

## **Role of Media in Foreign Policy Formulation: A Cultural Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explains the role of media in foreign policy formulation. It will also explain what role media plays in elaborating cultural perspectives as it is well acknowledged that media is the most significant contributor to social awareness. The impact of media is more robust than anything else in the general public. People are very responsive to this source of communication. Media can change and groom society by showing sensible and responsible content. Media has an extreme effect on culture. The more prominent approaches media for certain gears. Employing this media can play its effective and efficient role in the formulation of foreign policy and culture. It is through the media culture of the state that can be publicized globally. This paper elucidates how media shows the optimistic appearance in foreign policy structure and through this what will be the cultural perspective and attitude to the world.

**Keywords** Media, Foreign policy, Culture, Formulation, Society, Awareness, Media Theories, Foreign Policy Theories

## **Introduction**

Today's media has appeared worldwide as an essential factor not only a source of communication but also an important factor in international relations. It has proved to be a critical aspect that influences the affairs between nations and guides them in a given direction.

According to Noam Chomsky, “the mainstream role of media in the (Chomsky, 1992) United States of America is restrained by the leading and distinct people like legislators and representatives. They all work on same scheme and affiliation for cooperation and sponsoring of each other’s well-being and influence.” By controlling the information provided to the public, it is possible to mold the people who are not exposed to other sources of information and news.

In Pakistan, the ownership pattern of the media has been quite distinctive from that in the United States or other developed states. Nonetheless, the press has operated on the propaganda model regarding some fundamental issues, especially on foreign policy questions.

Before the role of the media on foreign policy formulation of Pakistan and cultural perspective is analyzed, it is necessary to realize the foreign policy and Culture itself. It is identified that foreign policy is a complicated and perplexed process. It does not evolve in a vacuum. There are many internal determinants and external determinants in which

media is also a significant internal factor. There may be a strapping relationship between media and foreign policy formulation.

Media has emerged as a vital emblem and means to spread awareness and information in the states. Besides, the media has also appeared as a "strategic actor" in making and shaping public opinions (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010) and narrative building through different channels.

Moreover, it provides direction to the public on foreign policy and cultural issues, which contributes to the foreign policy formulation process of different states. It brings out salient features of the issue through efficient management. Three different kinds of media are print media, electronic media, and social media.

Now a day, electronic media and social media are more prevalent among people in Pakistan. In Pakistan, the media role has been undermined because ruling political parties are suppressing it in different establishment periods. The media in Pakistan earlier was broadcasting only some government channels, which did not play their role effectively. At that time, there were no institutions or sturdy laws for broadcasting substance against the government.

But, of course, at that time, broadcasting was limited. Consequently, our Culture was sophisticated and elegant. By the passage of time, our media groomed the audience and

general public somehow, forgetting and slowly losing our actual cultural and traditional values. And behind this, there may be many causes.

Media in western states is focusing on awareness, grooming, entertainment and using this means of communication for educational and political purposes. By this, it can be said that media is showcasing its Culture, tradition, and also in diplomatic ties between states. “There are three categories in which media and foreign policy can be explained and analyzed and that are (Ejaz, 2012); manipulative/monolithic/advocative; adversarial; and indifferent.”

Developed nations media and mainly the U.S. media have been careful, improvise, strict and uncompromising, sophisticated as well. To the extent that, the Pakistani media, reporters and journalists are observed and perceived, media has remained detached and unbiased towards foreign policy as for the reason that Pakistani media has been under strict government control.

Media in other developed states plays its efficient and effective role as the "fourth pillar" of foreign policy and public opinions' as it is in direct coordination (Ejaz, 2012) and interaction with the public on different views in addition to decisions in Pakistan the position of media is not very vigorous. The media, in some way, want to execute its responsibility as the fourth pillar, but it is not allowed that much to perform its duty well. The media role if discussed in the case of Pakistan is and should be confrontational in

democratic or military regimes. One is, in fact, the opposition to autonomous forces in government.

Eventually, in Pakistan one and the other either democracy or military rules were tyrant and attained supremacy through extraneous unconstitutional means. These both regimes held and strained the media. However, this surely, arose the gap and left void as, the leaders realize that reporting is critical of their own rule. Then they cracked down on media. Both regimes, either democratic or dictator, endeavored to publish news and affairs in their interests. They forgotten about basic culture, values and principles of our state. Media was regulated by hook or by crook, and private channels were established lately.

If the emancipation of speech in media is observed from Pakistan's perspective, then media in Pakistan was not liberated. There were only a few government channels that were broadcasted to the people. Media got actual and realistic sovereignty in the supremacy of Pervaiz Musharraf. After that, many media channels started posting. An institution was established, and people began bringing awareness about their state affairs and other regional states' matters. By following that, people made their opinions regarding government, its performance, and policies.

Media and foreign policy relationships and their perspective in Culture are discussed in two parts; the first part talks about the role of media in foreign policy and Culture and

gives a conceptual framework for better understanding. The second part describes media issues in Pakistan.

### **Literature Review**

Culture and media are universally acknowledged subjects and areas. Many research and exploration have been made on these topics. Because media and culture are somehow interrelated as through media the culture of one state is shown to the other world. Although there is dearth of literature finding and critiques on foreign policy and its association with media. In Pakistan, media and foreign policy stratagem is not discussed thoroughly.

“Study of the media and foreign policy should consider the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon by focusing on these dimensions; such as public views, foreign policy culture, technological advancement, (Mowlana, 1997) by viewing situation of security and peace, monetary and trade as determinant of foreign policy and most importantly culture and information as another factor of foreign policy.

"Communication media is influential (Merill, 1991) in generating, spreading, and amending images of other states and notable global leaders."

Media as source of political, cultural and societal communication can transform national images and perception that not only relates with different segments of society but also provides a podium and power of speech to community for sharing of views. Media has

become a prevailing and authoritative establishment that affects political policies and culture through different extents either entertaining, documentaries or bulletins.

Media sketches political maps of the world in contemporary times. Media actually changed public opinions and briefed (Cohen, 1963) individuals what to think about and share views about tradition, culture and foreign policy. This well-known citation of Cohen explains the agenda-setting role of media

“Media and foreign policy are entwined and associated with one another in such a way that data and evidence shared on these channels and platforms give confidence to community to share their views and opinions about policies. Global media has made (Weiss, 1966) communication prompt and instant, and television has cashed on the saying of 'seeing is believing.'”

Understanding these citations shows that media is the only source for showcasing the culture and foreign policy formulation aspects. To formulate foreign policy, culture and information are most substantial and significant.

### **Cultural Perspective**

Culture is people's characteristics and living style based on their religion, language, state, and region. In contrast, cultural perspective states how the idea or impression of an individual is shaped. Every part, state, and religion have its own Culture. People live conferring to their cultural perspective. Culture is representative means of connection and

relations. It is the main source of depiction of traditions and values. It is through culture that people of different societies and regions coordinate with each other. Some of its views includes ability, learning, awareness, aptitudes, principles, values, orders, and motivations. The context and spirits of the emblems of culture are accomplished and knowingly spread in a society through its institutes and organizations. The research was drifted out on the conventional patterns for social sciences, i.e., descriptive and analytical both approaches to assess progress and arrived at a conclusion. Review of existing literature on mass media in Pakistan and its role in foreign policy formulation and especially its effect on Pakistan's culture available online and publications sources were consulted to get a comprehensive perception on the effect of media, foreign policy and culture.

### **How Media Affect Culture**

Media has a direct influence upon Culture. Many people depend upon media for entertainment, news, and other communication means. Media is completely unrestricted in some states, and it broadcasts its particular content by its own will. One way or another, this content is in favor of the public according to their cultural perspective.

Some state's media is still under strict watchdog and regulatory authority because of that media cannot express and transmit facts content without prior information. Then there

becomes a massive revolt in the field of media. The quick and fast progress of media has massive impact on transmission of cultural exchange.

Traditional media back years had some limitations and restrictions to convey

Information and evidence. But new media has brought innovation and revolution in digital communication.

The whole world has been connected through digital and social media. Earth has become a global village. The satellite communication is very informative and revealing for everyone. People of one state can watch and analyze the culture, tradition, and news events of other states.

The media can also broadcast false propaganda about one state. This incorrect information ruins and causes disintegration among states. There is another medium of communication and information among people, and that is online Culture. This is somehow the new means of media cultural development. Online Culture is increasing because of this massive media advancement.

Networked and internet cultural information is without national borders and regions. People share equality, freedom of speech, and information. Anybody can share stuff whenever they want. Via media and Culture, foreign policy of any state can be determined. Media and culture bring convenient and efficient communication, transmission, and exchange of people's thoughts, views and ideas. People share

judgements and opinions about government decisions and choices. Now a days, social media is spreading so rapidly that everyone shares their ideas about someone's decisions. Somehow, it is causing harm to individuals' life. The situation has become effortless for the public to share views about other forums like foreign policy issues since foreign policy decisions are imperative for building ties and alliances amongst states.

The media act as cultural socialization agents in this new era. The impact of media has had not only on individuals' activities, cultural, and societal perceptions. It is due to the speedy growth of the television industry and social media and its dominant role in daily life.

Media telecast different cultural, religious, political, social, and entertainment programs for the viewers. Over time, the viewership is also increased with enormous media evolution. Media has caused an intense shadow on the public. Many people depend on media for certain global news and entertainment programs. Media is the sole establishment for worldwide programs by different means and technological advancements.

Meanwhile, the use and effect of media have grown, scholars have come advanced and put forward theories regarding an increase in advancement and its increasing results and consequences. There exist some cultural and sociological perspectives theories that are Direct Effects Theory and Limited Theory

Rendering to direct effects approach media has a direct influence on general community and society. "Several media entertaining programs have influence on young individuals as they are exposed to this development (Orbe, 2013) and expedition and it is causing negative and harmful ramifications.

According to a limited theoretical perspective, media has limited and little influence on the general public. "People are prone and susceptible towards media, but prefer to follow programs (Orbe, 2013) particularly concerning their own cultural discernments. As, many individuals are constant and persistent with their own prevailing beliefs, culture, customs and values. Some people are strict about choosing of specific programs. This shows media somehow has limited effect on individuals."

It relies on community and society what they prefer to watch and perceive through these media programs. Most of the public pay attention to political, religious, and cultural entertaining and related programs. These programs build a different mindset of people towards their traditions and values. Media airs various state programs like in Pakistan Indian programs are so watched that Indian Culture penetrated our children and youth that they were adopting their Culture, traditions, and values. But for now, the media has stopped airing Indian programs, and people left watching those programs.

In Pakistan, electronic as well as social media is getting acclaimed, particularly among teenagers and young individuals. "Social media in Pakistan (Kugulmen, 2012) as a

communication tool is used in five ways; breaking stories ignored by traditional media; mobilizing people for social and other campaigns; promoting and coordinating humanitarian aspects of issues and problems; activist for social causes; and accelerating communication between politicians and their publics.” Meanwhile there is a booming progression of television channels in Pakistan and now electronic media enjoying a great nuance of permission and independence, the audience usually gratifies their informative needs from these channels. Social media is mainly used to socialize; therefore, the role depends upon its usage patterns either for progressive or regressive purposes. Its role depends upon its use if people uses this mean of communication for getting information and increase in knowledge then this medium is very informative, educational and instructive.

In the stage of development and era of new media, correspondence and intercommunication has been increased and correlative especially the custom and practice of computer related communication. (Pavlik, 1996). Since, the new media has emerged the direction track of mass media has been altered from only delivering from small community to large community audiences. Media has actually the power and authority to influence culture and foreign policy, the era of new media has accelerated the process.

With the advancement of technology, interdependency (Couvering,2003) enhanced the control over the onlookers. New advancements in media give the impression of suspension and disruption of old media.

This research is significant because it is timely in the new informational era into which the people are approaching. The rapidity of transformation in the information age means that the relevance, accessibility, dimensions, and regularity of media coverage will increase and may affect the culture and foreign policy decisions. Individuals and policymakers will be aware of this change and the effect, if any, that it will have, an effect on their choices. In addition, this study is significant to the public, whose right is to know and understand how media coverage can influence decisions made by their elected leaders. Furthermore, this research study is critical and important as many researchers had not studied the relationship between media, culture, and foreign policy. Media and its relationship with culture, and foreign policy is delicate, subtle and complicated.

### **Conclusion**

There is a connection and association between media, foreign policy, and cultural perspectives. Media has a significant impact and influence on people. The general public is relying on media and its transmission. Now, here the role of media is compelling. It is the responsibility of the media to play its role efficiently and effectively concerning transmission and telecast content.

The media should broadcast content regarding cultural, religious, and traditional values. Through media, the public, especially young individuals, gain inspiration and motivation and then implement it in their daily lives. There are many researchers conducted

regarding media and culture, but they were not related to foreign policy. There is a shortage of literature concerning media, Culture, and foreign policy formulation, especially in Pakistan, since media mainly focuses on entertainment programs.

Furthermore, media should focus on educational, informative, constructive, and technological advancement to develop focused, attentive and deep learning and learn about their culture and perception well.

Culture is an umbrella term which comprehends the social behaviors, norms and values of any state society. Cultural attributes of Islamic states are very distinct and have particular values and ideologies as compared to western states.

Foreign policy should be decisive and significant regarding the state's cultural and societal perceptions. Because alliances, ties, links, and narratives are built according to the state's cultural and traditional values. Media consumers must develop media literacy. Media literacy is the mere understanding of media programs, their operation, and their programs. It will be instrumental and convenient for the general public aimed at knowing media.

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