is equal to the power of industrial and military tools and even much more. The power of cinema is equal to power of Pentagon and governments and even much more." (Baudrillard, 2016, p. 89).

Surely, scientific studies based on field researches are far from generalizations. What's more, we are conducting a flexible design qualitative research here.

Having said that, this kind of studies is of utmost importance since they present in-depth findings about the event, fact and/or situation subject to the relevant research. To this aim, we made a series of conceptual categories via messages, emotions and thoughts the movies arose. And concepts expressed frequently were transformed into content of analysis through feelings and categories.

This study evaluates political and cultural reflections of movies called London Has Fallen and 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi shot under the influence of US hegemony and conservative policies. With this study, we search for possible impacts of clear attitudes on concepts and facts presented in both movies and precise judgments and sharp discourses on Turkish and foreign students studying in Turkey and whether these made any kind of contribution to US hegemonic policy. We preferred using case analysis approach, one of the flexible design research strategies. Case analysis approach is a research strategy involving empirical questioning through employing multiple data sources within a real-life context of a specific current fact (Yin, 2009). The most important characteristics of case study is its concentration on a specific or rare situation. Case studies do not necessarily require handling individual situations. A case study is a limited field study that can be conducted over a group, an institution, a neighborhood relationship, an innovation, a decision, a service (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p. 150) or a program etc. (Merriam, 2015, p. 40). Analysis units of this case study will be messages, representation strategies, dramatic narrations, idealized components, schemes, vision and similar elements of two Hollywood movies that narrate and process US global hegemony claims and power relations and also how all of these are perceived, interpreted and experienced by foreign (13) and Turkish (14) students studying in Turkey. Distribution of students among classes and departments were completely random, however we paid special attention to a balanced distribution for foreign students according to their countries and regions. Students were distributed according to their regions as such: Balkans, Middle East, central Asia, south and central Africa, south Asia and southeastern Asia. Four students of them were Christians while nine of them were Muslims. Five of them were female, while eight of them were male. There were six female students and eight male ones among Turkish students. Another point to be specified is that there was no homogeneity among Turkish students in terms of political preferences (determined with a control question).

Within this context, we tried to bring together and describe certain themes related to the case by using detailed and in-depth data collected from various sources (visual-audial material, face-to-face interviews and focus group meetings) for a

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limited case. Initially, participants were informed about the research and then both movies were watched together with participation groups. Then, interviews with foreign students and Turkish students were made separately. Within this framework, interviews including a comprehensive information source where we used semi-structured interview forms consisting of eight questions with both student groups were conducted and these meetings were extended with some other questions during interviews (in addition to these eight questions, approximately 10 more questions were asked). The initial eight questions were as such: What are the most striking scenes of both movies and why? What kind of feeling do these scenes arise in your soul? There are good and bad people in movies and what do you say about such a distinction? What do you say about the general atmosphere and attitude of both movies? How do you describe the impact movies left on you? What do you think about easy death of all world leaders and survival of US president in the first movie (London Has Fallen) ? Which message do they try to convey in your opinion? How do you consider the personality, attitude, goal and murder of ambassador in the second movie (13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi) ? What kind of relationship can we build between the main theme and democracy and concepts like human rights in both movies? What is the main message of the movies in your opinion?

On the other hand, neither any specific manipulation was conducted nor any scene-specific question (apart from two scenes) was asked during face-to-face interviews. One of these two scenes is the murder scene towards the end of the first movie and the other is the one where "a guy wearing t-shirt with Turkish flag" appears. In focus group meetings, we tried to concentrate on seemingly most important headings, meanings and feelings with the help of participants' interaction and increase the amount and depth of data. During focus group study, we worked on whether certain themes and emphases arose during the individual interviews with students were repeated or not and a general group attitude in accordance with this was emerged or not. Eventual narrative structure was such a one that all details were defined and gathered together from interviewers, interpreted around given themes and centered on positional and emotional aspects, which leads to a descriptive style. Not all face-to-face interviewers were quoted wholly but expressions with strong emphasis on the relevant subject were quoted. Additionally; while determining, explaining and interpreting each and every theme, evaluations of each student were taken into account. Another point to be made is that these data were collected long before the period with high tension in Turkish-American relations. In other words, these data were collected in an environment where a perspective less motivated by tempering developments

in foreign policies compared to current situation for both Turkish and foreign students dominated.

2. THEMES

In *London Has Fallen*, whose first film was shot previously and included White Palace's occupation by a North-Korean terrorist group, the plan of kidnapping US president in a funeral where other heads of state participate and struggle of president and secret service agent against the plan is narrated. This second terrorist group is the one financed by a Middle-Eastern prosperous family. The second movie, based on a true story, mentions the attack on US Embassy in Libya in 2012 and developments throughout this period (US ambassador and three employees working at Embassy lost their lives due to this attack) And another point to be made before passing on to apparent themes is that texts of interviews contain much richer oral material than themes we will mention here. However, it is impossible to utilize all of them in a single article, which leads us to deal with students' emphases and attracting themes voiced with different words and hints. And thus, we had to exclude the rest of it from our article.

a. Distinction between the Good and the Bad

Neither Turkish nor foreign students found this distinction between the good and the bad employed in both movies favorable. Participants expressed that the good-the bad distinction, justification of this distinction and minor distinctions of the good and the bad in the side narrations besides the whole fiction did not correspond to realities. When these evaluations of students were expounded, we could understand that they criticized this distinction basically in two terms. First, according to students' view, this kind of distinction about the good and the bad in movies contained a sharp categorization and implied a certain homogenization. In other words, students clearly thought that the good (on an abstract plane) and the bad were absolutized and characteristics of each group (the good is always good while the bad is always bad) were treated with a single dimension.

> *"When we consider these two movies, we always see that America is the absolute good and whatever against him is always and certainly bad, which I completely disagree. Such a propaganda" (Y-3). And some students stated that relationships based on self-interest and interest-seeking activities underlay this distinction of communities and countries and movies only reflected what was existing. "The US is fighting for own interests and security not for democracy" (Y-1). "I can only say that they write all these on their own. There is a socio-psychological theory called 'self-*

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service'. They only serve for themselves. I wish we could see what they really did. Things like bombing civilians or other bestial things. These movies do not show their activities. What they only reveal is the deeds of other party, which they call terrorist. The wilder, worse and less conscious deeds" (Y-4).

This last quote is of great importance in that it sets forth the available perception related to both cases. It expresses that in these movies, the general narration about "the good and the bad" distinction is depicted with "self-service" concept, which means relationships based on self-interest and a one-sided opposition of "the good versus the bad". Students declared that on the one hand a social comparison[3] was made in movies, while on the other they themselves made such a comparison. Moreover, this social comparison was also available for the second dimension of "the good – the bad" perception.

As a second point, students attracted attention to dehumanization, trivialization and objectification of people falling into the bad side of "the good and the bad" distinction, especially in the second movie. According to participants, with the help of binary opposition categories and de-identification/dehumanization of *the bad* in these movies (See: Brown & Turner, 2002, p. 68) and presentation of *the good as* "normal people", both undesired characteristics are attributed to the bad group and this dehumanization procedure is used as a tool for justification. Students also remarked that this was a unilateral evaluation and represented an approach far from being just and fair:

Libya, close to USA, is presented as somewhere clean, beautiful and innocent. Their opponents are presented as enemies and bad people. For example; all soldiers are father and their children wait and long for them. But no any terrorist has children! (Y-5)

There are people with families, with children, leaving all these crying for them behind on the one hand and there are some who came out of blue just like tomatoes pulled off their stem. As if they had no families. (T-1)

US citizen has a family, he is good; but the terrorist has no family. The family represents the good. US citizen misses his family and cries for them since he has a big heart full of mercy and love but

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[3] Comparison of oneself and internal group with other individuals and groups. See (McLeod, 2008).

> *the terrorist is cruel and merciless. US citizens have humanist*
> *values. But a terrorist is never humane. (Y-2)*

On the other hand, students also expressed that they never approved such a categorical distinction and set forth that the good and the bad was always intermingled and produced each other in some contexts and sometimes the good was responsible for evil deeds of the bad. "We must not forget the share of good people in bad people's situation" (Y-2). "We look at bad guys, they cause innocent people to die but when we look at the bright side full of good people, we see that they also kill so many innocent people just to kill a single bad one. Therefore, we can argue that the good and the bad is intermingled in this movie, too" (T-1). There is a general consensus that absolute categories like the good and the bad cannot exist, the good and the bad constantly feed and trigger each other. One of the most gripping expressions by a student focused on the common thing underlying both sides (the good and the bad as depicted in the movie), which we can mention as being *human,* and also leads us to concentrate on these sentences indirectly:

> *"They bring them to airport. The last thing movie shows is the*
> *lying bodies of hired US soldiers. But there are also families and*
> *children of people raiding the police station at night. And his mother*
> *comes and laments for her dead. Indeed, their common point is being*
> *human. (T-2)*

> **b.   Us-Them/East-West**

In both movies, defense of US and other countries under danger against the enemy stands out as a representation strategy. When especially viewed from the perspective of the good-the bad opposition discussed in the previous theme and disapproved by students, another binary opposition like us vs. them/East vs. West was also realized by both foreign and Turkish students. Moreover, they stated that the validity of this discourse involving good-us (US and its allies) and bad-them (countries and societies far from American policies) had to be questioned. "Libya, close to USA, is presented as somewhere clean, beautiful and innocent. Their opponents are presented as enemies and bad people" (Y-5). Students also put forward that this *us vs. them* opposition was fictionalized over another opposition of East/ (Islam)-West when certain movie scenes were taken into consideration and "us" with good traits and "them" (See: Baumann ve May, 200: 43) with bad traits were narrated throughout both movies. Students who kept evaluating from this very point of view specified that this distinction might become a distinction between civilization and primitiveness and so US was represented as the center

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of Western civilization in movies, yet this representation might also be regarded as a tool for advertisement and propaganda:

> *This discourse like we are always right, we have a tidy and neat life as US or British citizens, we are civilized, we have plans never ends. We act with plans but these come and die all they know is to come and die. They never stop and seemingly we will never be fed up with killing them.[4] (T-2)*

In direct relation to previous theme, participants stated that they never approved this framework of movies putting the opposition of "us vs. them". An important point which makes this theme different from the previous one is a striking scene and some gripping catchwords, holding Turkish and foreign students together. This scene is the one where praying people and guns stand together within one frame (there is a similar tendency in the first movie but students emphasized the second movie in this term). As can be remembered, praying people and guns standing by them are presented to us in a way that leads us to make an association between them. To students' opinion, this scene, *azan* and words like "holy war" make it possible to understand the opposition of us-them and East-West as a distinction of Islam-West. We must underline that Christian students had similar thoughts about the general attitude that becomes apparent with this scene:

> *This might be the beginning of holy war… US occupied so many places after 9/11 and required such explanations to justify the occupations. We can see this on London Has Fallen, they say 'you started this and it won't end.' They mean the violence between the East and the West won't end. (Y-5)*

> *We see guns standing by praying people. This may be regarded as insult. And any person watching these movies looks at Islam with different eyes. (Y-6)*

> *Terrorists, saying in inverted commas, pray before their final attack. Azan comes. While they are praying, the camera turns and Kalashnikovs become visible and then praying people. They try to say and make an image that Islam is the only source of terror. Very clear, really precise… (T-3)*

Interpretations and comments of participants on these scenes underline that the called scenes and catchwords are those with heaviest messages. When these scenes and relations between communities and religions allowed in both movies are considered, included messages will not yield positive outcomes even with a good-hearted and optimist evaluation, according to participants.

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[4] Emphases within the text belong to us.

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Islam equals to violence as to these scenes. And another thing attracting my attention is that production years of movies are really close: 2015, 2016. Movies shot during the years of rising Islamophobia. This is a little bit eye-catching since it fuels the hostility against Islam. I watched two movies, where Muslims are terrorists. If I were a Christian, this would wake my Islamophobic ideas. (T-1)

c. Justice-Injustice

Another important point to be problematized by participants based on movies is about the representation of rights and injustice. Nearly all participants found the way Americans justify themselves wrong and disapproved them. Thus, they described this approach as a unilateral perspective and thought that it involved a kind of injustice towards *the other*. "My perspective is unilateral, which makes the justification of murdering them (terrorists) easier. Rebels are always presented as wrong people doing wrong things. I think both sides have soldiers shooting each other and everything is reciprocal" (Y-5). Participants supposed that the justification in movies was unilateral and had propagandist messages, mentioned in the themes above and made use of the concept "unfairness" in addition to injustice while trying to explain their points. In the final analysis, they stated that they never threw in with such a justification and distinction:

Why didn't they get the opinions of people living in this country? Why didn't they ask what they were seeing, feeling or thinking? Well, they are not objective in my opinion. They defend something biased. With subliminal messages or real events… The other side is already killer and has no aim. All they wanted was to kill people, they are completely wrong. I do not agree with this shitty representation…They put something unfair on. (Y-4)

Another dimension of injustice apparent in the movies is the violation of "principle of individual criminal responsibility" according to participants. Under this principle, the only individual who commits the crime must be punished, which is fair, but in the movies this principle is violated and justice principle is damaged. That is why our participants regarded the case not just as an injustice or unethical problem but also cruelty.

When someone does something unethical, we must head for this person. The revenge must only be taken from the very person committing crime not from his familY. Barkawi did not do something right but what he got in turn was also cruelty" (Y-5).

Again, a Turkish student directly emphasized this dilemma of justice-injustice and principle of individual criminal responsibility:

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> *They try to highlight in the movie that we are indeed wrong but since they attacked us, what we are going to do is completely right. We are wrong while bombing the wedding or blowing the tent up but they are also wrong because they came to London and blew us up… What they try to say in the movie is that: We want peace with our civilized tongues but they killed us. (T-2)*

> *On the other hand, participants disagreed with the main message of both these movies and US explanations that democracy and democratic values and principles directed their foreign policies. To them, the reality was completely different:*

> *We all know that Hollywood works purposefully writing all these plots. They are partially based on truths but generally the main goal of movies is to present US as a righteous democrat. (Y-4)*

> *They are not fighting for what they claim, which is valid for each country. They only fight for self-interests and security, not for democracy. (Y-1)*

Students regarded the struggle between two sides in the movies not as one for democratic principles and values or any other kind of values the other side believes in but as a struggle of self-interests and wholeheartedly expressed that consideration of this struggle in favour of one side might be an overt injustice when the favorable side's usage of power and struggle for interests as one of the main messages were taken into consideration. To their opinion, having a disproportionate force and using this force to derive some benefits meant being unfair and wrong:

> *In fact, they try to tell us that we will be the one saying the final words yet with violence. We see that they cannot always find solution exerting politics or claiming justice. They always use force. But force is not always righteous. (Y-4)*

> *This force they have makes them dareful. But this is unfair. Being powerful does not always mean being righteous. (T-1)*

d. Violence

Participants considered the violence in the movies overdone and problematic, even though the first movie was based on a true story, and also expressed that target people of this violence did not fall into acceptable boundaries. Participants generally attracted attention to two types of violence existing in the movies, first of which belonged to terrorists and was already not approved by participants. By the way, one of the main emphases of these movies is the illegitimacy of this type of violence. On the other hand, there is another type of violence exerted by US forces and depicted as legitimate. The message of movies is such that US forces

had to exert this inevitable type of violence. Moreover, participants completely agreed with the idea that this narration throughout the movies was not relied on a proper and acceptable reason:

> *There is a tent and wedding blown up, which is not good. But after seeing this, US goes to London and bombs metro stations and people… Which is also not good… But to what extent was it a terrorist action? It became a terrorist action when they came to London and used their guns. And were they right? Of course, they were. What were their planes from US or Europe doing in this country's airfield? Why did this bomb fall down there? As I said, Western people were right until they came and blew up London. But their method is very very wrong. (T-2)*

> *Barkawi killed so many innocent people, which makes him wrong and unfair. Yes, I find it normal to have a desire for revenge. But it is not okay to kill many more innocent people to reach this aim, either. (T-1)*

Students disapproved both types of violence, neither their way nor amount of usage. To their opinion, violence does not resolve anything and brings more pain as well. In addition to all these, they remarked that one of the messages hidden in the movies was the ultimate suffering that those engaging with US (real-time agents, women and children) would experience, whose internal reasoning was right and perfect:

> *Here they say if you harm us, you harm yourself eventually. And with another message, they say violence does not resolve anything. Families of US citizens are away from danger. But women are crying in that scene. I mean they try to say that if you fiddle with us, you will have to leave your crying women and children behind. (Y-5)*

> *They constantly show the families of US soldiers and exploit our emotions giving the message that US soldiers are always right even if they murder people. (Y-3)*

> *Nothing can be solved using violence. Darker is not the solution of dark. To me, the very best thing is to destroy violence. (Y-4)*

On the other hand, murder of ambassador is considered something completely wrong by students. In other words, they insisted on that murder of ambassador and violent acts against embassy were wrong and unfair deeds, which even led them to feel negative emotions for relevant actors. Besides, they also noted that it was unproper to use this case to legitimate the violence and depicted the event

as just a self-defensive one.

> *To me, people killing ambassador are absolutely wrong and did something bad, which made me unhappy and left broken. I think he did nothing to deserve death. The message is like this: They are killing a very good person. (Y-4)*

Eventually, it is not proper to make a distinction between just violence and unjust one, according to students. And they also argued that US claim about its "just violent acts" was not right and appropriate while they invited people to act violently due to their apparent foreign political and military preferences and evil deeds on a micro-level. In students' opinion, US itself makes concessions to violence and acts with a Machiavellist attitude:

> *Attitude of soldiers seemingly says 'The ends justify the means'. Kind of Machiavelist approach. If we have to kill the people against us for self-interest, yes we can do it. We must do it, otherwise we cannot be successful. (T-1)*

> *US makes concessions to violence. US directs to violence. It takes on an attitude saying 'Do whatever you want. (Y-6)*

e. Arrogance and Show of Force

Nearly all participants found US image and its way of presentation in movies very arrogant. And they also noted that this arrogant state of mind, accompanied by an overrated show of force, caught the eye both in the general framework and subliminal messages of movies, which arose various feelings in them including disturbance to say the least and irritation and annoyance to say the most:

> *They say we are the best. This is a show of force. I'm really against it and getting furious. It cast so much anger upon me since there is a monopoly here, not a real justice. As if we always had to interpret the world through the eyes of America. (Y-5)*

> *This challenging and always-winning attitude is arrogance, we can say. This over-confidence, show of force and constant repeat of 'American' attract our attention, be it real or fiction. The message of the movie: An American is precious. (Y-3)*

Having regarded such an attitude not only as a reflection of great arrogance, but also as challenging and hegemonic depiction of what is happening, students believed that the representation of US, characterised as the ultimate good, as a more *precious* asset indicated an unfair vanity, which was similar to their explanations encountered in previous themes, and this was also a type of advertisement and propaganda (as mentioned in other thematical headings) for which film industry was exploited successfully.

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> *"They have arrogance and patronising attitudes, for which they are a little bit right since they act together in a strong manner. Hollywood challenges in a great way. It can produce a desired effect on our minds, an effect that cannot be achieved with guns and finance" (Y-2).*

Messages of both movies are very clear, a little childish but still successful, according to students' mind.

> *I'm against terror and do not want it in my life. But the whole terror is controled. US creates the chaos and leaves the party. However, US shows itself in such a way that even a child cannot believe in what they did in Libyan events. (Y-6)*

> *It may be arrogance. Amir Barkawi says 'Now you are finished' but is beaten eventually. There is a message there. You will not destroy our capitalist system. They try to make it a holy system and that's a sign of arrogance. (T-3)*

On the other hand, the interests and favor of US and those of world seemingly correspond to each other. To put in a different way, we can understand the interests of US and the rest of the world become exactly the same after watching these movies. Students emphasized this narration in both movies and especially accounted for the last scene of second movie, where "Libyan people apologize", within this framework:

The general message: If US wins, you all win. If we win, we do it for you, too. US is introduced as structure that makes people happy all around the world. I don't know, this may just be my perspective. And I'd be happy if I did not mind all these. (T-3). Libyan people apologize in the last scene of the second movie. When Americans become unsuccessful, Libya surrenders to terror and becomes the center of terror. (Y-7)

And they stated similar opinions about US hegemonic and military power as such: "To have, to get. US is all about this. US is there for this and needs excuses" (Y-7). These expressions signify the movies as means of US struggle for self-interests. Students also noted that even if there is an awareness on this problem, such a gigantic technologic and military capacity may lead people to despair:

> *"It makes you desperate since you see the devices and means used by US. The greatest and most functional policy of US is about advertisement and public relations, of course. US Empire is represented something really big and high, to which no one can oppose." (Y-5)*

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f. Annoyance-offense

Participants also implied that this approach of one single truth and the ultimate good annoyed and offended them. As the reason underlying their annoyance, they indicated that while American imperialism and their economy-based foreign policy preferences caused certain adverse results in both US and non-European countries, the movies completely ignored this and depicted this single and one-sided source of violence and terror. "In each movie, they are democrat, right and solution-oriented. This makes me unhappy and angry. I cannot see any bite of justice" (Y-4). The reason underlying this offense, as they stated, is removal of certain countries, religions and races from global prosperity and exclusion from safe boundaries of global peace-seeking and human rights concepts. Similarly, students underlined that the unilateral narration, unfair and injustice representation of reality and a mentality supporting just one side all the time empowered the feelings of annoyance and offense. On the other side, students also told that they developed two affections within the framework of general attitude arising from the themes mentioned above following the annoyance and offence:

> *I mean I'm asking why some media are such liars. What to do is clear: Just report fair and real news. I'm expecting this. Really important. And lack of it offended and disappointed me. Why do they choose sides and backbite the other? For justice? This will just go on. (Y-4)*

> *I got angry while watching movies, in fact. When you just look at it, you can say these regions called Middle East or Mesopotamia are those bearing civilizations. Now, they are just playgrounds, if I'm talking about based on the movie. This annoyed me. I didn't like it at all. (T-1)*

Lastly, participants felt annoyed when Muslims were wholly depicted as terrorists in both movies.

> *The gun and praying scene in the movie is one that aims to spread Islamophobia. I found it wrong and got angry. It's really upsetting to put religion and terror in one frame. This is wrong. I defend justice and cannot accept this (Y-5).*

Participants regarded this as tricky and emphasized how disturbing the sub-liminal message was. "They want to spread this message: We are behaving well to you but you try to kill us and you deserve the bullet. But this is not true, they are deceiving people" (Y-6). On the other side, one of the foreign students devastatingly expressed how adverse effects general and sub-liminal messages of

movies were produced on participants as such:

> *There is a scene where the soldier says 'He has no gun, just cellphone'. US soldiers are not that humane, I think. For instance; there are crying women and children in the end of second movie. We should not be like Americans, we should not make women and children cry (Y-7).*
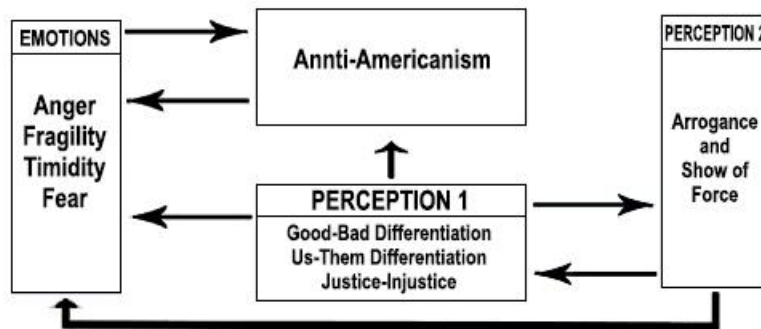

Figure 1. Emotions and Perceptions

g. The Guy with Turkish Flag T-shirt

As stated in Methodology section, students were asked a single question about the guy wearing t-shirt with Turkish flag. While responding to this question, explanations of foreign and Turkish students turned out to be highly similar. At first, they had difficulty in interpreting the existence of such scenes in a movie based on a true story. One of Turkish students stated that "There was an atmosphere like Turkey went there to create chaos and US tries to fix it. But Turkish flag on the vehicles made me surprise… It is a movie, I know, but US does not act like our ally even though it is one of them." (T-1).

Students also emphasized that this kind of scenes sought propaganda and tried to manipulate audience, which caused them to feel dissatisfied. While Turkish students specified that they found it wrong to associate their own countries with terror over *representation of their flag,* foreign students responded in the same direction, either. "There used to be Hollywood movies depicting Chinese people like cockroaches. Then Japan and Russian people replaced them. The new bad guy is Turkish. They try to make bad guy out of Turk for their energy corridor in the region" (T-3); "Five different parts of movie include the scene. Different scenes, different messages. I did not think well when I saw someone with Turkish

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flag as a terrorist" (Y-6). Another point which attracts our attention here is that: Both Turkish and foreign students agreed that these scenes were shot to associate Turkey with terror. Especially foreign students responded more reactively to this problem compared to Turkish students:

I think this is kind of crime. Ambassador mentions Turkey in his speech, which is a certain indicator of manipulation. I got angry. I do not accept this scene. (Y-3)

Far from respect, too bad. Why? It is upsetting since it is far from respect. That flag the terrorist carries. This country's people think similarly, as far as I understand? I think this is a special message. A message saying that a Muslim country supports the terrorist. (Y-4)

Students also remarked that conveying a message with visual means could produce much greater effect than written or verbal methods.

They try to give a message like Turkey supports terrorists. It would not be lasting when told, yet concentration on visual tools lead some associations in visual memory and you begin thinking that Turkey is one of the bad guys (Y-2).

Within this context, another emotion emerging in addition to annoyance and anger is astonishment. While foreign students found it meaningless to associate Turkey and Turks with terror since they lived in Turkey and knew the country as well based on their personal experiences, Turkish students denied such a relationship since their own realities opposed to such a narration.

Too much visuality that leads people to characterize Turkey as a terror supporter. I've been studying in Turkey for 5-6 years, I know Turkish people. I normally don't generalize but they are really good-hearted people. And I don't think they suppose terrorism. (Y-5); I got surprised after seeing Turkish flag there. The desired message is this: Turkey helps terrorists by standing their side (T-4).

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In sum, Hollywood may function as a means of US hegemonic strategy since American policies and values are agitated in these movies, where a kind of "us" perception is tried to be built. In this frame "it is clear, that Hollywood and Washington are closer bedfellows than ever before. They collaborate on and work towards an emphasis on the efficancy of the American polity, a facet even more crucial in the second decade of the twenty-first century. ...It is also true that, over the longer historical period, Hollywood has often been accused of simplifying democratic debate (Scott, 2011, p. 10)." With the help of marginalization strategy, this perception, based on binary oppositions, determines who the ally

and the enemy is, forms the way of thinking, feeling and reacting and ultimately tries to justify all these mechanisms within a fiction.

Therefore, our study aims to reveal the effect of movies "London Has Fallen" and "13 Hours: Secret Soldiers of Benghazi" that propagandize US hegemonic politics on the "others". Turkish and foreign students studying in universities of Kayseri (Turkey) were asked to utter their opinions about the messages related to main themes of this article after watching the called movies. And via open-end questions and semi-structured interviews, basic ideas and feelings of students were observed and recorded.

One of the most important findings of our study is the similarity between Turkish and foreign students in terms of thinking and feeling regardless of their religions or countries, which have a minimum effect on the outcomes. As per this point, there is a negative perception about the main messages of movies, which also leads to a negative US perception. Students considered the argument of "first they did it", on which Americans relied to take action, unserious and illegitimate. When viewed from this aspect, US, as an expression of hegemonic power in the international arena, triggered anti-American thoughts and feelings in students as it makes use of terrorism and violence as a means for agitation and manipulation. In fact, student had such feelings because what they derived from movies was these very messages.

The movies were generally criticized by students for making US propaganda and trying to shape some binary opposition like the good and the bad, arrogance and pride, justice and ethics and their perception. As to our students' considerations, such basic concepts are directly connected to human values and shape our inferences about anything. Accordingly, US effort for shaping these concepts through propaganda drew reactions and was harshly criticized.
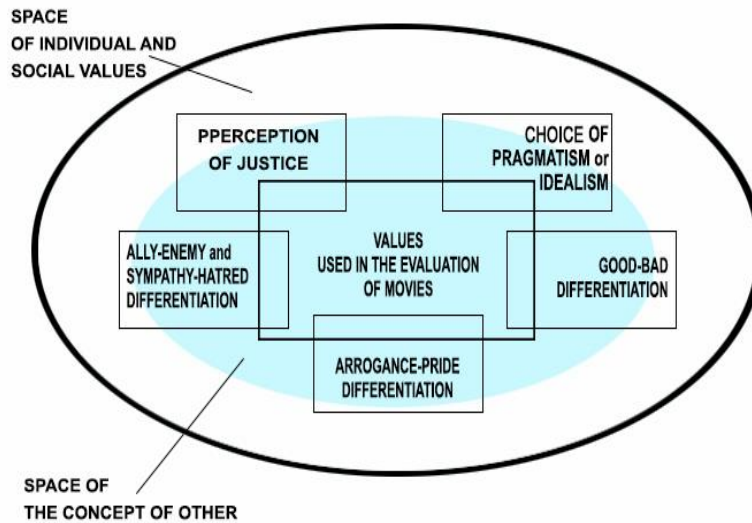
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Figure 2. Social space where students considerations on movie are shaped

The relationship between terrorism and Islam, terrorism and undeveloped countries disappointed and annoyed Turkish and foreign students belonging not to US and the world represented by it. As a result of interviews with students, we have come to a conclusion that universalization of US tendencies and values is impossible and thus an interpretation and explanation grounding on these values will get no reaction from specifically US and generally non-Western world and in the last instance increase anti-American reactions, leave alone arousing sympathy.

Another point that students attract attention and show reaction to is that US can easily point someone or a country as a target, violate international legal rules and stand-alone during its struggle with the bad guys. It is a harsh criticism that US constantly emphasizes illegality and inhumanity of terrorism and approaches to international law on the one hand but can completely ignore the legal codes when desired and engage in actions disregarding human life on the other. Students interpreted this case as such: US exploits its hegemonic and peerless power unfairly in favor of its own interests and makes a despotic pressure on the rest of the world.

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Eventually, we can summarize our concerns like this: Anti-Americanism is a perspective put into words by specifically US and generally non-Western world, which in general terms defines US as the center of imperialism, police force of exploitation system and the chief responsible of world's injustices and wars and the only reason underlying discontents. The anti-Americanism perspective is a fundamental and lasting solution as well as a simple respond to all concerns and unhappy issues arising from the life we are living. Therefore, uneducated and hopeless masses can easily be directed and manipulated to a legal or illegal fight against US. And terrorism, within this context, is being instrumentalized just to attract attention, voice the unheard, be addressed and create a micro-domain of power based on violence and fear due to an anti-Americanist motivation. The proposed method for such an unequal fight is of course terror which can unexpectedly hurt people and produce important effect on masses. So, we can argue that anti-Americanism is a matter of oppressed nations but the masses which combine it with violence and transform it into a tool for rebellion and self-expression, be it emotional or physical, are the young people, who made the first reaction to adverse events. US policies and actions all around the world contribute to the anti-Americanist movements of these people, who instrumentalize violence. Thus, propagandist Hollywood movies may function as an ideological material for anti-Americanist movements with their global messages and access opportunities. The world needs more dialogue than ever. That is why the effect of marginalization and target-pointing fictions of Hollywood on deeper layers have to be realized and cultural propaganda must be controlled based on human rights and freedom if a more cooperative, peaceful and prosperous world is desired.

The end goal of this study is to find out and reveal what kind of thoughts and feelings the worldview narrated by propagandist US movies trigger among university students living in countries otherized by US and how these thoughts and emotions correspond to parameters of anti-Americanist tendencies. It would be proper to repeat this study since it is restricted to a certain student group, one of them being foreign, and only two movies. And in repetitive studies, it would also be appropriate to diversify movies, increase the number of students and more importantly, include young people studying in universities of other cities.

Table 1. List of foreign students in the study by code number

Student Code	Come From	Sex	Age	Relegion	Class	How Many Years in Turkey
Y-1	Balkans	Woman	20	Christian	1	2
Y-2	South	Woman	20	Christian	1	2
Y-3	Middle	Man	22	Muslim	2	3
Y-4	Central	Man	24	Muslim	4	5
Y-5	Central	Man		Christian	3	4
Y-6	Caucasus	Man	22	Christian	2	3
Y-7	Caucasus	Man	22	Muslim	2	3
Y-8	South	Woman	21	Muslim	1	2
Y-9	South	Woman	22	Muslim	2	3
Y-10	North	Man	23	Muslim	1	2
Y-11	Middle	Man	22	Muslim	2	3
Y-12	Balkans	Man	21	Muslim	1	2
Y-13	Middle	Woman	21	Muslim	2	3

Table 2. List of Turkish students in the study by code number

Student Code	Sex	Age	Relegion	Class
T-1	Woman	21	Muslim	3
T-2	Man	25	Muslim	3
T-3	Man	22	Muslim	4
T-4	Man	22	Muslim	1
T-5	Kız	19	Muslim	1
T-6	Man	19	Muslim	1
T-7	Man	21	Muslim	2
T-8	Woman	20	Muslim	2
T-9	Woman	19	Muslim	1
T-10	Man	22	Muslim	4
T-11	Woman	22	Muslim	4
T-12	Man	22	Muslim	4
T-13	Man	22	Muslim	4
T-14	Woman	20	Muslim	2

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