



Image: Azadeh Ghahvie

## Cinematography: A Medium in International Studies - Film, International Law and Humanitarian Diplomacy

### La cinematografía: Un medio en los estudios internacionales - Cine, derecho internacional y diplomacia humanitaria

#### Abstract:

It is said that knowledge and education are key to an empowered lifestyle. The article presupposes that the fundamentals of international law, human rights, are the basis of contemporary enlightenment. Knowledge and awareness of an individual's rights are thus essential. The expansion of digital learning and especially the use of film as a learning tool in schools and universities have become an effective teaching mechanism and support for educators, particularly documentary style of film. Arguably, the film industry's potency, for better and for worse, illustrates how the major production corporations vie for cultural and societal influence demonstrating their quasi-hegemonic grip on Soft Power. Soft Power can be both an advocacy as well as a pedagogical tool, but also a factor shaping and polarizing politics through social movements. This second article takes up the Trilogy's thread highlighting the role advocacy based on international law and knowledge-creation for society and its applicability.

**Keywords:** Advocacy; awareness; documentary film; education; humanitarian diplomacy; international law.

#### Resumen:

Se afirma que el conocimiento y la educación son la clave para un estilo de vida empoderado. El artículo asume que los fundamentos del derecho internacional, los derechos humanos, son la base de la ilustración contemporánea. Por lo tanto, el conocimiento y la conciencia de los derechos del individuo son esenciales. La expansión del aprendizaje digital y, especialmente, el uso del cine como herramienta de aprendizaje en las escuelas y universidades se han convertido en un mecanismo de enseñanza eficaz y en un apoyo para los educadores, en particular el estilo de cine documental. Podría decirse que la potencia de la industria cinematográfica, para bien o para mal, ilustra cómo las principales corporaciones productoras compiten por la influencia cultural y social demostrando su control casi hegemónico sobre el Poder Blando. El Poder Blando puede ser tanto una herramienta de promoción como una herramienta pedagógica, pero también un factor que da forma y polariza la política a través de los movimientos sociales. Este segundo artículo retoma el hilo de la Trilogía destacando el papel de la defensa basada en el derecho internacional y la creación de conocimiento para la sociedad y su aplicabilidad.

**Palabras claves:** Abogacía; sensibilización; cine documental; educación; diplomacia humanitaria; derecho internacional.

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#### Cherin El Khodr

AdvocacyProductions  
Geneva, Switzerland

[cherin.s-khodr@outlook.com](mailto:cherin.s-khodr@outlook.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0234-5419>

#### Nitanth Jain

Geneva School of Diplomacy and  
International Relations

Geneva, Switzerland

[nitanthjain@gmail.com](mailto:nitanthjain@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8375-3734>

#### Yasemin Serpil Olcay

SOAS

London, United Kingdom

[ysmnlcy@gmail.com](mailto:ysmnlcy@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3404-9756>

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## **1. Introduction**

International law is one of the most all-encompassing and far-reaching forms of global regulation. The term itself is used to indicate legally binding rules that are applicable at an international level. The primary goal of international law is the facilitation of conditions to foster international peace and stability.

Humanitarian diplomacy is the process of persuading decision makers and leaders to make decisions and take actions while always keeping in mind the welfare of those most vulnerable and with the utmost respect for the fundamentals of humanitarian principles.

The process and the reach of filmmaking can bridge the gap between international law and humanitarian diplomacy as it can assist in delivering messages of advocacy and create awareness among a wider audience about current affairs in international law and relative to crises. The impact of film can be a lot more tangible and intelligible for the average person; thus, film can be wielded as a powerful tool for the promotion of international law, humanitarian diplomacy, and the promotion of peace, global welfare, and the protection of human rights.

International law is not however, without its limitations, and these restraints are not insignificant as they can be debilitating to its efficacy. One of the main issues surrounding International Law is its lack of enforceability, as those who are most vulnerable rarely have a tangible means of remedy. Acknowledgment alone cannot replace active assistance and legal recourse. Though its nature is one that should be all-inclusive, it is not accessible to everyone and evenly distributed to all persons, many of whom lack access to it; it is not easily comprehensible or even clear. International law promises a world where conflict can be simply mitigated or even outright avoided through mere abidance and diplomatic negotiation. This, however, is clearly not the case as many human rights atrocities worsen and magnify with each passing day and some are even buried by the powers that be in order to continue their rampage of destruction and self-interest. As the majority of common people do not have a comprehensive understanding of international law and many of the rights enshrined within, such as the Geneva Conventions or the UN Charter of Human Rights are rendered almost useless to those who do not know of their existence, let alone be able to help those most vulnerable. International Law is not taught nor is it disseminated widely enough for its impact to be one that is palpable at present, while humanitarian diplomacy relies on the good intentions of those who have the power to enact any sort of change and rendering of assistance and protection. Film, however, does allow for the melting of these areas and allows for the further dissemination and broadcasting of information of both law and humanitarian crises, which can extend its reach and add to its understanding whilst alleviating the barriers of education and accessibility.

## **2. International Law and Advocacy in the Pursuit of Justice**

International Law to a large extent, is developed out of international customary law, and establishes the foundation of international relations. The rules of international customary law derive

out of state practice and have crystallized over time, many of them eventually being codified in conventions and treaties of international law.

International Human Rights Law was established to protect the rights of every human being to make sure that everyone is able to live a dignified life and to combat discrimination and inequality. Not only does it establish rights but also obligations for the states to obey. The citizens' knowledge of their rights helps them feel empowered and leads them to be able to advocate for themselves, as well as stand up for others in the face of injustice. If we take climate change, for instance; the civil action taken by Greta Thunberg when she began protesting for climate change that later developed into a movement of young students who organized school strikes in order to call on their governments to take action. The advocacy effort of the movement made vital information about the consequences of the inactions of the governments evident, therefore convincing more and more people to join her fight for the cause. Without the sharing of knowledge regarding climate change the outcome of the reach would likely have been different. As climate change is only possible to tackle using a global approach, no positive actions of one country alone can have a significant impact. Thanks to the huge platforms where she had the opportunity to address the issue in front of the key players her protest has transformed into advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy on an international level. Given what is at stake it is essential that all citizens are aware of the obligations of the state to hold them accountable in the event of a violation. The actions we take today will have consequences on the livelihood of future generations.

A successful climate-related case was one of private law action for damages against the Netherlands, brought forward by Urgenda and aimed at reducing national CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Urgenda is a foundation based in the Netherlands that aims to prevent climate change and to promote the transition to a more sustainable society. Urgenda's statutes state that the foundation will prepare a vision for a sustainable Netherlands in 2050, which will serve as inspiration and motivation for everyone who works with sustainability.

In December 2013, Urgenda brought a private law action in The Hague District Court, Rechtbank Den Haag. Urgenda requested that the Court order the Netherlands to limit its greenhouse gas emissions by 40%, or at least 25%, compared to 1990 emission levels. The legal bases for the action were numerous and were based on Dutch law, EU law and international law. As regards the former, Urgenda relied on Article 21 of the Dutch Constitution, which entails that the State must protect and improve the environment. On the one hand, Urgenda argued that the state has a private liability for breaches of provisions in environmental law and a private law-based duty of care, which means that the state must protect the public from harmful pollution. The UNFCCC, the ECHR, and the 'no-harm' principle of international law were further invoked as grounds for the Dutch government's responsibility to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Urgenda argued that the right to life (Article 2 ECHR) as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights gives rise to a positive obligation to take

the necessary measures to prevent such a threat to human life as climate change poses and of which the State is aware. Urgenda further argued that the right to private and family life (Article 8 ECHR) gives rise to a positive obligation for the state to protect citizens from environmental pollution, even when these are not life threatening. Referring to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, Urgenda argued that it is irrelevant that climate change affects large sections of the Dutch population. Nevertheless, the rights of the individual under Articles 2 and 8 ECHR may be considered infringed. According to Urgenda, the measures taken by the Dutch State to curb climate change were insufficient to ensure the right to life and respect for private and family life. *Rechtbank Den Haag* allowed the action on the basis of private law. According to the district court, the state had breached its duty of care, which it found gave rise to an obligation to prevent dangerous climate change by reducing Dutch greenhouse gas emissions. Following an appeal by the State, the Court of Appeal upheld the District Court's decision. The Court of Appeal however, based its judgment on Articles 2 and 8 of the ECHR. According to the Court of Appeal the state has an obligation to take precautionary measures to prevent future violations of human rights to life and privacy. Following an appeal by the government, the Supreme Court finally pointed to previous case law from the European Court of Human Rights which shows that the state has a positive obligation on the basis of the two articles of the Convention and the precautionary principle to take appropriate measures, including preventative ones, to protect individuals from damage to their environment, even when there is an uncertainty as to the extent of these damages. This obligation, the court continued, exists not only in relation to individuals but to the population or society as a whole. Thus, according to the Supreme Court, the state has an obligation to take positive action in the form of emission limits to prevent climate change.

As the above legal process shows, change in the international sphere is not always brought about by governmental interests or those of the powerful lobbies. In some cases, Soft power, which definition will be explored more in depth in the following section, can prove effective when applying political pressure on public officials and governments.

### **3. Soft Power**

Soft power is a concept originally proposed by Joseph Nye as a strategy to grow influence in order to fix the diminishing reputation and economy of the United States following the Cold War, with the main premise being that in the modern, interconnected world it is no longer a military force, but in addition, the influence of culture, trade, and tourism that continues to rise; "proof of power lies not in resources but in the ability to change the behavior of states."

A country's branding or reputation is a crucial factor in the ease with which it can negotiate to further interests while the opposite is also true; and according to the Nation Brands Index maintained by Simon Anholt, national images of countries do not have the tendency to change easily, and it has taken decades of business, technology, and hard work for nations such as Germany and Japan to earn their stellar reputation following the aftermath of World War II. This is thought to be due to human

nature and its tendency to adhere to stereotypes (Fearn, Welsh, 2008). «The Cold War saw the end of one world; globalization and the associated communications revolution has heralded the start of another. Recognising these rapid changes, David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla called for a 'revolution in diplomatic affairs'. Their concept of Noopolitik emphasised the importance of engaging with non-state actors in a way which focused on cooperation, shared interests and common goals' (Fearn, Welsh, 2008).

### *3.1 Soft Power and the Role of the Individual*

Today, due to the changing nature of the world and diplomacy, clear-cut distinctions and boundaries are no longer present between the diplomatic corps and the citizens; the international arena is more dynamic, issues are more interdependent, and there is an increase in the influence of an individual can have, whether it is as part of a lobbying group, or as a well-known personality active on social media as the case of Greta Thunberg illustrates. As mentioned earlier, climate change gradually became another thematic diplomacy topic with mounting importance and urgency, and key individuals such as Nicholas Stern, who published the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change in 2006, in addition to the popularity and impact of Al Gore's film "An Inconvenient Truth", created the impetus for the international community to speed up attempts to address climate change beyond the Kyoto Protocol (Fearn, Welsh, 2005). Since the age and advancement of the internet and social media, a large component of what comprises diplomacy has now also become digital diplomacy; the internet and social media have changed diplomacy into a two-way street, with active dialogue between the consumers of influential media, and the creators of this media, and with those under the sphere of influence of the consumers of the messages.

### *3.2 Influence of Film on Humanitarian Diplomacy; a Case Study of Two Influential Films.*

#### **Film: Zero Dark Thirty**

##### **Introduction**

The following paragraphs present an analysis of the 2012 film, Zero Dark Thirty from humanitarian diplomacy and international law perspective. The film is directed by Kathryn Bigelow and stars Jessica Chastain, Joel Edgerton, Chris Pratt, and Jason Clarke in leading roles. The film depicts a fictionalized account of (including events leading up to) the covert operation to capture and kill Al-Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden. There are various aspects of international law and humanitarian diplomacy that the film touches upon, including but not limited to, the use of torture, the treatment of prisoners of war (POW), and the subversion of international laws in the so-called War on Terror (WoT). The film will be examined in light of these important considerations.

##### **Revisiting Zero Dark Thirty: A Brief Background**

Before moving on to discuss the pertinent international law related issues in the film, it is first important to revisit some aspects of the script itself. The story revolves around Maya (Jessica

Chastain), a CIA operative obsessed with capturing or killing Osama bin Laden. The film depicts CIA's pursuit of Bin Laden through Maya's eyes, starting from the time right after the 9/11 attacks till his eventual killing in May of 2011. The first half of the movie depicts Maya immersed in the unlawful world of interrogations - largely conducted through torture and enhanced interrogation techniques - to gather leads and information with regards to Bin Laden's whereabouts. The second half involves Maya fighting bureaucracy within the CIA itself to make a case for expediting investigative work to capture Bin Laden. Eventually, the uncovering of the identity of Bin Laden's key courier by Maya leads the CIA Special Forces to Bin Laden's bunker in Abbottabad, Pakistan, where he is captured and killed.

### **Zero Dark Thirty: International Law and Humanitarian Diplomacy**

The nature of the WoT, waged under the leadership of the U.S, has been such that some international laws have been broken. Torture at U.S 'black sites', for example, at the Guantanamo Bay Detention Centre and Abu Gharib has been a frequent feature of, at least, the initial years of the war. The movie does not shy away from the depiction of such practices, and shows torture techniques such as waterboarding, stress positioning, insult slaps, and shaking.

Based on the aforementioned points, an important consideration comes to mind. The movie assumes that the information collected through torture was important in eventually finding the bunker of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad. In this regard, there is an undertone of the notions of 'self-defense' and 'the responsibility to protect' throughout the film. In that the U.S is a victim of the 9/11 attacks, and that the country acted in self-defense to not only protect itself from terrorist activity but the larger international world as well. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter gives sovereign nations the right to act in self-defense and was also one of the pertinent reasons given by the Bush administration to wage the WoT (Badescu, 2007). Responsibility to Protect (R2P), on the other hand, is also a United Nations' doctrine that stipulates, that nations have a collective responsibility towards each other in order to stop (among others) crimes against humanity (Badescu, 2007). Thus, the premise of the film, to a certain extent, is positioned within these ideals and principles of international law.

Despite these undertones, the movie could have done a better job of depicting international law. There were very few mentions of rules and stipulations that govern the treatment of captives and prisoners, such as those, for example, codified in the Geneva Conventions. One major inclusion of opposition to torture was shown in the shape of Barack Obama's interview in the backdrop of a CIA meeting, in which Obama asserts that "America does not torture" (Joyce & Simm, 2014). But such inferences of international law were not a frequent part of the film. With respect to this, Joyce and Simm (2014) write "What is unsettling about Zero Dark Thirty is that targeted killing and torture are presented as the subject of mass entertainment, without the director appearing to take a moral position or engaging in any form of debate surrounding the international legality of such actions; international law is largely surplus to requirements."

As far as humanitarian diplomacy is concerned, the film was largely silent on this particular subject matter. Understandably, the movie was largely concerned with showcasing the events leading up to the killing of Osama Bin Laden, and in that regard, humanitarian diplomacy did not fit into this investigative/ war drama. However, it is felt that the WoT created a huge humanitarian crisis in various countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The pursuit of Osama bin Laden and other terrorists by the U.S in the WoT came at the expense of thousands of innocent civilians that were displaced from their homes, or even killed. The trials and tribulations of these civilians, and the humanitarian effort that later ensued, conducted largely by the U.S as well, could have become a feasible part of the movie. However, this was not the case.

### **Findings**

Zero Dark Thirty was undoubtedly a very important film. It was also one of the very first movies to depict the covert operation that led to the killing of Osama bin Laden. Understandably, the initial phases of the WoT included aspects where the U.S did not fully align with international law. Laws were broken with regards to (among others) interventions, extra-judicial killings, and torture; the larger justification being self-defense and responsibility to protect. The movie was quite honest in the depiction of these bleak aspects of the WoT. However, it is also felt that aspects of international law, such as rules stipulated in Geneva Conventions, could have played a more solid role in the script of the movie. Similarly, the movie also could have been more accurate if it had placed the pursuit of Osama Bin Laden in the scope of the larger humanitarian crisis and the ensuing humanitarian diplomatic efforts. All in all, Zero Dark Thirty is by no means a complete examination of the various rules and stipulations that states have to follow in times of war, although it does increase viewers' awareness about some aspects of international law; especially in the muddled context of WoT.

### **Film: Hotel Rwanda**

#### **Introduction**

This section places the multiple Academy Award nominee, Hotel Rwanda, in its political and social context to ascertain its impact on humanitarian diplomacy and issues pertaining to international law. The 2004 film was directed by Terry George and stars Don Cheadle and Sophie Okonedo as Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager at Hotel des Mille Collines and his wife, Tatiana, respectively. The film depicts the 1994 Rwandan Genocide through the eyes of Paul Rusesabagina as he scrambles to protect the lives of his own family and those of approximately 1300 other refugees, by giving them shelter at the hotel. The film explores genocide in great detail, along with other issues such as political corruption, humanitarian activism, and international political silence. The rest of the analysis that follows will be situated within the context of these overarching issues, with a special focus on humanitarian diplomacy and international law.

## **Hotel Rwanda and the Rwandan Genocide**

The film *Hotel Rwanda* is set during the Rwandan Genocide, which occurred during the spring and summer of 1994 in Rwanda. In order to understand the issues dealt with by the movie, it is first important to consider the actual genocide itself. The genocide was the culmination of long-standing differences between the Hutu population, the ethnic majority in Rwanda, and the Tutsi population, an ethnic minority in Rwanda (Carnegie Council, 2008). The genocide started when the Rwandan government controlled by the Hutus ordered the armed forces and several militias to cleanse the Tutsi ethnic minority and moderate Hutus in the backdrop of the assassination of Rwandan Hutu president, Juvénal Habyarimana. An estimate of 800,000 to 1.1 million people, largely the Tutsis, died during the Rwandan Genocide (Carnegie Council, 2008).

It is in this context that the *Hotel Rwanda* plays out. Paul Rusesabagina, a Hutu himself has to save not only his wife (who is a Tutsi) but also scores of other people that eventually seek refuge at the Hotel he manages. What ensues is fear, manipulation, and corruption, on one hand, and courage, resilience, and bravery, on the other. There is a depiction of international silence with regards to the humanitarian crisis on the official level, but at the same time, various humanitarian groups, extending aid to the victims, are shown throughout the film. Eventually, as in reality, Paul Rusesabagina is successful in protecting his family and all the people camped at the hotel, who then are able to flee to Belgium.

### **Hotel Rwanda: The Depiction of Humanitarian Efforts and International Law**

This section analyses the depiction of humanitarian efforts and international law in the film, starting with the former. Humanitarian efforts are seen throughout the film. The premise of the movie itself, with Paul Rusesabagina protecting his family and other people, predominantly Tutsis, is based around the ideals of humanity. Apart from that, United Nations peacekeeping forces and refugee camps are shown to be on the scene in various parts of the film. As in reality, the peacekeeping forces and the UN mandate were already present in Rwanda when the genocide started, to enforce the Arusha Accords of 1993. The United Nations in the film is represented by Colonel Oliver, the head of the peacekeeping forces based on the real-life UN General, Romeo Dallaire. The character of Colonel Oliver shows the extent to which the UN peacekeeping forces were helpless, with the Colonel at one point, saying that “we are here as peace-keepers, not as peacemakers” (Tunzelmann, 2014). The refugee camps such as those run by the UN Red Cross, as in reality, were shown to be overflowed with people and were depicted to have scarce basic living essentials. This overflowing of people at the United Nations Red Cross at one point forces Paul to accept more refugees at the hotel.

Having said this, this depiction of humanitarian efforts should not be confused with ‘humanitarian diplomacy’, with the latter referring to systemic efforts to persuade decision makers and warring parties to act in the interest of civilians. In this regard, the movie is silent and does not add to the viewers’ awareness about the concept itself. However, this lack of discourse on humanitarian diplomacy is only

accurate in the context of what actually transpired during the Rwandan Genocide. The international world turned its back on Rwanda and allowed the atrocities to go on with impunity. The movie depicts this in a powerful scene in which Colonel Oliver tells Paul Rusesabagina that the world is only silent on the genocide because Rwanda is an African country.

Additionally, the world of Hotel Rwanda understands the realm of international law. The characters at various points lament the inability of the international world to act in order to stop the genocide. While there is little mention of past humanitarian interventions, such as those conducted by the UN and the U.S in Somalia, the movie does explicitly make it clear that those same international laws (*vis-à-vis* humanitarian interventions) were not applied in the case of Rwanda.

Lastly, it must be mentioned that the film portrays Paul Rusesabagina as a hero who protected and saved the lives of over a thousand people by giving them refuge at the hotel. However, recent accounts of people present in the hotel have disputed the one-sided portrayal of Rusesabagina. For example, Tunzelmann (2014) writes “some survivors have alleged that he [Rusesabagina] extorted money from them, or that he refused to let some people in who did not have means, or that he forced them to vacate their rooms if they couldn’t pay.” His portrayal as a hero has also taken a hit recently when he was arrested in Kigali, Rwanda, and later tried on nine charges pertaining to his involvement with the National Liberation Front (FLN), that killed at least nine people in a terrorist attack in 2018 (The BBC). Rusesabagina was later convicted on terrorism charges and sentenced to 25 years in jail (The BBC). While some people have welcomed the judgment, the international community, by and large, has called the trial a sham and the judgment as an exercise of political vendetta by Rwandan president Paul Kagame.

### **Findings**

Hotel Rwanda is an excellent portrayal of the brutality that the Tutsi ethnic minority and moderate Hutus had to face at the hand of extremist Hutu militias. The movie does not only establish this brutality but also highlights the silence with which the international world approached the Rwandan Genocide. Here, the movie depicts the scant humanitarian efforts that were being conducted by the already present UN mandate but makes it clear that these efforts were not enough. The sheer scale of killings and ethnic cleansing required strict international humanitarian and political response, but no country was willing to take up such a responsibility. In the end, Rwandan people had to themselves look after one another, which is exemplified by the efforts of Paul Rusesabagina. Additionally, the film also laments the absence of coherent international laws *vis-à-vis* humanitarian interventions to prevent ethnic cleansing and mass murder. After the release of the movie in 2004, it was pleasing to see the UN adopting the R2P doctrine in 2005, which makes it a collective responsibility of the international community to act in times of humanitarian need. Collectively, Hotel Rwanda is a heart wrenching depiction of the Rwandan Genocide, which makes succinct points with regards to international laws and humanitarian diplomacy.

#### 4. The Soft Power of Film and its Impact on Society

Technological advancement and the advent of the internet has made the world a much smaller place than it used to be. This innovation has been a catalyst in not only changing the trajectory of film and cinema, but our understanding of the world in general. Only two decades ago, it was almost inconceivable that the world's population would have access to information on important events and current affairs in real-time. As most of the world's population continued to be oblivious to what was happening around the world. The transmission of information was slow, controlled, and scarce and the advent of the internet changed that. Cassettes and CDs have been rendered as relics of the past as the internet has made films from across the world available at one's fingertips, completely revolutionising the reach and the impact cinema has on individuals.

The growth of streaming platforms in the past decade has added another dimension to the overall impact of cinema. Online streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, etc. have made content more accessible. As of 2019, 4.66 billion or 59.5% of the world's total population has access to the internet (Johnson, 2021) and 4.33 billion or 55.1% of the world's total population are active social media users (Kemp, 2021). People today can access films and content from around the world, regardless of the language barrier, as advanced translation software work tirelessly to provide optimum viewing experience in multiple languages. This enhanced accessibility has allowed for people across countries and industries to be connected in ways that would have been seen as impossible, before.

One such industry that has massively benefitted from the Internet is E-Learning. Studies highlight that the retention rate with E-Learning is 25-60% higher (Chernev, 2021). By 2025, the worldwide E-Learning market is projected to be worth up to \$325 Billion (Chernev, 2021). And the investment in the digital learning space has just been exasperated by the sudden emergence of COVID-19. The sudden disruption in education due to the mandatory lockdowns enforced due to the pandemic has forced countries to increase their investments in digital learning.

The expansion of digital learning has also witnessed a sharp growth in using film as a learning tool in schools and universities across the globe. Film, even though often dramatized, has been an effective teaching tool for educators, particularly the documentary style of film. This trend will continue soaring, as the entire world warms up to the concept of digital learning.

##### 4.1 *Film and its impact*

Many film enthusiasts argue that film as an art form, in itself, is worth studying. Film, removed from its messaging, still continues to have an aesthetic and an entertainment value for society. Movies have a high tendency of capturing one's imagination, reshaping the sense of reality and truth. Seen as the route to escapism in the past, film has come a long way to propagating social change through creating awareness and mobilising the youth to think critically, ask questions and participate in making change. Over time, cinema has evolved into a platform for expression, enabling the exchange of ideas, culture, and values, while simultaneously challenging archaic traditions and societal norms. Film

allows us to revisit historical events from multiple lenses, enabling learning from history. It sometimes acts as a bridge between truth and political agenda. Something that most history textbooks fail to do.

The subliminal impact of film on an individual or a society as a whole cannot be ignored. Films can directly influence our personalities, lifestyle, sexuality, ideology, social and consumer behaviour, language, etc. It is widely argued that they also affect our relationship with tourism, family, health, education, and the nation. Their socio-cultural impact on the world is undeniable as they continue to shape our perception of distant lands, diverse cultures, and the world as a whole.

Another major aspect of cinema, and one which is dangerously influential, is the celebrity culture. Popular artists and celebrities directly contribute to shaping people's personalities. From purchasing decisions to fashion and grooming choices, masses have followed their favourite celebrities through their lifetimes. Celebrities also influence the way we interact with each other. They are the trend setters and massively influence the slang or the popular language of the time. This phenomenon is far from new. However, the advent of Social Media and the growth of the accessibility to a mobile phone have amplified the influence of celebrities over our society. The culture of oversharing and the constant need to scroll through our phones have enabled celebrities and their agents to directly influence every aspect of an individual's life. From what to wear, where to eat, what to buy, every decision made by an average young person today, has footprints of influencer marketing.

This section aims at shedding light on the different film industries around the world and their influence over the masses.

### **The Soft Power of Bollywood**

The Bombay film industry or more popularly known as Bollywood, began in 1896 (Kaushik, 2005). In its nascent stages, Bollywood imported and exhibited foreign films, soon diversifying into producing its own feature films. The journey of Bollywood started with Romance and Adventure, evolving into social realism, in the post-independence era (1947). The industry then, was believed to reflect the Nehruvian state social reformist agenda (Kaushik, 2005). By the 1970s Bollywood moved away from its reformist template and developed into its own unique blend of genres like romance, social activism, adventure, action, comedy, etc. with the dominance of music. The author of "Global Bollywood" (2008) exclaimed, "On one level they are utterly commercial, but they also probe themes ... that are incredibly resonant in societies battling between tradition and modernity - themes such as class, family, and inter-religious conflict. These films often take up the question of how to live with people who are different from you."

This paved the way for Bollywood's dominant presence across all continents, selling an average of 2.6 billion tickets across the world (McCarthy, 2014). As of 2014, Bollywood has an estimated worth of \$2.28 billion, producing an average of over 1000 films per year (Statistica, 2021), making it one of the biggest film industries in the world. In the 1990s, film transcended beyond just being a means for entertainment and gave rise to the international tourism industry in India, encouraging travel amongst the middle class and setting trends for the next favourite destination for Indians to vacation in.

Bollywood's highest-ever grossing film *Dangal* made \$277 million worldwide (Statistica, 2021), while simultaneously advocating for women's rights and shedding light on the condition of national sportspersons in India. The past decade has seen a rise in the trend of films commenting on the current social issues and predicaments of society. This has increased awareness about the persistent evils deep-rooted in the society, amongst the masses. Some Bollywood movies have managed to spark protests, as the people stormed the streets, advocating for women's safety and other issues in India. Shashi Tharoor, an Indian Member of the Parliament and author expressed, "It is not the side with the bigger army, but the side with the better story, that wins. India is already the 'land of the better story.' As a pluralist society with a free and thriving mass media, creative energies that express themselves in a variety of appealing ways, and a democratic system that promotes and protects diversity, India has an extraordinary ability to tell stories that are more persuasive and attractive than those of its rivals."

### **The Soft Power of Hollywood**

American culture, through Hollywood, has invaded other cultures for a long time now. Hollywood has successfully facilitated a global culture, while slowly invading the national identity, culture, and tradition of countries around the world. This phenomenon is popularly known as the Americanisation of the world. Since the early 1900s, Hollywood has shaped and exported American culture. And as predicted, it will continue to dominate the global community. As Thomas Friedman wrote, "today's era is dominated by American power, American culture, the American dollar, and the American navy".

Hollywood generates \$2.09 billion in box office revenue (Watson, 2020), practically reaching every country in the world. Hollywood continues to be a leading film industry of the world, breaking barriers not only through revenue and numbers, but technology and innovation as well. Hollywood remains unchallenged as the global leader and trendsetter, amongst all film industries in the world. Films like *Zero Dark Thirty*, *The Great Hack*, *Dark Waters*, *Vice*, *Spotlight*, *Selma*, *BlackKlansman*, *Just Mercy*, etc. (Khal, Daria, Roland, Herrera, 2021) highlight the problems within the society effortlessly, inspiring the population to ask difficult questions and advocate for important causes.

### **The Soft Power of Nollywood**

The Nigerian film industry produces an average of 2,500 films annually. It produces movies in English, Hausa, Yoruba, and other Nigerian languages. Nollywood movies are a household norm, not only in East Africa, but the entire African continent and by extension, the entire African Diaspora. By 2013, Nollywood reported revenue of \$11 billion (Vota, 2019) and this number has only increased since.

Nollywood, as a matter of policy, aims at reshaping the behaviour of African society. Examples of this include the use of African musicians to promote family planning, the use of soap operas to promote women's rights, etc. African politicians also recognise the impact of Nollywood on the community and often use it to promote social change and the empowerment of genders and communities.

### **The Soft Power of Hallyuwood**

The Korean wave (Hallyu) first began in the 1980s in China, with the rise in popularity for the cultural products of South Korea. This soon turned into a global trend, offering Hallyuwood its first global boom. The industry currently reports revenue of 1.05 trillion KRW, with an export value of \$54 million (Statista 2021), with a massive presence in Asia, Europe, Middle East, Latin America, and North America.

Music has always played a massive role in the success of Hallyuwood. South Korean films and shows have found unmatched popularity amongst younger women and girls across the world. Unlike the other film industries, the Hallyuwood target audience is very defined. The popularity of this industry has drastically increased, since South Korean director Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite*, was the first ever non-English film to win the Best Picture in Academy Awards. *Parasite* was a metaphorical display of differences between the classes and the condition of the lower class of South Korea. This movie, with its social messaging and restrained artistry, won hearts across the world.

### **The Soft Power of Yesilçam**

The Turkish film industry has witnessed multiple rises and falls in the past hundred years. The 1950s through 1970s mark the golden age of Turkish cinema. Named after the Yesilçam street in Istanbul, the industry became the fifth largest producer of films worldwide by the 1960s, leaving its neighbours in the Middle East and the Balkans far behind in the race.

This changed in the post - Yesilçam era in the 1980s and early 1990s, as political instability grew, and the Turkish economy rapidly declined. The early 1990s saw two-three films a year, compared to the Yesilçam era, when Turkey produced over 300 films a year (Culture Trip, 2017). The mid-1990s witnessed a surprising rise in the box office as Turkish art films began to receive international recognition and accolades. 1996 is considered the year of the revival of Turkish cinema. Both the commercial films and the art films have consciously returned to a more nationalistic, inward-looking approach, talking about themes like identity and belonging.

Today, the Turkish Ditz, makes the second most international sales and global views, in worldwide TV distribution, only after the U.S. Turkey produces an average of 150 films (Navarro, 2021), marking the sale of 70.4 million movie tickets in 2018, Turkey confirmed its spot as the 7th largest film industry in Europe, capturing 63% of all admissions in 2018 (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2021).

## **5. The Hegemony of the Film Industry**

The global film industries are arguably one of the most influential sectors of modern society. Every audio-visual piece of content has the ability to transform opinions, shape behaviours, and rewrite history. It is no wonder it is being used as a tool for various objectives, including advocacy for international human rights. A good film can educate, inspire, and entertain people. Movies can give

rise to inspired and creative thought processes. They can inspire us to be more compassionate and can motivate us to help other people and aspire for change. Films provide a platform to peacefully coexist. As popularly believed, film imitates life and life imitates film. This circle of influence can lead to many positive changes for humanity. However, it can also taint our reality through propaganda and political motives.

Unlike the entertainment industry, documentary films have proven different when it comes to their objective and impact. Documentaries are mainly produced with a purpose to adhere to the truth and to shed light on an important and often ignored issue of public interest. The research- and knowledge-based factual depths presented in a documentary can often achieve a wider informative and certainly a more educational spread to the public in comparison to the media, especially in unfortunate events and situations that are underreported or twisted by biased media. One of the most recent documentaries that have raised many questions is the investigation of the disaster of the Estonia ferry that mysteriously sank in 1994. The acclaimed documentary has sparked a debate and a hope for justice and discovery of the reason behind the disaster of the sunken ship, as the governments of Sweden, Estonia, and Finland reopened the investigation due to the new findings presented in the documentary.

The power of cinema has been manifested and exploited socially, economically, and politically throughout the history of film. Political figures such as Adolf Hitler used film to propagate the Nazi messaging and ideology, before and during World War II. Leaders such as Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong Un, use film to completely wash away the reality, painting a very rosy picture of North Korea, for their population. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in China, also often uses film as means to reiterate the CCP policy changes, amongst the masses. The recent example of this being their brand new “Three Child Policy”.

The hegemonic nature of these industries often suppresses the individual filmmakers and supports the big-budget, big production house films. It is a financial-industrial complex, and it is in the nature of film industries to sell the film and make money. However, this phenomenon often silences the unique voices in cinema and continues supporting the films and talents that tow the social and political lines. This often results in the dramatisation or diminishment of historical events, to suit the current political narrative, changing one’s perception and memory of the event.

Most big production houses around the world have fallen into a comfortable template of fraternising with the political class, converting them into ideology pushers. Massive film conglomerates often adhere to national political agenda, coercing and manipulating important events, struggles of the society, and thus eventually, our perception of reality.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study posed its core, inherent research question at the base of all its arguments wanting to know how Society, International Law and Soft Power related advocacy or Humanitarian Diplomacy

have been influenced by film making. The article focused on the hegemonic forces released by international film producing corporations forming culture and societal change via the internet, social media, and general influence on world discourses. The article examines the ways in which film can be at the same time the messenger and the message for change, not always for altruistic reasons, as was demonstrated.

It is argued that although these corporations play a huge role in shaping global discourse, it is Soft Power and its understated influence that impacts democratic processes through social movements, empowering people unlike anything seen throughout history.

Humanitarian diplomacy is exemplified as a tool in the process of persuading decision makers and political leaders to take action, keeping in mind the welfare of those who elected them. The accountability towards those most vulnerable and in need of the full respect for and applicability of the fundamentals of humanitarian principles is monitored by the individuals making use of their Soft Power instrument based on the information highway.

Filmmaking, it is argued, can bridge the gap between international law and humanitarian diplomacy as it is the messenger and knowledge creator of awareness among a wider audience about current affairs linked also to international law and its relation to crises. The impact of film can be a lot more tangible and intelligible for the average person; film can be wielded as a powerful tool for the promotion of international law, humanitarian diplomacy, and the promotion of peace, global welfare, and the protection of human rights.

This article follows the thread from the first article in the current Trilogy "The Genesis of a Documentary" where the origins of a film are uncovered to better understand how a film comes into being. This article shows how, once a film is born, it takes on a greater meaning and becomes a carrier of a message or multiple messages. These, however, do not stand in a void, as has been depicted, and need to fit into context. The context is a largely hegemonic industry, but with big gaps for Soft Power to continuously penetrate.

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