

**Weaponizing Social Media in Pakistan:
Analyzing the Multifaceted Connections of Technological Determinism and
Information Warfare**

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Abstract:

Due to the recent technological evolution, states and civilizations have become trapped in a state of technological determinism or dependency thereby increasing their exposure or interaction to social media. This study brings together the context of information warfare being conducted through social media and how technological determinism further fuels its results. The study explores if information warfare conducted through social media has exposed elements such as cultural extinction and xeno-centrism in the Pakistani society. A survey was conducted which involved around 200 respondents following the non-probability method and specifying the respondents to be working professional from the age of 25 and above. The results indicated that this issue did persist in Pakistan and the public was slowly being brain washed through information warfare conducted using social media by foreign elements like India and America and thus turning public perception of Pakistan according to will of the foreign elements and stopping them from the path of development.

Keywords: Xeno-centrism, information warfare, soft power, non-military resources., social media, memetic warfare

INTRODUCTION

Due to the recent evolution of technology, societies have been a victim of technological determinism and therefore social media too. It has transformed the way of individuals completely. From aiding in communication to work everything is being assisted by social media and technology. Social media has a specific way of attracting youth much more than any other generation and is dramatically changing the lives of its users specially the youth (Al-Sharqi, 2015).

Social media is such an evolution of technology, which through time has shown great results from aiding in communication, to facilitating health care, to being platform for solution, to information. The technology of social media marks the ending of the industrial age and the start of the post-industrial age. Social media is truly the technology of the present as due to its numerous attraction as well as benefits many individuals according to a survey have shifted from traditional media to

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social media for their news purposes, like in 2016 around 62% of news citizen shifted to social news media sites while 44% considered Facebook a source for getting authentic news. According to researchers conducted, the youth from 26 countries with approximately 50,000 individuals considered social media much more superior than traditional media (Cordy, 2017).

Social media is medium or platform, which then is used for good or bad means. Just because we see positives aspects of social media it necessarily does not mean that it does not have any negative aspects, social media has been seen provoking violence and public hate carried out by either foreign or national elements, England and Greece serve as examples to the pervious notion. Pertaining to the pervious notion, social media is just a medium with no or little control and a lot of ambiguity, so it just depends upon its user and the user's intent, whether using it to spread awareness, to using it for information warfare to get a specific message across to a public in order to influence their perspective regarding a certain idea. The era of hard power and conventional warfare has ended. Today states are technology smart and therefore using ICTs (Information and communication technologies) to achieve their aim through mostly social media and the internet, as ambiguity and less control exist on the social media, so it becomes the best platform for spreading of malicious propagandas as well as gossips to sway people (Rugge, 2018).

Information Warfare

Information warfare and cyber operations to affect a certain situation pertaining to a foreign audience or state has existed for a long time. The only difference today is the evolution and introduction of more advanced information and communication technologies. Also, to the fact that technology smart states have found much more value in soft power pertaining to information and cyber warfare. At first states did not buy the idea of internet warfare but seeing its drastic results they now invest in it and properly carry out large scale psychological operations to influence a particular audience regarding a certain Idea, might that be turning a public against its government, to turning an image of certain state bad in the eyes of international audience. As the internet or the social media today presents individual access to around hundred –thousands of people around the world, with less control and more ambiguity it becomes the biggest as well as the most value and success laden platform for all operations to take place. This notion of changing individual perspective about a certain idea is today called perception management. Today when cases of xenocentrism, cultural extinction, public hate, public disorder anything and everything appear today in states mostly are because of cyber as well as psychological operations carried out through memetic as well as information warfare funded and directed by foreign elements to achieve their certain goals. So, the weapon of future to achieve great power while using the least number of resources is called information warfare (Rugge, 2018).

Global Perspective

The concept of information warfare to social media being used as a tool to influence political discourse in foreign as well as national perspective is not something unknown today, rather this issue has now been seen as something that threaten the international as well as the global security. Defense analysts like Thomas Niessen of the Royal Danish Defense College term today ICTs or in other words known as social media as weapon of the day. Thomas also aware the audience regarding some of the other uses of social media like for surveillance purpose, for perception

management, for intelligence operations to psychological operation. Then moving on to MI6 (British secret service) perspective about social media, according to Nigel Inkster former Deputy Director of MI6, during surveillance operations rather than satellite information ground reality provided by social media serves as a much better informational element. Online based life might be virtual, but the information and facts provided by it might be more real. So, at present the challenges provided by warfare and operations carried out through social media are very multifarious and require the cooperation of not only military but governments, the private sectors as well as regional and international aid. Addressing the issues presented by social media NATO has started to incorporate social media more in their strategies to halt or minimize social media operations. Moreover, many high-ranking officials of NATO have been seen actively engaging in social media to counter as well as analyze it, to ensuring freedom and security of social media. NATO currently has around 2.1 million followers on Facebook to having around 50,000 followers on twitter. Further following this issue, Tacan Ildem. NATO Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy enlightened the audience that this campaign's main purpose is to make aware the NATO state's youth as well as other youth regarding this perilous of social media usage, to what its influence can do. The NATO employee handbook recommends all NATO employees to be very careful while using social media or updating any kind of content relating to NATO on to the social media rather first asking the above chain of command for permission before any kind of social media activity (Cordy, 2017).

Information Warfare and Terrorism

A tool used to gather Intel, to sway an audience to a certain idea, to provide surveillance regarding a certain situation or target is referred to as information warfare. Using ICTs (information and communication technologies) to brainwash or to provide a certain notion regarding an incident or a state or even a government is the work information warfare. When this takes place in the form of graphical content or in the forms of memes it is termed as memetic warfare. Now this type of warfare is currently being used by state actor and non-state actors like terrorists. As if we discuss social media and terrorism, as social media is low cost and less time-consuming terrorist widely use it. In fact, mostly terrorist groups have their own media cells through which they gather Intel, to brainwashing of individuals, and getting them to join the terrorist groups, to locating possible sponsor and funding for their mission. As for terrorist social media serves as great platform for identifying individuals with ideas like those of terrorist's groups and then radicalizing them to join forces. Social networking sites like YouTube, Facebook, twitter, blogs etc. can become great platform for them to disseminate propagandas as well as fear and hate in public also to achieve the level of attention and recognition that they require. Terrorist groups like al Qaida readily use the techniques of social media to further goals as well as providing graphical content to make the international community aware of their presence. Also, that nowadays, there are websites, forum, and applications like "E-jihad" to further aid the terrorist's goals. Non-state actors like the IS Islamic state has also been seen using social media to achieve their goals. Pertaining to this above point a small group claimed as followers of IS referred to as the cyber caliphate hacked the twitter accounts of US military information operation and posted materials, proving to the world that even the US had a weak spot. Answering to this issue twitter immediately took care of this issue as well as blocked out around 2000 accounts which even showed least bit incitement towards the IS. IO or the information operations are those steps and strategies taken to defend as well as counter social

media issues and attacks caused by non-state actors to state actors also to using information warfare to achieve their own goals as well. About a few years many concerns were raised when a Stuxnet Worm. A virus was found in the Iranian Nuclear facility with an unknown source. Concerns raised here were that was this sent by a terrorist group, could the terrorist have such capability to create such a virus or could they study this virus and create one Stuxnet virus on their own (Theohary, 2015)

Russia is one of those technology smart states that understand the importance and value of ICTS as well as the influence created by information warfare. Russia today incorporates technology and mostly use of social media in everything from its foreign policies to its military. An information warfare analyst belonging from Russia Timothy Thomas says that “a real cognitive war underway in the ether and media for the hearts and minds of its citizens at home and abroad”. While a Russian analyst Keir Giles, residing in United Kingdom says that Russia “considers itself to be engaged in full-scale information warfare”. Russia rather than focusing on hard power and conventional warfare shifts to soft power and ICTs to achieve its goals as well as in monitoring of other foreign states. At present Russia uses techniques like propagandas, disinformation, rumors, and perception management to drive the foreign audience to towards their notions. News channels like RT Russia today to news websites like sputnik which provides its content in over 60 languages to carry out missions of information warfare. Russia has employed a separate sector of individuals to counter online political as well as socio political discourse that occurs on the social networking sites. Social media and ICTs are a considered a critical part of Russian strategies at present. Russia being a developed state with the latest technologies have also revolutionized the techniques of information warfare like propagandas to fake rumors to hashtags trends being carried out. Russia basically focuses on finding as well as creating narratives like theirs. Russia focuses at present are on its neighboring countries or former states of the once Soviet Union like Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan to states like Azerbaijan, Estonia and Ukraine. Evidence of information warfare were seen recently when Russia carried information warfare and hybrid warfare in Ukraine as a result Crimea was annexed from Ukraine (Winkelman et. al., 2018).

Social Media in Relations to Soft Power

Social media’s part in igniting public movements, public hate, protest as well as providing certain perception through perception management or information warfare regarding political or socio-political discourse has been seen a lot recently, which intern caused a lot of curiosity towards journalist and scientist. ICTs are widely seen as to influencing various political situations some like the Arab springs. Around 2011 using ICTs also known as information and communication technologies pertaining mainly to social media and that to twitter, was seen causing distrust and public hate towards governments leading to riots in countries like Yemen, Egypt, Bahrain, Tunisia, and Algeria. Due the twitter role in provoking of these riots’ media practitioners termed it as the twitter revolution, because of this ICTs significance as heavily noted. (Jaitner, 2012).

Due to its geostrategic location, Pakistan has become the focal point of international politics. Because of this feature, Pakistan became a pawn of the great powers during the Cold War, and it now faces a new challenge as tensions rise between the US (the current hegemon) and China. While these hegemons use other hard measures, soft power was a better option in the case of Pakistan, which is nuclear. Pakistan has long been a victim of 5th generation warfare, trapped between great

powers. (2021, Nadeem and Mustafa) As 64% of the Pakistani population comprise the youth, creating false or negative images on the young minds would serve their purpose far better than any other tactic. Corrupting the minds of the next generation in order to create extreme situations of public hate. Initially, Pakistan was a victim of great powers, but as India rose as a regional power, their soft power measures toward Pakistan doubled. The Brussels-based organization exposing the EU-disinfo lab scandal made this revelation. While Bollywood was already spreading certain narratives, this 15-year-long operation conducted in 116 states via fake media outlets advanced their narratives via social media and electronic media (Butt, 2021).

This study been conducted to examine a form of war that appeared through advancement of technology, a war that occurs without any bloodshed or military assistance, which is entitled as information warfare. With population moving day by day more towards media and that to social media, the platform for information warfare has shifted to social media. Xeno-centrism, cultural infiltration, cultural extinction, demoralization, and hatred towards a nation are all works of information warfare done through social media. This study will follow the dominated research method, in that survey method will be used in contrast to this topic.

This paper aims to identify the possible implications of social media use, and; to investigate whether social media can be used for surveillance purpose. The study focused on these questions: What are the negative effects of social media pertaining to information warfare? To what extent can social media be used for surveillance purpose in terms of information warfare?

LITERATURE REVIEW

With the advancement of technology and the idea of technological determinism circulating, social media has become a vital part of our societies. From empowerment to awareness, news to business everything has been upgraded to social media. Since individuals are slowly and gradually becoming overly dependent on technology leading their over dependence on social media, this could be beneficial as well as harmful for them. As social media becomes the biggest platform for information and data which could intern be used for malicious purposes, so in saying social media also becomes a security comprise for its users (Fatima, *et. at.*, 2015).

Since ancient times, countries have indulged into diplomacy to achieve their national as well as international goals. Form the start diplomacy was always considered in traditional terms referring to the different government bodies and their communication process with each other but lately diplomacy as broaden its perspective from just traditional diplomacy to public diplomacy where states use this method to communicate with internal as well external public too, so that their concerns can be voiced before it causes any kinds of issues for the state. Since the evolution of technology diplomacy shifted to social media to further reach their audience as through social media they could/can improve their states image to the international audience. Considering social media to its fullest potential and using it to reach a greater audience. If developed states like United States of America be taken as an example, this state not only uses but benefit from its hidden feature to shift from conventional warfare and hard power to unconventional warfare/information warfare meaning soft power. According to Joseph S. Nye, Jr soft power is a type of method used by to achieve their goals without any kind of bloodshed or force, carrying out cyber operations in the form of freedom of speech and in reality all they do is manage perceptions regarding certain ideas

according to what is feasible for them. Point to be noted the platform in social media through perception is managed are websites like social networking sites, blogs and social video content (Colona, 2012).

In recent years its influence has reached to point of shaping political grounds at international as well as national level, incidents like 2009 Iranian election to civil disturbances in the Middle East as well as in North Africa all provide beneficial evidence pointing to social media's involvement in these conflicts. All these incidents revolve around one notion that social media in future well be involved in more information-based warfare or simply using/stealing or manipulating the enormous amount of information on social media to achieve one's own goals (Maharaj et al, 2013).

The concept of information warfare and technologies link to it has existed for quite a while now, and everyone and anyone who wishes to achieve power, or any other goal looks towards IW, be it governments, agencies, security companies etc. Then a question arises that what is in reality information warfare and would the world shift from hard core conventional warfare to soft power being that to unconventional warfare, as information warfare is just using technology in the right pattern looking towards only information and communication technology to either get someone to submit to your goal or to defend yourself against foreign attacks ,to causing public distrust or panic in ones or another's state ,and why just to achieve ones goals with the least Amount of time and the least amount of resources. As today's world is a world of technological determinism where no one can survive without technology, at a point like this exploiting their dependence on information and communication technology becomes very easy.as information warfare does not require enormous armies or funding just ICT and knowledge about them anyone whether an actor or a non-state actor can achieve their goals through it. At present developed nations like United States of America and Russia deems it as dangerous as the WMD (weapons of mass destruction). Looking through Pakistani perspective, Pakistan is a direct victim on IW carried out by India with help of Israel.at present information warfare is something which should be understood by states clearly so that they can take preventive as well as defensive measures to counter this type of either soft power or unconventional warfare (Khan, 2013).

Non-democratic and autocratic regimes have understood the concept of information warfare and social media, rather than taking steps to defend themselves against this menace they try to use it to their benefits meaning achieving goals cheaply. Focusing on controlling state and society issues through social media. Using social media has tool to make public perception according to their needs and goals. Considering social media with its actual value and referring to it as tool as to shape as well as create opinions and perceptions aiding to their wills. Countries like China, Russia and Middle East particular encompass their strategies around this notion, but the point raised here is the consequences and implication carried by the use of this notion (Gunitsky, 2015).

The practice of using data and information off the internet in a particular way which could and does serve as a tool to aid conflicts and induce further conflicts in reality exists as of today and possess as the real issue of this digital era. As platform of war changes from muddy lands to social media this type of information warfare is also referred to as mimetic warfare. As of today, mimesis is a new trending concept of brain washing and s well as establishing the fact of its psychological impact on its audience. So there comes a need for understanding information warfare in that mimetic warfare deeply so that its effects and implications can be measured, so that proper measure and steps can

be taken to avoid as well as defend oneself against this online menace used by foreign elements to achieve their goals (Kalpokas, 2017).

Evolution of technology at present has presented many perils regarding information as well as data stored on the social media as well as the internet being used for hazardous purposes. Today people are more cautious on information warfare than nuclear weapons as the disasters brought by information warfare would be considered much more horrifying than the outcome of a nuclear war. Information warfare today is something like hiding in plain site or as an open secret which everyone is aware of yet cannot properly defend this attack carried out by foreign as well as internal elements. According to research carried out by Russian army, two perspectives of information warfare are presented the broader perspective which accompanies both military as well as non-military resources to achieve soft power goals .to a narrow perspective which only facilitates the goals of states or armies where a small push is needed to spark up elements (Darczewska, 2015).

In this age of technology, where technological determinism rules societies, social media is classified under information and communication technologies (ICTs). Where social media aided in every field of life for an individual turning the world in a global village, in contrast to all its pro it carries some cons as well, which could one day threaten the states national security and integrity too. Keeping Kenya in mind, social media's implication towards its military, government and police is quite an issue, so moving towards a free an independent state, Kenya's government needs to be well verse red ICTs to defend as well as you it to achieve their own goals.

As social media itself is not dangerous rather it depends upon its user and for what purpose it is being used for it as it is only a platform that carries no control or restriction whatsoever. To understand the levels of information warfare conducted through social media different surveys were conducted and it was found that social media indeed served as a platform for information warfare carried out by terrorists' groups within Kenya for recognition, instability as well as selection of candidates easiest to brainwash, further turning them into terrorist by corrupting their minds through social media. radical groups like MRC (Mombasa Republican Council), 'Sungusungu & Mungiki' readily availed the opportunities provided by ICTs and information warfare in achieving their goals whether they were for causing a state of panic in the states or to turn the public against the government. On the hand if we consider military's role in usage of social media it meant countering propagandas as well as providing moral support to its soldiers and lastly monitoring movement of foreign element that may threat to Kenya in any way (Kimutai, 2014).

Not all states are equal, for this reason they are divided and classified as developed, developing and underdeveloped nations.so therefore cannot be equal in terms of technology too, so if these non-democratic regimes do not have the right technology how will they be able to protect themselves from today's most prevailing threat being information warfare. If were to take examples as to understand this more sincerely, Egypt seems to the best example to understand the concept of information warfare as well as how not all regimes are capable of it, where to stop a revolution social media was used and not only did it work in their favor rather it backfired on them resulting in further acceleration on the revolution and therefore fall of a government. (Gunitsky, 2015).

Nigeria is a constant victim of terrorism, which intern hinders its economy as well as its security and peace. The terrorist specially focusses at the north and south geopolitical areas thus putting Nigeria at a great disadvantage. So, to counter this social media and information warfare was

considered, of how to use ICTs to achieve peace and counter terrorism to bring a new era of peace and stability in Nigeria. To use social media analytics to counter terrorist, to stop their funding, to identify their motives as well as their recruits. Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and twitter, YouTube to be used to gather data as well to be used for surveillance purpose to counter and neutralize threats. By using sites/agencies like network X, i2 analyst, sentinel visualizer and epigraph to further strength ICTs to properly counter as well as use information warfare to achieve their goals more successfully (Jibril et al, 2017).

In today's age of technology and globalization if military needs to counter foreign elements who use soft power to achieve their goals, it needs to rethink its strategies and joins hands with media to counter. Military and media have had very hostile as well as difficult relations in the past. the only similarity both share is the element of the public without which either can survive. As these, organization never had a very promising relationship, but their cooperation is need of the present time as states have shifted form hard power to soft power, everything is now depended on technology and therefore information warfare takes advantage of this. Their relationship will benefit the state against all kinds of attack conducted by foreign elements as well as using it to achieve their own goals (Ramić, 2015.)

Russian defense minister Sergie Shoigu himself regarded media as tool to serve as a weapon in upcoming battles and wars. Pertaining to the above idea recently when ever trolls related to president Putin or Russia appeared, through social media the parties who initiated these trolls were sent clear frightening messages and then these individuals never again even tough of posting anything against Russia, but then comes to an idea of how to counter a state like Russia which is developed in every way possible how to counter the information warfare carried out by them (Aro, 2016). In context of hybrid warfare looking in to the category of 5th generation warfare, one critical example to quote is that of the ban faced by Facebook for its free basic service and then criticism faced by a tweet by Facebook's Marc Andreessen (board of director) "Anti-colonialism has been economically catastrophic for the Indian people for decades "Why stop Now" commenting on the tweet MIT center for civic media (Ethan Zukerman) said that" I see the project as both colonialist and deceptive".

Despite Facebook's claim of this service being for the poor, it was later revealed by Indian researchers with substantial data that number of people that started to use the Facebook after this service who did not have before had the facility of the internet were very few, pointing out that the actual target of this service were not the underprivileged but the students and youth that were there for surfing it (LaFrance, n.d.). Then let's not forget famous Facebooks involvement in 2016 US elections, where Facebook (Andrew Bosworth close friend of Mark Zuckerberg), itself admitted that it was responsible for the win of Donald Trump in an internal memo which was later leaked out to the media (BBC, 2020).

Hypothesis

If users are too much dependent on media, then can it be used against them? If developing countries have weak media, then can foreign countries use this opportunity for information warfare?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study plans to analyze the dependent relation established between the audience and social media being their medium to satisfy their needs and therefore the implications they would have to face due to their increasing dependence on social media, today being a platform of information warfare. So the theory being used as guidance is the dependency theory. This theory is discussed below with present study in belief.

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory was first proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in the year 1976. This theory borrowed the basic elements like psycho analytics, causal and systemic approach from the uses and gratification theory. This theory regarded the audience as active, and also that the audience is smart enough to know what is right and wrong for them. Rather than focusing on the effects of the theory like Uses and Gratification theory focuses, this theory focuses more on the relationship created between the audience and the media to satisfy their needs. As individuals learn less from life so they turn to media to satisfy their informational need. As media satisfies their needs, the dependent relation of the audience on the media gradually increases.

The degree of dependence is directly proportional to:

- **Individual:**

When a specific media fulfills the needs of an individual so as a result, the dependent relation between media and the audience increases and similarly if it fails to fulfill the needs of its audience the dependency would decrease.

- **Social System**

When changes occur in a society, it causes the audience to alter or rethink their beliefs and ideas like elections or riots so they turn at this point the dependence of the audience on the particular media drastically increases.

- **Active Audience:**

As during this process, as the audience is considered active and smart enough to choose the right medium to satisfy their needs, which may vary depending upon such factors like economy and such.

As for the process of creating dependence;

1. Media creates a dependence relation with its audience by offering variety of content which they fulfill the satisfaction levels of the audiences.
2. Media maintains the dependence level by attracting its audience through cognitive motivations which may cater to increasing their attention span while affective motivation may be responsible for increasing the level of satisfaction.
3. Both these motivations work continuously to increase further dependence of audience towards a particular media. (Britannica, n.d.)

Rationale for Theoretical Framework

This study on social media being used as a tool for information warfare focuses on the dependency theory, due to the recent evolution in technology many individuals have shifted from traditional media to social media, like around 62% of individuals who watched traditional media for news purposes shifted to social media sites and networking sites for news (Cordy, 2017). Social media being a particular medium that satisfies their needs and satisfaction, their dependence day by day increases, but the point to be noted here is that news that appears on the social media has no or

very little chances of authentication as no or little control exists on the social media, and therefore there would no way to differentiate between news or propaganda presented in the form of news therefore moving to the point of being a victim of information warfare. So, concluding to the notion that since the audience is heavily dependent on the social media, they are at a great risk of being exposed and influenced by the information warfare that occurs on the social media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was planned to examine the role and implications of social media in information warfare pertaining to Pakistan. Keeping in view the nature of the study, survey method is adopted for collection and analyses of data. The population selected for this research study was professionals living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The units of analysis are the male and female, working class of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The population was divided on the basis of one element that the respondents had to be working and educated therefore keeping in mind the age, gender and occupation characteristics, the data was collected using the purposive method. Owing to time and financial restraints rather than following a large population, a sample of 200 professional male and female ranging from the age of 25 to 55 were selected for this research study.

DISCUSSION, AND FINDINGS

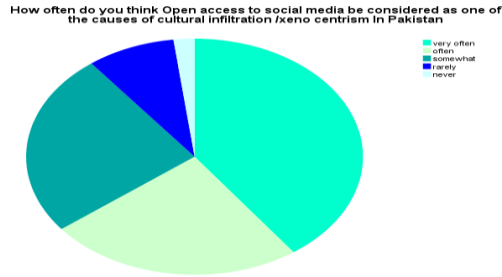
Over the span of the recent years, individuals have directed their attention towards social media more than traditional media. The once thought reliance on traditional media has shifted towards social media and not only in youth but adults have also been seen more inclined towards its societies shift towards an era of technological determinism, their over dependence on technology and social media also carries some consequences which they are completely unaware and constantly become victim of it. Here it may sound that technology or social media are wicked elements but that is not the case, they are just tools being used to achieve malicious goals as individuals become incomplete without them. The theme behind conducting this research is to make people understand the actual reality that exist behind social media or the internet, the age of information warfare or memetic warfare. To achieve something with minimum possible resources and the maximum intensity of results.

Referring to figure 5.1

Table 1.1

How often do you think open access to social media be considered as one of the causes of cultural infiltration /Xeno-centrism In Pakistan

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very often	80	40.0	40.0	40.0
often	49	24.5	24.5	64.5
somewhat	50	25.0	25.0	89.5
rarely	17	8.5	8.5	98.0
never	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	



Pie chart 1.1

Table: 5.2

How much do you think the adopted trends from social media be considered as leading cause of cultural extinction

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very much	62	31.0	31.0	31.0
Much	87	43.5	43.5	74.5
Somewhat	34	17.0	17.0	91.5
Rarely	15	7.5	7.5	99.0
Never	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Histogram: 1.2

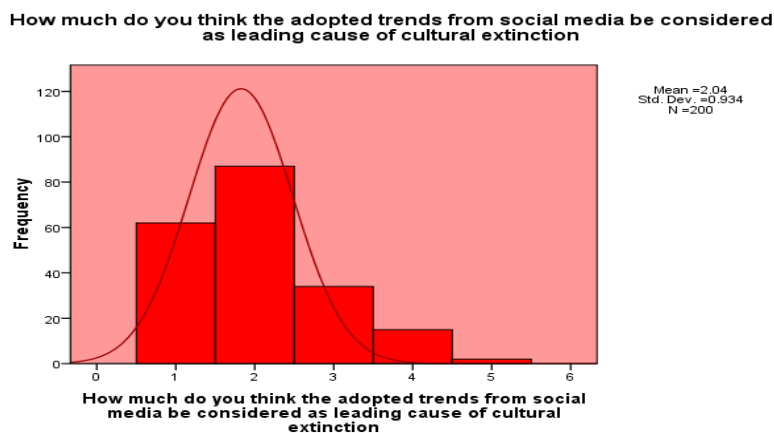
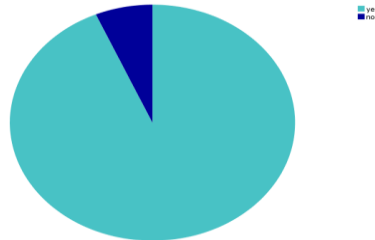


Table: 5.3

Do you think social media has become a strategic weapon in creating mindset in today's society

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	187	93.5	93.5	93.5
No	13	6.5	6.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Do you think social media has become a strategic weapon in creating mindset in today's society



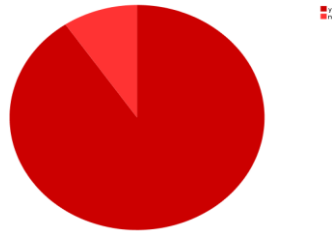
Pie chart: 1.3

Table: 5.4

Do you think social media has the power to change public opinion

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	181	90.5	90.5	90.5
no	19	9.5	9.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Do you think social media has the power to change public opinion



Pie chart: 1.4

Table: 5.5

Is social media more harmful then beneficial for its users

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very much	36	18.0	18.0	18.0
much	50	25.0	25.0	43.0
somewhat	82	41.0	41.0	84.0
Rarely	29	14.5	14.5	98.5
Never	3	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Pie chart 1.5

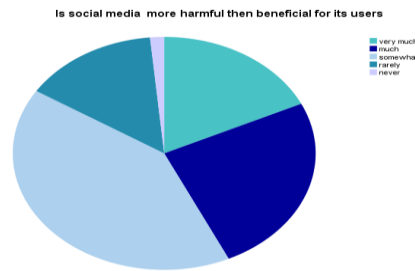
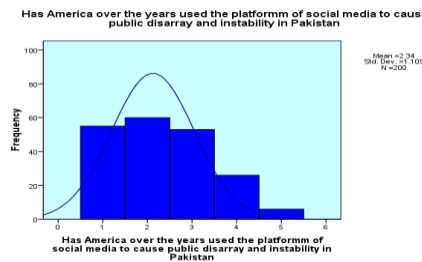


Table: 5.6

Has America over the years used the platform of social media to cause public disarray and instability in Pakistan

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very much	55	27.5	27.5	27.5
much	60	30.0	30.0	57.5
somewhat	53	26.5	26.5	84.0
rarely	26	13.0	13.0	97.0
never	6	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	



Pie chart: 1.6

Table: 5.7

Has the Pakistani populace been infected to the level that even though India is Pakistan's adversary still Pakistanis would prefer to watch Indian media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very much	56	28.0	28.0	28.0
much	60	30.0	30.0	58.0
somewhat	54	27.0	27.0	85.0
rarely	22	11.0	11.0	96.0
never	8	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Pie chart 1.7

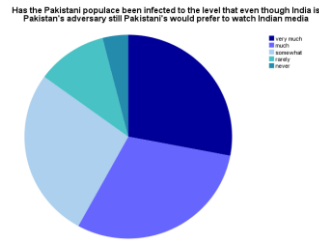
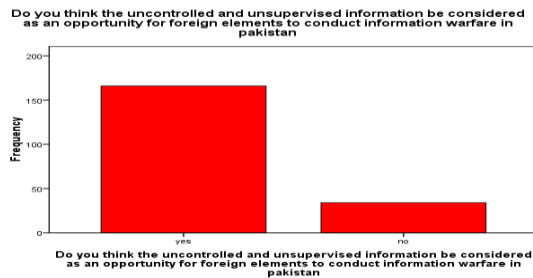


Table: 5.8

Do you think the uncontrolled and unsupervised information be considered as an opportunity for foreign elements to conduct information warfare in Pakistan

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	166	83.0	83.0	83.0
no	34	17.0	17.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	



Bar chart: 1.8

Table: 5.9

Do you think developed nations prefer soft power over hard power in today's age of technology.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Commulative Percent
Valid yes	176	88.0	88.0	88.0
No	24	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Pie chart: 1.9

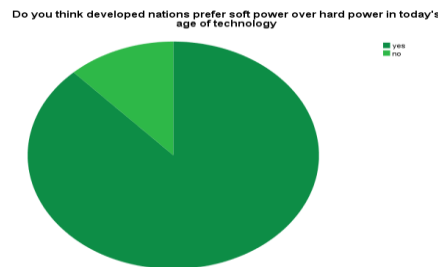


Table: 5.10

Is information warfare the most successful weapon to achieve victory at present

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	159	79.5	79.5	79.5
no	41	20.5	20.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Bar chart: 1.10

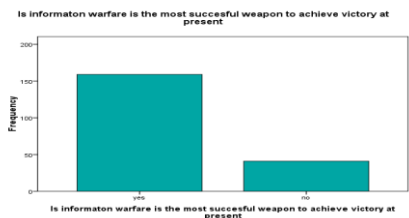
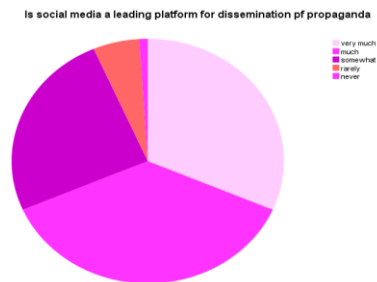


Table: 5.11

Is social media a leading platform for dissemination of propaganda

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very much	63	31.5	31.5	31.5
much	74	37.0	37.0	68.5
somewhat	50	25.0	25.0	93.5
rarely	11	5.5	5.5	99.0
never	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

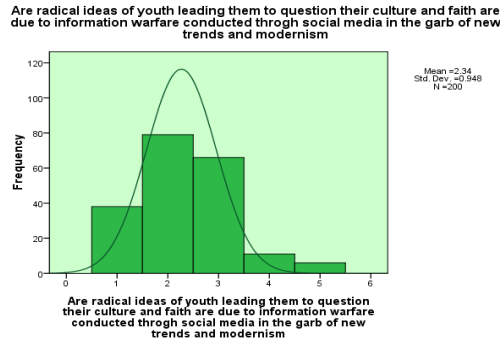


Pie chart: 1.11

Table: 5.12

Are radical ideas of youth leading them to question their culture and faith are due to information warfare conducted through social media in the garb of new trends and modernism

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very much	38	19.0	19.0	19.0
much	79	39.5	39.5	58.5
somewhat	66	33.0	33.0	91.5
rarely	11	5.5	5.5	97.0
never	6	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	



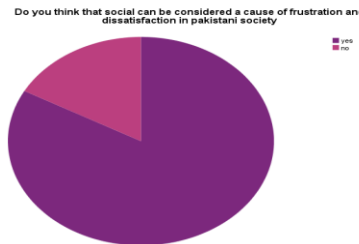
Histogram 1.12

Table: 5.13

Do you think that social can be considered a cause of frustration and dissatisfaction in Pakistani society

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	166	83.0	83.0	83.0
no	34	17.0	17.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Pie chart: 1.13



CONCLUSION

This study was designed to explore the role of social media in information warfare as well as providing information about the concept of information warfare and how it affects Pakistan and furthermore, what is its impact on the users of social media. Over the span of last few years social

media's popularity has increased drastically. Individuals who opted for traditional media as a source of information and entertainment now moved up a ladder and diverted their attention towards social media. As day by day number of users increased it also meant that the social media was also becoming a storage for immense amount of information.

As social media slowly became a bank of information with little or no control, where everybody could reach anybody just by a touch of technology. Distances were removed and the world became into a global village where information from any part of the world could be easily accessed just through technology and internet. As every good thing has a downfall, so did social media. As information on social media kept piling up with little control that information became vulnerable to hackers and cyber-attacks, but if we talk about the present where states understood the concept of soft power and how beneficial it was for them rather than traditional conventional warfare, the concept of war changed too.

As the concept of soft power prevailed the developed nations it was a time to change old weapons like guns and grenades to ICTs (information and communication technologies). As developed nations understood the vulnerability of information on the social media, they therefore took advantage of it and used it to covert foreign audience to achieve their goals. This all was possible due to immense dependence on social media as well as no or little control, therefore cyber operations like information warfare as well as memetic warfare started to take place.

According to the empirical data achieved through survey it is concluded that people's perception regarding social media and information warfare is corrupt. They regard it as something that benefits them, and information warfare is child's play. When individuals should be concerned about what is information warfare or even so memetic warfare, how it distorts the thinking of its victims through perception management, especially for the state like Pakistan whose media carries a lot of vulnerability issues and thus proving the above hypothesis as true: If users are too much dependent on media, then can it be used against them? As well as proving: If social media satisfies the needs of its audience, then can it also carry some negative aspects?

With over 90 percent accepting that social media could become a strategic weapon in today's age. The data showed that the older generation was more inclined to accept this concept of information warfare and its impact on the users rather than the youth. On every point where the youth disregarded the older generation accepted like for instance when talking about information warfare conducted on Pakistan by foreign elements like America and India with the number of 50 percent and 83 percent respectively agreeing, the youth still did not whole heartedly accept this notion while the older generation not only acknowledge but also gave their suggestion regarding this concept.

This points to the question what if the youth of Pakistan is already a victim of information warfare is currently undergoing information warfare as we speak. The only issue that arises through deep research that people lack awareness and information regarding this prevalent menace. Russian defense minister Sergei Shoigu regarded social media and information warfare as weapons of mass destruction in current times. This issue of information warfare carries too much hazardous elements that the issue of information warfare raised at the UN as well as NATO issued a report claiming to threaten it provided in the international society for states.

For a nuclear state like Pakistan whose future is solely depended on its youth steps must be taken, to counter as well as use information warfare for their own benefits as well.

Then comes the part of surveillance operation conducted through social media as enormous amount of information exists so intern it is vulnerable to theft and cyber operations. Thus, proving two more hypotheses: "If developing countries have weak media then can foreign countries use this opportunity for information warfare?" & "as social media is a platform for massive amount of information, can this same information be used for surveillance purpose or information warfare."

All above hypothesis presented became hence proved as through the data as well as the literature provided, it was found that social media does carry negative effects for its users then moving to the fact of a technological determinant state, individual over dependence on social media also becomes a reason for becoming vulnerable to information warfare. Lastly as Pakistan has a weak media sector with quite a lot of issues of corruption and propaganda therefore it fails to assist its military in combating information warfare.

Keeping in mind the respondent's response towards the open-ended question these suggestions are presented.

- Awareness regarding information warfare and its implication must be provided.
- Foreign content should be filtered before reaching the Pakistani population.
- Efforts should be made to make the Pakistani media sector strong.
- The issue of information warfare should be highlighted towards the government.
- Proper strategies should be designed to counter information warfare.
- The concept of information warfare and social media should be researched at a massive scale to find way where it could be used against the enemy benefiting Pakistan itself.

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