

Research Statement: Firasat Jabeen

My research interests include to study the intersection of media hegemony, imperialism, international communication, and the political economy of communication. In specific, in order to study the uses, abuses, effects, and implications of complex power structures in Pakistan, I study the production and promotion of ideologies in media messages. As my work is primarily situated in the cultural and critical domain of communication, often times I work on artefacts, images, and mass media content to illustrate the abstract ideas of power, exploitation, and imperialism.

My dissertation titled “The Rhetoric of neo-Orientalism” examines the phenomenon of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* for Pakistan. For this purpose, I study the creation and circulation of ideologies in events and case studies. I study the phenomenon of stereotypical portrayal of East (Pakistan) by West (US) that depicts East as a place that is backward, overtaken by benightedness, and civilizationally inferior to West. This phenomenon characterized as Orientalism/Othering further serves the imperialistic functions of western powers. Moreover, the phenomena of imperialism and exploitation is also replicated within a nation wherein those within the circle of power and privileges tend to exploit/exclude marginalized groups, thus, rendering them as ‘others.’ Here, I study the ideology of English language supremacy in Pakistan and its functioning in the frameworks of power. The unequal access of English learning in Pakistan creates a social chasm wherein the imperial/colonial legacy of English supremacy still persists in the country. For this purpose, a chapter in my dissertation examines the ideology of English supremacy in the school advertisements published in Pakistani newspapers.

For the study of issues of representation, there is a chapter in my dissertation where I study the representation of Malala Yousafzai (a Pakistani female education activist and a Nobel Peace prize winner) in the US newspapers and compare her portrayal with the portrayal of the US drone attack victims in the tribal areas of Pakistan. In order to elucidate my argument (regarding orientalism and imperialism), I compare the representation in the US newspapers with Pakistani newspapers as well. Similarly, another chapter compares the representation of Daniel Pearl (an American journalist abducted and later killed by Pakistani extremists) with the representation of victims of the Raymond Davis (a contractor with the US intelligence agency who killed two Pakistanis in Lahore) incident in both US and Pakistani newspapers. The last chapter compares the rhetoric offered in opinion articles for all four case studies in the US and Pakistani newspapers and explains that in the representation of these case studies, Pakistan is presented as a troublesome site—in need of either intervention or control of the US. All chapters employ the methodology of critical discourse analysis for studying the relationship of ideology and power through the theoretical framework of orientalism and argue for the perpetuation of orientalism in the post 9/11 Pakistan.

My publications speak to my ongoing commitment to scholarly conversations about these issues. During my PhD, I extracted a paper titled “The Perpetuation of Colonial Legacy: Uncovering internal Orientalism in the form of English Supremacy in Pakistan” from my dissertation and the paper has appeared in a journal published by Routledge. Essentially, this paper is a truncated version of one of the chapters from my dissertation. In addition, I co-authored a multimodal piece for publication in *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology,*

and Pedagogy, one of the most prestigious journals in the field of rhetoric and communication. My co-authored project “The Rhetoric of Revolution: A Cynical Cycle” is already published as a web-text in the *Kairos*'s issue of 2019. Overall, this project is a synthesis of a movie and a writing component (introduction, synopsis, and conclusion) that manifests the authors' prowess in the Adobe technology, which is an essential part of my disciplinary training at Clemson. My contribution—being a personal narrative—speaks to the problems of copyright laws for international students and how I overcame those problems for a class project that addressed the idea of revolution.

My publications before I embarked on my PhD journey are based on my collaborative projects with my senior professors or colleagues. For example, my articles on peace journalism and the use of media for countering the concept of othering are revised and improved versions of my papers that I co-authored as class assignments after participating in a media course, with special focus on peace journalism, at the University of Oslo, Norway. Similarly, other articles, too, are the product of my training under senior professors as a lecturer in the universities of Pakistan.

After finishing my PhD, my immediate goal has been to share my research as journal articles—something that is already underway. But my ultimate aim is to transform my work into a publishable book. This will require the addition of further chapters. I aim to incorporate a thorough and detailed analysis of Pakistan's mainstream media—something that I could not explore at length because of my travel limitations to the country. Furthermore, the addition of chapters will enhance the utility of my work for Pakistani media landscape. Given my interests on the issues of power, exploitation, and manipulation, I have intentions to work on the application of propaganda theories for media analysis in Pakistan. This approach will continue to inform my future research as I remain committed to confronting injustices against traditionally marginalized and underrepresented groups.