Articulation of Political Discourse Through The Prism Of Mass Media In Pakistan

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Abstract

T he world has changed radically since 1991 in domains of politics owing to the new struggles for democracy and development, new concerns about human rights and the environment, latest technology and the forces of nationalism. Political messages disseminated through Pakistani mass media usually emphasize events that have no real importance and link isolated facts with artificially created units. As a result distorted, doubtful and biased conclusions spread that effect upon the attitudes and behaviors of the people. Influences on political content of the mass media have been studied through triangulation method; qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined for valid inferences. From media content one may infer many of the facts or influences that shaped it. This paper investigates assorted influences on political discourses disseminated through Pakistani mass media.

1. Introduction:

Mass media content is a socially created product, not a reflection of an objective reality. The media operate under certain expectations about the nature of content from the audience and work under constraints imposed by sources and organizations. McKibben (1992) writes, "We believe that we live in the 'age of information', that there has been an information 'revolution,' while in a certain narrow sense this is the case, in many important ways the opposite is true" (p. 160).

Media content is an indicator of many other underlying forces. Contents of media provide a glimpse of the people and organization that produce them and help to understand and explore phenomenon that are less open and less visible. Content is not a product prepared and produced in isolation rather it is the outcome of many a factors including consumers' demands, organizational factors, extra organizational factors, and social processes that contribute to its production. Media exist in certain community and cannot cut off its relation with the society.

According to Shoemaker and Reese (1991) there exists a hierarchy of influences viable at five levels; individual level, media routines level, organizational level, extra-organizational level, and ideological level. The integrated study of the characteristics of the content, audience, and effects can help to understand underlying processes, social phenomenon, societal linkages with media, media linkages with society, media functions and so on. This study is focusing upon the factors that shape political contents of major Pakistani mass media like television, radio, and newspapers at micro and macro levels.

2. Background & Literature Review

Influences on media content have been studied lately as compared to the effects on audience. Gans (1980), Gitlin (2003) and Shoemaker and Reese (1991) have suggested five broad hypotheses to address varied influences on production end. From media content one may infer many of the influences that shaped it. The research proves that journalists' worldviews, their perceptions of social reality may influence their work (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). News as a product, consciously or unconsciously carries influences exerted at various levels.

There are many factors that determine what will be transmitted and how it will be treated. Political economy of the media approach facilitates to explore media contents from a different perspective (Murdock & Golding, 1997). Not everything 'eligible' to be mass media content actually gets into the media. Some critics suggest that journalists consciously bias their news reports in line with their personal attitudes (Gieber, 1964). With respect to the news production, one striking feature is the great reliance of journalists on a limited, official and otherwise legitimized source through a network of contacts and procedures. The heavy reliance on such sources by the media people is justified as 'sources of facts' and to substantiate other 'facts'.[1]

In a particular media organization the ultimate power comes from the owner who sets the direction and the ultimate policies regarding the selection and coverage of media content. Epstein (1974), Tuchman (1978), Gans (1980), Ericson, et. al. (1987) have focused on organizational elements that shape up contents. However the limitations of mass media regarding space and time restrict certain

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[1] Tuchman, G. (1978). Making News: a study in the construction of reality, New York: Free Press. P.32

content from dissemination. The discarded content is also very significant as it reflects the variables of disapproval.

Some critics believe that journalists intentionally bias their news reports in line with their personal attitudes while others believe that journalists' worldviews may influence over their work. Gans (1979) suggests that journalists try hard to be objective, but neither they nor anyone else can in the end proceed without values. Different researchers found conflicting results of empirical tests conducted on this topic. Shoemaker concludes that general attitudes about special interests and other political groups can affect how a group is covered by the news media. McCombs (1997) suggested that owners could influence newspapers content. Chaffee & Berger (1997) found that news stories are more influenced by reporters' personal opinions as compared to the editors and readers. Peterson et.al found that papers business editors were more favorably disposed towards capitalism than were the general public. It can be concluded that the attitudes, views and beliefs of a communicator affect upon content and if the communicators have more power over their messages and less constraints, their personal attitudes, values and beliefs more often influence content. Communicator's professional role and ethical framework can also influence content. According to Breed (1955, p. 328) "a new journalist discovers and internalizes the rights and obligations of his status and its norms and values."

Bennett (2001) identified four news flaws common in news coverage: personalization, fragmentation, dramatization, and normalization. Personalization means individuals are more focused in news stories when reporting on large scale social concerns. Fragmentation is the outcome of competition and increased commercialization that focuses much on the delivery of news in disconnected, brief capsule summaries. Hart (1991) referred to fragmentary presentation as resulting in "cameo politics". Dramatization occurs whenever news is selected on the basis of its dramatic or entertaining value rather than its importance as an issue. Normalization takes place whenever news stories show how particular problems can be solved within the existing political system. Each of these flaws affects the nature of a political communication.

Most research on effects from political communication has concentrated on the individual rather than society at large; in other words micro-level effect studies are over shadowed while macro level studies dominate the literature. Tumber and Prentoulis (2003) suggest that we may be witnessing a paradigmatic shift in journalism: from detachment to involvement, from verification to assertion, from objectivity to subjectivity. There is a fundamental contradiction between the nature of peace process and news values, the media often play a destructive role in attempts at making peace (Wolfsfeld, 2004). Those who run the media tend to favour four values: immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism. These values make it difficult to use the media for peace.

	Media Focus	No Media Focus
Immediacy	Specific actions and events	Long-term processes and policies (as in ongoing peace process, dialogue, or mediation)
Drama	Violence, crisis or conflict, extremist behaviours, outrageous acts	Calm, controlled, moderate people getting along with each other (such as those participating in dialogue)
Simplicity	Clear-cut opinions, images, major personalities, two-sided conflicts	Complex opinions or explanations, institutions, root causes, multi-sided conflicts
Ethnocentrism	'Our' beliefs, myths and symbols, 'Our' suffering, the brutality of some 'Other'	'Their' beliefs, myths, and symbols, 'Their' suffering, 'Our' brutality to 'Them'

Source: Based on Gadi Wolfsfeld, Media and the path to peace (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

2.1 Articulation of Political Discourse: International Scenario

According to Freedom House (1997) media remain vulnerable, even in many of the world's nominally democratic countries. These governments' use of a wide variety of methods to intimidate the press continues to hinder the ability of journalists to provide independent scrutiny and commentary, which is critically important if governments are to remain accountable. Media treatment of parties, candidates, campaigns, views, and ideology suggest political bias. If some issues are frequent and others are less projected, one can explore underlying political bias easily. Robinson and Sheehan (1980) in their analysis of CBS and UPI's coverage concluded that objective portrayal was evident while value statements, direct assertions and inferences were rarely found in the 1972 presidential campaign. It is difficult to measure political bias in media content because events do not always occur in a balance amount so researchers cannot measure political bias in quantitative terms. Usually media consider it their duty to critically evaluate candidates and this assumed obligation sometimes results in negative coverage.

Gans (1980) studied CBS, NBC, Newsweek and times and found that prominent and known people already dominate news. The 'knowns' usually consist of government officials, presidential candidates and public figures that are alleged and actual violators of the laws and mores. The 'knowns' were getting five time more coverage. Official news was 'officials' or 'deviant'. The major non-war domestic activities were government conflicts and disagreements, government decisions, proposals, functions, protests, crimes, scandals, investigations and disasters.

According to Shoemaker and Reese (1991), it is easier to compare the media with the geographic and demographic world. The research about patterns of media content suggests that news and entertainment programs should represent the world in proportion to population, area, ethnic groups, gender or some other criteria (Boyd-Barrett, 1993). But the proportionate media representation may not attract people.

2.2 Articulation of Political Discourse: Influences on Micro and Macro Levels:

Research in the field of mass communication has been focusing the process and effects of mass media contents. The researchers concentrated on micro-level or individual level analysis. According to Shoemaker (1991) mass communication research can be categorized into two dimensions.

1. Micro Level of analysis
2. Macro Level of analysis

Shoemaker and Reese observed the factors that influence on news content range from the micro level (individual media worker, media routine, and media organization) to the macro level (extra media and ideology).

Micro Level Influences:

Personal characteristics, professional background, personal attitudes and professional role conception of media workers are micro level influences that affect upon media content. These factors construct peculiar attitudes, values and beliefs that are mixed up with professional backgrounds and experience. Personal traits sometimes result in biased approach in peculiar circumstances. A journalist observes and constructs reality according to his perception. The selection of world to describe the same event or camera angle and shot to depict the same happening will be different if more than one journalist is employed to that assignment. It is so because personal characteristics vary from person to person.

It is assumed that attitudes, beliefs and values of a journalist influence upon his construction of reality. Personal political attitudes and religious orientations also effect upon media content. For example, a journalist whose political views match to a party will treat news of that party in a different way as compared to journalist whose political views and attitudes do not match with it. Employment patterns, traditional stereotypes and socialization patterns affect each individual in a different way but these factors also harmonize thinking style and approach. Under developing countries most often relate expertness to demography as we consult foreign correspondents to cover some complicate and complex phenomenon. Women are not considered as talented as men especially in our society. This stereotype thinking affects the approach of common man.

The nature of job and the status of a journalist affect his content. New employees learn many things from their seniors. Professional role, policy and coworkers who create an atmosphere of shared values in an organization determine ethics. Media workers are obliged to follow the code of ethics that influences upon the selection and treatment of the content. Though there is no direct influence of communicator's characteristics, backgrounds and experiences on media content but these factors indirectly influence upon content because of their intrinsic nature. Professional roles determine the criterion of selection and construction of reality. Economic survival and economic considerations, political views and instances along with other factors shape ideology. In Marxist societies, the ruling elite own mass media so media emerge as a tool to show power. Events are interpreted from the perspective of powerful interests.

Macro Level Influences:

Ideology and extra media influences fall in this category. Extra media factors produce great influence on media content. Media as an agent of social control identify the threat to the status quo

by deviants (Boyd-Barrett, 1977). Patterns of content show that powerful get news coverage routinely to control mechanism in society. Ideology is not an individual belief system rather it is a societal level phenomenon. Ideology denotes to total structure that governs the perceptions of individuals about themselves and the outer world.

The model described by Shoemaker and Reese (1991) has five levels represented by five concentric rings. The innermost ring represents the individual decision-maker; the second ring is the media routines level; third is the organization level; fourth is the extra media level; and fifth is the ideological level. At each of these levels, there are influences that presumably have an impact on the decisions that lead to news content.

It is not possible for any media organization to cover all the events happening around the world by itself. It has to depend upon sources that are of various types working at multiple levels like individuals, organizations, interest groups, public relations practitioners, government, and so on. Sources that provide news to media organizations sometimes withhold information or lie. There exist overt and covert ways to influence media content. Information embedded in a particular context and construction of reality in specific and favorable perspective cannot be easily identified (McChesney, 2000). Through information subsidies media organizations get easier and cheaper usable information (Herman & McChesney, 1997). Journalists are sometimes engaged and kept busy in ways that they could not find time to approach alternative views.

Newspapers editor accept and reject potential news stories for highly subjective reasons, which can be based on the editor's own experiences, attitudes, and expectations. All these elements are related to the ideology of that individual. Journalists sometimes follow their personal agenda that influences on the content. The selection or rejection of stories is determined by the ideology the media maintains. Potential stories are based on agreed-upon values.

Selection of information sources is the discretionary power of media organizations but powerful information sources exert pressure to get their side of the story. Journalists prefer organizational sources to individual ones because it is easier for journalist to use information from organizational sources than from individual because of accessibility, quotability and credibility. Organizational sources are easily available whereas individuals do not have sufficient time and resources to compete effectively for the journalists' attention that's why official sources are more preferred because of availability and credibility. Media organizations get news from other competing organizations, electronic media monitoring, print media, wire services and so on. Each source treats events in its own style and constructs reality in its ideological paradigm.

Public relations departments issue materials to media organizations that assist them to control costs. Through information subsidies media content are influenced. These information sources influence the content by constructing realities in special contexts and perspectives. Pseudo-events are staged to get public attention that ultimately results in media coverage.

Technological revolution has rubbed the boundaries of mass media and started producing content for wide range audiences. Technological advancement provided multiple channels and choices to audiences. Newspapers that use computer composing have fewer mistakes than others. Satellite technology is being used to transmit national editions of newspapers at global level. With the emergence of global media transnational communities have emerged that facilitated the growth of global advertising campaigns.

3. Methodology:

This study is based on triangulation method. Qualitative and quantitative methods are applied. Political contents of Pakistani media are analyzed and its impact on literate youth is measured through survey. This integrated study to measure effects of political content may help to evaluate and judge the extent to which mass media are performing their roles in Pakistani society. Data for the analyses and valid inferences are collected through survey and interviews. Survey method helped to get details from practicing reporters, sub-editors, editors, producers, and anchors. The data assisted to explore the micro and macro level influences on the articulation of political discourse in the media.

Survey from media and non-media students helped to compare and evaluate viewership patterns, likings, awareness and the influence of political discourses. Since youth is the most important segment of population for the progress and development of a society, it seems necessary to evaluate the impact of political content on the youth. Interviews facilitated to make valid inferences about the articulation of political discourses in the media.

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) named five categories of extra-media influences that may have an impact on news content:

(1) Information sources, such as special interest groups and public relations campaigns.
(2) Revenue sources, such as advertisers and audiences.
(3) Social institutions, such as business and government.
(4) The economic environment.
(5) Technology

4. Articulation of Political Discourse by Reporters, Editors, Producers and Anchors:

Survey Results and Analyses:

The level of influence: Micro Vs. Macro

The producers of news do not have complete control over it while audience gets delayed gratification from news as compare to other contents. News contents are assumed to provide guidance and watchdog role therefore, can be analyzed on these criteria. Political talk shows and humorous programs on political issues provide immediate gratification and relaxation for its consumers. Media treatment of people, events and issues conveys underlying message of socially approved and commendable behaviors, attitudes and actions as well as abhorring and condemned situations, persons, and phenomenon. Political deviance denotes the ideology of producers and reporters. Treatment of an issue, production technique and description helps to suggest political deviance. Media portrays some people and groups frequently and in powerful position while others are ignored, critically represented and outside the mainstream. Transmission of similar contents in the backdrop of specific civilization generates socialization and integration.

Table 1: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
micro mean	34	9.6275	3.01569	.51719
macro mean	34	8.4338	2.94733	.50546

One sample T-test is applied to determine the level of influence on the sample of editor and producer. There is difference between editor and producer level of influence. Results shows that the individual influence which deals with the micro level are more than the macro level which deals with the social structures, social networks, organizations, and cultures.

Six types of influences on political contents of the media are observed through survey;

1. Political influence

Government controls privately owned media in different ways. Controls are entertained through laws, regulations, licenses and taxes. Government owned media are controlled through media financing. Politicians, government officials and civil servants make all editorial and programming decisions. Censorship policies are executed to control the content. Interest groups want to communicate their viewpoints to the public and try to influence legislation as well as public opinion and behaviors. Interest groups sometimes provide guidelines to cover topics of their interest and establish lobbies to influence mass media. Interest groups apply critical approach to influence media policy, content and workers as to get maximum coverage. They threat media by planning boycotts, protests and influencing sponsors and advertisers. Interest groups sometimes use public relations campaigns to get public attention and coverage. They successfully get in media agenda through their campaigns by designing and holding events that the mass media will cover. These events are not really news but 'pseudo events' planted, incited and planned to get coverage by news media. These events also fulfill media's need for news.

2. Economic influence

Mass media try to compete others to get maximum number of audience and advertisers. Characteristics of the market place in which a medium operates can influence its content. Market driven media try to satisfy the needs of greater audience and this struggle sets peculiar trends and patterns. Institutionalized media and media conglomeration are the results of such trends. Competition is assumed to create a marketplace of ideas that facilitate free discussions and expression on important issues. Some media corporations are interlocked with financial institutions. Boards of directors from non-media institutions serve as journalists and prove a threat to the autonomy of mass media. Reality is constructed in the perspective of advertiser and unfavorable information is withheld. Multinational manufacturers and advertisers have considerable power to suppress and kill unwanted political messages.

3. Organizational influence

Intra organizational influences on media content are various like the kind of roles an organization plays, its goals, internal structure, technology, market, ownership and policy. Organizational routines are followed by top-down approach, higher authorities issue policies that are implemented at lower levels. All members of a media organization are answerable to their owners and top management. Norms and values of media organizations define structure, role specialization, standards, interchangeability of personnel, and commonly held conceptions of what the content should be. Potential stories are based on agreed-upon values of the organization.

All media organizations have to assign roles and develop structures in order to smoothly run media organization. Media organization's assigned roles are of three levels; the front line that consists of reporters and creative staff; the middle level consists of managers, editors and producers who coordinate between top level and bottom level routines; the top level consists of news executives and corporate who make policies and set budgets. Assigned roles shape the opinions and determine views of the people working in an organization.

Table 2: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
political influence	34	7.4044	2.59152	.44444
organizational influence	34	8.5882	2.60951	.44753
procedural influence	34	6.0441	1.70168	.29184

One sample t-test is applied on the reporter's sample, and the results show that organizational influences are more than any other influence.

4. Procedural influence

Marshall McLuhan (1964) contends that medium is the message means that media are not just channels of information, media carry many other things along with the message that construct the reality for a receiver. One cannot completely understand the effects of any version of social reality if one does not understand the forces that shape it.

Media routines are the patterned and repeated practices implied by media workers. Media workers develop routines that become standardized and institutionalized owing to their utility. Routines help an organization to avert constraints and pressures. For example, people demand maximum information and it is not possible for a media organization to cover all the events happening around the world so they are obliged to contact with news agencies, establish bureaus and beat of reporters. Reporters face time constraint because they have to submit news stories before the deadline. This constraint effects the shaping of news substance. Media routines inculcate an approach in a journalist to consider an event as news or not. It can be inferred that an organization's routines lead a journalist to define an event as news.

Table 3:   **One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Political influence	25	9.5840	2.14703	.42941
Economical influence	25	4.9200	1.08666	.21733
organizational influence	25	11.4480	3.18029	.63606
procedural influence	25	4.4200	1.07461	.21492
professional mean	25	13.8080	3.79626	.75925

One sample t-test is applied on the reporter's sample; results show that professional influences are more than other influences.

Suppliers or sources of media content have a great influence because these sources dictate routines to media organizations. There are hard and fast rules about the coverage of judicial proceedings. Emergence of public relations as a profession played a vital role in harmonizing press and other institutions' routines. Newspapers encouraged public relations efforts of providing press release, handouts, copies of speeches but this practice reduced the ability of reporters to get scoops and inside stories. This situation caused dependence of journalists upon the news flow of public relations that can easily manipulate media content. It is a common practice in Pakistan to issue political news coming from these sources. There are countless sources of news including formal and informal channels for news media like official proceedings, press release, press notes, press conferences and non spontaneous events are formal news sources while background briefings, non-governmental proceeding, reports from other news organizations are informal news sources. Media routines conform bureaucratic routines that serve the cause of power elite who can easily manipulate the news content.

5. Social/Reference group influence

Pakistan is a heterogeneous society where every group, race, casts and creed wants its domination on media organization. They want to introduce and cultivate their specific culture, values, norms and ideology. Every group attempts to influence media to get maximum and positive coverage that affects on media content.

News and entertainment contents are cultural manifestations that are why the reality represented through it is culturally constructed. Power relations can help us to understand the culture and the patterns of media portrayal because each person does not possess equal power, so, power relations get more representation and in turn indicate who is powerful and who is powerless in the existing culture. Overrepresentations and repeated representations convey the message of importance while under representation or misrepresentation gives the message of lack of power. News revolves around the concept of 'power' so news sources are around the powerful people even media relying upon officials, wealthy people, and corporate and bureaucratic elite for news. Media content at the same time emerge as a manifestation of culture as well as source of culture (Galtung and Vincent, 1992).

The community also influences mass media where they work. Social, political, economic and cultural traits of that community affect the kind of media working there and produce continuous influence on its content. Larger communities exert more influence while larger media organizations have more power to sustain that influence.

6. Professional influence

Journalism and social science share similar claims, routines, objectives and restrictions. Claims of both fields are accuracy, objectivity and truthful representation of the world but both face restrictions. In order to fulfill their claims, journalists follow accepted professional routines and practices to attain reliability and credibility. The acknowledgement of credibility and reliability guides journalists to take given information as highly reliable rather to see them as filtered one and thus put a check to explore various factors involved in 'communicator category.' According to Tuchman (1978), objectivity is a ritual that serves primarily to defend the organizational products from critics. The objectivity helps journalists to satisfy maximum numbers of audience. Selected content is placed on a paper in a way to absorb audience attention and interest. Television messages are designed to appeal large audience. Presentation techniques and formats are developed that ultimately appear as media routines.

News contents inform us about changing scenarios and alert us to things that are now going well so it is impossible to consider proportionate representation in news. Intra organizational influences on media content are various like the kind of roles an organization plays, its goals, internal structure, technology, market, ownership and policy. Media organizations now consist of large sections that have acquired their own routines so it is not possible for an individual to have direct contact with them all. Organizational routines are followed by top-down approach, higher authorities issue policies that are implemented at lower levels. All members of a media organization are answerable to their owners and top management. Usually organizations are profit oriented so their first priority becomes economic gains but they do not totally ignore professional objectives. This situation gives rise to peculiar media routines in which economic considerations serve as constraints.

Table 4: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
total mean	34	18.8500	3.43513	.58912
reporters journalistic experience	34	2.94	1.922	.330

One sample T-test is applied to determine the relationship of experience for the level of influence on the sample of editor and producer. There is difference between editor and producer level of influence and their experience. Results show the level of influence which deals with micro level and macro level is increased with the experience.

Table 5: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reporters journalistic experience	25	2.52	.918	.184
Reporter's level of influence	25	22.6240	4.28936	.85787

One sample T-test is applied for the level of influence on the sample of reporter's. There is difference between reporter's level of influence and their experience. Results show that the level of influences which deals with micro level and macro level is increased with the experience.

Findings

1. It is assumed that media workers who have a journalism degree produce content with different characteristics than do those with other majors. It is believed that journalists with proper education and degree perform differently but in Pakistan the situation is not mush clear, as the trend of employing professional degree holders is not set in. Staff in our prints and electronic media is not usually equipped with the professional education of their filed and media routines are extensively followed.

2. Individual media workers' backgrounds, experiences and social relations affect the coverage of media contents. Journalists are more likely attuned to select news from their social circles that result in the ignorance of other fields' news. Treatment of news is also different among the experienced, educated and stringers. Similarities affect the type, coverage and treatment of news. Similarities of cast, creed, language, community and inter personal ties effect the coverage of news content.

3. Media produce reality that is socially constructed. The construction of reality is effected by media workers' personal attitudes if organizations do not follow strong routines. Reporters can manipulate facts while covering events and issues. Editors can do slant or angling. Journalists' personal attitudes influence the content and result in biasedness. Associations with a certain political party, pro government attitude, religious party affiliations, perceptions and other factors that produce a particular behavior and attitude, affect on the media content. Journalists' role conceptions affect content.

4. Social pressures work as driving force and journalists do their duties according to the perceived ethics. Though ethics are not in black and white form but journalists usually avoid those activities that are considered unethical. Ethics can vary from country to country and community to community. Private channels in Pakistan are telecasting political talk shows that carry unethical humor, remarks, and satire. However ethics of print media workers vary because of market forces, personal attitudes and mediated meanings of ethics.

5. Media routines strongly effect on media workers' perceptions and develop peculiar attitudes among them that cause to produce content attuned to media policies. Routines build up an occupational paradigm and media workers get accustomed of it with the passage of time. One can recognize the writings of a columnist that has been working for a certain newspaper.

Routines guide media men what to do and what not to do, what is sanctioned by their media organization and what is not welcomed. This understanding is the result of long interaction and association with a particular media organization.

6. Media organizations do not disseminate all the content received by them. In gatekeeping, contents that are closely related to organizational routines are more likely to be entertained. PTV follows particular routines and the content contrary to the routines is less like to be selected. For example, news of deviants is less prominently covered and if some journalists cover it in a positive and dominant way, it will lose the chance of selection. The more media workers learn the routines associated with their jobs, the more professional they are rated by coworkers. Professionalism is associated with following the routines of media organization. All the media organizations do not follow the same routines so the definition of professionalism differs from organization to organization. Coworkers compel a journalist to follow the routines so as to get professional.

7. On stories or subjects without established routines, in early stages of an issue, for example, individual factors will be relatively more influential compared with routines. The content is more likely to be influenced by media workers' attitudes if a media organization has not established routines for that story or subject. Routines cultivate specific attitudes that help to handle an issue, story or event and escape the content for individual's personal influence.

8. The closer an event is to the media organization's routine definition of newsworthiness; the more likely it is to be covered. The major criteria of media organizations for information selection are newsworthiness and news peg but the definition of newsworthiness is not the same for all media. Media organizations want to develop consistency in their coverage over time so coverage is guided by the routine practices. The more journalists cover an event, the more similar their coverage will be. The more that journalist read each other's stories, the more similar is their subsequent coverage of an event or issue. Journalists follow the same patterns and practices in the coverage of events so similarities in covering news do occur. Moreover, editors test the credibility and truth worthiness of event by comparing it with other journalist's coverage. Journalists confirm the validity of their viewpoints by matching them with the other. This trend sets similarities for the treatment of events and issues by journalists.

9. Pakistani media organizations' personnel can be classified in upper-level, middle-level and lower-level. Upper-level staff determines the policy and takes decision, middle level staff gives first priority to media goals and lower level staff concentrates more on information sources. When editorial routines conflict with the organization's need to make a profit, if the editor control both the business and editorial sides of a newspaper, the editorial side will be given a lower priority than the business side. Media organizations are generally profit oriented so in case of any conflicting views between ideology and business, the later is preferred. Media construct social realities so they are more closely connected with social institutions. The higher an individual is in a media organization, the more likely he or she is to have connections with non-media organizations. Non-media organizations approach and develop relations with media men to get coverage and projection. That's why high officials of a media organization are linked with close social networks especially with power elite.

10. Workers of chain organizations have less direct interaction with upper level staff but are more

familiar with the other chain parts. The other parts of the organization serve as information sources so they have weaker attachments with local community. However, workers of independent organization have strong relationship with the upper level and middle level staff. Chain newspapers establish relations on the basis of political economy, cultivation effects, and hegemony system and not with individuals. Nawa-e-Waqt is a chain paper and supports Muslim League form its inception. The support and endorsement is homogeneous throughout the chain because all the chain papers are owned and controlled by one body that issues policies, dictates media routines and makes decision about the coverage of events and issues.

11. Elite media organizations serve as agenda setters for other media organizations. Events ad issues covered by elite media are usually followed by other media as well because journalists consult other media organization as one of their news sources. Lower level newspapers usually follow Jang Group of Publications' agenda.

12. The more a media organization promotes itself within a target audience, the more its content will reflect the interests of that audience. Organizations set their agenda according to the likings of their audience. Not only audience but advertisers also influence media content.

Articulation of Political Discourse: Audience Survey & Analysis:

Media contents are developed to satisfy their audiences. Newspapers' circulation is a criterion to measure the satisfaction of audiences while electronic media rely on multiple sources to gauge audience size. Audience research is conducted to get information about general interests. News values guide journalist about what is interesting and important for audience. Journalists include importance, interest, timeliness, controversy, proximity, and the unusual in news values because these values mainly revolve around the limited attention and interest of the audience. It is not possible to cover and publish all day's events so media routines are developed to meet the needs of maximum audience. News values assist gatekeepers to select content but objectivity helps them not to cross their limits.

Political satire is a significant part of satire that specializes in gaining entertainment from politics; it has also been used with subversive intent where political speech and dissent are forbidden by a regime, as a method of advancing political arguments where such arguments are expressly forbidden. Historically, the public opinion in the Athenian democracy was remarkably influenced by the political satire performed by the comic poets at the theatres. Watching or reading satire has since ancient time considered one of the best ways to understand a culture and a society.

Political talk shows are quite popular in Pakistan. Private television channels are telecasting different political talk shows in a humorous and satirical manner. The channels include Geo TV, Express News, Dunya TV etc. The political talk shows that are quite popular and heavily sponsored are Darling on Express News, Hasb-e-Hal on Duniya TV, Hum Sab Umeed se Han, and Khaber Nak on Geo TV, Three Idiots on Aaj TV.

Hasb-e-Haal:

Hasb-e-Hal is a social and political satire show aired on dunya news. The show is widely watched not only in Pakistan but it is popular among overseas Pakistanis. Sohail Ahmed appears in the program as Azizi. The program is an effort to raise the voice of sanity over the apparent apathy in the society.

Khabarnak:

This show is another political satire of Geo TV. Khabarnak features Aftab Iqbal as host and Mir Muhammad Ali as several different characters along with antics of Jeeda and Hakeem sahib and Seemab Imran who randomly reads the top stories of the week.

Hum Sab Umeed Se Hain:

Hum SabUumeed se Hain is a political satire show, which features funny segments on Pakistani political issues, it airs on geo TV hosted by actresses Saba Qamar and Sara Chaudry.

Dar and Darling:

Darling is a satire show, presents witty and at times taunting treatment of socio-political events, issues and situations. The title of the show goes with anchor's name Khalid Abbas Dar, and the show is aired on express news.

Some university students were interviewed to know the influence of political substance. One of the students told, "Khabar nak,hasab hal and dar and darling, ham sub omeed say hain all programs are product of Lahori sense of humor. These are typical ways of talking of Lahori culture in markets, colleges and universities. The people who are not used to such kind of humor and satire cannot digest it." Another student added, "Humor in political programs and talk shows cannot be understood by the Karachi people as they are only restrained to Altaf Bhai's speeches and Omer Sharif's comedy shows. Long time ago Karachi produced fine political comedy under Moin Akhtar and Anwar Maqsood but now they are confined to some particular tastes." One of the students living in hostel shared, "But will you believe that Hasb-e-Haal is the widely watched TV show in all over Europe and America. I can provide you the reference; (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sohail_Ahmed) and Azizi should be given the best ever comedian award for political programs." Another student expressed his views about the political satire shows, "I dont like Khabarnaak, it is purely copy by Aftab Iqbal. Aftab is diplomatic. He wishes to defeat Hasb-e-Hal which would remain his dream. Azizi is doing a great job. He should be given more than civil award. Najia is just a display nothing more than that. She is surely a show piece like in cosmetic or tailor shops. Junaid tries to dominate Aziz, huh! not possible. He's trying to convince public, but you know Aziz has gained remarkable popularity."

According to Wikipedia political satire is usually distinguished from political protest or political dissent, as it does not necessarily carry an agenda nor seek to influence the political process. While occasionally it may, it more commonly aims simply to provide entertainment. By its very nature, it rarely offers a constructive view in itself; when it is used as part of protest or dissent, it tends to simply establish the error of matters rather than provide solutions. Political satire is a significant part of satire that specializes in gaining entertainment from politics; it has also been used with subversive intent where political speech and dissent are forbidden by a regime, as a method of advancing political arguments where such arguments are expressly forbidden.
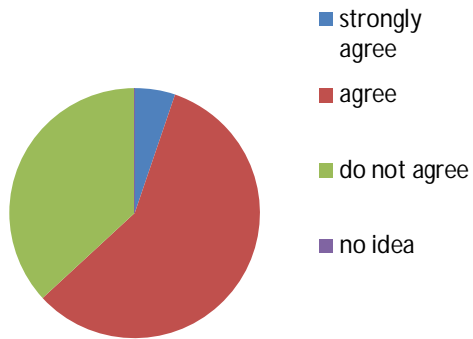
A survey is conducted to determine the awareness, popularity and effects of the political satire shows. Same questionnaire was given to two different groups of the Punjab University; one group comprised of media students and the other was non-media students. Questionnaire is given at the

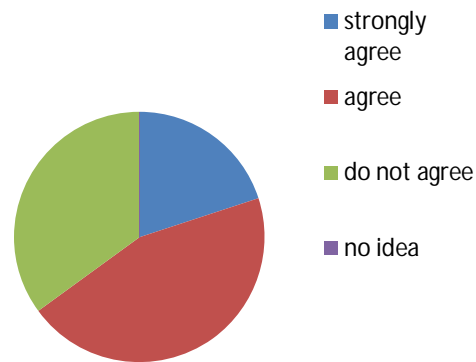appendices. The results are as follows;

Media Students
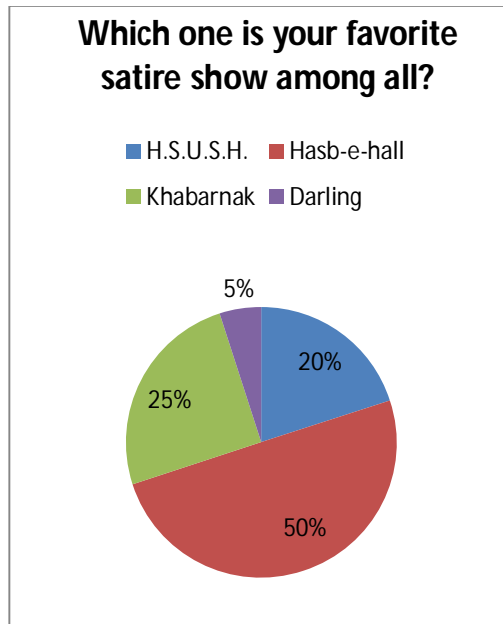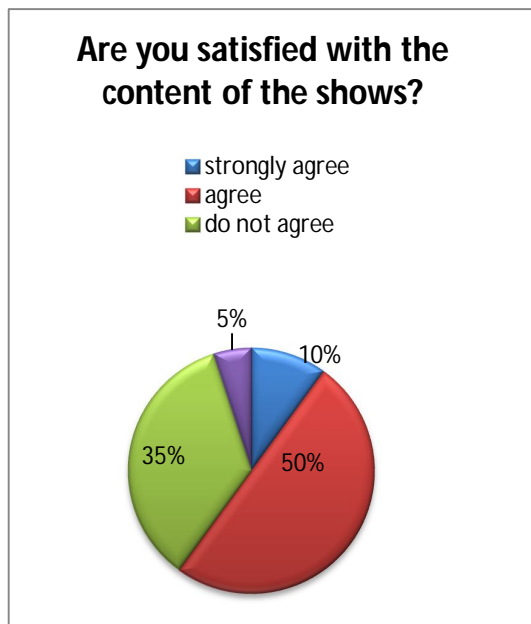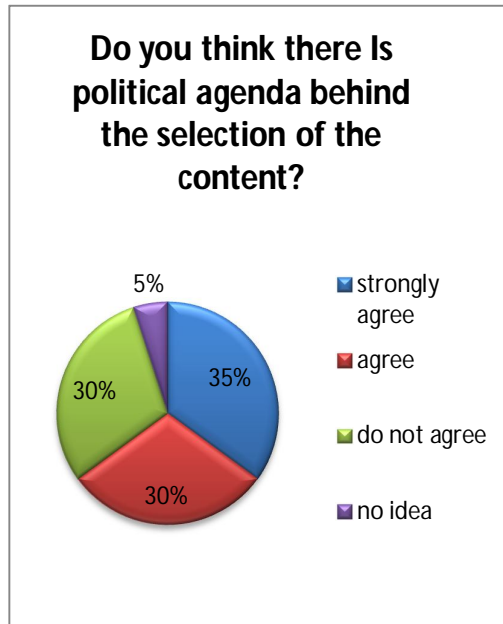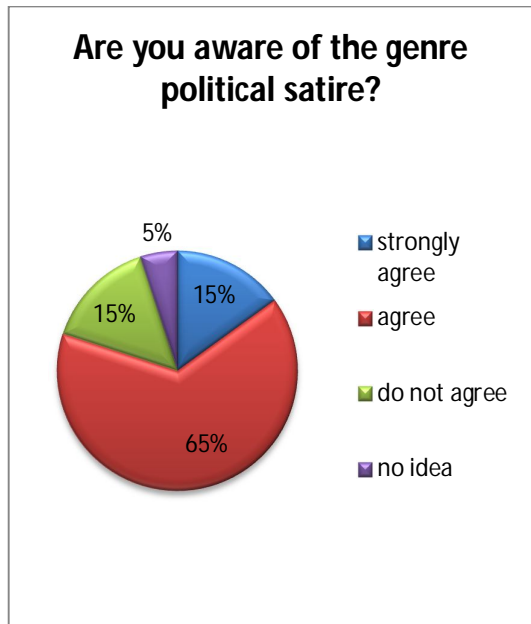
Are you aware of the genre political satire?

- strongly agree: 15%
- agree: 65%
- do not agree: 15%
- no idea: 5%

Do you think there Is political agenda behind the selection of the content?

- strongly agree: 35%
- agree: 30%
- do not agree: 30%
- no idea: 5%

Are you satisfied with the content of the shows?

- strongly agree: 10%
- agree: 50%
- do not agree: 35%
- (no idea): 5%

Which one is your favorite satire show among all?

- H.S.U.S.H.: 20%
- Hasb-e-hall: 50%
- Khabarnak: 25%
- Darling: 5%

Do you think making fun of serious issues is unjust?

- strongly agree
- agree
- do not agree
- no idea

Do you think that these programs desentisize you towards political issues?

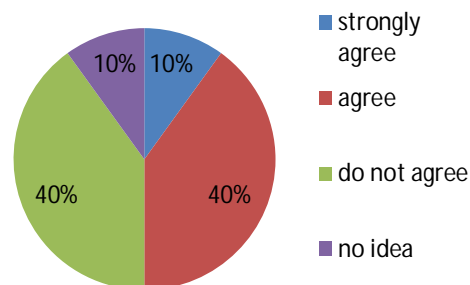- strongly agree
- agree
- do not agree
- no idea

The above mentioned survey results show that the students associated with media are well aware of this genre, but there's a mixed response regarding content. 70% of the students see these shows often which shows the level of impact which these shows have. It is also admitted that somehow these shows are also a source of nuisance. They believe that a hidden agenda is working in the content.
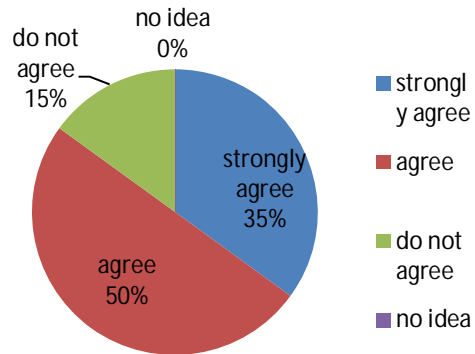
Non-Media Students
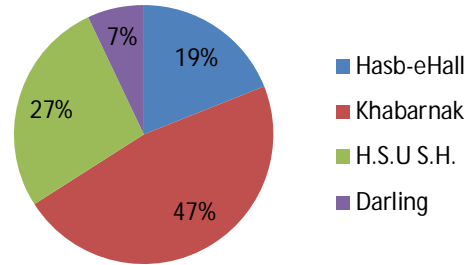
Are you aware of the genre political satire?
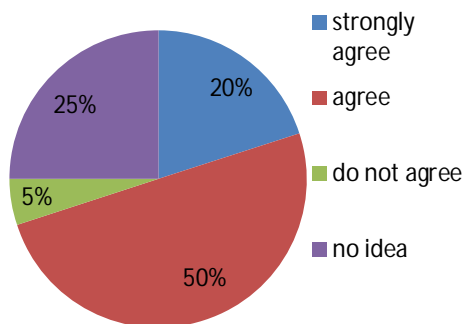
- strongly agree
- agree
- do not agree
- no idea

20%
25%
5%
50%

Do you think there Is political agenda behind the selection of the content?

- strongly agree
- agree
- do not agree
- no idea

10% 10%
40%
40%

Are You Satisfied With The Content Of The Show?

- strongly agree
- agree
- do not agree
- no idea

no idea 0%
do not agree 15%
strongly agree 35%
agree 50%

Which one is your favorite satire show among all?

- Hasb-eHall
- Khabarnak
- H.S.U S.H.
- Darling

7%
19%
27%
47%

Do you think making fun of serious issues is unjust?

- strongly agree
- agree
- do not agree
- no idea

15%
25%
35%
25%

Do you think that these programs desentisize you towards political issues?

- strongly agree
- agree
- do not agree
- no idea

10%
25%
25%
40%
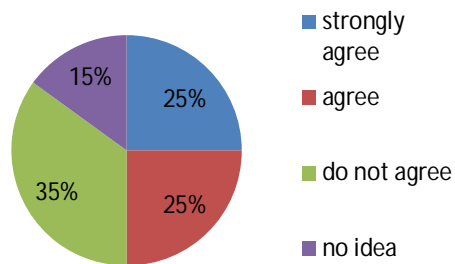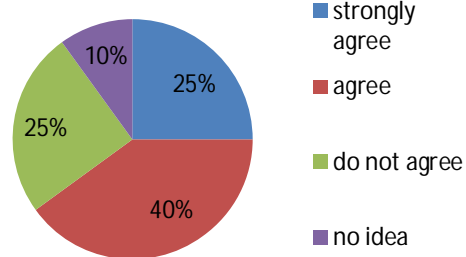
The survey results from the non media students were strikingly different. Neither the masses were aware of the genre, nor did they know that what they saw was political satire. The shows they randomly call as humor or political humor shows were seen by them quite often and more than the half of them were satisfied with its content. They say these shows were a sigh of relief. The interesting thing about the results is that the students are aware of the fact that these shows do desensitize them. A very few of them said they would like to join this genre. The results about the most favorite show were very contrary between the two groups. Amongst the four choices about the shows, non media students preferred Hum Sab Umeed Se Hain on other shows.

Editors rise to their positions only after fully internalizing the norms of the journalistic paradigm. Occupational ideology provides the base to attract advertisers. Government serves as an advertiser, so those newspapers that get government ads are obliged to fulfill the aspirations and expectations of government. Government departments issue press release, press notes and handouts to print media that prove an easy and cheaper way to get information. The information provided is embedded in peculiar perspective to supplement government interests.

Information sources also influence the content by constructing realities in special contexts and perspectives. Global media flows affect the content directly and indirectly. News organizations have to depend on news agencies and other media organizations for information. Pakistani newspapers publish contents borrowed from global electronic media because it is not possible for them to cover all events. A source's credibility, reliability and quotability affect the type and nature of coverage. Interest groups, pressure groups and political parties launch pseudo events to get public attention through media coverage.

As far as public and private Pakistani media is concerned, extra organizational factors that influence media content are almost of same type. Influences on state owned electronic media directly work because they are working as semi-government institutions; dictated by the government, decisions taken by the government and policies determined by the government. In the case of private channels, the situation is different. Private television channels are indirectly influenced by government in the form of advertisements and policy decisions.

Print media is indirectly influenced by the government because of its regulating power. Government passes such laws, rules, regulations and ordinances that snatch the freedom of journalists and limits their rights. Newsprint is under the direct control of government that is used as a weapon to influence print media. Government uses advertisements as weapon and sanctions them to its favoring newspapers. Payments of bills are withheld to influence the content. Information is censored and press notes are released that affect media agenda setting.

Bureaucracy is blessed with concentration of power and exercises its authority to influence media organizations overtly and covertly journalists face threat and inconvenience caused by the government officials. Governing political parties pressurizes media organizations to given maximum coverage and to withhold opposition's positive portrayal. Public relations department also cause to influence media content by applying various approaches and techniques. Information subsidies help to reduce cost and get maximum profit. Public relations practice to issue press release, press notes and handouts has customized media routines.

Social integration, social control and cohesiveness are attained through media. Pakistan is a heterogeneous society. Its norms, values and culture revolve around the principles of Islam. PTV interprets issues to integrate societal interests. Views and values that are within the bounds of Islam and government perspective are acceptable while others are labeled as illegitimate. Newscasts in PTV give more prominence to the right-wing activities while left-wing activities are portrayed less prominent. Semiotics and production techniques are applied to govern to perceptions of target audience and to set particular frames of reference. Print media is owned and controlled privately and reflects the ideology of advertisers.

In Pakistan, television news content most of the time depicts those who are already prominent. Power elite are covered more than ordinary people especially news is concerned more with the people already prominent or deviant. In news, power elite, public figures, opinion leaders, political leaders, government officials get more coverage of their activities than less prominent people. Therefore, television serves as a mouthpiece of ruling class. Most news comes from official channels however; journalists use other sources when they are available. Media routines, public relations practices and information subsidies affect the other sources of news.

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