

LANGUAGE AND STIGMATIZATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL IDENTITY AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION IN PAKISTANI AND AMERICAN TV TALK SHOWS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how culture influences the process of stigmatization of the social identity in Pakistani and American TV talk shows. Therefore, the study employs content and critical discourse analyses using Erving Goffman's Theory of Stigma and Hofstede's Five Dimensions of Culture to analyze language patterns and discursive practices regarding race / ethnicity, gender, religion and mental health. It also provides a comparative analysis of how collectivist – religious value system in Pakistan is different from individual – secular one in the United States in regards to constructing different social identities. Stigmatization in Pakistani talk shows arises based on unified collectivity that labels anyone violating traditional religious or cultural practices norms as a threat to stability of the society, such as non-Muslims, women engaging in campaigns for equal rights or those who deviate, from societal expected roles. Unlike the British talk shows, in the American ones the focus was made on personal liberty and rights for everybody with stigmatization arising not for violation of social rules such as racial, gender, or immigration ones. The study also shows how religion influences Pakistani media and how Pakistani English media links it with stigmatization especially of gender and sexual identities while American talk shows especially those with liberal appeal, provide a Secular multiculturalist discourse that sometimes debates stigma. However, stigmatization is still manifested in innocent conservative American shows, a race and immigration specifically, with minorities depicted as a jeopardizing element to American ideals about the nation. In light of these findings the research maintains that cultural parameters of collectivism and individualism, and religion and secular believes are the important factors that determine how these societies perceived and read media messages in terms of conformity or alterity to common stigma and hence why cultural attitudes are relevant for assignments operating in these contexts.

Key Words: stigmatization, social identities, mental health, race, gender, religion,

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

One of the special features of humans that has attracted individuals' interest throughout history is language. After many years of historical development, the scientific study of human language

has expanded to encompass a vast range of topics including the language role in shaping and constructing social identity. Individuals express their experiences, ideas, feelings, and emotions through language which can reveal their personal identity

(Gee, 2014). Moreover, language choice of individuals, which may include their use of bilingualism or dialects, can also depict their personal identity such as socioeconomic status or cultural background (Gumperz, 1982). Language greatly influences social identity as it functions like a medium through which social and cultural values, beliefs, and customs are transferred and preserved. It contributes to the preservation of cultural stability, particularly in minority populations where the survival of social and cultural history is correlated with language preservation. (Kramsch, 2009).

The significant role of language in shaping and constructing social identity is changing with a change in civilizations which are getting more connected with one another. Similarly the mixing of different cultural and linguistic impacts consequently forms hybrid identities, which portray how people can move between different social contexts by making use of language in different ways (Hymes, 1996). Language reflects our identity and plays a vital role in shaping it in various intricate manners. It enables individuals to adjust to evolving social and cultural landscapes. Social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) mean that people obtain a part of their identity by the groups to which they belong. Such groups can be ethnic, national, religious, gender or occupational in nature. In their theory they suggest that individuals have self-image and self-esteem, this is usually through the process of evaluating the in group in relation to out groups. Hogg and Abrams (1988) builds on this by pointing that social identity is variable and contextual such that a person shall be associated with one identity in one situation while in another; he shall be labeled differently. For example, a person may assert ethnicity when celebrating a world tournament and may stress the occupational persona at the workplace.

This is an effort to attain a positive social identity that is common among people due to the resulting in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, individuals have in and out-group bias, to the extent that they have a positive perception of the groups they belong to than to those they do not belong to. According to Dovidio et al., (2005) these dynamics play a role in formation of stereotype, though it has some benefit in determining the view of social groups by the public.

Stereotypes can be described as the general idea that the general public develops based on groups that people belong to. Stereotypes are mentally pictures that sum up how a society regards a given type of people, and these pictures are normally oversimplified. They are often illusory and many have no factual foundation, making it easy for people to stigmatized and discriminated against (Fiske et al., 2002). For example, Fiske et al. (2002) proposed the stereotype content model, which suggests that public perceptions of groups are based on two dimensions: warmth and competence. While people seen as both warm and competent (for instance the young active and healthy people) are liked, people who are warm but seen as incompetent (like the elderly people) are pitied while people who are incompetent but seen as competent (like the wealthy people) are envied. This model can be used to explain why some categories are discriminated against and discriminated despite the general positive attitudes that are accorded them in other regard. This is also an interesting point because ordinary people cannot overview such media and conclusions that media gives them again are stereotyped. Schneider (2004) argued that it is the medi a that have a key task of disseminating different messages and fulfilling an important social role, namely, to represent certain groups in a manner that will only reinforce prejudices. For instance, racing minorities in crime related scenes or women in Care giving roles influence societies perceiving of the roles the groups should play.

It is apparent that social identity and certain public perceptive plays a key role in stigmatization. Link and Phelan (2001) defined stigma as the process by which certain categorized attributes in a community are considered deviant or inferior, thus leading to rejection of such a group of individuals in society. For instance, people who have mental health disorders may be discriminated against because of theories that holds that people with mental illness are dangerous or, at least, that they cannot conduct responsible or productive lives. Crocker and Major (1989) propose that people with a stigmatized identity have one of two strategies: denial of such an identity or identification with such an identity and hence identifying with other individuals with similar characteristics, in order to retain a positive self-image. Nonetheless, the level of social inclusion or

exclusion that people receive according to their group affiliations is normally defined by public perception.

The dynamics of intergroup relations are based on the perception of common social category that tends to be a cause either for intergroup conflict or intergroup cooperation. According to Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), prejudice can be reduced through intergroup contact; this is because the contact results in the establishment of friendship between two different groups and thus changing the perception most people have about the other group. Their study is in line with contact hypothesis which holds that, when certain conditions prevail, the amount of contact between people from different groups will help to change the prejudice of the two groups and make them more acceptable to each other. Nonetheless, Brewer (1999) affirms the fact that self-favoritism and perceived in-group assumed superiority over the out-group escalates conflicts especially in the event of national of ethnic identity. This natural inclination towards prejudice results in ethnocentrism strengthens discrimination and prejudice as a result of nationalism or racism.

One of the papers establishes that the perceptions of the masses are critical in situating individual and group identities. Goffman (1963) posited that the way in which society looks at certain identities, or especially more negative ones, such as those labelled as a stigma, can alter the way in which people look at themselves. For example, the minority group individuals may adopt the prejudices of societies and end up suffering from self-stigmatization and / or low self-esteem.

On the other hand, Tajfel (1981) opined that the individuals through their group identity they can counter any negative stereotype impressions formed by the public. Per Osborn and Feiling (2015) through social creativity, people may change the existing stereotype of their group by focusing on the positive aspects of the definition or by changing the criteria that depict the group as inferior. This kind of culture enables the oppressed groups to harbor proper image about themselves in spite of the prevailing hatred from the society.

Statement of the Research Problem

The paper at hand is titled “Language and Stigmatization: A Comparative Analysis of Social Identity and Public Perception in Pakistani and American TV Talk Shows”. The problem before the researcher is to explore the language patterns which impacts social identity and stigma of Pakistanis and Americans in TV talk shows. Further, it aims to analyze cultural differences in stigmatization of social identities in the talk shows of Pakistan and America.

Objectives of the study

The study focuses on the following research objectives:

- To find out the language patterns which influence social identity and stigma of Pakistanis and Americans in TV talk shows
- To explore the cultural differences in stigmatization of social identities in the talk shows of Pakistan and America.

Research Questions

The study tries to answer the following research questions:

- What are the language patterns which impact social identity and stigma of Pakistanis and Americans in TV talk shows?
- How do cultural differences influence stigmatization of social identities in the talk shows of Pakistan and America?

Significance of the study

The study is significant as it provides insights into the linguistic power which shapes, constructs and impact the social identity and stigma in two different cultures. It is noteworthy to mention that the results of the study can also influence media practices, policy-making and public awareness campaign that try to promote an inclusive picture of social identity and lessen stigma. It is also significant in a sense that it is a great addition to the existing body of research on stigma, social identity and media.

Literature Review

Studies on the representation of marginalized identities in the media emphasize how language patterns that stigmatize people on the basis of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status frequently depict stigmatized identities (Fairclough, 1995). Van Dijk (2000) emphasizes that language in the media frequently reflects larger societal disparities, with stigmatized groups receiving less favorable or stereotypical portrayals.

Language has a great influence on social identity and stigmatization when the cultural differences take place. Individualism is often reflected in the vocabulary used in Western media, especially American TV talk shows, where the emphasis is on autonomy and personal achievement (Hofstede, 1984). Because stigmatized groups are often positioned as "others" through language that stresses difference rather than inclusion, this can have an impact on how social identities like race and gender are established (Hall, 1997). On the other hand, language used in Pakistani media to reinforce traditional social hierarchies based on gender, class, and religion frequently stresses group identity due to its impact from collectivist cultural ideals (Rahman, 1996).

According to Shaheen's (2003) comparative analysis of Western and Eastern media, the representation of specific ethnic groups and religious sects in American media frequently reinforces negative stereotypes, while Pakistani media more frequently stigmatizes gender and class identities in unique ways.

Public Stigma and Mental Health

According to Corrigan and Watson, public stigma is a measure of perceived social rejection for people diagnosed with mental health conditions based on prejudice & discrimination. When it comes to mental health, there is evidence that it is stigmatized, and the following attributes are attributed to people with mental illnesses; dangerous, unpredictable and weak (Pescosolido et al., 2010). Culturally such perceptions lead to stigma, prejudice and discrimination in different spheres of life such as, employment, education, health care (Thorne et al., 2007).

For example, Corrigan and Shapiro (2010) pointed out that societal stigma is evident when media distorts mental illness as a result making the society to develop negative attitudes towards people with mental illness. It [the media] makes people with mental health conditions develop feelings of loneliness and alienation since the depictions discourage such people from accessing treatment coming with stigmatization.

Self-Stigma and Mental Health

Self-stigmatization is the process by which ever the stigmatized emotions and perceptions of mental illness are applied to the self (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). These internalizations can result to low self-esteem, feelings of uselessness and perceived competence or in other words low self-efficacy. According to Vogel et al (2007) self-stigma hinders people from seeking those services maybe because they feel embarrassed or perhaps they do not feel they ought to deserve anything better.

Livingston and Boyd (2010) presented a meta-analysis that confirms that self-stigma is a constant factor affecting mental health; its relation with depression, anxiety, and declining quality of life. Their study reveals that self-stigmatized clients are not always compliant with the prescribed treatment regime and may have hopelessness which may worsen the signs of the mental disorder.

Structural Stigma and Mental Health

Social structural stigma as defined by Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, and Link (2013), is the official discrimination faced using policies and institutions to reduce chances and allocations for those with mental health disorders. This form of stigma can be seen in health organizations that offer a low standard healthcare service or there being policies that limit the freedoms of those with mental disorder. Structural stigma contributes to the status quo and prevents patients from receiving the right care by continuing to uphold unjust social norms by denying people with mental health issues the right care by Hatzenbuehler et al.

Stuber et al., 2008, focused on how structural stigma in the health care setting hinders those with mental illness from seeking for health care. They truly learned that by having policies that stigmatize certain conditions, for instance, having policies that offered

little insurance coverage to mental health services, leads to poor compliance with treatment procedures, and therefore, poor mental health.

Stigma and Help-Seeking Behavior

Stigma was identified as a major factor that contributes to failure among individuals with mental health conditions – they do not seek help. Clement et al., (2015) reviewed studies on stigma and help-seeking, the two forms of stigma hinder people from seeking mental health services. The review established that stigma makes people avoid medical procedures, stay away from physician to avoid being rejected, discriminated against or judged, if they talk or seek treatment for mental illness.

In the same way, Barney et al., (2006) noted that self-stigma decreases the probability of seeking help from mental health, and that, individuals with this condition will hide their ailments. The failure to disclose can result in the activities of the symptoms together with reduction in well-being, something that cements the state of stigma as an important factor in mental health outcomes.

Reducing Mental Health Stigma

The strategies that have been used in the diagnosis include education contact and advocacy interventions to do away with stigma associated with mental health. According to Thornicroft and colleagues (2016) community based education that seeks to enhance the public's understanding concerning mental health can play a major role in eradicating myths as well as the perpetration of stigmatized attitudes. From their studies, they discovered that enlightening the public on the biological and environmental causes of mental illness ensures that there is little or no prejudice in relation to mental health issues, the general notion, which is, mental illness is caused by personal deficiency is a misconception.

Corrigan et al. (2012) confirmed that the interaction with persons with mental health issues is one of the key methods of reducing stigma. Direct contact removes the illusion of insanity and emotion seen in stereotypical depictions of people with mental health disorders and restores the perception of those people as competent others.

Methodology

This study adopts a comparative mixed research design to explore the role of language in constructing and shaping stigmatization and social identity in Pakistani and American TV talk shows. The study employs content and critical discourse analyses using Erving Goffman's (1963) Theory of Stigma and Hofstede's (2010) five cultural dimensions to analyze how stigmatizing language is utilized, how social identities are constructed, and how public perceptions are influenced in Pakistani and American contexts.

Fifty (40) complete talk shows broadcast in English language were selected from American and Pakistani official channels available on YouTube. The talk shows were purposively selected which show various social identities such as gender, class and ethnicity. The selected talk shows were transcribed for analyzing them via corpus analysis tool, Antconc, content and discourse analysis techniques. The study used content analysis to find recurring language patterns and explore the themes with the help of critical discourse analysis which impact social identity and stigma, using Erving Goffman's (1963) Theory of Stigma.

Stigma is defined as trend at which specific people or groups are rejected and labeled as deviant. Erving Goffman's seminal work on stigma, "Stigma: Publicly, we read "Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity" which serve as the basis for gauging this particular subject. Accordingly, Goffman has described stigma to be the social character that taints an individual or a group in the sight of others and deems them unfit for acceptance in that group or for receipt of certain services.

Goffman (1963) outlines three types of stigma: bodily abnormalities, personal sins (for instance, mental illness, alcoholism or joblessness), and tribal taboos (like color, belief or origin). Once assigned to a person, these labels define how other people approach and interact with that person as well as denying him or her rights. Stigma can be expressed or latent, that is if an attribute revealed and distinguishable, and if it is concealed until disclosed. Link and Phelan (2001) added to Goffman's notion by identifying stigma as a process that involved labeling, stereotyping, separating, status devaluation

and rejection, discrimination and exercised power. In their theory, stigma is described as a situation in which some members of society are in a position to give out labels and personalize their attributive deviations from other stigmatized people so that they can control their behavior. This theory underline that stigma is beyond discrimination in on personal level but also in terms of achieving structural inequity.

In addition, psychological consequences of stigma for the stigmatized persons themselves have been developed by Major and O'Brien (2005). According to them, stigmatized people develop threat to self-esteem besides experiencing more stress and disturbed social relations and this alters their health status. It is not simply a sociological problem of structure but a psychosocial phenomenology with sustained consequences for individuals' mental health.

Corrigan and Watson (2002) also defined mental health related stigma and made the distinctions between public stigma and self-stigma. Public stigma can be defined as the way that society responds to stigmatized people, while self-stigma is a process wherein people accept misinformation about themselves believing that it is true. Rosenfield and Weissman all claim that both categories play a role in maintaining the status quo of social injustice as prejudice puts off people with stigmas and they will not go for assistance or chance.

Stigma can therefore be best described in terms of the layers of social and psychological processes, and structures implied by the two conceptualisations of the term. It is embraced at both the microlevels of interacting individuals and the macrolevel of societal structures as it impacts the way people in a society are treated as well as the perception they harbor about themselves. Through the complementary combination of Goffman's originals ideas about stigma with the additional viewpoints provided by Link and Phelan (2001) as well as Corrigan and Watson (2002), the framework of stigma provides an all-encompassing means through which to analyse all forms of exclusion and their repercussions for those on the periphery of society.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW

This section gives the results of the cross-sectional study conducted on the selected Pakistani and American TV talk shows to examine the effects of language features on SI and stigma. The analysis enriches our understanding of how language actively contributes to the creation, reproduction or subversion of social categorizations and stigma in two different cultural and mediated contexts.

Cultural impact on the stereotyping of social identities in the Pakistani and the American TV talk shows can be seen as very significant and having many layers. The review shows that media discourses in both countries reproduce and mobilise the particularities of the respective culture, relations of power and value systems. Hofstede's five cultural dimensions — collectivism vs. individualism, religious vs. secular culture, and treatment of matters of sexual politeness — as well as gender and colours being politically incorrect subcategories all part in the openness levels of stigmatized social identities.

Language Patterns Influencing Social Identity

In-Group vs. Out-Group Dynamics

The study also established that in-group and out-group relations were indispensable of the construction of social identities in Both Pakistani and American talk shows respectively. As simple as it may sound, use of pronouns like "we" and "they" played a major role of demarcating one group from another.

- **Pakistani Talk Shows:** Cross referential to national/ religious belonging with some political/ regional-topic connected discussion Hosts and participants used the pronoun "we" quite often. For instance, in this sample of discussion during the topic of national security or economy the participant employed rhetoric which based the Pakistani identity as 'us' against a foreign or enemy 'them' such as Western world and neighboring countries. Ethnic identities (Punjabi, Pashtun, Sindhi and so on) were drawn with 'they,' thus marking a clear, if gradual, separation within the nationality discourse.

- **American Talk Shows:** Analyzing the races and political affiliations in America, frequently in the conflict used in-group and out-group criteria. Frequency type concerns the use of certain types of pronouns, for example, “us” as compared to “them” when people were arguing a political divide (Democrat against Republican) or discussing race issues (Black against White). For instance, discussions associated with race such as the police or immigration showed that the particular language tended to preserve racism or political allegiance. In support of this finding, the existing theory of Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) postulates that individuals obtain identity based on social classification, and this classification is—supported by the language that is used. In both these cultures, talk shows as mediums where language is employed manifest selections of social boundaries either maintaining or subverting existing identification.

Framing of Identity Issues

This study indicates that there is a difference in framing choice in terms of percentage when it comes to issues revolving around social identity in both Pakistani and American talk shows in consideration of the cultural and social aspects.

- **Pakistani Shows:** Religion was particularly useful in defining Pakistani nationalism as a type of reference when the nation’s position in the neighbourhood and the international system or the politics of internal strife was to be considered. Therefore, the main way in constructing a Pakistani identity was done with religion, specifically Islam where more often than not it was an us and them scenario, or we are better than them where they refers to the West or groups deemed as not as ‘Pakistani’ enough; not as Islamic enough. For instance, in case of the debate on status of women or there being more representation of the minorities, what was used was religious framing in order to perpetuate traditionalism and thereby marginalise the progressive reformers.

- **American Shows:** On the other hand, the discursive formation of identity in American talk shows was defined within the contexts of rights and freedoms. These debates took one of the form of asserting and defending the individual subjectivity of gender, sexuality, and race. For example, in episodes concerning the topic of homosexuality, the people involved relied on such terminology as self-identification against social or organizational labels. Laying stress on personal identity in ‘being American’ American culture framing thus deviates a great deal from the collective religious identity framing ‘being Pakistani’.

Language Patterns Reinforcing or Challenging Stigma

Stigmatization through Stereotypes and Labeling

The analysis found that stigmatizing language was commonly used in both Pakistani and American talk shows, albeit with different focal points and intensity.

- **Pakistani Talk Shows:** The main topic that made use of stigmatization was ethnicity and social class discriminative bias. Laws and the media designated one ethnic group as ‘backward’ such as the Baloch or ‘separatist’ such as the Pashtun, which was continued tones that dehumanize ethnic groups. Likewise, discourses about poverty contained a latent process of placing the shameful label of ‘lazy’ or ‘scrounging’ on pauperized citizens eagerly waiting for their welfare check. Similar to what was observed with the physical health issues, mental health was also shameful, and words such ‘crazy,’ ‘stupid,’ ‘it’s weak,’ etc. This is in tune with the normal attitude toward mental health in Pakistan, where people with such psychological problems are considered nonexistent or if they exist they deserve to be punished by being locked up.

- **American Talk Shows:** While stigmatization was comparable, more so in the American context, for all forms of prejudices, race, immigration, and mental health prejudices grabbed a lot of attention. For instance, referring to Mexican immigrants as ‘wetbacks.’ ‘Spicks’ to refer to people from Spain; ‘Niggers’ to blacks and ‘cockroaches’ to refer to Latin Americans prejudice alongside xenophobia was encouraged. Also target were

mental health which though less so than in Pakistani shows, was considered shameful, with terms such as ‘unstable’ or ‘dangerous’ used to refer to people suffering from psychological problems especially when it came to the use of guns.

These findings correspond with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis established by Van Dijk (1993) according to which language is used to perpetuate dominant social relations. Language should not stigmatise other such language connotes culture and media is equally infamous for reinforcing such stigmas.

Challenging Stigma

The studied Pakistani and American talk shows involved participants who employed language as a tool to combat social stigma.

- **Pakistani Talk Shows:** For gender equality discussion, some participants used relatively liberal language and questioned women’s conventional roles. For instance, women’s rights groups reversed gender based issues to invoke ‘empowerment’ and ‘rights’ to counter social segregation of women by anti-female factions in society. Still, some conversations about mental health had started to move from labeling mental disorders as just the people’s moral defects and see them as medical conditions, at least to some extent.

- **American Talk Shows:** American shows were more overt in their defiance of stigma especially as regarded the rights of gays and people of color. Persons in focus employed terminology such as ‘integration’ as well as ‘diversity’ to recast how minorities were being portrayed as something good. For example, debates about Black Lives Matter frequently ‘responded to’ stereotypes by focusing on prejudice in institutional structures more than in individuals.

These examples prove that it is possible to consider talk shows as popular vehicles that not only disseminate the leading ideas of society but also offer the grounds to resist; the latter is accomplished via the supernatural language of un-fair identities. This is in parallel with what Fairclough (1995) as cited in literature has proposed in his Critical Discourse

Analysis that focuses on how discourse supports power and how it possibly subverts it.

Cultural Differences in Stigma and Identity Construction

The analysis highlighted key cultural differences in how stigma and identity are constructed through language in Pakistani and American talk shows:

- **Collectivism vs. Individualism:** In analyzing Pakistani talk shows, social identity was articulated in terms of collective identity, religion and nationalism in proximal reference whereas in American talk show, viewers identified self in terms of individual identity, especially through race, gender and freedom of choice.

- **Public Perception of Stigma:** Cross-sectional, both formats of the talk shows contributed to reinforcing and disrupting stigmatizing representations. However, the negative othering language was more permissible in PAK medias especially regarding ethnic and religious minorities, while more American talk shows claimed more of the objecting standpoint against racism and sexism in accord to the global social movements such as black life matters, or any movements for the LGBTQ community.

Collectivism vs. Individualism in Shaping Stigma

One cultural gap that was identified through the analysis for two countries is that of collectivism for the Pakistani culture and individualism for the American culture. This difference largely determines how stigma is enacted and constructed in these talk shows from the two nations.

Pakistani Talk Shows: Collective Identity and Religious Framing

Pakistan is collectivistic culture hence there is big emphasize on the group coherence, which is related to religion, ethnicity, patriotism. This cultural orientation impacts on how social identities are socially constructed and stigmatized. Most talk show ideas from Pakistan have a collective concern or are centered around order and therefore, any departures from the norm are viewed as threats to the entire unit. For example:

- **Religious Identity:** Religious identity in Pakistan is part of the Pakistan's political narrative and often, in the talk shows, marginalised populations are demonised as the groups not conforming to the Sunni Muslim norm. This can be seen more so in the hatred the society has towards religious groups more especially the Ahmadis, Hindus and the Christians labeling the later as outsiders or even less patriotic. The language used to portray compliance further cements a Muslim identity, which in essence persuades people of these minorities to be aliens in the Pakistani society.

- **Gender Roles:** Debates on gender roles on Pakistan's TV shows lead many stations to descry female audiences wanting to break free from conventional roles, calling them 'westernised' or 'un-Islamic'. Gender equality is constructed here as something noble and humane but a threat to culture or religion shows a collectivistic orientation to the world view that emphasises the oneness of people into some groups with their norms. Femininity is derived mainly in terms of family and community and any deviation is treat as taboo.

This collectivistic orientation is means that stigma in Pakistani talk shows is for the defense of shared self-identify or shared consensus. Asymmetric social identities that deviate from this solidarity—religious, gender, or ethnic— are usually labeled as deviant because they are seen to erode on the societal fabric that bonds people.

American Talk Shows: Individualism and Personal Freedom

On the other hand, the United States of America has relatively liberal culture which embraces liberalism, liberty, personal point of income and expression. Most of the stigmatization in American talk shows is directed towards meta- contradictions in which people's self-identification and behavioural patterns are considered contradictory.

- **Race and Identity Politics:** Always, discourses of race in American talk shows focus on individual's freedom to self-identify. Although it is postulated that there is a racism system and the existence of the racial discrimination in America, the

words used on many American speaking shows are procession of the American culture that stress personal triumph over antitype. For instance, racial minorities are depicted as managing their lives well, despite the dominant overrepresentation of racism in their lives. Nevertheless, racial stigmatization still remains, especially in the programs that reflect conservative values, when immigrants and racial minorities are SUCH a 'threat' to the American values, especially during the discourse on immigration and police work.

- **Gender and Sexuality:** Amazingly, gender and sexual identity always tend to be presented by American talk shows with respect to the freedom of choice and individual liberties. Sexual orientations in general are considered personal choices and the discrimination emanates from other parts of society, specific minority who considers such sexual orientations as sinful or against the norms of their faith. However, in progressive talk shows, the language for that stigmatization is changed to one of inclusion, diversity and the right to speak. This is in concordance with the American culture of independence as opposed to conformity as a society. Consequently, in American talk shows, stigma emerges when people's decisions are deemed as coming against the acceptable conventional culture. However, the emphasis is kept on the ability of the stigmatized subject to reject or transform them, which corresponds to the individualistic cultural paradigm of choice and individual autonomy.

Religious vs. Secular Framing of Stigmatized Identities

There is also another observable ethnographic variation between the Pakistan and America talk shows: religiosity in constructing the sorts of social identities that the programmes foster.

Religious Influence in Pakistan

Religion has a very strong influence over Pakistan's social interaction and this influence in also evident in most of the talk shows where matters concerning identity and stigma are tackled. Since the religion is fully embraced as part of Uganda's nationality, it sets pace for appropriate behavior in society. This religious framing amplifies the margins of any

identity as far as it does not align with the so-called Quranic teachings.

- **Stigmatization of Non-Muslim Identities:**

The religious minorities are shown in the talk shows as “Other” or less Pakistani. This stigmatization is also supported by the state’s constitutional position on religious topology such as the legal prosecution of Ahmadis. The language of stigmatization in these shows is not just the product of social phobia but religious teachings, which make Non-Muslim subject positions a priori stigmatic.

- **Moral Policing of Gender and Sexuality:**

Religious beliefs portray gender and sexual identities in a very unique and most often unsympathetic manner. Talk shows perpetuate unladylike images, threatening the women majorly those who fight for women’s rights and embarks on what society deems not proper for women. Likewise, there is hardly any discourse on mainstream Pakistani talk shows regarding the existence and litany of the rights of the specific LGBTQ+ persons, where addressing homosexuality is as good as to constructing it as solely a moral or religious sin. The marginalisation of these identities is due to the voices that suggest homosexuality and other related forms of identity are prohibited in the Islamic faith, and this religious narrative has very limited crevices for contestation.

- **Secular Discourse in the United States**

On the other hand, the American talk shows especially those produced for the liberal or popular audience practice a secular form of discourse that leaves space for multiple voices on question of identity. Certainly, religion does play a role in specific discourses, especially in conservative media; however, the primary cultural paradigm of a majority of American talk shows is multiculturalism and the principle of the discipline between the Church and the State.

- **Secular Framing of LGBTQ+ and Gender Issues:**

LGBTQ+ identities are addressed in American talk shows using the liberal political perspectives in which they are portrayed as rights issues not moral and religious. Taking away the religious aspect enables participants to present scholarly arguments that speak against stigma since

they do not have to balance what they are arguing for against religion’s teachings. Opinions about gender and sexual diversity, which the American shows include in the discourse of the free establishment of individual rights and liberties, are impossible in religious Pakistani shows because of the country’s context.

- **Race and Secularism:** Although race serves as one of the most despised categories of differentiation in the U.S., secular framing can minimize religious based explanations of people’s differential treatment and focus more attention on structural and historical reasons. In matters concerning race in progressive talk shows people focus on the systemic reforms rather than concentrating on blame or sin which might be the case in more traditional and religious media.

Cultural Taboo and Controversial Topics

Some issues are tabooed in one culture and not in the other because cultures prescribe what is fit for conversation.

Mental Health and Social Class in Pakistan

Two things that practically do not exist in Pakistani talk shows are mental health and social class prejudice. Mental health has always been accompanied by an aspect of shame, vulnerability, and often spirituality; talk shows only rarely address this point or use such terminology regarding mental health problems as ‘Western diseases.’ Just like in the previous category, social class, more specifically poverty is also mentioned and categorically portrayed as the poor being to blame. This lies with a culture of denial of structural injustice where people are simply considered to be lacking in whatever vices society expects of them.

Race and Immigration in the United States

However, race and immigration are among the most unfavorable themes in American talk shows especially within right-wing media. Newcomers and especially those of color pose a threat to the economic and cultural integrity in the eyes of the nation. Likewise, African Americans and other Latinos are also stereotyped entering the discourse of crime and social justice. These stigmatizations are

rooted in racism in the United States where the public policy discourages any discussion on racism in part by using coded language that reinforces stigma.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSION

Therefore, when comparing the discursive practices of Pakistani and American shows, the mechanisms of constructing, reinforcing, or subverting social subject positions can be regarded as being elucidated at their deepest level. The study underlines such processes as in-group / out-group differentiation; the use of 'we' and 'they' discriminates the components of a given group from those of other groups. In Pakistani and in American cultures, talk shows are venues for articulating national, ethnic, political, and religious selves, although the modes of articulation represent two quite different cultural formations. Pakistani shows originating from a collectivistic culture promote religion and nationality, and Individuals who do not conform to the collective culture are discriminated. On the other hand, American talk shows being colored by the individualism paradigm, people's rights, especially concerning the issues of race, gender, and sexuality. Talk shows also do not uniformly strengthen or weaken stigma based on gender or culturally. Whereas Pakistani programs regularly replicate stereotypes of ethnic minorities, women, and mental illnesses, American, especially progressive, programs counter such stigmas, especially when it comes to race, gay rights, and mental health. Nonetheless, both of the mentioned media landscapes depict and construct the overall societal lessons on identity and stigma where the talk shows bear the testimony of.

Such differences in the representation of self and others based on Pakistani collectivism and American individualism are even more pronounced with relation to identity and stigma. Pakistani talk shows focus more on themes of religious and nationalist community, and delegitimize marginalized groups which undermine social unity, whereas American talk shows focus on individual freedoms, and transformation of stigmatized subjects. Further, the organisation of the sources by religion in Pakistani discourse can be opposed to the organisation of

American shows in relation to gender, sexuality, and non-Muslims' rights.

Finally, this comparative discourse analysis shows how language plays a significant role in constructing the social realities of gender, ethnicity and ageing. The television talk shows in both countries play a balancing role of negotiating social image by either maintaining prejudices or creating other subversive image. Since, identity construction continues to be mediated by media, such linguistic features need to be identified to spearhead social change processes and facilitate advertising that does not reproduce existing inequality frameworks.

SUGGESTIONS

One of the research areas that could shed light on how to focus on discursive practices for the sake of transforming the existing negative perception of certain groups of people is the use of the strategies of the inclusive language in the media representation of the stigmatized minorities. This research would examine ways through which broadcasting media such as talking shows, news procasts, and other social media platforms minimize stigma about sensitive matters such as mental health, gender, race, or immigration. Through the evaluation of the selected media outlets' cases, researchers can define the approaches for shifting the paradigm in discussing minorities and gender. In addition, future research: again, exploring the effects of inclusive vs. stigmatized language on program audiences could provide useful information as to how media can generate constructive understanding and diminish prejudice on the societal level and enhance communication and respect on the interpersonal level. The findings of this research could be useful in creating early guidelines or policies for stakeholders within the media industry who are keen on eradicating stigma-laden media messages within their various communities.

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