

Research Statement

I completed my doctorate at the Hong Kong Baptist University on the evolution of mainstream opposition groups in Pakistan and the role of the media environment in 2001. My research combines interviews with key informants, content analysis of television bulletins and newspaper archives, and intersects various fields, specifically movement-media interaction, protest innovation, commercial news media, television journalism, political opportunities, mediatization of politics and contentious politics. This statement will illuminate the contribution of this research to science, its impact beyond academia, and directions of enquiry I'm currently pursuing.

I - Past research

a. *SIDDIQUI, A. A. (Author). 27 Sep 2021. Container Politics in Pakistan since 1988: Opposition Tactics in Response to Changing News Media Imperatives. Doctoral Thesis. Link: Open Access shorturl.at/xzKLZ*

My thesis addresses a gap in the literature on media-movement interaction that a plural and commercial television can be a game changing 'new media' in the context of our overt focus on the Internet in recent times. Television technology is not new but its commercialisation and pluralisation opens new avenues for political engagement in politically stagnant context. This conclusion is drawn via the comparative case studies of two similarly resourced mainstream opposition groups separated by liberalisation policies of the state implemented in 2000 in an emerging media context using data from key informants, quality news reports, bulletins and secondary literature.

A combination of media and social movement framework is used to explain the tactics of Pakistan People's Party in 1992 and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf Party in 2014. Both political groups were in the opposition in their respective periods. To tease out protest tactics from news reports a method in line with literature on social movements, in particular the works of Charles Tilly is used. It involves looking at contentious tactics as mechanisms and processes that vary according to context. A systematic examination of evidence of such tactics through news reports, police records and political journals results in a sense of a *déjà vu*; the feeling that events are repeating themselves across contexts with only minor variations.

When I first dug into archives at Daily Dawn, I noticed what Pakistan observers have said about local issues; *Pakistanis are stuck in time*. Subsequently, I realised that this feeling may actually be a *déjà vu*, a sign of patterns of protest activities. These patterns can be seen as mechanisms of media political tactics like 'legislative performances', 'protest events as media events', 'national security frames', 'selling the idea of revolution', 'opposition as media managers' that activist deploy against their opponents in various combinations depending on the nature of perceived injustice and media affordances. These mechanism concatenate into templates of resistance, repertoires of action, that can be called Container Politics and Million Man Marches that have gained significant attention in Pakistan post-media boom of early 2000s. Other mechanisms concatenate into repertoires we know as Social Movements, Revolutions, Democratisation, and more.

This study conducted a content analysis to evaluate the impact of commercial, professional, and political imperatives on news content in Pakistan since the 1990s. By comparing primetime bulletins from Pakistan State Broadcaster (PTV) in 1992, 2014, and Geo TV in 2016, the analysis focused on variables like coverage speed and immediacy¹. Surprisingly, the findings revealed mixed results. Contrary to expectations, news items actually increased in length instead of becoming shorter to meet the demand for bite-sized content. Additionally, the prevalence of 'Live' formats exceeded 'Fixed-time' packages, challenging the assumption of journalism's complete subsumption by commercial and entertainment motives. These findings emphasize the need for a nuanced approach in addressing commercial pressures and shed light on the unpredictable outcomes of media liberalization in Pakistan, which don't always negatively impact journalism.

These findings are insightful as the success of media political tactics of mainstream opposition groups, specially post-2000s shows that media is a powerful tool to get heard and make an impact even in semi-authoritarian contexts. They invite more attention to be paid to the impact of commercial television news, and not just the Internet, in societies where broadcast media were once monopolized by the state.

¹ PTV is the state broadcaster of television news content. While Geo TV is the largest private and commercial television channel in Pakistan.

II - Other notable thesis outcomes

The goal of my contribution to science, and therefore of these publications, is to improve our understanding of media political strategies/tactics of popular movements in differently democratic contexts and to do so by analysing the best available evidence. Here are several other notable outcomes from the thesis:

a. Siddiqui, A. A. (2020). *Aurat March, a threat to mainstream tribalism in Pakistan. Interface: A journal for and about social movements*, 12(1), 64–71. Republished in *The Left Berlin*.

This publication illustrates research significance. My research also illuminates action strategies of fringe political actors in new and interesting ways. The controversial posters of Aurat March, an annual symbolic feminist demonstration, that originated in my home town in 2018 are notable. As a participant of these demonstrations my own posters went viral online and got the attention of movement organisers. These controversial posters in Muslim Pakistan reveal how fringe political actors use innovative stunts to enter mainstream public discourse without violence.

b. Siddiqui, A. A. (2018). *Doing journalism where public life is synonymous with violence. Media Asia*, 45(1-2), 25-27. Supported by an advisor's grant from University Grants Committee Hong Kong.

This publication is a methodological contribution that deals with the validity and reliability of thesis findings. Selecting Daily Dawn as a standard and well-regarded index of political reports on contentious events from different periods was no accident. Through in depth interviews the Daily was case studied as part of the thesis advisor's project on ethical best practices among Asian news organisations.

c. *Pakistan's dual media system – presented at the International Media Conference Post-Truth Era: Trends in Media 2022, at Karachi University, Pakistan.*

This contribution relates to the research line on the evolution of the local media environment developed as a secondary focus in the thesis and presented at a public conference in Spring 2022. This system is defined by its formal and informal political and economic imperatives; media either parallels political cleavages and/or operates as a military client. Through a content analysis of news bulletins based on variables previously tested in the United Kingdom, United States and Norway the project combines both perspectives to conceptualise a 'Pakistan media system'.

III - Research impact beyond academia

A good example of how this research on *mainstream* political actors illuminate *fringe* actors in interesting ways is my experience participating in Aurat March as an activist. My involvement in the movement began with creating posters that went viral online, generating important conversations. These posters are conversation starters and have facilitated the painstaking work of women's rights defenders in the public and policy community. They were also picked by:

Diva Magazine in 2020: https://www.instagram.com/p/B9eNEOnppYC/?utm_source=ig_embed

And, *Aurat March Organizers* in 2021: <https://twitter.com/AuratMarchKHI/status/1369650683281092609?s=20>.

Creating these posters and going public in Muslim Pakistan is a fraught with challenges and the threats I have received as a result gives me a better appreciation of everyday women experience. I also like to speak and engage with students, faculty members and citizens about my research any where I can as long as the debate respects the rule of critical enquiry. I have been invited to speak at several notable venues and am also on the jury of Agahi Awards which is Pakistan's first indigenous awards dedicated to journalism (please refer to CV for details). Find out more on the impact of past research in my teaching statement.

IV - Three lines of further research and their status

I aim to complete the following projects in the next three to five years.

a. *Media tactics of protesters in the global south and what that tells us about contemporary populism.*

Building on PhD research I am case studying four additional and politically significant contentious episodes from further back in time - protests against Ayub Khan in 60s, Pakistan National Alliance in 70s and Movement for Restoration of Democracy in 80s. As well as tactics of former President Trumps Million MAGA March in 2020, which is a marker of contemporary populism in the advanced democratic world.

Findings may illuminate mundane symbolic displays and discursive battles during significant protests events in Pakistan prior to the media and information technology hype of the last three decades in new and interesting ways. It will also increase validity and reliability of thesis findings and the overall theoretical framework. Moreover, the international comparative perspective will illuminate some common mechanisms of a strange consumer driven, performative politics, aided by turf war between legacy and new media that has emerged globally. This new politics cuts across ideologies and maturity in democratic context.

For these reasons I believe that Pakistan is a critical case in the literature on populism. While populist politics is common in a politically stagnant contexts like Pakistan, dating back to at least 1970s, it has gained recent scholarly attention in mature democracies like the United Kingdom (with issues such as the right to fox hunting and anti-Iraq war protests), the United States (through popular rallies by former President Donald Trump), and India (with the anti-corruption drive preceding the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party).

My application on the impact of protests in the age of media abundance, particularly in Pakistan as a case of mediated populism, was shortlisted for a fellowship at the Open University of Catalonia and also received positive feedback from The Wilson Center. While I didn't progress further in the selection process this year, the feedback on my proposal was encouraging, and I will continue to apply for funding. The research requires accessing the British Library Asian Archives section for relevant Parliamentary debates. I plan to combine four case studies with two from my thesis for a book project, and separately submit one case study on the tactics of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Party in 2014 and one comparison between populist politics in the U.S and Pakistan as journal articles.

b. Pakistan's zero-sum mainstream politics

Existing literature on Pakistan tends to prioritize political power, particularly the military, while downplaying the influence of media on society. This oversight limits our understanding of the diverse effects of media in Pakistan's fragile democracy, especially in the era of abundant media. Moreover, the post-Cold War and post-9/11 landscape has witnessed routine protests that defy neat ideological categorizations. Unfortunately, public discourse on popular mobilizations often reinforces divisive binaries, fuelling polarization e.g. *the left vs the right, muslim vs infidel, patriots vs traitors, right vs wrong, good muslim vs bad muslim* and etc. To overcome this zero-sum rhetoric, new frameworks are needed to acknowledge the perpetual uncertainty and potential violence inherent in the political process. This project is a revision of a thesis background chapter on Pakistan's political environment since 1988 that sheds light on mainstream politics and proposes an alternative perspective. It is suitable for South Asia area studies journals.

c. Conceptualising a 'Pakistan media system.'

In my thesis, I conducted a content analysis of 18 hours of news bulletins from PTV and Geo TV, focusing on local commercial imperatives impacting journalism. To strengthen the analysis's validity and reliability, I am actively seeking grants from the Education Ministry of Pakistan and other sources. These grants will enable me to expand the sample size to at least 100 hours of local footage. I plan to collaborate with a team of research students from Karachi-based universities for this purpose. The findings will be presented in two journal articles, offering a comprehensive understanding of the "Pakistan media system". Furthermore, I am preparing a review article to contextualize Pakistan within the existing literature on media and communication.

Teaching Statement

In 2014, I had my very first university teaching experience in Karachi, delivering a lecture on Elizabeth Eisenstein. Despite initial nervousness about being seen as a mentor, my apprehensions vanished the moment I stepped on the podium. Words flowed effortlessly, capturing the attention of the eager audience, and faculty members observed approvingly. The experience sparked a profound realization: teaching not only comes naturally to me, but it is also a genuine source of enjoyment. It was a strange cathartic moment that instilled in me an immediate sense of responsibility towards those who had entrusted me with their education.

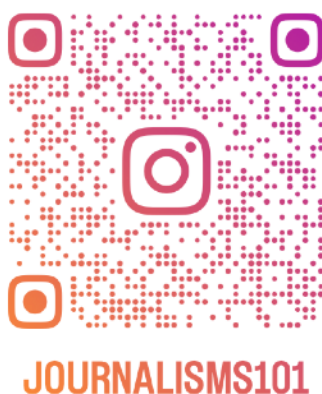
Since then, I have become a passionate communications instructor, focusing on journalism and strategic communications. My teaching philosophy revolves around three core learning objectives, which I would like to share with you today. I will also provide some student evaluations in the end.

I - Understand a rapidly evolving media landscape and tackle polarisation in society

In response to the pressing challenges posed by the rapidly evolving media landscape and societal polarization, my teaching philosophy centers on three key objectives. Firstly, I aim to foster a classroom environment where arguments are conversational, emphasizing the pursuit of useful meaning rather than 'winning' debates. This is achieved through team-based projects, where I assign roles to students and provide regular feedback throughout the semester. For instance, in journalism classes, students work as a group of reporters, obtaining story approvals and sharing updates on their progress. Similarly, in digital marketing classes, campaign problems are reviewed before students begin their work. I encourage students to challenge me and ask questions, fostering accessibility and collective learning.

Another aspect of my teaching philosophy is maintaining an open smart phone/laptop policy, which enhances student engagement and provides valuable insights into their media habits. By understanding their top sources of information, preferred social media platforms, and media diets, I can incorporate this grounded knowledge into discussions on how information shapes perceptions. Students are prompted to reflect on their screen time and compare it with data from their smart phone usage applications, fostering an appreciation for data-driven decision making.

Furthermore, my approach as a media educator focuses on cultivating an understanding of the underlying logics behind the Internet and emerging communication platforms, rather than solely mastering technical aspects. This empowers students to critically analyze media and its technical affordances, enabling them to tackle practical problems faced by audiences, regulators, and media organizations in their own unique ways.



Have a look at my student projects by scanning the QR code via your smart phone camera

II - Bring theory to life through everyday student experiences

Applying theory to their everyday experiences is a challenge for students in Pakistan's evolving media industry and higher education system, which is why practical projects play a crucial role in my teaching approach.

Teaching digital journalism and digital marketing courses has been particularly rewarding in this regard. These courses allow students to utilize their skills in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information in a reflexive manner. I emphasize to my students that data analysis is a fundamental skill for journalists, marketers, and professionals in various fields, differing only in audience and intent. In my journalism courses I remind my students that I can teach the craft of reporting but you already know social media platforms much better than I do.

To illustrate this, I assign my students to analyze public government records using the data analysis techniques taught in class. They uncovered intriguing insights of public interest and creatively presented them through engaging Instagram posts. All student projects have a public component, with digital journalism students adapting and sharing their stories and infographics on social media, while marketing students pitch their campaign ideas to department faculty members. Interestingly, marketing students' stories often generate higher online engagement compared to journalism students' work.

Building on the success of these assessments, my department has decided to merge journalism and digital marketing courses into a broader specialization called strategic communications within our undergraduate program. I have been entrusted with leading this initiative, aiming to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the evolving media landscape and the practical skills needed for impactful communication.

III - Improve standards of media literacy in society

The ultimate objective of media education is to enhance journalism quality, promote public service values, and advocate for creative industries. I am prepared to teach undergraduate and graduate courses on media history, research methods, digital journalism, digital marketing, and strategic communications in pursuance of these objectives.

Cultural contexts play a vital role in media literacy education. To ensure inclusivity, I incorporate various strategies. While project-based exams foster practical skills, written midterms cover essential concepts and readings, facilitating discussions with many relatable local examples. This was particularly necessary for students I taught in Hong Kong. Reflexive assignments, such as note-taking and reflective essays on films, literature, and industry leaders, encourage critical analysis of course material. These assignments serve as valuable data points for summative assessments. By tailoring my teaching approach to the native language, customs, and values of students, I create a shared understanding and meaningful engagement in the classroom.

I continuously improve my teaching approach based on student evaluations and personal feedback (see next page). I also encourage students to use me as a resource for self-learning. The satisfaction of achieving meaningful learning objectives through real-world projects and being invited for a cup of coffee after a long class makes this challenging profession worthwhile in the end.

IV - Teaching evaluations

Undergraduate courses

Main Campus							
New Teacher Evaluation - Fall - 2022							
Section Code : M-15293(Methods In Media Research)							
Course Name (Code) : Methods In Media Research (MMM328)							
Faculty Name (Code) : Dr. Ayaz Ahmed Siddiqui (4341)							
Question Text	A %	B %	C %	D %	E %		
Assignments in this course are related to the course material taught in class.	Strongly Agree	21.43	Neutral	28.57	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
Exams accurately covers the material.	Strongly Agree	50	Neutral	28.57	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
Exams are assessed fairly and impartially.	Strongly Agree	42.86	Neutral	42.86	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
Over all, I have made a progress in this class in terms of learning.	Strongly Agree	21.43	Neutral	42.86	Disagree	7.14	Strongly Disagree
The instructor is always on time in class.	Strongly Agree	64.29	Neutral	14.29	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
The course material is presented at right time during the class.	Strongly Agree	50	Neutral	28.57	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
The instructor gives well-organized lectures.	Strongly Agree	28.57	Neutral	35.71	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
The instructor is able to convey ideas and concepts clearly.	Strongly Agree	28.57	Neutral	57.14	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
The instructor is helpful in assisting the students with questions and problems before and / or after class.	Strongly Agree	35.71	Neutral	28.57	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
The instructor is helpful in assisting the students with questions and problems in the class.	Strongly Agree	35.71	Neutral	35.71	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
The instructor is up-to-date with the subject matter covered in the course.	Strongly Agree	42.86	Neutral	21.43	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
The instructor speaks audibly and clearly.	Strongly Agree	35.71	Neutral	28.57	Disagree	7.14	Strongly Disagree
The learning and teaching methods encouraged the students.	Strongly Agree	35.71	Neutral	28.57	Disagree	7.14	Strongly Disagree
The overall teaching ability of the teacher is good.	Strongly Agree	28.57	Neutral	50	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
The reading list and material provided were relevant to the course.	Strongly Agree	42.86	Neutral	35.71	Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree
Total :		39.52 %	20.95 %	33.81 %	1.43 %	4.28 %	

FES Report

Date Of Issue : 11-June-2023 At : 03:33 PM

Main Campus

New Teacher Evaluation - Spring - 2023

Section Code : M-16587(Digital Journalism)

Course Name (Code) : Digital Journalism (MIM367)

Faculty Name (Code) : Dr. Ayyaz Ahmed Siddiqui (4341)

Question Text	A %	B %	C %	D %	E %	
Assignments in this course are related to the course material taught in class.	50	50	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
Exams accurately covers the material.	50	50	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
Exams are assessed fairly and impartially.	42.86	50	Neutral	7.14	Strongly Disagree	0
Over all, I have made a progress in this class in terms of learning.	57.14	42.86	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
The instructor is always on time in class.	57.14	28.57	Neutral	14.29	Strongly Disagree	0
The course material is presented at right time during the class.	50	50	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
The instructor gives well-organized lectures.	50	42.86	Neutral	7.14	Strongly Disagree	0
The instructor is able to convey ideas and concepts clearly.	42.86	42.86	Neutral	14.29	Strongly Disagree	0
The instructor is helpful in assisting the students with questions and problems before and / or after class.	42.86	57.14	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
The instructor is helpful in assisting the students with questions and problems in the class.	42.86	57.14	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
The instructor is up-to-date with the subject matter covered in the course.	42.86	57.14	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
The instructor speaks audibly and clearly.	50	35.71	Neutral	7.14	Strongly Disagree	0
The learning and teaching methods encouraged the students.	42.86	57.14	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
The overall teaching ability of the teacher is good.	50	50	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
The reading list and material provided were relevant to the course.	42.86	57.14	Neutral	0	Strongly Disagree	0
Total :	47.62 %	48.57 %	3.33 %	0.48 %	0 %	0 %

FES Report

Date Of Issue : 11-June-2023 At : 03:35 PM

Main Campus

New Teacher Evaluation - Fall - 2022

Section Code : W-15933(Seminar In Strategic Media Marketing)

Course Name (Code) : Seminar In Strategic Media Marketing (MMM603)

Faculty Name (Code) : Dr. Ayaz Ahmed Siddiqui (4341)

Question Test	A %	B %	C %	D %	E %
Assignments in this course are related to the course material taught in class.	Strongly Agree 47.37	Agree 5.26	Neutral 21.05	Disagree 21.05	Strongly Disagree 5.26
Exams accurately covers the material.	Strongly Agree 42.11	Agree 21.05	Neutral 21.05	Disagree 5.26	Strongly Disagree 10.53
Exams are assessed fairly and impartially.	Strongly Agree 36.84	Agree 26.32	Neutral 26.32	Disagree 5.26	Strongly Disagree 5.26
Over all, I have made a progress in this class in terms of learning.	Strongly Agree 42.11	Agree 10.53	Neutral 15.79	Disagree 26.32	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The instructor is always on time in class.	Strongly Agree 52.63	Agree 31.58	Neutral 5.26	Disagree 10.53	Strongly Disagree 0
The course material is presented at right time during the class.	Strongly Agree 42.11	Agree 15.79	Neutral 15.79	Disagree 21.05	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The instructor gives well-organized lectures.	Strongly Agree 47.37	Agree 10.53	Neutral 15.79	Disagree 21.05	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The instructor is able to convey ideas and concepts clearly.	Strongly Agree 42.11	Agree 15.79	Neutral 21.05	Disagree 15.79	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The instructor is helpful in assisting the students with questions and problems before and / or after class.	Strongly Agree 42.11	Agree 21.05	Neutral 26.32	Disagree 10.53	Strongly Disagree 0
The instructor is helpful in assisting the students with questions and problems in the class.	Strongly Agree 42.11	Agree 15.79	Neutral 26.32	Disagree 10.53	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The instructor is up-to-date with the subject matter covered in the course.	Strongly Agree 36.84	Agree 21.05	Neutral 15.79	Disagree 21.05	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The instructor speaks audibly and clearly.	Strongly Agree 36.84	Agree 31.58	Neutral 15.79	Disagree 10.53	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The learning and teaching methods encouraged the students.	Strongly Agree 36.84	Agree 15.79	Neutral 15.79	Disagree 26.32	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The overall teaching ability of the teacher is good.	Strongly Agree 36.84	Agree 15.79	Neutral 21.05	Disagree 21.05	Strongly Disagree 5.26
The reading list and material provided were relevant to the course.	Strongly Agree 36.84	Agree 10.53	Neutral 26.32	Disagree 15.79	Strongly Disagree 10.53
Total :	41.4 %	17.9 %	19.3 %	16.14 %	5.26 %

FES Report

Date Of Issue : 11-June-2023 At : 03:31 PM

Main Campus

New Teacher Evaluation - Spring - 2023

Section Code : W-16979(Digital Marketing)

Course Name (Code) : Digital Marketing (MKT620)

Faculty Name (Code) : Dr. Ayaz Ahmed Siddiqui (4341)

Question Text	A %	B %	C %	D %	E %
Assignments in this course are related to the course material taught in class.	33.33	25	8.33	8.33	25
Exams accurately covers the material.	33.33	25	16.67	8.33	16.67
Exams are assessed fairly and impartially.	41.67	16.67	8.33	25	8.33
Over all, I have made a progress in this class in terms of learning.	33.33	0	33.33	16.67	16.67
The instructor is always on time in class.	58.33	25	8.33	0	8.33
The course material is presented at right time during the class.	41.67	25	25	0	8.33
The instructor gives well-organized lectures.	33.33	8.33	25	16.67	16.67
The instructor is able to convey ideas and concepts clearly.	41.67	8.33	8.33	25	16.67
The instructor is helpful in assisting the students with questions and problems before and / or after class.	33.33	25	33.33	0	8.33
The instructor is helpful in assisting the students with questions and problems in the class.	33.33	25	33.33	0	8.33
The instructor is up-to-date with the subject matter covered in the course.	33.33	16.67	16.67	8.33	25
The instructor speaks audibly and clearly.	41.67	16.67	25	8.33	8.33
The learning and teaching methods encouraged the students.	33.33	8.33	25	16.67	16.67
The overall teaching ability of the teacher is good.	33.33	16.67	25	0	25
The reading list and material provided were relevant to the course.	33.33	8.33	25	8.33	25
Total :	37.22 %	16.67 %	21.11 %	9.44 %	15.56 %

FES Report

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