



## REPRESENTATION OF ETHNIC PRESSURE GROUPS IN PAKISTANI MEDIA

**Shahid Kamal\***

*Department of Humanities, COMSATS University, Islamabad Campus*

*Email: [shahidkamalkhan2000@gmail.com](mailto:shahidkamalkhan2000@gmail.com)*

**Dr. Sadia Siddiq**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities, CUI Islamabad Campus*

*Email: [sadia\\_siddiq@comsats.edu.pk](mailto:sadia_siddiq@comsats.edu.pk)*

**Bibi Amina\***

*COMSATS University Islamabad*

*Email: [bibi79753@gmail.com](mailto:bibi79753@gmail.com)*

**Mohib Ullah Khattak\***

*Bahria University, Islamabad Campus*

*Email: [mohibzafar777@gmail.com](mailto:mohibzafar777@gmail.com)*

### **Abstract**

*Media shapes the opinion of a public and the story of politics about pressure groups with the help of their representation. Such groups may or may not be validated in the representation and have an impact on their social acceptance and influence. Much research has been conducted on pressure group media portrayal. However, one would still say that research on how pressure groups are represented in the English Pakistani newspapers is lacking. Thus in the context of the wider umbrella of Agenda setting theory, the present research attempted to qualitatively investigate the evaluative representation of the pressure groups in the chosen editorials of English newspapers in terms of image building of pressure groups in Pakistan. Appraisal analysis indicated that the newspaper editorials had a seriously manipulative portrayal of the pressure groups by making use of the appraisal tools. PTM (Pashtun Tahafuz Movement) has been presented as democratic and rights based movement under state repression whereas BYC (Baloch Yakjehti Committee) is presented as a marginalized group struggling to seek justice but volatile through the use of number of different appraisal tools in an manipulative way such as metaphor, negative judgment, negative affect, negative appreciation, judgmental expression, heteroglossia, deontic modality, hedges, proclaimer, adverbial intensifier, up scalar, positive appreciation, positive judgment, monoglossia, positive affect, disclaimer.*

**Keywords:** *Ethnic Groups, Agenda Setting, Evaluative Tools, Newspaper*

### **Introduction**

Media serves as the main political information source for many people which explains its ongoing significance according to Laubach and Fetter 2007. People use media reports to remember important contemporary events according to Oates 2008. The current modern era uses newspapers television and digital media to control how people think about various issues. The selection of particular words, their repetitive use, and the implementation of social symbols create an essential effect that enables people to understand specific information (Entman, 1993). The media provides extensive coverage about pressure groups because these groups represent different social and political and economic interests. The media representation of these groups creates a public discussion which shapes government decisions and modifies public



opinion about these groups. Digital platforms have introduced new ways to cover pressure groups which develop through changing journalistic practices. Newspapers and other traditional media outlets provide trustworthy information sources yet their content results from editorial decisions and ideological stances and political circumstances. Media reporting has developed a situation where news organizations create deceptive content through selective presentation methods. Research has studied how media framing operates in worldwide situations but there has been insufficient research about how Pakistani English newspapers show pressure group representation. The study aimed to investigate how national media in Pakistan presents coverage about ethnic pressure groups.

### **Problem Statement**

The media coverage of the pressure groups can create an effect on the perceptions of the people which also stimulates the attitudes in the society and political dialogue. The social acceptability and influence of such groups can be justified or discounted through manipulative appraisal in the newspaper editorials. Nonetheless, there is lack of research on media coverage of pressure groups in Pakistan. This is the goal of the present study, which examined the coverage of the pressure groups in the Pakistani English newspapers.

### **Research Aim**

The current study aimed to explore the representation of ethnic pressure group in the national media in Pakistan.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To determine the various Evaluative tools utilized in the national newspapers to cover the pressure groups.
2. To examine the play out of used evaluative tools by the national newspapers in image building of the pressure groups.

### **Research Questions**

1. What kind of evaluative tool the national newspapers refer to when discussing pressure groups?
2. What are the consequences of such employed evaluative tools by national newspapers on image building of the pressure group?

### **Significance of the study**

- This research can assist individuals to realize social and political struggles, and can attract attention to the issues Pashtoon are experiencing, and can facilitate intelligent and understanding and kind national and international discourse.
- Ethnic Pressure groups in Pakistan have also not been analyzed in detail considering the media perspective. This research can thus give information that can be used in future research or study on the framing of pressure groups in the media in other situations.

### **Literature review**

The media function as the primary force which shapes social reality through their selection of particular event details and social actors to evaluate and display. News discourse does not merely reflect reality but actively shapes public understanding of political movements and institutions (Entman, 1993). The pressure groups need their demands to receive media coverage because this serves as their main method to gain



public backing for their demands. The methods newspapers use to present and assess these groups determine their social acceptance and institutional credibility and political power.

The way media organizations depict pressure groups to the public results from their guidance by ideological beliefs and their established institutional procedures. Gitlin (1980) asserts that mainstream media outlets tend to isolate opposing movements because they focus on reporting conflicts and disruptions and unacceptable behavior while they disregard the underlying factors that create protests. Social movements use media access as their most vital resource according to Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) but news outlets present these movements through a biased lens which follows political and professional limitations. Research conducted in Western nations demonstrates that movements receive their public image through two main frameworks which depict them as either legitimate political entities or dangerous forces that disrupt social harmony using specific words and comparison patterns and powerful emotional expressions to guide how viewers understand the message.

The existing research about South Asia remains limited because current studies demonstrate that ethnic and regional movements get portrayed through nationalist and security-focused discourses which depict their activists as threats to the state (Chakravartty & Roy, 2015). In Pakistan, there exists a lack of research about how English newspapers depict pressure groups like the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement and the Baloch Yakjehti Committee through systematic linguistic analysis even though ethnic activism contains political sensitivity. The institutional power of editorial discourse exists because it presents institutional assessments instead of actual content which results in it creating the main stories that establish legitimacy and justice and opposing viewpoints.

The framework of Agenda Setting Theory helps us understand the process through which narratives are created. McCombs and Shaw 1972 show that media outlets control public priorities by their decision to show particular topics and specific people to their audience. The research that followed first level agenda setting which focuses on the relationships between actors and issues (McCombs 2004) emerged as the main research focus. Media organizations create permanent public impressions about pressure groups because they keep showing particular democratic and violent and marginalized traits (Kioussis et al. 2007). The attribute-based portrayals of Pakistan's politically sensitive areas show which power structures need to be either strengthened or weakened.

Appraisal theory provides structured analytical methods which researchers need to study linguistic expressions of assessment. Martin and White developed the framework which explains how writers use language to express their emotions and moral judgments and their assessments of different matters while guiding readers to specific viewpoints. The studies which used this framework demonstrated that journalists use negative judgments with stronger assessments and limited voice options to establish state actors as credible while undermining the legitimacy of protest movements (Bednarek, 2006; Thomson & White, 2008; Zhang & Liu, 2018). Pakistani media analysis has not yet adopted this method because researchers need to conduct studies about ethnic pressure groups in Pakistan.



The existing research demonstrates that media serves as a powerful tool which constructs political realities for society but fails to provide sufficient information about editorial discourse and ethnic movements and evaluative language research in Pakistan. The research needs these openings because researchers want to study how public discourse uses language to create social and political perceptions of pressure groups.

**Methodology**

The research focuses mainly on qualitative research methods.

**Population**

The population for this qualitative study is Pakistani English newspaper Editorials.

**Sample**

The study examines three English newspapers which include The News, The Dawn, The News, and The Daily Times. The sample selection process needs to identify specific editorials which focus on Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) themes.

**Theoretical Framework**

The current research uses Agenda Setting Theory as its foundational framework. The study McCombs and Shaw conducted in 1972 demonstrates that media outlets possess the ability to elevate specific topics to critical status while simultaneously lowering other topics to minimal or non-existent importance.

**Analytical Framework**

The appraisal model developed by Martin and White which they established in 2005 serves as an analytical framework for Critical Discourse Analysis according to which the researchers conduct their qualitative research.

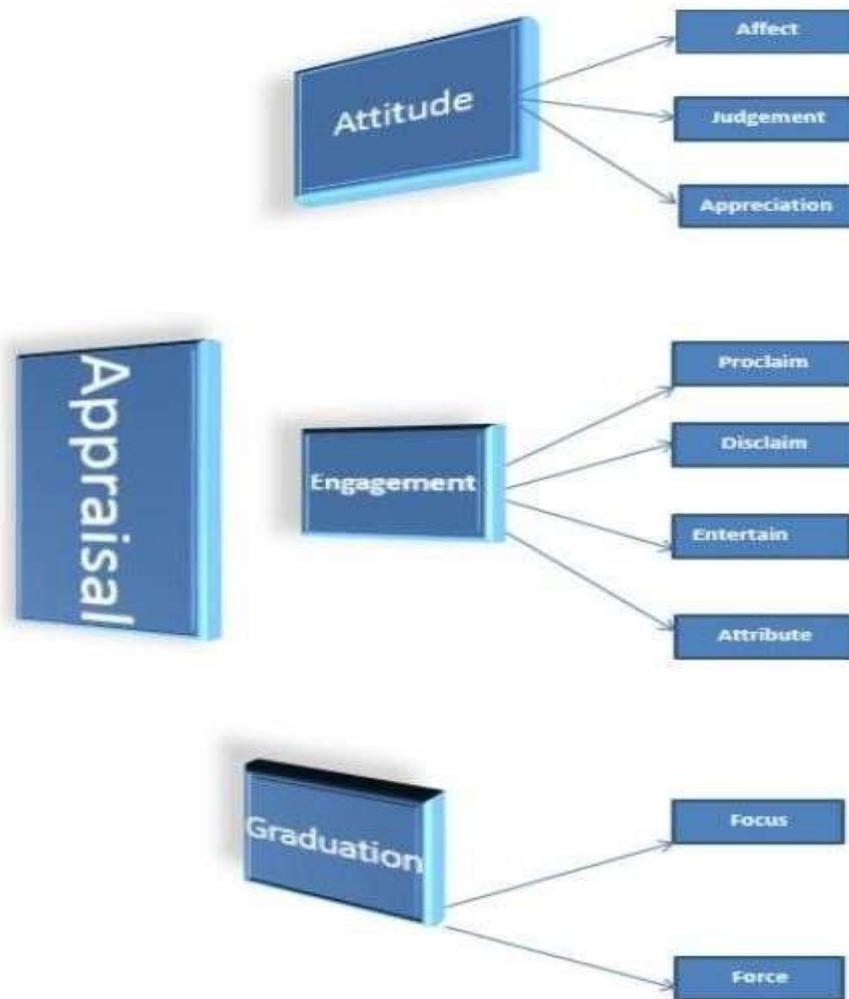


Figure 1: Resources of Appraisal (Martin and White, 2005)

### Data Analysis

### Daily Times

Banning PTM

October 7, 2024

The title of Ban Hammer functions as an internet and gaming slang term which describes the sudden and violent process of expelling someone from a platform. The title functions as an indirect assessment tool because the author employs a metaphor to demonstrate how the ban violates established rights through an extreme destructive method. The hammer image represents unselective power which operates without any form of subtlety and complexity because the government employs a forceful and violent approach. The framing leads readers to perceive the action as an excessive measure of authority rather than an appropriate security procedure. The title presents a brief but powerful metaphor that shows something to be judged negatively because it portrays governmental actions as unjust and harmful. The editorial uses judgment as an attitudinal resource to evaluate institutional actors through their behavior and moral character. The phrase "yet another ill-advised move by the state" shows a negative evaluation of the government. The adverbial "ill-advised" is used to attack the



judgment capability of the government as it can mean that the government acted foolishly or illogically. The phrase "many see the decision as an attempt to suppress dissent" shows negative judgment of an issue through social esteem angle because the government undermines democracy by restricting freedom of speech and civil initiative. The editorial uses affect through the factors "exacerbate the anger and sense of marginalization" to demonstrate how governmental actions affect PTM followers' emotional state. The case uses the phrase "anger and marginalization" to show how negative emotions affect a specific group who reacts to state repression. The concept of "pushing marginalized groups further away from the state" introduces alienation and abandonment as essential emotional states which people experience. The editorial presents its assessment of state policy because it considers the policy to be ineffective and detrimental to progress. The statement "heavy-handed moves fail to achieve their desired goals" presents a negative assessment of how government actions provide value and result in benefits. The historical evidence supports this assertion because "history has shown" that particular actions have resulted in past failures. The appreciation reaches its conclusion through the critical term "counterproductive" which establishes a lower value for PTM terrorist group associations. The language component that describes state policy through its word selection demonstrates how the policy leads to increased disputes instead of solving existing conflicts. The term "short-sighted" describes the policy as failing to achieve its goals while it does not understand the long-term impact, which reveals the government's strategic error. This editorial uses heteroglossia to develop its engagement system, which permits others to express their opinions through their voices. The **modals** and **hedging** terms like "many see", "could push more people", and in case "if the government has concrete allegations," are all evident in the editorial to leave room to engage in dialogic space in front of a potential opposing opinion. An example of such is the use of attribution as in, "many see the decision as an attempt to suppress dissent", trying to circumvent the use of the editorial voice to explicitly accuse, and rather reports on what people are saying. The credibility of the editorials has strengthened by demonstration of being conscious of a wider discourse through the tactical use of **heteroglossic tools**. There are also grammatical features of attribution, as in the phrases containing the words like "alleged state violence" and "alleged disappearances," in a manner that indicates sensitivity towards the political and legal associations. Further, the phrase: "this is not merely unjust", this is "short-sighted" can be inferred as a **proclamation**, emphasizing the editorial's own voice in a **monoglossic manner**, thereby asserting a stance that leaves little room for disagreement.

The editorial uses multiple appraisal methods from the Martin and White framework to answer its first research question. The negative assessment of state actions together with the actual demonstration of people's emotions and their alienation and the state policies which the author sees as harmful and unjust demonstrates the author's attitude. The author uses engagement through heteroglossic statements which include attribution and modal verbs to present different perspectives but he uses monoglossic statements to show his editorial opinion. The author uses graduation tools to create critical evaluation which shows direct differences between two subjects while making an urgent situation also presenting emotional content through increased intensity and



focus. The state actions toward PTM are evaluated through multiple strategic methods which work together to establish a critical discourse.

### **BYC women in jail**

**April 27, 2025**

The statement “*THE detained Baloch Yakjehti Committee leader Mahrang Baloch and other BYC activists, including women, are reported to have been on a hunger strike...*” in the start of the editorial shows a strong evaluative framing. The reference to “*detention*” and “*hunger strike*” portray an **affective** dimension that invokes suffering, injustice and resistance. The **epithet** “*detained*” is a **negative judgment** of the action of the state and foregrounds the coercive aspect of the state power. The phrase “*alleged police brutality*” combines appreciation and judgment. The term “*alleged*” in the phrase is a heteroglossic engagement that acknowledges contention while the other term “*brutality*” is a moral critique on the activities of the authorities. Such an opening places the BYC activists instantly as victims of repression, and the moral responsibility of the state. The aspect of **graduation** can be seen in the emphatic wording of the “*failure of the justice system to safeguard their rights*” in which the word “*failure*” increases the weakness and moral irresponsibility of the state, which strengthens the **evaluative force**. The editorial also mentions that “*BYC supporters are staging rallies across Balochistan for the release of activists who were arrested more than a month ago under the dubious MPO law.*” The evaluative word “*dubious*” signifies **negative appreciation** of legality, which undercuts the legitimacy of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) law and presents its application in questionable terms. The interaction here is **heteroglossic via attribution**, and the demonstrations are framed as a mass expression of protest, signifying that the social opposition challenges the position of the state. The enactment of **graduation** is implemented in “*across Balochistan*” which increases the spatial scope of protests and consequently increases their salience. The issue of **judgment** can also be seen in a case where Sardar Akhtar Mengal condemns the detention of women activists describing it as “*something unprecedented in the history*”. This historical appeal acts as an **amplifier** to make state actions more severe that makes them extraordinary and norm-breaking. The editorial in the second paragraph intensifies its moral tone and mentions that “*Mahrang is apparently facing the state’s wrath for forcefully raising her voice on the issue of enforced disappearances.*” The use of the lexicon “*wrath*” **personifies** the state as vindictive and punitive which is a **negative judgment** of the state conducts. The expression of “*forcefully raising her voice*” is given in a **positive judgment** of ability and decency that depicts Mahrang as a brave and devoted individual. This two-sided framing creates a moral polarity between the tyrant state and the principled activist. The word “*forcefully*” used to designate **graduation** is an **emphatic intensifier** which indicates the zeal of the activist. The **engagement** is **monoglossic** in this case because the editorial takes the power of interpreting the behavior of the state without considering other different interpretations. The editorial observes that “*a malicious campaign has been launched against her on both social and mainstream media, linking her with Baloch secessionists and the gruesome attack targeting the Jaffar Express*”. The **epithet** “*malicious*” is a clear moral statement, positioning the campaign as intentional, unjust and immoral. The fact that the Jaffar Express attack is described as a “*gruesome*” is a **negative appreciation** and creates



horror and fear, whereas the idea that it is connected with a Mahrang is described as discrediting propaganda. **Engagement** is **heteroglossic** through attribution and the assertion is made as a something “launched against her”, not endorsed by the editorial voice. **Graduation** is reflected in the expansion of scope with the term “*on both social media and mainstream media*” which amplifies the scope of the disinformation campaign. Regardless of these efforts, the editorial claims that “*her support among the Baloch population has refused to wane*”. This expression uses **positive appreciation** of resilience. The **intensifier** “*refused to wane*” reflects **coercive** continuity and enforces the image of Mahrang and its credibility to the readers. The criticism is also directed towards the political leadership and mentions that “*The PPP, which is leading the coalition in the conflict-ridden province, should know better than most about how women prisoners are treated by jail staff in the country.*” In this instance the modal auxiliary “should” serves as a **deontic obligation** marker in expressing moral **judgment of propriety**. The evaluative expression “*know better*” rebukes the ruling party, making its lack of knowledge or compliance a responsibility failure. The **epithet** “*conflict-ridden*” province is an attempt that **negatively appreciating** the political situation in Balochistan, which refers to instability as a consequence of state failure. The comparative “*better than most*” is **graduation** at work and this increases expectations of the PPP in terms of its historicity and position of power. This ethical reproach further enhances the descriptions of political laxity in the editorial. This analysis is exacerbated with the argument that “*no amount of state brutality has ever been able to break the resolve of political prisoners, especially women activists.*” The epithet “*state brutality*” is unequivocally a **negative judgment** whereas “*the resolve of political prisoners*” gives **positive judgment** of bravery and endurance. The **graduation** tool “*no amount*” is a complete **intensifier** that excludes the chances of state victory by means of repression. The engagement is **monoglossic** and categorical which makes this statement undisputable truth instead of argument. The particular focus on the “*women activists*” adds to the affective weightage and mobilizes the cultural and moral sympathy of women who are oppressed. At the same time it criticizes the violence of the patriarchal state. The editorial then cautions and mentions that “*The proponents of a ‘hard state’, too, should realize that their actions... have deeply alienated an entire Baloch generation, embroiling the province in a cycle of endless violence.*” The **nominalization** “*hard state*” is a negatively evaluative term, which describes the state of authoritarianism. The **negative judgment** of consequence is expressed by the **verb** “*alienated*” which means that the moral failure is being talked about and the “*entire Baloch generation*” makes the phrase broader by amplifying the extent of the grievances. **Graduation** is attained by use of “*deeply and endless*” both of which increase urgency and severity. Meanwhile, the editorial draws the distinction between the militant and peaceful actors by mentioning that “*There is no doubt that the militant secessionist elements need to be dealt with sternly, even eliminated. But at the same time the state should engage with the more practical political voices from the province and address their legitimate demands.*” The phrase “*no doubt*” is used as **monoglossia** that closes down space for alternatives positions. The **adverb** “*sternly*” is an indication of **negative judgment** of militancy and the **verb** “*eliminated*” is a further demand to act strongly. Nevertheless, the concessive condition “*but at the same time*” opens the pot again to heteroglossic



expansion while accepting that there are legitimate political voices as well as militants. The opening statement of activists being viewed as “*practical political voices*” expresses **positive judgment** and **appreciation** which justify the demands made by BYC to be considered reasonable. Graduation appears in the **intensifier** “*legitimate demands*” reinforcing their validity. This dual framing allows the editorial to balance its condemnation of militancy with its defense of civic activism.

As to the first research question this editorial exemplifies the extensive use of **Judgment** e.g. “brutality,” “wrath,” “malicious campaign”, **Appreciation** e.g., “dubious law,” “gruesome attack,” “conflict-ridden province”, and **Affect** e.g., hunger strike, alienation, resilience. The resources of engagement are used strategically through **monoglossic** claims are made with the sense of moral authority (e.g. no amount of state brutality has ever..) while **heteroglossic** statements are made involving outside voices e.g. the condemnation on Sardar Akhtar Mengal, the accusations of BYC. **Graduation** is very evident in **emphatics** and **intensifiers** like “*deeply*” “*alienated*”, “*no doubt*” that strengthen the evaluative force and urgency. These tools collectively form BYC as resilient, democratic and morally justified while portray the state as repressive and alienating.

#### Daily Times

The Vicious Nexus

October 5, 2024

#### Analysis:

The initial statement of the editorial “*An incident that began as a minor dispute... turned into a tragedy that would have ramifications throughout Pakistan’s socio-political landscape*”, is evaluated in nature. **Appreciation** in this initial statement is employed through the evaluative phrase “*minor dispute*” that lowers the seriousness of events and the use of word “*tragedy*” amplifies its consequences. The **graduation** through the use of **force** with “*ramifications throughout Pakistan’s socio-political landscape*” exaggerates the scale of impact. Such a combination portrays that the death of Gilaman Wazir not merely as local but as nationally consequential. This combination sets a stage for engagement with PTM’s subsequent actions. The editorial continues by naming the perpetrator, “*a PTI supporter, Azad Dawar,*” and specifying that the victim, “*a respected figure in PTM,*” died on July 11. The **epithet** “*respected figure*” is a **judgment of social esteem** that positively appraises Gilaman. It creates sympathy and moral standing for the victim. However, the verb “*seized upon*” is a negative **judgment of propriety** that suggests opportunism and exploitation. The **engagement** here occurs through a **proclamation** like the writer asserts this as fact, without hedging which forecloses alternative readings of PTM’s behavior. The editorial claims through evaluative phrase “*real tragedy*” that refocuses attention from the personal loss to PTM’s actions. The words “*manipulation*” and “*seeks discord*” show strong **negative judgment** that portrays PTM as deceptive and destructive. The phrase “*rather than peace*” further introduces an implicit **appreciation** of social harmony. Such an appreciation contrasted with PTM’s alleged divisiveness. Graduation in the phrase “*the real tragedy*” intensifies the negative stance. The editorial contextualizes the issue while mentions that “*Pakistan’s tribal areas have been afflicted with a complex web of personal, tribal, and political tensions.*” The term “*afflicted*” is a **negative affect** resource and presents tribal areas



as victims of long term unrest. This portrayal frames PTM's environment as volatile and later claims about their exploitation of conflict gain discursive weight. The reference to CPEC and the FATA merger with KP are presented positively as developmental efforts which are a form of **appreciation** that contrasts with PTM's alleged negativity. When the editorial claims that "*The PTM's decision to exploit this tragedy, by falsely linking Azad to Pakistan's intelligence agencies, reflects a deliberate strategy to divert attention from the real issues plaguing the Pashtun people,*" several appraisal tools converge. "*Exploit*" here reflects a strong **negative judgment of propriety**. The phrase "*falsely linking*" functions as a **disclaim** that rejects PTM's claims outright. **Graduation** through the use of term "*deliberate strategy*" intensifies the assertion of intentionality. Such a representation frames PTM not as misguided but as purposefully manipulative and builds its image as disloyal actor. Furthermore, the **metaphor** "*stoke the flames of division*" is a **negative appreciation** that appreciates PTM's actions and position PTM as incendiary and destabilizing. **Graduating force** is heightened by using the phrase "*rallying cry*" that emphasizes the exploitative energy attributed to PTM. **Engagement** remains monoglossic with no acknowledgment of PTM's own perspective which presents the editorial's stance as the only valid one. The editorial further aligns PTM with terrorism and claims that "*Their consistent targeting of the military... often through rhetoric that echoes the sentiments of terrorist organizations like Fitna Al Khwarij (FAK), suggests a troubling nexus.*" The comparison of PTM to FAK is a **judgment of propriety and veracity** that casts PTM as morally compromised and ideologically suspect. The phrase "troubling nexus" is **appreciation/reaction** that signals alarm. Engagement appears through **entertain** ("suggests") but the surrounding certainty reduces dialogic space and subtly closing off alternative interpretations. The Afghan flag episode is described as "*a blatant violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.*" The **epithet** "blatant" is an **intensifier** that amplifies the condemnation. The act itself is framed through **negative judgment (propriety, national loyalty)** and constructs PTM as unpatriotic. Reference to India's RAW as external involvement is an **attribution through acknowledgement**. It suggests that PTM is linked with hostile actors. This inter-textual positioning expands the editorial's stance but only to reinforce its **negative evaluation**. Further along, the text contrasts FAK and PTM: "*While the FAK uses direct violence... the PTM uses a subtler approach... to undermine state institutions.*" Here, **judgment** characterizes PTM as deceptive ("subtler approach") and disloyal ("undermine"). Graduation strengthens the claim with "concerted effort," implying systematic intent. The contrastive structure ("while... PTM...") uses **contract (counter)** engagement, guiding the reader to accept PTM as equally dangerous though less overt. While discussing protests after terrorist attacks, the editorial states that "*This concerted effort not only diverts attention from the real problem of terrorism but also undermines Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts.*" The negative **judgment** of PTM as undermining is reinforced through **graduation** (not only... but also) which escalates their culpability. This sequentially builds a narrative of PTM as complicit with terrorism. In the last section the editorial declares that "*PTM's alliance with FAK... threatens national security. To combat this, policymakers must not only eliminate terrorism but also expose the tactics of groups like PTM.*" The phrase "threatens national security" is a highly



charged **judgment of propriety and security** has been intensified by the use of **graduation** “must not only... but also”. Engagement is **monoglossic** that leaves no dialogic space for PTM’s counterclaims. The cumulative effect is an unequivocal condemnation of PTM as a proxy destabilizing force.

### False Flags and Silent Betrayals

May 16, 2025

#### Analysis:

The title “*False Flags and Silent Betrayals*” of the editorial is itself evaluative in nature that relies heavily on **judgment**. The phrase “false flags” invokes deceit and manipulation, while “silent betrayals” frames the groups like BYC and BLA as disloyal actors who hide their treachery behind silence and which is a **negative judgment of propriety and social sanction**. It therefore predisposes readers to view the groups as morally corrupt and treacherous even before the editorial begins. This **negative framing** is further continued at the beginning of the opening paragraph, which states the stark contrast between how the groups described themselves and the silence they portrayed when India aggressed. The statement “They identify themselves as a freedom fighter, a voice of the oppressed, a protector of rights is surrounded by engagement resources, where the groups themselves make the statements, but the editorial voice is disidentified with the statements. The distancing is followed by intense attitude resources, particularly judgment, when the editorial accuses them of their silence as more loud than any statement and re-reframes it as betrayal. The word graduation here is used to make the condemnation more intense; therefore, no action was neutral but a form of complicity. This **negative framing** is furthered in the very first sentence of the opening paragraph, which arranged a sharp contrast between both how the groups viewed themselves and how they remained silent against the aggressions of India. The clause “*They call themselves fighters for freedom, voices of the oppressed, defenders of rights*” uses an **engagement resources** that presents the groups’ own claim but distance the editorial voice from them. Such distancing then extends to strong **attitude resources** and most notably **judgment** when the editorial criticizes their “silence” as “*louder than any statement*” and recast it as a betrayal. The effect of using **graduation** becomes even more condemnatory, implying that it was not being silent but rather doing it calmly. This stance is further escalated by explicitly naming the groups like BLA, BYC and affiliates and describes them as “*cloak themselves in the language of justice and autonomy.*” The **metaphor** of “cloaking” implies deceit that is used as a **judgment of veracity**. The editorial then moves into **appreciation** when describing the actions of the groups as “bomb public spaces, kill teachers, attack soldiers” and categorized as destructive, violent, and cowardly. The cumulative effect of listing multiple acts builds **force through graduation** by amplifying the sense of danger. The final evaluative statement in this section “they are instruments of Pakistan’s enemies” is a categorical **judgment of alignment and propriety** that completely stripping them of legitimacy. The third paragraph is about Pakistan and India skirmishes that heavily relies on appraisal resources. The silence of the group is portrayed as “complicity,” which is again **judgment of propriety** that shows immoral betrayal. The phrase “*validating India’s narrative*” shows **engagement**, as the editorial references another voice (India’s) and condemns the groups for echoing it. The editorial through **graduation** emphasizes



this betrayal by stating that their voices “*did not reappear... speaking for the people of Balochistan*” but rather for Pakistan’s adversary. This sharp polarizing strategy heightens their delegitimization. The engagement is used through rhetorical question: “*If Pakistan were truly a terrorist state, why then would the terrorists align themselves with India?*” It prevents counterarguments by framing them as illogical and thereby closing down alternative positions. There is a **negative judgment** about the group actions and portrays the group as “fratricide” that shows its hypocrisy and deception. This metaphor not only condemns them morally but also heightens the emotional **affect** by framing their actions as betrayal against their “own.” Their campaigns are described as “radicalizing youth” and “vilifying soldiers,” that invoke **judgment of propriety and capacity**. The soldiers are positively evaluated as protectors who defend both the borders and the nation internally. The contrast creates a binary of terrorists as villains, the Army as heroes. The focus in the upcoming section shifts towards civil society actors who “*fall into their trap*” or “*parrot their talking points.*” Here, the editorial widens its evaluative scope by using **judgment** against internal actors who lend legitimacy to separatist narratives. Their actions are framed as “*accomplices in a war,*” which further criminalizes dissenting voices. The judgment is further strengthened by graduation resources which imply that even minor sympathy equates to betrayal. The change in the tone occurs by appealing to the rights of the “real Baloch.” The editorial uses **positive appreciation** and **affect** by mentions that the people of Balochistan “deserve education, opportunity, dignity, and representation.” However, this sympathy is juxtaposed with condemnation of militants by suggesting that their struggle robs ordinary Baloch of true justice. The **contrastive engagement** here positions the editorial as the authentic voice of concern for Balochistan, against the manipulative claims of BYC or BLA. Judgment is also reintroduced in the last of editorial that critiques the political leaders such as Akhtar Mengal, who is accused of playing a “*double game.*” His behavior is cast as opportunistic and aligning at times with separatists for personal gain. Similarly, Mahrang Baloch’s international image is deconstructed through **judgment of propriety** and **engagement** by suggesting foreign actors’ portrayal of her as a hero is misguided and biased. The phrase “being female is not a license to defy the law” employs **judgment of propriety** while dismissing international advocacy as hypocritical. The editorial uses a judgment i.e. “*They are not revolutionaries. They are agents of destruction*” that consolidates its evaluative stance. Similarly, the phrases “betrayal for bravery” and “partners in aggression” operate as **judgment** and metaphorical **appreciation** closes the editorial with a strong reaffirmation of Pakistan’s unity and sovereignty. The usage of national identity as a counter narrative to separatist propaganda has been reinforced through the use of **positive appreciation** in the last appeal “*Pakistan still matters.*”

#### News International

#### Good step forward

August 04, 2024

The title “Good Step Forward” uses the Appraisal tool of **Appreciation** to evaluate actions, events, or processes as to their value or worth. The **adjective** “Good” is used to show a favorable evaluation of the government to give financial and legal support to the families of missing persons which means that it is approved and hopeful. It



presents the state effort as a positive and good step to dealing with an old human rights problem. The expression "Step Forward" is a **metaphorical** expression that implies development and advancement towards a better life, which helps support the **positive evaluative** position. It means that the government is doing a responsible and progressive job that will bring them a step closer to solving a humanitarian issue that has been around years. This combination of words creates a tone of cautious optimism which does take into consideration that the problem is not resolved yet, but there is a significant progress. **Positive Judgment** is used in the editorial to evaluate the government's new approach, calling it the "right way to take the next step forward" and a "positive development." It employs a positive appraisal, stating the government has "rightly offered legal and financial assistance." **Negative Appreciation** is used in the editorial that creates negative appreciation to critique past state actions and the overall situation. It notes "*terrible optics of unnecessary arrests*" and calls the missing persons issue the country's "most sustained human rights question." **Positive Appreciation** is used in the editorial to value the government's action highlighted. The support package is appreciated as a "*much-needed band aid to stop the bleeding*" and an "official acknowledgement" of genuine grievances. **Heteroglossia** is used in the editorial to compete claims that are presented to provide context and manage the narrative. The government "*claims that only 23 per cent*" of cases are pending, but families "say the numbers are much higher." This validates the skepticism of the families. **Monoglossia** with high necessity is used in the editorial to assert the crucial political demands. It emphasizes that the package is "not remuneration but an attempt... to share the grief." Furthermore, the core message is mandated: "justice is served with them" and the families "need closure." The editorial explicitly addresses and reverses past state narratives. It highlights that the families "*were in the past labelled as foreign agents,*" but asserts they are "indeed Pakistani citizens who have genuine grievances." **Intensification** is used in the editorial to stress the gravity of the problem and the necessity of action. The issue of missing persons is a "*challenge every government has failed to resolve.*" The grievances are repeatedly labeled as "genuine." **Focus** is used in the editorial to reframe the context and purpose of the aid. It employs an **extended metaphor** to distinguish between the superficial and the fundamental: the package is a "band aid," but the real issue is the "cuts these families have been nursing." This re-focuses attention from financial aid to the need for closure. The core issue is clarified using strong, definitive language: "the most important issue is of course the recovery of missing persons, without which no package would work."

Responding to research question one, the editorial "Good step forward" employs appraisal tools to positively evaluate the government's recent policy while validating the necessity and legitimacy of the pressure groups' core demands. The editorial strategically uses Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation resources to achieve a tone of measured, cautious optimism regarding the state's actions. **Positive Judgment** is used in the editorial to access the government's action positively as the "right way to take the next step forward" and a "positive development." The assistance is considered to have been "rightly offered." **Negative Appreciation** is used in the editorial to critique the overall situation and past failures. It notes "*terrible optics of unnecessary arrests*" and calls the missing persons issue the country's "most sustained human rights



question. **Positive Appreciation** is used in the editorial to highlight the core value of the government's action. The package is appreciated as an "official acknowledgement" of genuine grievances and a "much-needed band aid to stop the bleeding. **Heteroglossia** is used in the editorial that presents competing claims to manage the factual narrative. The government's official case numbers are opposed with the families who "say the numbers are much higher." This validates the skepticism of the pressure groups. **Monoglossia** with high necessity is used in the editorial to assert crucial political demands. The editorial mandates that the package is "not remuneration but an attempt... to share the grief." The central message is forceful: packages will only work if "justice is served with them." The editorial directly reverses past state narratives. It highlights that families who were previously "*labelled as foreign agents*" are now affirmed as "*indeed Pakistani citizens who have genuine grievances*." **Intensification** is used in the editorial to stress the problem's gravity and the necessity of the groups' demands. The issue is a "challenge every government has failed to resolve," and the grievances are repeatedly labeled as "genuine." **Focus** is used in the editorial as a strong metaphor to distinguish between the superficial and the fundamental. The package is framed as a "band aid," but the real issue is the "cuts these families have been nursing." This redirects attention from financial aid to the absolute need for political closure.

#### **Avoiding Total Alienation**

**October 12, 2024**

#### **Analysis:**

The title "Avoiding Total Alienation" of the editorial is a caution and evaluation note in that it uses **negative appreciation** through the use of "alienation" and **mitigative verb** "avoiding" to present the discussion around the threat of an absence of connection between the state and marginalized groups like Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM). The title of the editorial indicates a proactive agenda that stresses an acute issue of national cohesion and thus portrays a **monoglossic stance** regarding anticipated agreement with the issue of reconciliation and reform. Such a use of **Engagement** restricts possible perspectives and slightly pushes the readers towards to align themselves with the state's initiative to lift the ban on PTM, while also suggests that any form of excessive easing or total elimination should not be encouraged. The editorial uses a multifaceted set of **attitudinal resources** to present a fair and balanced impression of PTM and the state. In the first instant a **positive judgment** is presented in terms of the state decision which is called a "*welcome step*" and a "*commendable one*" that presenting the government as friendly to reforms and responsive to people dissent. Such terms associate the government with the values of maturity and rationality while making it more credible. Nevertheless, the editorial blunts this commendation and mentioning that "*the methods and agenda of PTM remain questionable*" which interposes **negative judgment** of the movement. This twofold assessment puts the PTM as a pressure group whose concerns are legitimate but whose methods are questionable and a characterization that simultaneously captures the grievances and puts the distance between the PTM and anything approaching legitimacy. The emotional framing is obvious in the use of **affect** specifically in the suggestion that banning movements "*risks deepening the divide*" and "*pushing those who feel unheard further toward militancy.*" These lines touch on a



sense of anxiety and fear associated with the disunity of a nation, appealing to concerns about extremism on a national level. The term “*history has shown*” employs **graduation** via **up-scaling** and uses **inter-textual memory** which is a caution that repression results in radicalization that experienced in Balochistan. These historical precedents are aimed at escalating the stakes and shedding **force** and **focus** toward an interpretation. Phrases like “*a legal avenue to channel their frustrations*” and “*the key to long-term peace lies in engagement*” in contrast evokes **positive appreciation** that is providing resolution and moral guidance. Such linguistic decisions shift the blame to reconciliatory and reformative actions. The editorial uses resources of **engagement** in a tactical way to influence ideological alignment. Although it admits that PTM has some justified grievances and it warns of the “*need to manage its role carefully*” particularly in “*sensitive areas*” that are suggesting a pragmatic reason behind the control. This **hedging** builds up **dialogic** space but narrows that space by insisting that suppression “*must be done through dialogue and engagement, not suppression.*” The transition of dialogic flexibility to **monoglossic** authority supports the editorial perspective as common sense reasoning. This rhetoric path promotes social confidence in the state policy. It also helps to justify surveillance or control of PTM actions. The editorial illustrates a comprehensive use of the appraisal tools of Martin and White (2005) framework while addressing a research question no one. It uses a **positive judgment** (“*commendable,*” “*welcome step*”) to justify government action, but at the same time uses a **negative judgment** (“*Methods... questionable*”) to moderate endorsement of PTM. The editorial evokes the emotional and psychological implications of state repression by using **emotive diction**, like “*those who feel unheard*” and “*deepening the divide*”. The text contains expressions of **appreciation** to support a conciliatory strategy (“*long-term peace*”, “*legal avenue*”) and uses **graduative** processes to increase risk perception or value (“*increasingly difficult*”, “*total ban*”, “*key to peace*”). **Engagement** is managed by considering an opposing opinion but directing the reader to a desirable position of evaluation, especially by alternating between **heteroglossic** and **monoglossic** statements.

## Findings

### Daily Times

In answering the research question one for the selected editorials of the Daily Times, different appraisal tools were employed (Monoglossia, Boosters, Negative Judgment, Heteroglossia, Epistemic Modality, Epithet, Nominalization, Rhetorical Question) to describe PTM and BYC as movements born out of social injustice and marginalization. The editorials used emotive and sympathetic language in consideration of their grievances but also highlighted the importance of the dialogue. However, there were certain undertones of caution that showed some fear of their growing powers and accompanying political consequences.

Responding to research question two, the appraisal tools in the Daily Times build the image of PTM and BYC as movements of legitimate grievances yet demanding attentive government involvement. The PTM was presented as a non violent and legitimate protest group that wanted civil rights to the Pashtun people. But the editorials even alluded that its increased popularity and emotional appeals could be political dynamite when neglected. Likewise, BYC was being framed as a rights-based organization that dealt with enforced disappearances and marginalization in



Balochistan, but a few lexical mentions of the “digital propaganda” and the “external narrative” established a mutual sense of ambiguity when it came to its intentions. The overall implications were that both groups were a part of the democratic struggle in Pakistan but had to operate within legal and non-violent structures. Daily Times thus built their image as credible yet politically sensitive actors who deserve engagement rather than suppression.

#### **DAWN News**

Responding to the question one from the selected editorials of Dawn newspaper, a number of appraisal tools (Metaphor, Negative Judgment, Negative Affect, Negative Appreciation, Judgmental Expression, Deeper Appreciation, Heteroglossia, Epistemic Modality, Hedges, Proclaimer) were used that reflected a balanced and analytical tone. The editorials recognized the historical and political roots of PTM and BYC’s discontent while urging restraint in state response. Dawn portrayed these groups as voices of legitimate dissent that needed engagement rather than suppression through moderate and open discourse.

In response to the research question two, the used appraisal tools in the editorials of dawn newspaper influenced the image of PTM and BYC as democratic movements constrained by authoritarianism of state. PTM was portrayed as a real rights movement with its activism implying entrenched frustration among Pashtuns who have been pushed to the margins by war and state neglect. Dawn urged activism instead of oppression and claimed that repressing PTM can only strengthen alienation and weaken national unity. In the same way, BYC was also portrayed as a group that expresses valid social and humanitarian interests instead of a military group. The editorial position focused on the inclusivity and negotiability as the potential measure to rebuild Balochistan trust on the federation. Framing both of these groups in terms of democracy and human rights, Dawn build an images of them as key stakeholders in the ongoing struggle of justice and equality in Pakistan.

#### **News International**

Answering research question one, various appraisal tools (Negative Judgment, Negative Appreciation, Heteroglossia, Negative Affect, Monoglossia, Intensifiers, Focus, Attribution) were used in the editorials of the News International which was oriented to empathy and democratic interactions. The newspaper acknowledged peaceful activism of PTM and BYC and denounced restrictions by the state as counterproductive. These editorials promoted dialogue and inclusivity, therefore portraying both movements as legitimate civil actors rather than security concerns.

In response to the research question number two, the appraisal tools used in the editorials of News International newspaper placed PTM and BYC in the legitimacy of civil movements based on profound social grievances. PTM was depicted as a representative of the suppressed Pashtuns who had been sidelined unfairly in the name of national security. The editorials claimed that the banning or oppression of PTM only creates more resentment and alienation, built the movement as an essential element of the discourse of democracy. Likewise, BYC was positioned as a right-based group that sought justice against forced disappearances and human rights crimes committed in Balochistan. There was empathy to the cause of BYC in the appraisal language, where the state was encouraged to distinguish between peaceful dissent and militancy. As a result, The News constructed the image of both



movements as victims of a systemic oppression and not threats, leveraging evaluative resources to promote inclusion, justice, and peace building.

### **Conclusion**

The research explored how Pakistani English newspapers create their public image of ethnic pressure groups through their appraisal resources usage when reporting on the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement and Baloch Yakjehti Committee under the framework of Agenda Setting Theory. The research demonstrates that evaluative language operates as a political tool which directs readers to view political legitimacy and threat and victimhood and political credibility as valid points of reference through its usage in editorials from Dawn and The News International and Daily Times.

The research shows that all three newspapers used the attitudinal system and engagement system and graduation system of appraisal to present these movements but they employed different methods for doing so. Dawn created an image of PTM and BYC as defenders of democratic rights who faced state oppression through negative judgment and appreciation which showed that state actions against them were morally wrong. The News International used humanitarian and political inclusion elements to present both groups as victims of structural injustice who deserved recognition of their complaints through formal institutional channels. The Daily Times used stronger negative evaluation and security-based language to show how PTM and BYC created an image of instability which damaged their credibility as national unity threats. The two different depictions provide evidence that media organizations function as intermediaries between their audiovisual content and the public because their investigations parent their content which manifests as specific attributes and publicized through particular published presentations. The editorial content demonstrates how editors select their language tools to create different effects which permit legal state power to operate without opposition while validating protests against it and treating any public demonstrations as criminal acts. The picture that emerges about Pakistani pressure groups does not show actual social conditions but reveals a contested social construction that results from different ideological viewpoints and editorial decisions.

The research uses Martin and White's appraisal framework to examine Pakistani media content which shows how South Asian ethnic activist groups use evaluative language to support their claims. The research shows how editors use their writing to establish a platform which enables linguistic discussions about democracy and national security and minority rights protection. The research results demonstrate that people need to become more aware of critical language use because it operates without detection to shape both political opinions and societal acceptance.

Researchers need to analyze Urdu newspapers and television shows and online platforms to investigate how media affects Pakistani multilingual audiences according to their research methods. The comparative diachronic approach enables researchers to track how pressure group representations change according to political developments. The study demonstrates that media organizations must maintain their ethical responsibilities when reporting news because this practice enables citizens to participate in meaningful public discussions which strengthen the democratic process.



## References

- Bednarek, M. (2006). *Evaluation in media discourse: Analysis of a newspaper corpus*. Continuum.
- Boykoff, J. (2006). Framing dissent: Mass-media coverage of the global justice movement. *New Political Science*, 28(2), 201–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07393140600655404>
- Chakravarty, P., & Roy, S. (2015). *Mediated nationalism: The politics of media and identity in contemporary India*. Oxford University Press.
- Cottle, S. (2008). Reporting demonstrations: The changing media politics of dissent. *Media, Culture & Society*, 30(6), 853–872. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443708096097>
- cultural perspectives (Vol. 160). John Benjamins Publishing.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Fetzer, A., & Lauerbach, G. (Eds.). (2007). *Political discourse in the media: Cross*
- Gamson, W. A., & Wolfsfeld, G. (1993). Movements and media as interacting systems. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 528(1), 114–125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716293528001009>
- Kiousis, S., Bantimaroudis, P., & Ban, H. (2007). Candidate image attributes: Experiments on the substantive dimension of second-level agenda setting. *Communication Research*, 34(4), 414–432. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650207302787>
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005). *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion*. Polity Press.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187. <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>
- Oates, S. (2008) *Introduction to Media and Politics*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Thomson, E. A., & White, P. R. R. (2008). Communicative style and evaluative prosody: Verbal strategies for positioning and stance. In G. Antos & E. Ventola (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (pp. 523–545). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Zhang, Y., & Liu, L. (2018). Appraisal in Chinese and English news discourse: A comparative study of reports on political conflicts. *Discourse & Communication*, 12(4), 410–429. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481318771447>