



## New Media Language: A Study on the History and Development of Propaganda in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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### Abstract

This study examines how propaganda messages related to the Pakhtun belt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, are created, shared, and consumed on Facebook, using new media language. An in-depth analysis of Facebook posts from a group with at least 10,000 members is conducted in this study, based on qualitative content analysis of the posts, as well as applying the circuit of culture as a theoretical framework. Pakhtunistan propaganda and PTI propaganda are two of the main types of propaganda identified in the study. It is widely accepted that both types of propaganda rely on various techniques to influence people, including the use of emotive appeals, selective use of facts, repetition, and slogans. Besides investigating the actors involved in the production, representation, consumption, and regulation of propaganda, the study also explores the channels, modes, and mechanisms involved in its production and distribution. A contribution is made to the literature relating to propaganda theories and practices in a particular geographic and cultural context from the perspective of this study. Furthermore, it promotes critical thinking skills, media literacy, and dialogue for the purpose of countering propaganda as well. As a result of the research, it came to the conclusion that propaganda is a complex phenomenon that adapts to changing media environments and can have different effects on society, depending on its intention and methods.

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### Introduction

With the rise of new media, propaganda has evolved into a dynamic and persuasive force that influences public opinion and societal behavior, particularly in politically sensitive regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. New media platforms—especially social media—have transformed how information is disseminated, providing both opportunities for open dialogue and vulnerabilities to manipulation. In this context, propaganda has become a powerful mechanism for shaping perceptions through selective information, emotional appeals, repetition, and slogans (Makuch-Fedorkova, 2021; Gondal *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[16, 6]</sup>. Historically, much of the research on propaganda has focused on the Western world, especially the United States and the United Kingdom (Doll, 2020). This study seeks to fill a critical gap by focusing on a localized analysis of propaganda in KP—a region with a rich but complex history of political mobilization, ethno-nationalist discourse, and armed conflict. Given KP's geopolitical position and history of marginalization, understanding the evolution of propaganda here is essential for broader discourses on media, identity, and conflict.

### Problem Statement

Contemporary propaganda operates within digital ecosystems, using blogs, podcasts, memes, hashtags, and other affordances of new media. However, there is a lack of empirical research on how propaganda is linguistically and symbolically adapted to these new media environments—particularly in underrepresented regions such as KP. Further, most studies overlook how these strategies affect marginalized communities, a critical gap this study seeks to address. The research explores how propaganda is created, circulated, and consumed in KP through Facebook, focusing on messages relating to Pakhtun nationalism and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) political discourse.

### Research Objectives

#### This study aims to

Analyze a sample of propaganda messages concerning the Pakhtun belt in KP as shared on Facebook.

1. Examine how propaganda adapts to new media techniques and platforms.
2. Understand how propaganda is produced, represented, consumed, and regulated using Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture model.

### Research Questions

- What types of propaganda messages are disseminated on Facebook concerning the Pakhtun belt?
- How has propaganda evolved linguistically and symbolically on new media platforms like Facebook?
- How is propaganda constructed, shared, consumed, and governed within the new media ecosystem?

### Significance of the Study

The study contributes to media theory, especially propaganda studies in new media contexts. By applying Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture (1997) framework, it provides a novel approach to understanding how meaning is produced and consumed through digital platforms, expanding the theoretical tools available for media and communication research (Du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Corner, 1996) <sup>[30, 31]</sup>.

The research addresses the underrepresentation of KP in academic propaganda studies. By focusing on Facebook group content, it provides data-driven insights into how political messaging is shaped in this region. The study uses multiple data sources—including Facebook posts, documents, and observations—to ensure validity and reliability.

Practically, the study provides strategic insights for policymakers, educators, journalists, and activists. It highlights the risks and potentials of new media as both a vehicle for propaganda and a tool for critical media literacy.

### Delimitations

The research is delimited to:

- The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, limiting generalizability to other regions.
- Facebook content related to Pakhtunistan and PTI propaganda.
- The timeframe of June to September 2023 for primary data collection.
- Content in Pashto and Urdu, with possible exclusion of other dialects or languages.

### Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture, which explores five interconnected moments: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation (Hall, 1997; Du Gay *et al.*, 1997) <sup>[31]</sup>. This model allows for a multidimensional analysis of how propaganda messages function within cultural and communicative systems, particularly in digitally mediated environments.

For example:

- Representation examines the symbols, slogans, and visuals used in propaganda.
- Identity considers how Pashtun nationalism or political loyalty is constructed.
- Production investigates the technological and labor dynamics behind message creation.
- Consumption studies how different audiences interpret or resist propaganda.
- Regulation analyzes state censorship, platform moderation, and informal community controls.

### Conceptual Clarifications

Defined as a deliberate effort to shape perceptions and control cognition (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2018), propaganda uses emotional and symbolic appeals to influence beliefs and behaviors. It plays a significant role in psychological manipulation (V. Bavel *et al.*, 2021; Wimberly, 2023) <sup>[26]</sup>.

Refers to digitally enabled communication platforms, including social media, podcasts, websites, and interactive content (Yates & Rice, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2022) <sup>[29]</sup>. New media is characterized by its interactivity, user participation, and algorithmic personalization.

Social media, and Facebook in particular, enables instant global communication and targeted propaganda campaigns. With over 3 billion users globally (Lin, 2023), Facebook offers powerful affordances for both genuine discourse and manipulative messaging (Chen *et al.*, 2022; Luo *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[4, 14]</sup>.

### Literature Review

The literature on propaganda and its intersection with new media offers a foundation for understanding its historical roots, evolving strategies, and impact in contemporary digital spaces, particularly in regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan.

### Propaganda: Definition and Mechanisms

Propaganda is defined by Jowett & O'Donnell (2018) as a deliberate and organized attempt to shape perceptions and influence actions toward achieving specific objectives. It functions through psychological integration, often aiming to suppress critical thinking and manipulate reasoning (Wimberly, 2023). V. Bavel *et al.* (2021) <sup>[26]</sup> note that propaganda can gradually alter beliefs and behaviors by reinforcing biased ideologies. According to the Cambridge English Language Dictionary (2023), new media encompasses any digital form of communication, including blogs, podcasts, and social platforms. It is distinguished from traditional media by its interactivity, real-time sharing, and the networked, participatory nature of its audience. Yates & Rice (2020) emphasize the significant transformation in media language due to these developments, while Zhang *et al.* (2022) <sup>[29]</sup> highlight its capacity to blur boundaries between personal and mass communication. Historically,

propaganda has been closely associated with mass communication technologies such as radio, film, and newspapers. The "manufacture of consent" concept demonstrates how propaganda manipulates public opinion (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Filipovic and Spaic (2020) argue that propaganda is inseparable from the media systems it uses. Shields (2021) further suggests that propaganda often masks manipulative intentions behind appealing narratives.

### The Role of Social Media

Social media introduces interactivity and user validation mechanisms—likes, shares, retweets—that deepen the persuasive power of propaganda (Esiyok, 2020; Omotayo & Folorunso, 2020)<sup>[19, 32]</sup>. Platforms like Facebook facilitate the rapid spread of manipulative content, challenging society's ability to discern truth. Chen *et al.* (2022)<sup>[4]</sup> note that propaganda now functions beyond traditional gatekeepers, while Farkas *et al.* (2017) and Monaci (2020) warn of social media's role in expanding propaganda's global reach. With over 3 billion users globally (Lin, 2023), Facebook has become a central platform for political messaging. Its structure enables impersonation, anonymous publishing, and emotional manipulation. A notable example includes Danish Facebook pages that spread anti-Muslim narratives through fabricated profiles (Monaci, 2020). Chen *et al.* (2022)<sup>[4]</sup> highlight how cost-efficiency and accessibility have allowed even small actors to engage in propagandist messaging. Propaganda in KP has a long trajectory, rooted in geopolitical upheavals and ethnic movements. From Gandhara Buddhist iconography used to legitimize rulers (Naveed, 2015), to Islamic propagation through Persian and Arabic literature (The Early Medieval Rise and Spread of Islam, 2018), to British colonial education and print systems that reinforced imperial ideologies (Rahman *et al.*, 2018)<sup>[22]</sup>, each era has seen the strategic use of media for ideological ends. Post-1947, propaganda became a tool for national unity and religious identity construction (Haider, 2023)<sup>[8]</sup>. During the Afghan-Soviet War, KP became a base for jihadist narratives. Extremist groups leveraged modern media to spread radical ideologies, recruit followers, and mobilize support (University of Peshawar & Islam, 2015). Propaganda concerning Pakhtunistan—a proposed Pashtun homeland—draws on historical grievances and cross-border identities (Nichols, 2021; Qureshi, 1966; Kosar, 2021)<sup>[21, 13]</sup>. While political figures like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the ANP supported autonomy, the idea has since declined in practical relevance (Ahmed & Khan, 2020; R. Khan, 2021)<sup>[2]</sup>. In contrast, recent PTI propaganda following Imran Khan's arrest on May 9, 2023, leveraged Facebook for real-time mobilization and protest coordination. Supporters portrayed Khan as a victim of state oppression, while the government framed him as a threat to national stability (Daily Qudrat, 2023; Crisis, 2023)<sup>[44]</sup>. Digital platforms have amplified the speed and reach of propaganda (Luo *et al.*, 2021)<sup>[14]</sup>. However, they also exacerbate echo chambers and polarization, as algorithms reinforce users' existing views (Delaney, 2021)<sup>[37]</sup>. Influencers now shape opinions, often blurring the line between advocacy and manipulation (Karagur *et al.*, 2022).

### Psychological and Social Impacts

Propaganda reshapes not only opinion but also emotional and psychological states. It can generate fear, anger, or a sense of group loyalty, while also increasing skepticism among media-literate users (D.S. Martino *et al.*, 2020; Guo *et al.*, 2022; Blades, 2021)<sup>[7, 3]</sup>.

### Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm to explore the dynamics of propaganda dissemination in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), with a focus on the role of new media language on Facebook. A case study design is employed to investigate how digital propaganda functions in a specific socio-political and cultural context, using Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture framework as the analytical lens. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of how propaganda is produced, represented, consumed, and regulated within the KP digital environment.

The methodology aligns with the principles outlined by Jamshed (2014) and Kumar (2011), emphasizing a comprehensive strategy for exploring contextual meanings through descriptive, real-world data. The research design focuses on uncovering textual and visual strategies used in Facebook-based propaganda, particularly those relating to Pakhtunistan narratives and PTI's political mobilization.

### Data Collection and Sampling

The primary data source is Facebook, specifically public groups related to KP's political, cultural, and regional issues. Purposive sampling is used to select groups that:

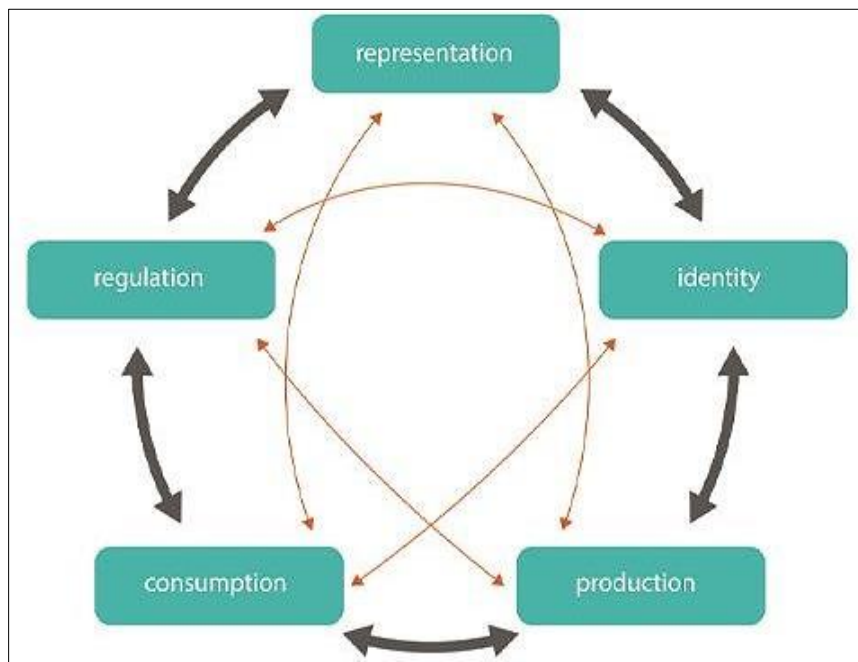
- Relate to KP topics (e.g., culture, politics, conflict),
- Contain at least 1,000 members,
- Are public and active, posting at least once per week.

Data were collected between June and September 2023, encompassing Facebook posts, comments, images, and other media shared within the groups. Original content in Pashto and Urdu was translated into English, with care taken to preserve linguistic nuance and cultural connotation.

To ensure triangulation and increase validity, secondary data were collected through document analysis, including academic articles, news reports, and archived digital content. Participant observation was employed to attend relevant events such as rallies and online seminars, offering first-hand insights into the propaganda environment. This observation followed opportunistic sampling, selecting events based on their relevance to ongoing propaganda discourse.

### Analytical Framework and Technique

Data analysis was conducted using close reading, a method of textual analysis focusing on structure, language, style, and embedded meaning. This approach facilitated the identification of recurring themes, symbols, discourses, and linguistic devices such as emoticons, hashtags, acronyms, slogans, and memes used in propagandist texts (Burke, 2011; Saccomano, 2014). The Circuit of Culture model provided the organizing framework for thematic categorization across the five domains: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation (Hall, 1997; Du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Cinque & Redmond, 2017)<sup>[31]</sup>.



**Fig 1:** Five Interconnected Dimensions of Cultural Analysis

This inductive analysis emphasized natural settings and meaning-making processes. Researchers immersed themselves in the material as participants and observers, aligning with qualitative approaches as described by Preiser *et al.* (2021) <sup>[33]</sup> and Creswell (2009).

### Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with academic neutrality. No political affiliation influenced the research process. Ethical considerations included maintaining objectivity and ensuring participant anonymity where applicable. The emphasis was placed on analyzing linguistic and symbolic structures, not endorsing or opposing specific ideologies or political groups.

### Textual Analysis

#### Propaganda of Pakhtunistan

The term Pakhtunistan refers to a proposed state or region which would encompass Pashtun-populated areas in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. This country is identified as Pakhtunistan because it argues that the Pashtuns have a distinct cultural, linguistic, and historical identity that has never been recognized or respected by the states of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is essential to note that the proponents of Pakhtunistan also oppose the Durand Line, which was drawn by the British in 1893 to divide Afghan and Pakistani territories. As a result of the circuit of culture

model, we may be able to analyze the propaganda of Pakhtunistan in terms of five aspects: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation.

### Representation

Representation is how meanings are constructed and communicated through signs and symbols, such as language, images, sounds, gestures, etc. Among other things, representation shapes people's perceptions and understandings of reality, as well as their expressions of identity and values

In order to convey its message and meaning, Pakhtunistan's propaganda employs various forms of language, including images, symbols, words, and slogans. In the flag, for example, the Arabic scripts are the *Takbir* (*i.e.*, Allahu Akbar = God is the greatest) above the emblem, "Pashtunistan" below it. Pashtunistan flag is red and black with a beautiful mountain in scripted into it which reflect the mountainous scenery of Pakhtunkhwa or Pashtunistan. The black implies the darkness, troubled past of the nation while the red signifies the blood shed by those who battled for the country's independence (Nichols, 2021). As well as representing unity and progress, crescents and stars are common Islamic symbols. Affinity and solidarity between Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line are also expressed through the flag.





Fig 2: Social Media Post: 'Azad Pashtunistan' by Shadal X Pakhteen"

Likewise, Pakhtunistan, /pʌkhtuːnɪˈstɑːn/ /pax'tunistan/ or Pashtunistan /pəʃ'tunɪstɑːn/ /pæʃ'tuːnɪˈstɑːn/ is used in the propaganda, which means

"land of the Pashtuns". According to this name, the Pashtun people are entitled to self-determination and sovereignty over their ancestral lands (R. J. Nichols, 2017) <sup>[18]</sup>.



Fig 3: Pashtunistan Advocacy: Social Media Engagement Snapshot

The propaganda also uses slogans such as "Lar aw Bar yaw Afghan" /lar aw bar jaw af'gan/ or /la:r aw ba:r jaw afya:n/ (Pashto for "Afghan on both sides"), "Da Pakhtunkhwa Zalmi" /da paχton 'kʷa: zalmi/ or /da pax'tunxwa zal'mi/, (Pashto for "The Youth of Pakhtunkhwa"), or "Pakhtunistan Zindabad"

/pʌx'tuːnɪstɑːn zɪndə'ba:d/ or /pax'tunistan zɪndəba:d/ (Urdu for "Long live Pakhtunistan"). They express the nationalism, resistance, and aspiration of the Pashtuns. Supporters and opponents are able to better understand the propaganda's vision, goals, and identity using these forms of representation (Rahman, 1995) <sup>[23]</sup>.



Fig 3: Pashtun Solidarity Post: 'Lar Aw Bar Yaw Afghan' (2018)

**Identity:** In society, identity is formed by the way in which people define themselves and others based on the various social categories they belong to, such as ethnicity, religion, gender, class, nationalism, etc. An individual's identity determines how they express their values and beliefs. Pakhtunistan's propaganda is important in defining its leaders and followers as well as redefining their identities. Various political parties lead the propaganda campaign, such as the Awami National Party (ANP), the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), and the Pakhtunkhwa Qaumi Party (PQP). A party's political and ideological agenda reflects whether it

adheres to secularism, democracy, socialism, or Islam. Pashtuns, whose identity is also influenced by propaganda, make up the majority of the population in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and northern Baluchistan. Propaganda promotes Pashtun language, dress, customs, values, and history in order for its citizens to embrace their Pashtun identity. Pashtuns across the Durand Line are not only encouraged to feel united and united through propaganda, but they are also encouraged to feel united through the propaganda.



Fig 4: Pashtunistan International Conference Announcement (November 2019)

#### Production:

All of the factors that contribute to production, such as technology, the economy, labor, and other material processes, play a role in production. In the context of access, production, and use, production shapes people's behavior.

In addition to posters, banners, flyers, books, songs, videos, and websites, Pakhtunistan's propaganda produces a variety of materials. A variety of posters depict Pashtun heroes and leaders, such as Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (also known as Bacha Khan), Khan Abdul Wali Khan, and Abdul Samad

Khan Achakzai. A number of praises and criticisms have been produced by the propaganda apparatus, including "Da Pakhtunkhwa Zalmi". In addition to creating websites for Pakhtunistan and Pashtunistan, the propaganda effort also created websites for media and information about them, including [www.pakhtunkhwa.com](http://www.pakhtunkhwa.com) and [www.pashtuntimes.com](http://www.pashtuntimes.com). Digital media, social media platforms, and underground networks are all employed by the propaganda to produce its propaganda materials (Woolley, 2022) [27].





Fig 5: Pashtun Nationalism in Global Context: Conference Date Announcement

### Consumption

Meaning is consumed in different ways by individuals, groups, communities, and other audiences across a variety of settings. Consumption is one of the factors shaping messages and desires, along with the way people interpret and respond to those messages and desires.

There is no question that Pakhtunistan's propaganda materials are consumed in a wide variety of contexts and audiences. Public places, such as streets, markets, schools, and mosques, may be places where the group's posters or banners can be seen by some audiences. A number of radio stations and

online platforms may play its music. In public libraries and bookstores, readers may find pamphlets and books. Smartphones and computers are available as means of accessing the company's websites for some audiences. Depending on the beliefs, values, and experiences of the audience, propaganda can be positively or negatively received. Some audiences may support or join the cause as a result of the propaganda's materials. There may be some audiences who ignore or resist propagandistic messages or meanings.



Fig 6: Vintage Pashtunistan Postal Artifact (1978) - Pakistan/KPK Flag Depiction

## Regulation

The regulation of meanings is the process by which meanings are controlled and contested by various authorities, such as laws, norms, and values. Rules and expectations can be shaped by regulation, as can how people challenge or change them.

Its operations and activities are governed by laws and policies that affect Pakhtunistan's propaganda. In Pakistan, for instance, propaganda is required to comply with constitutional laws protecting local sovereignty and territorial integrity. Security laws concerning withdrawal and troublemaking must also be followed by the propaganda. Several areas or platforms are prohibited from publishing propaganda materials under censorship laws. There are also some groups or individuals who repress or oppose the propaganda, challenging its validity or morality, such as the Pakistani government, the military, the judiciary, the media, or other ethnic or religious groups.

## PTI Propaganda against Government

The circuit of culture model can be used to create, circulate, contest, and change meanings across a variety of cultural contexts and situations. It consists of five interrelated moments: representation, identity, production, consumption,

and regulation. In addition to power, ideology, history, geography, and other factors, each of these moments contributes to the production of meaning.

**Representation:** Representation is how meanings are constructed and communicated through signs and symbols, such as language, images, sounds, gestures, etc. Among other things, representation shapes people's perceptions and understandings of reality, as well as their expressions of identity and values. In addition to using images to demonstrate their perspectives and agendas, different actors represented the incidents on 9 May 2023.

## For example

Government officials used images of burned vehicles, damaged buildings, and injured security personnel to illustrate the violence and destruction caused by the protesters. As well as the arrest and trial of Imran Khan, some images featured him in handcuffs in court and wearing a prison uniform after being taken away by anti-corruption agents. Protesters were portrayed as unlawful and disruptive elements in these images, while the government was portrayed as legitimate and lawful authority.

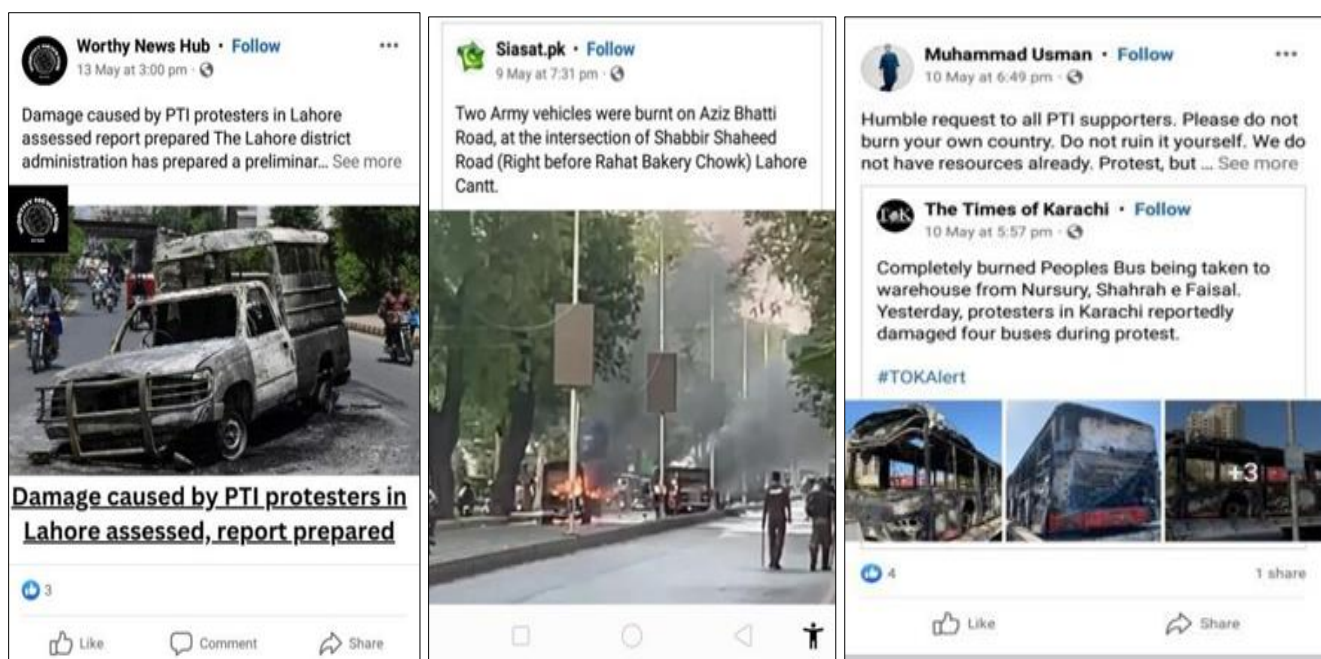


Fig 7: PTI Protest Aftermath: Lahore Damage Assessment Report

The PTI used images showing the solidarity and support of their supporters, such as posters, banners, and flags. Moreover, they showed images showing the government's oppression and brutality against protesters, such as tear gas, water cannons, and live ammunition being used against them,

as well as dead or wounded PTI workers being carried away by their comrades. PTI was portrayed as the democratic and popular movement, while the government was depicted as the oppressive and authoritarian regime (Zeidan, 2023).





Fig 9: PTI's May 15 Social Media Post in Pashto

**Identity:** In society, identity is formed by the way in which people define themselves and others based on the various social categories they belong to, such as ethnicity, religion, gender, class, nationalism, etc. An individual's identity

determines how they express their values and beliefs. It was possible for different groups of people to identify themselves and each other based on symbols that demonstrated affiliation and difference during the 9 May 2023 incidents.



Fig 10: Imran Nazi' Protest: Public Discontent Display

**For example:**

*The supporters of the PTI* displayed flags that showed their patriotism and loyalty to Imran Khan, including a green flag with white crescents and stars (the national flag of Pakistan), a red and green flag (the party flag of the PTI), and portraits or slogans of Imran Khan. A black flag or armband (signifying mourning or protest) was also used to express their opposition and resistance to government, while pictures or names of Shehbaz Sharif (the current prime minister) or

other government officials were crossed out, and the slogan "Go Nawaz Go" was used against the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who was ousted together with Imran Khan in July 2016 (Daily Qudrat, 2023)<sup>[44]</sup>. As patriots, these symbols were meant to distinguish them from traitors who were betraying the nation and its leadership, as well as to demonstrate their patriotism and commitment to democracy and justice.

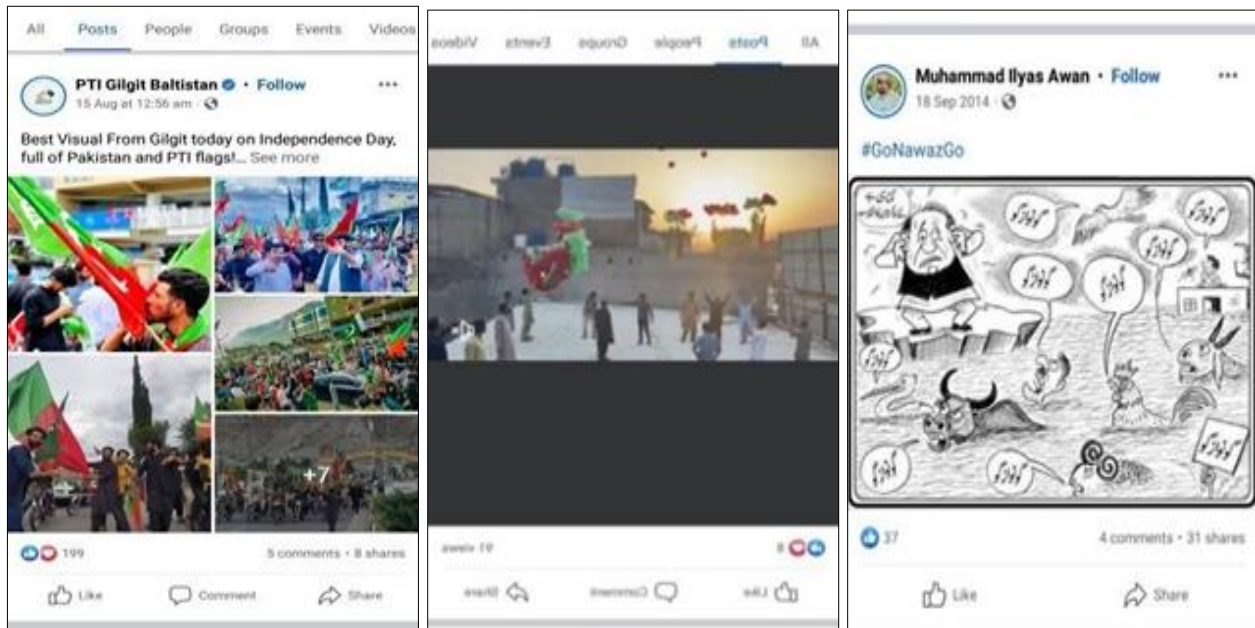


Fig 11: Patriotic Display in Gilgit: Pakistan & PTI Flags on Independence Day

There was a strong display of loyalty and obedience on the part of the *government supporters*, including the green flag with the white crescents and stars of the ruling party (the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz), the white flag with the green maps of Pakistan (the main opposition party's flag), and portraits or slogans of Shehbaz Sharif. Also, they displayed symbols that condemned and rejected Imran Khan and his supporters, including red crosses and stamps on pictures or names of him and other PTI leaders, and signs or chants that said, "Imran Khan Murdabad" (a derogatory slogan that means "Death to Imran Khan"). Symbols like these

demonstrated their loyalty to the constitution and law, and was intended to distinguish them from rebels disrupting order and peace (Daily Qudrat, 2023) <sup>[44]</sup>.

**Production:** Technology, economy, labor, and other material processes are all factors that contribute to production. The manner in which people access, use, and produce goods and services is shaped by production. As a result of the 9 May 2023 incidents, technology either enabled or hindered communication and coordination between disabled people using a variety of production methods and modes.

For example



Fig 12: Imran Khan Calls for Protest Against ECP in Islamabad's F9 Park

Mobile devices, the internet, and social media were utilized by PTI to communicate and coordinate their actions and strategies. Informing and motivating their supporters, they used these technologies to organize and mobilize their protests and resistance. These technologies also allowed them to communicate with international organizations and human rights organizations, bypassing censorship and government propaganda. Even though the government sought to silence and suppress them, they were able to speak out in public and be heard. As part of its communication and coordination

strategy, *the government utilized analog technologies* like television, radio, newspapers, etc. These technologies were used to communicate messages, to broadcast news, reports, analyses, and reports, as well as to monitor and control public opinion. The government restricted the use of digital technologies, such as mobile internet, social media, and other digital platforms, by PTI and their supporters. Even though the PTI attempted to challenge and expose them, these technologies gave them a monopolistic and dominant position in the public sphere (Jazeera, 2023a).



Fig 13: Riots in the name of protest Political dissent

The opinions and experiences of the public regarding the incidents were coordinated and communicated through a variety of technologies, including phones, computers, cameras, etc. Through the use of technology, they were able to communicate and exchange messages, comments, reviews, etc., as well as record and observe events and the effects they experienced. Moreover, they used these technologies to research or find independent media outlets, online forums, blogs, etc., that offered alternative perspectives in addition to gaining access to or seeking alternative information sources. The government or PTI may have tried to influence or persuade them with these technologies, but they always had the right to make their own choices and to have their own voice in the public arena.

### Consumption

Individuals, groups, communities, and other audiences consume meaning in various ways. Messages and desires are shaped by consumption, as well as how people interpret and respond to them.

Consumer behavior and attitudes influenced and changed people's reactions to the 9 May 2023 events. In addition to differences in consumption patterns and practices, there were also differences in how people consumed and evaluated the messages and meanings produced by different actors.

### For example

There was a conscious and uncritical consumption of PTI messages and meanings by PTI supporters. During the protests and resistance to the government, they utilized them

as inspiration and motivation. Additionally, they were used as sources of information and to justify supporting Imran Khan and condemning his opponents. As far as their validity and veracity were concerned, they did not question the PTI messages or meanings.

There was total loyalty and unquestioning acceptance of the government's messages and meanings. For their support of the government and condemnation of the PTI, they used them as sources of information and justification. As well as protecting and securing the community, they consumed them for protection and security. Government messages and meanings were not challenged or criticized.

Different actors produced diverse and critical messages and meanings to be consumed by the general public. To understand the situation and form their opinions, they consumed them out of curiosity and concern. In addition to surviving the crisis and adjusting to it, they consumed these items for survival and adaptation. As a result, the message or meaning produced by different actors was questioned and evaluated for reliability and relevance.

People reacted differently to different patterns and practices of consumption because of these differences, which affected how they supported or resisted one side or another, or were indifferent or undecided about the incidents. Consumption of certain messages or meanings influenced or persuaded some people. Certain goods or services were consumed by some people who were satisfied or dissatisfied.

Regulation: The regulation of meanings is the process by which meanings are controlled and contested by various authorities, such as laws, norms, and values. Rules and



expectations can be shaped by regulation, as can how people challenge or change them.

There is no doubt that regulation played a decisive role in determining and influencing the outcomes and consequences of the 9 May 2023 incidents. As laws and norms governed the incidents, people behaved differently based on the types and levels of regulation that they encountered, as well as the changes or reforms they demanded or accepted.

### For example

PTI leaders, workers, and supporters were slammed by the government for breaking the rules that they imposed upon them, such as the arrest of Imran Khan, the mobile internet blockade, and the arrest of PTI leaders and workers. According to them, these measures protected national security and stability because they were legal, constitutional, and democratic. In addition to refusing to release Imran Khan, restore the internet, and free PTI workers, they refused all other requests. Military courts were also considered necessary and legitimate by them for the trial of civilians. In addition, they accused the international community and human rights organizations of being biased and hostile in their internal affairs (Crisis, 2023) <sup>[43]</sup>.

Depending on their circumstances and preferences, the general public complied with or violated the government's regulations or PTI demands. Curfews, lockdowns, traffic rules, and other laws governing their daily lives were often followed or violated by some people. Electoral reforms, anti-corruption laws, constitutional amendments, etc., all were proposals or implemented by either side. Some people supported them while others opposed them.

In different ways and at different levels, these different forms and levels of regulation influenced people's outcomes and consequences. A regulation imposed by either side or challenged by the other may result in some people gaining or losing their rights or freedoms. Depending on the regulation enforced or defended by either side, some people achieved or failed their goals or expectations.

### Conclusion

This thesis aimed to examine how propaganda messages related to the Pakhtun belt in KP are communicated with Facebook in a way that speaks to the language of new media. As part of the thesis, samples of propaganda messages posted to Facebook groups were analyzed using the "Circuit of Culture" framework. Two primary propaganda messages are examined during the study, Propaganda from Pakhtunistan and PTI disinformation about the government. Because Facebook can adjust to the characteristics and functions of posts, comments, likes, shares, groups, pages, and events, it has been proven to be especially helpful for propaganda. Propaganda has also made use of Facebook's personalization, moderation, share ability, and engagement. Memes, hash tags, emoticons, stickers, and other aspects of new media are just a few examples of how a significant portion of this culture also influences propaganda. Many actors work together to produce and disseminate propaganda on Facebook. Members communicate across a range of media, engage with a range of customers, and employ a range of strategies to manage the propagation of their misinformation. The results of this thesis, which are interpreted and utilized to formulate suggestions, are expected to be of great service to scholars, decision-makers, and the general public. By analyzing the evolution of propaganda and its past in the

larger context of new media, this thesis adds to the body of knowledge on propaganda theory and practice.

Taken as a whole, the thesis suggests that propaganda is a dynamic, ever-changing phenomenon that is always altering. Propaganda uses writing, radio, and other media to try and change people's attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Propaganda is created, portrayed, consumed, and controlled through modern media. Propaganda can have a beneficial or detrimental effect on society, depending on its goals and means of distribution. By using the same language of new media, new approaches are being developed for combating propaganda in which messages of information, education, and inspiration are created and spread.

### Recommendations

1. Compare the new media language of KP with the mainstream media language of Pakistan and identify the factors that influence their difference.
2. Contrast the new media language of KP with other regions or countries that have faced propaganda, misinformation, or ideological conflicts and draw insights from the historical and theoretical frameworks of propaganda research.
3. Compare and contrast the circuit of culture model with other theoretical models or frameworks that have been used to study propaganda.
4. Conduct empirical research using the circuit of culture model as a guide for data collection and analysis on a specific case or context of propaganda.

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