

## **Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model: Its Application on Electronic Media and Journalists in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

*The political economy of media not only looks into power from ownership perspective but also explain news in top-down decision-making order. This paper is based on the application of Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model to explain the privatization of media sector in Pakistan and the relationship of this unprecedented change to secondary and ground levels influences upon journalists working in a conflict zone. With the help of seven in-depth interviews with displaced tribal journalists reporting on the US-led war-on-terror fought against militants in the northwestern Pakistan, this papers finds the model helpful in providing insight into macro-level developments i.e., commercialization of media and the concentration of media to serve interests of those ruling at the top. Weakness of the model, as the study finds, is the lack of vocabulary to use for micro-level developments, understanding and approach to develop insight into the social and cultural forces affecting media labor and influencing their working interests in reporting on a conflict zone. The outcome of this lack is, first, the absence of insight into decision-making dynamics between media elites and working journalists on the ground. Second, the element of working journalists' resistance is not taken into account. On this account if macro-level analysis of the propaganda model could be held as strengths of the model, disconnect from ground realities is its weakness. And in order for political economy to connect with the bottom it is imperative for scholars to recognize and acknowledge those small details in which lays the element of resistance against power.*

**Key Words:** Propaganda model, Weakness, Resistance, Conflict, Pakistan, journalists

### **Introduction**

Generally, scholars writing on the political economy of media make top-down analysis of the media scene.<sup>1</sup>This assumption could not be overlooked in the

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<sup>1</sup>"All approaches to the political economy of media take it as axiomatic that the media industries—the structure of the markets they operate in, their patterns of ownership,

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study of many classic accounts concerning media ownership, corporate interests, mergers and lack of heterogeneity in media content especially in Pakistan. Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model is no exception to this culture, which we use as a theoretical framework of this study. Despite providing an effective framework for addressing key areas of the political economy, the model invites critique from many scholars (Hallin 1994; Holsti & Rosenau, 174; Klaehn 2002, p. 147-182; Romano, 1989).<sup>2</sup> These scholars argue that Herman and Chomsky (1988) promote a mechanical and functionalist approach. Herman and Chomsky (1982) acknowledge leaving out many factors at secondary level by not making them the subject of their analysis. According to Chomsky's biographer Rai (1997) said:

“The kind of micro-analyses is not the task of the Propaganda Model. The model provides an overview of the system at work, making sense out of a confusing picture by extracting the main principles of the system (p. 46).

Keeping in view the scholarly arguments and counterarguments, it is fair to say that propaganda model cannot be held responsible for addressing all issues of media. Still we argue that analysis informing the political economy of media is incomplete if we ignore the role of secondary and ground levels influences. On this account if macro-level analysis of the propaganda model could be held as strengths of the model, disconnect from ground realities is its weakness. And in order for political economy to connect with the bottom it is imperative for scholars to recognize and acknowledge those small details in which lays the element of resistance against power. In view of this consideration the question we want to ask is: what social and cultural factors are behind constituting journalists' spirit of resistance and what mobilization do these factors creates in field journalists in Pakistan? Also, how does this kind of resistance associates with reporter's everyday spent in Pakistan's media field?

In exploring these questions we want to engage with propaganda model at two different levels: from macro-level we are taking the model down up to the base level Bourdieu (1993) called Field. For macro-level analysis we offer the

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the strategies of key players, trajectory of development, and so on—are important objects of analysis” (Winseck, 2011, p. 11).

<sup>2</sup>By the political economy of media we do not mean in classic terms the economics of media. On the contrary, political economy here means the politically conditioned changes, which the global neoliberal economy forces upon media landscape in any Third World country.

## Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model

burgeoning news media of Pakistan as a case study. We will then analyze decisions of the commercial media in the light of reporting carried out by local reporters in the conflict zone called the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA). Let us first explain the two different contexts as part of the same media system (in Pakistan). We then will explain key elements of the propaganda model before offering actual field situation to later connect top decisions with reporting at the bottom (field).

### Commercialization of Airwaves in Pakistan

Through a presidential ordinance in 2000, the former military President Pervez Musharraf passed a law to facilitate electronic media privatization in Pakistan. This development brought an effective end to official monopoly on electronic news media. In the next few years the authorities licensed 129 FM radio stations, 87 television channels, six MMDS, and a host of cable television operators and other broadcast facilities such as IPTV, DTH, and teleporting (PEMRA, 2012). This wave of privatization coincides with Musharraf's decision to join the US-led war on terror. Critical media scholar McChesney (2004) wrote extensively to define the self-evident "direct link between control over the media and control over the society" (p. 17). For McChesney (2004) commercial media typically derive legitimacy from progressive social reforms and public welfare, but role of commercial media are always anti-public. Since media reside at the center of power struggle, therefore, McChesney (2004) argues that connecting media owners to power politics is vital to understand what kind of force media is? (p. 17). In the case of Pakistan McChesney (2004) observations carry serious implications. Since licenses were issued to media houses already in the news business or those tycoons using media to cover other businesses, therefore, concentration in urban hubs made commercial media dependent on State apparatus. After all advertising cannot help sustenance a media outlet as long as official patronage is not there. Commercial media in Pakistan are aware of such constraints. With terrorism coming to grip with the *lawless* peripheries, TV screens in urban Pakistan started to rule the current affairs of everyday life. Every terror attack was followed official reaction to explain militants' actions. Such news made terrorism a *high-class tragic drama* staged by militants which then was re-presented by commercial channels to engage urban audience.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the urban concentration of media, however, 70 percent of Pakistan is rural based. But media divide is not so judicious to represent rural issues. This

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<sup>3</sup>Commercial TV channels have their rating meters installed only in business-friendly big cities on the basis of which owners decide contents of their programs.

problem aggravates in case of disaster or natural calamity. For example, the US war on terror hit the tribal belt of FATA. Gradually, militancy expanded down country getting hold of the adjacent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KP).<sup>4</sup> Caught in the middle of a conflict, Pashtuns, as a community, are dependent for information either on urbanite private TV channels or officially run FM radio stations focused on anti-radicalization propaganda. On International front, BBC, VoA and many radio broadcast cover Pashtun belt as their priority area. But the nature of this broadcast qualifies the definition of propagate, which in the current case is to promote Western viewpoint on the issue of terrorism (Intermedia, 2011, p. 7).

Too much media focus on Pashtun belt has caused some unprecedented changes in the local media scene—Pashtun belt. The number of young local Pashtun journalists has increased in national and international media. In the presence of ban on foreign journalists' entry in FATA, local journalists cover their native terror-hit areas for national and foreign media outlets.<sup>5</sup> Despite the influx of youth, there is a dark side to it as well. More serious than all is the growing imbalance between rich and poor journalists. Though educated and urbanized media professionals at the national level are earning from more than one source, their rural colleagues (read Pashtun journalists in FATA) are not so lucky. Some of them are not paid at all; others are not paid on time, while the rest are all underpaid. Over a decade a total of 30 ethnic Pashtun journalists have been killed in northwestern Pakistan, 12 of them hailed from FATA. Rising US drone attacks against al-Qaida militants and counterinsurgency operations by Pakistan military represent one kind of

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<sup>4</sup>KPK and FATA are parts of the Pashtun belt in which over 22 millions ethnic Pashtuns live. Unlike FATA, laws and regulations KPK are at least not discriminatory in rulebooks. Applications of such laws, however, are subject to explanation. Intelligence outfits representing the State apparatus can browbeat any journalists or media owner. One such critical English newspaper *The Frontier Post* was clamped down temporarily in 1999. Nationalist owner of the newspaper Rehmat Shah Afridi was incarcerated on charges of smuggling contrabands. Initially, the court awarded him death sentence, which later was reduced to life imprisonment. After his release on parole in 2008, Afridi said: "I was arrested after my paper published a report that the then Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) DG and some of the army officers were involved in drug smuggling" (Dawn, 2008, May 25). *The Frontier Post* is still published from Peshawar, but the "once well-respected," foreign-quoted daily from the Pashtun belt had already "fallen on hard times (Bark, 2001, February 19).

<sup>5</sup>Through out the country working journalists jumped from 2500 in 2000 to 17000 in 2011, which led to decrease in their average age from 47 years in 2000 to 24 years in 2011. This raise in manpower has carried enough effect over awareness of journalism in Pashtun belt.

## Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model

threat, while scores of al-Qaida affiliated militant groups another. FATA became a "no go area" for hundreds of those journalists whose distant families are stuck over there. Over a hundred journalists still live inside the conflict zone reporting for media outlets outside FATA. Despite all such hardships very few are ready to quite journalism. Can we assume that unemployment is high in the area or journalists association with their communitarian society is a bound strong enough to help them staying in field reporting? We will consider this question in the section below, which is based on seven in-depth interviews with displaced FATA journalists we conducted on Mr. Irfan Ashraf's recent visit to Peshawar in December 2014.

Looking into this scenario, two interdependent media contexts have developed in Pakistan. If one context carries ownership of the medium, another context feeds media 'hot news' about terrorism and counterinsurgency. In other words if the urban context of media ownership represents the top elites having in control media ownership and agenda setting of news, the second context is a conflict zone (read Pashtun belt) which are gripped by awful tragedies and harsh working conditions. With a critical view of the two scenarios in view, how relationship works between capital and manpower is a question later. But first let us explain key aspects of Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model.

### Propaganda Model: Key aspects

Connecting macro-level analysis of the US based commercial media outlets i.e., *Newsweek*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, and *CBS News*, Herman and Chomsky (1988) established contours of a propaganda model by evaluating biased worldview of the US elite media. The model examines in US elite media the coverage of "U.S Clint states" (p. 33) such as Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Identifying five filters as the main constituents of their propaganda model, the authors focus on the inequality of wealth and power and their ensuing reflection in mass-media interests and choices. This model "traces the route by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 2). Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that state propaganda is hardly visible in countries where media is in private hands and no formal censorship exists to be identified visibly. This differentiation gets further difficult when media completion is visible and malpractices in official sector are also part of media routines, not to mention media's claim about community's representation.

These filters explain: First) concentration of media ownership, media size and economic interests characterize the political economy of the mainstream corporate media which to serve as filter for discouraging the possibility of any alternative. Second) advertising in corporate media works as a driving force to filter contents and devise news agenda. Third) dependence on government sector for privileges and news makes corporate media to scan news the effects of which tend to challenge the status quo. Fourth) calling it 'flak,' negative feedback containing threats and warnings are the outcome of the corporate media function. Therefore, disciplining effort against media, in fact, reinforces media's strength. Fifth) "anticommunism" is a controlling toll which serves in corporate media a source of permanent bias meant to discourage news on ideological grounds.

All these filters, according to the model, are interdependent and interactive to reinforce one another effectively. This commercial model filters news through a process to "fix the premises of discourse and interpretation...and...explain the basis and operations of what amount to propaganda campaigns" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 2). Filtering process is so natural and professional that news workers do not see any foul play. Instead, mechanism like "objectivity" convinces them of fair play. Schiller (1981) looks upon objectivity as the product of mid-nineteenth century era of positivism that promoted a whole new lot of "widespread acceptance of uniform, objective world" (p. 83). In this way objectivity emerged as a "universal journalistic ideal" (Schiller, 1981, p. 85), which primarily serve *status quo* at the cost of social change.

### **Is Corporate Media Essentially Anti-democratic?**

Concerning the political economy of media, almost all major critical scholars (Herman & Chomsky 1988;Herman & McChesney 2004; McChesney 2004; Schiller, 1981) portray corporate media as anti-democratic. Looking into the evolution character of commercial journalism and media, McChesney (2004) argues that power of the corporate media is not limited to what they show. Along with commercial influences, political pressure from powerful self-interested parties—and to a lesser extent, the general public—has also shaped contemporary journalism. While pressure from the elites remains constant, non-elite pressure does not work: professional code of journalists does not consider general public knowledgeable enough to participate in journalism discussions (McChesney, 2004, p. 98). After getting disconnect from the grass root, the rise of a particular kind of self-serving commercial critique has pushed journalism largely in the control of conservative resourceful circles. At least McChesney (2004) admits journalists' role in making decision-making choices, though such choices are authority-centric for they are trained so. Still we need to look into these codes more carefully to

## Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model

know what are so powerful about them. They influence journalists not to look into their own people worries despite living among them for decades as community member. Objectivity is one such code extensively followed by another political economist Scheller (1981). Starting from the penny-press of 1830s, Scheller (1981) follows the trajectory of commercialism in US corporate media and keep an inventory of the way objectivity and public relations hijacked from people their right to unadulterated information. Visibly upset by the infringement on American public rights to reach informed decisions, Scheller (1981) argues people must reclaim their power, which they are losing to institutional control. "We must strive for a public sphere in which the people themselves rather than undelegated groups from their midst will be lord of the facts" (Schiller, 1981, p. 197). In early 1970s the non-allied nation raised the issue of global commercial media imposing on third world countries such values, which they called "cultural imperialism" (Herman & Chesney, 2004, p. 24). Another major issue was transnational media role in undermining national sovereignty, which was connected to the politics of imperialism and global communication policy. These debates, however, couldn't achieve a desired purpose mainly because Third World dictators in their own countries "censor the press to keep the truth from their peoples and the world" (Herman & Chesney, 2004, p. 25). Looking into the negative values of global corporate media and the acrimony such values bring along, the Herman and Chesney (2004) prefer community media and the more democratic channel of Internet communication arguing: "they are democratic media in the true sense, and they regularly provide a community public sphere (which the mainstream media fail to do)" (p. 201). Would it ever be possible for the Transnational Media Companies (TNCs) to address global concerns had there been democracies in the Third World countries? In other words would the Third World countries be able to impose their agenda had there been no dictatorship to curb press freedom in such countries? Herman and Chesney (2004) would say no for a reason because they argues about a structural flaw in the whole system of information dissemination. On this account, global commercial media system works on anti-democratic lines and even stands as a barrier in the way of "meaningful self-government" (189). This inherent weakness discourages plurality in global media and instead, concentrates media control in business elites shaped by advertiser interests. "These in turn feature entertainment, the avoidance of controversy, minimal public participation, and the erosion of the public sphere" (Herman & Chesney, 2004, p. 188). Where to fix the responsibility? If TNCs carried a structural flaws and mainstream corporate media commodify information in the service of power, how to liberate the public sphere?

### **Bourdieu Field Model**

Field is the social space or structure in which reporters bring into effect creative action by interaction with their sources, colleagues and through carrying everyday routines including reporting on community issues. Renowned French sociologist Bourdieu theorize field into a social space of opportunities, which Bourdieu (1993) called “aesthetic disposition” (p. 23). Aesthetic disposition is a form of cultural capital a person builds on by living with the cultural patterns of his native society, which, like other forms of capital, tends to follow an unequal patterns of accumulation. It is a space of political resource and a space of practical participation. For Bourdieu (1993) journalism is “the seemingly most heteronomous form of cultural production” which could is not merely dependent on economic incentives but also the outcome of social capital (p. 45).

Bourdieu (1993) knew that “agents do not act in a vacuum, but rather in concrete social situations governed by a set of objective social relations” (p. 6). Therefore, to avoid the trap of determinism of objectivist analysis, Bourdieu developed the concept of field (*champ*) which means “any social formation is structured by way of a hierarchically organized series of fields (the economic field, the educational field, the political field, the cultural field, etc.), each defined as a structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force independent of those politics and the economy, except, obviously, in the cases of the economic and political fields” (p. 6). So far the political economist of media explains media logic mostly in terms of political power and economic resources, however, they forget professional role of a journalist in field environment.

### **Locating subjects amidst Threat and impunity**

As mentioned earlier, we conducted seven in-depth interviews with displaced Pashtun journalists who report on terrorism in FATA while living in the adjacent Peshawar city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. All seven journalists live with their immediate families, but extended families of these reporters still live in FATA with whom they stay in contact on daily basis.<sup>6</sup>We asked what kind of situations are they going through, and how they report on FATA and why?

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<sup>6</sup>Purposive sampling here mean that requests for interview was the outcome of my judgement, as a native subject, mainly because we wanted the sample not only to be representative of all tribal districts [at least one reporter each from all seven tribal agencies of the Fata], but also educated, married and *vocal* enough to *comfortably* speak out their heart. All interviewees have 16 years of education with major in journalism. Their average reporting experience ranges from 4 to 12 years. Four of



## Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model

For tribal reporters impunity is the worst kind of threat. Starting with offenders getting away with crime, impunity entails considerable social and individual consequences. Tribal journalists negotiate their professional existence to survive in the zones of exception, which then requires them to cooperate with militants—not ideologically, but strategically. “We start our day picking our battles carefully understanding well that nobody will protect us but ourselves” said the 35-year old tribal journalists reporting on Mohmand agency. This self-protective notion not only reflects a sense of abandonment by the state, but the demoralizing impact of the structural nature of impunity also diffuses at a wider social level. From police officials to family members, threats are taken as the consequence of journalists’ own miscalculations. Blaming victims for their inability to navigate within the structurally created insecurities is something that carries haunting effects for reporters. One participant of this study said, “informing police after receiving threats is useless.” When asked why, the tribal reporter quoted a police official telling him “if the well-equipped military couldn’t defeat Taliban militants, how can police do?” Institutional apathy embodied in official responses reinforces the effectiveness of such threats that journalists face. Reporters said they cannot afford to underestimate the power of the intimidating source, and any “irrational” approach may possibly “invite death.” With respect to institutional apathy, reporters attribute their sense of disposability to the state apparatus. Tribal reporters call this institutional passivity a “defeatist” approach, which, they believe, carries overarching social consequences. Three tribal journalists working with the national media said they don’t officially report threats; the four reporters associated with international media said they are officially bound to report intimidations. Nevertheless, all the reporters said they keep a low profile after receiving threats. Despite taking stress-relieving pills and suffering depression (sleep disturbance, explosive anger, etc.) tribal reporters didn’t

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them represent foreign broadcast organizations (radio and websites), while the remaining three works for the national TV channels. Two of the participants migrated three years ago to Peshawar from South Waziristan and Mohmand Agency of the *FATA*; three interviewees shifted about four years ago from Khyber Agency, Orakzai Agency and Kurram Agency and the remaining two lived for over 5 years in Peshawar after they shifted from Bajaur Agency. All interviews were conducted at a place of interviewees choice in which names are withheld by mutual consent. In stead of personal names, each reporters is mentioned by their place of origin on which they report as well.

include psychological and social pressures in the category of threats or risks. For them, threats and risks mean physical attacks and verbal intimidation, which then require them to apply different strategies. “I stop working for a while and, sometimes, involve colleagues [to contact the Taliban militants for resolution]” said the journalist from Mohmand Agency. What is absent in his statement is the reference to any state institution to rely on or ask to intervene. Mistrust of the state is visible which then gives credence to alternative security measures in the form of journalists’ coalition. This coalition, called the Tribal Union of Journalists (TUJ), is organized around the issue of security, a kind of community building. In the absence of satisfactory response from the concerned law enforcing state institutions, community interference at some level is helpful in taking up ad hoc measures (negotiating the release of a colleague or confirming if threat to a colleague is genuine). The Committee to Protect Journalists (2013) in its special report expressed report said: “The perfect record of impunity has fostered an increasingly violent climate for journalists. Fatalities have risen significantly in the past five years, and today, Pakistan consistently ranks among the deadliest countries in the world for the press” (p. 6).

### **Between Self-censorship and Critical Reporting**

Despite worried about the lack of institutional protection, two journalists said they watch out for putting “critical spin” on news. By “critical spin,” they mean to report clearly what actually had happened without mixing things up. In other words it means critically reporting without any fear of combatants’ displeasure. Rest of the five reporters, however, said they prefer to report “safe” and “handy” news. “Worth of a journalist lies in winning sources, not losing them,” one of them working for the local media said. Safe and handy reporting means to cover news from combatants’ perspective, but “civilian perspective I equally value” he added.

How closely are impunity and financial insecurity related to reporters’ decision-making ability? Raising this query is vital to understand the way field journalists decide on what to report and what to leave out. More so, this question helps us know if reporters’ displaced status is the outcome of ‘critical’ decision-making or the result of peculiar sovereign practices? Tribal reporters are divided on this issue. Five of them said ‘independent’ or ‘critical’ reporting--as understood in the western mainstream media--is not possible. A reporter from North Waziristan said his main priority is to feed his family. Before further explaining his point, a phone call diverted the reporter’s attention. After he finished to talk, the seemingly restless reporter said the call was from a Taliban spokesman. “They have killed a top cop of Karachi metropolitan,” he said. For the next five minutes he was busy [later also the interview was

## Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model

disconnected three times]. Finally, the reporter turned around saying, "This is the way we do journalism: after reporting the news to my channels I then shared it with colleagues" adding, "sometimes all reporters release a news at the same time to minimize the risk factor." In this kind of journalism, he said, reporters don't have much choice other than to size militants' speeches. "Reporters in *FATA* do not live long" he chuckled. Uncertainty and widespread violence are the ultimate expressions of naked power that has caused displacement of reporters, not critical reporting.

Issues concerning civilian casualties due to indiscriminate violence and rifts in militants' ranks are fractious in view of the life risks involved. Understanding the negative implications of their decisions, two reporters said challenging the status quo sometimes becomes inevitable. "I don't want simply to be a stenographers," said a journalist from Kurrum Agency. Holding back the temptation of independence is self-torture, he said. Similarly, the journalists from Orakzai agency said, "Usually my producer motivates me to do something different." He records actualities and biting script before to send it to headquarters for over." In 2013 the reporter from Orakzai agency received a call from remote Massozai valley where about 50 protesting girls demanded a school.<sup>7</sup> The news was risky mainly because Taliban discourage girls' education. "While sitting in the relative safety of Peshawar how can I ignore young girls protesting daringly for their rights next to Taliban's hideouts?" said the journalist. Apparently, it does not seem wise to report anti-Taliban protest. Particularly if a reporter's family still lives in *FATA*. "I can't not feel the pain of my own people?" said a reporter from Bajaur. When asked about objectivity in reporting issues about own tribe or community the reporter said, "I only project worries of such victims who happen to be my own community." Questioning the theory of journalism and its relevance to conflict situation, one reporter said "once I was grilled for reporting a story about the military operation. After I was released, I sent an email to my university professor asking him not to teach the values of fairness and objectivity, the cornerstone of true journalism, because such values, he said, are no more valuable in post 9/11 world."

### Convincing the top managers

Five of the seven *FATA* journalist said they are contacted by the senior managers such as news editor only when big issues emerge such as death of

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<sup>7</sup>For lack of school buildings girls in *FATA* usually study with boys but they have to quit after completing primary education

known al-Qaida figure in drone strike, Jet bombardment on civilian areas, and suicide bombing or kidnapping of high military targets. Generally, all the seven reporters remain in contact with producers or assignment editors either through email or by phone. The assignment editor/producer usually call in the morning once or twice a week to inquire about the situation and ask for assignment, if required. In case of big event, tragedy or occurrence news the office requires official view point, which carries more worth than the truth itself. For example a journalist from Khyber Agency narrated an incident happened in 2010 in which 62 civilians of Koki Kheil tribe were killed in jet bombardment by Pakistan military. People from the area contacted reporters asking them to release news of the casualties. "Our channels were already broadcasting news by Pakistan military in which it was claimed that 62 militants have been killed in Tirah valley of Khyber Agency," said the reporter. Community pressure on reporter was so forceful that the reporter begged his producer to broadcast then news. "After realizing that our respective channels will not release news, I visited the area along with other colleagues and flooded social media with pictures of the blood drained civilian bodies following which local newspapers in Peshawar accepted the news building pressure on national media to run the news" the reporter said. Public pressure following media coverage of the incident finally compelled military chief to seek apology by visiting Koki Kheil tribe to give local people compensation for their dead relatives (GEO, 2010, April 17). Usually, a reporter said, the high managers of channels are extra-careful of accepting anything involving military or government officials. On the whole the management accepts news keeping in view geographical importance of information. For example a marriage party in Karachi deserves a media ticker but 50 tribal people protesting against power loadshedding do not. To escape social pressure coming from community, reporters in FATA adopted another strategy: five of the seven journalists have launched their personal web pages carrying online news sheet on which they display local news either rejected by their respective channels or not worthy of sending somewhere. Rest of the two said they send news to display on colleagues' pages or upload them to personal face book pages.

### **Analysis**

On the whole, propaganda model is a framework that carries conceptual explanations for almost all weaknesses any corporate media suffer from. In the case of our research the model provided a framework helpful in explaining some aspect of my research question while weak to provide insights into others. Since labor in the neoliberal economics is at the disposal of capital, therefore, not only journalists in FATA but labor class anywhere suffer exploitation at the hands of capital. In Pakistan the State apparatus divided the public resource of electromagnetic waves in a moneyed class, which have

### **Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model**

always remained allied with the power corridors. Not only alternative media could not be established in the presence of high taxes, license requirements, and regulations (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), but government power (take military establishment in the case of Pakistan) also excels over media (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). In the case of advertising, commercial media sometimes challenges the traditional definition of news or journalism in order to capture the market potentially more productive in terms of advertising.

Weakness of the model is the lack of vocabulary to use for micro-level developments, understanding and approach to develop insight into the social and cultural forces influencing or denting the political economy of media. Since media system does not operate in a vacuum, therefore, the political economy of media cannot be disassociated from the field reporting. On this account lack of input from the lower rung of decision making unit cannot help any model to fully explain top organizational decisions or character. So common is this issue in almost all the scholarly literature on the political economy of media (Hallin 1994; Holsti & Rosenau, 1974; Klaehn 2002, pp. 147-182; Romano, 1989) that focus on metanarratives such as top ownership, profit orientations, production cost, oligopoly, mergers and TNCs offer a deterministic overview reflecting the notion as if power is speaking in the face of agency. While this is true, but equally true is the everyday struggle people put in their cause. French scholar Certeau (1984) argues: "everyday life invents itself by poaching in countless ways on the property of others" (p. XII). From acts of speech to the system of language, and from consumption of popular culture to the process of its production, everyday is the property of poaching.

In our everyday struggle, this social world is structured around contestation between two dominant powers: economic and cultural capital opposing each other in different ways (Benson, 2006, p. 190). By economic capital we mean money or anything that could be turned into money while cultural capital is educational credentials and anything concerning social orientation. If economic capital is more powerful in buying material satisfaction, it is cultural capital that economic capital needs for legitimacy (Benson, 2006, p. 190). In line with Bourdieu definition of field, Benson (2006) argues: "fields are arenas of struggle in which individuals and organizations compete, unconsciously and consciously, to valorize those forms of capital which they possess" (p. 190). McChesney (2004) argues that professional code limits journalists' view about general people (p. 98), but political economist here ignore that autonomy is vital part of professionalism. Journalist in this autonomous role usually challenges the economic pole of the field the benefit of which ultimately goes to social pole. Abandoned by commercial media and caught in threatening working routines, significance of the social forces should not be ignored which

take shape of a force, sometimes, to mobilize journalists go against decision of their own managers even.

So far the political economy of media not only looks into power from ownership perspective but also explain news in top-down decision-making order. This order may still be intact in highly regulated economies and societies such as the West where news is not just information but also a responsibility inviting litigation, if wrong. But news in the conflict zone is different: what comes first prevails over all later versions of "truth." Events are so full of drama and trauma that commercial media cannot escape the tension of losing out to competitors. That explains social media significance in every newsroom. Can we say that social media has the potential to set agenda for electronic media? Though a question worthy of research, decision-making power today is divided between field and newsroom, though it depends upon journalists' ability as to how strategically well placed decisions they make?

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**Syed Irfan Ashraf, Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi & Tabassum Javed**

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