



## Politcotainment: Fictionalizing Politics in Pakistani Cinema

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Haleema Khalid\* Muhammad Shahbaz† Behzad Anwar‡

### Abstract

*This article aims to investigate Maalik, Pakistani political thriller as the product of 'politcotainment', a genre combining politics and entertainment. Keeping in view the nexus of politics, media and language, Discourse Historical Approach from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis with a particular focus on media, discourse, and society is employed. Maalik, is exceptional movie because it is explicitly related to real life socio-political and socio-cultural events of Pakistan; its focus on social and political issues such as exploitation of power and corrupt political system shifts the focus towards the ownership of Pakistan and accepting responsibilities. Therefore, the film connects the emerging political discourse in Pakistan with the rising public pulse against corruption and call for accountability. This research provides insights regarding the discursive construction of contemporary Pakistani narrative in the time of national crisis in order to reveal the projected and recontextualized norms in the context of Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** Media, Politics, Politcotainment, Fictionalization of Politics, DHA, CDS

### Introduction

As social science researchers, we are all well aware of the practical implications that our research might contribute into socio-cultural, socio-political, sociolinguistics, socio-economic and so forth aspects of a wider societal construct. This societal construct is conceptualized as a social system which entails interconnected, interrelated and somehow interdependent basic social institutions to constitute a pattern to keep the system going. In contemporary era, owing to the reliance of the social web of system on power, among all institutions the hegemony of media, politics and language has been emerged as the most prominent hierarchy influencing the overall social structure of world societies. Particularly, fictional media constructions revealing features of political system using language as an expression of thought in a particular social setting influence public sentiments and cognitive patterns to shape expectations, perceptions, understandings and opinions about politics, socio-political ideals and political system. Therefore, the present

\* Lecturer, Elite College for Girls, Gujranwala, Punjab, Pakistan..

† Assistant Professor, Department of English, GC Women University Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: [shahbazasian@gmail.com](mailto:shahbazasian@gmail.com)

‡Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan

study proceeds with this scope of understanding that the role of media, politics and language together is significant in the construction of narratives both locally and globally.

‘Politicotainment’ a neologism, formed by merging politics and entertainment together by Riegert (2007) refers to “the way in which politics and political life are interpreted, negotiated and represented by the entertainment industry in particular by drama series and reality-based TV programming”. However, being the part of media and entertainment, cinema cannot be considered excluded from the entertainment industry in Pakistan. The recent years has seen the renaissance of Pakistani cinema by providing a range of themes depicting the realistic socio-ethnic issues, cultural stereotypes, fictionalized portrayal of politics and biopics. It has been noticed that ‘politicotainment’ is becoming trendy in contemporary Pakistani cinema in the recent years. The films dealing with politics, political system and socio-political stereotypes of Pakistani society such as: *KalayChor* (1991), *Watan kay Rakhwaalay* (1991), *Jungle Ka Qanoon* (1995), *Chambaili* (2013), *Maalik* (2016) and *Verna* (2017) being the genre represent the perceived preconceptions and prevalent socio-political and socio-cultural ideologies in the politics of Pakistan with reference to the public engagement.

The genre fictionalizing the politics as Wodak (2009) called it a process is illustrative of complex realms where media, society and politics converge and give birth to hegemonic discourses in the contemporary world societies. Thus, by focusing on politics, media and fiction with reference to particular society, *Maalik* (2016) has been analyzed as a particular prototype representing the nexus of media, politics and language influencing the overall social structure from the perspective of DHA.

This body of research contributes to the existing literature of Entertainment Media, Politics and Language in addition to the Socio-Political Discourse of Contemporary Pakistan from the perspective of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). The present study is unique from the perspective that “politicotainment” has been introduced as genre in Pakistan’s Media Entertainment Industry to get insights about preconceived socio-political trends in the public domain with reference to the politics in Pakistani society. Secondly, this study presents the discursive analysis of Wodak’s (2009) notion of “fictionalization of politics” with reference to *Maalik* (2016) in the precincts of Pakistani society. Last but not the least, by using DHA from the perspective of CDA, the study in hand presents the discursive construction of contemporary Pakistani narrative keeping in view the frame of reference for ‘the people’ and ‘the good guys’ with particular context of post Afghan War Pakistan.

## **Literature Review**

This section continues with the elaboration of the relevant background and literature along with the introduction of concepts employed in the study.

Politicotainment as genre has been well recognized in the West (Wodak, 2009; Holly, 2008; Richardson, 2006; Riegert, 2007; Corner & Pels, 2003), however in Pakistan much has not been contributed yet. Therefore, this body of research proceeds to address the genre in Pakistani context.

### **Media, Politics and Fiction**

Digitalization and mediatization of contemporary world societies has predominantly changed the mode of operation for all social institutions in a wider social construct (Hjarvard, 2013). It indicates that being the hegemonic one, media in the digitalized age appeared to be the one holding the strings of societal function. In this sense, social processes taking place in a particular society are increasingly dependent on media to formulate certain course of actions. Hence, politics as one of basic social institution has been “integrated with media” (Hjarvard, 2013) in such a way that media has become a medium to practice politics. This ‘practice’ takes place primarily through language, because language being an expression; “a form of social practice” (Fairclough, 1992), has been considered a significant tool to launch everything social to deal with everything within societal construct. Therefore, this convergence of media, politics and language in the contemporary world have proposed various new perspectives in the relevant fields including political science, sociology, linguistics, psychology, education, media and management studies along with many other.

### **Fictionalization of Politics**

The process which leads to the convergence of media, politics and fiction to provide a useful resource to study the socio-cultural trends in the public’s engagement with the world of politics has been termed as fictionalization of politics by Wodak (2011). She has discussed American TV soap operas dealing with politics and politicians such as; *The West Wing*, *Borgen*, *House of Cards*, *Yes Minister* and others in addition to their implications for audience’s beliefs about and engagement with, the real world of politics (Wodak, 2011). The roots of this genre can be traced back to the time in history from Aeschylus’s *Agamemnon* to Shakespeare’s *Richard III* to August Strindberg’s *Erik XIV*. However, with the advancement in the development of mass communication and media entertainment industry in the recent years, politicotainment and fictionalization of politics has entered a new stage in which media entertainment is becoming a source for political thought and action.

Moreover, Riegert (2007) discussed the dramatization of politics by keeping in view the way media representations related to the ongoing political climate, the relationships between history, nation and memory by situating media in context of reality to portray real political people and their issues. In addition, Reigert also brings into light the way media popular culture is related to the political processes. This can be seen not only in the contemporary Pakistani films but also in the Pakistani TV dramas such as; *Taleem-e-Baligha'n* (1956), a political satire, *AnganTerrha* (1980) an indirect criticism on martial law and military regime in Pakistan in addition to electoral system, *Dhuwaan* (1994) a semi-political action thriller, *MeraSayeenin* (2010) being the pure political and Khan (2017) a socio-political drama narrating lust for power along with an outlook on moral values which change according to the power structures.

### **Politicotainment and Contemporary Pakistani Cinema**

Inclination of Pakistani film popular culture towards politicotainment can be addressed in terms of chronological evolution of Pakistani films. Paracha (2015) discussed the way political transitions and socio-political dynamics of our country influenced the Pakistani films. However, he proclaims, “The new-wave of films are urban middle-class mediation on life, love, faith and politics”. In addition, there appears to be a consensus to give credit to Shoaib Mansoor’s enigma that set the course for contemporary Pakistani film; from the cinematic meditation on certain social, domestic and romantic issues of middle and lower-middle class towards ethno-religious, socio-political and socio-cultural issues in context of post 9/11 War against Terror with “subsequent ideological and moral confusion” in attempt to aspire Pakistani identity and set the precedent to be followed (Hussain, 2017).

### **Research Methodology**

This section provides an overview of the research methodology, conceptual framework, approach, limitations and data analysis procedure. Initially, the present study provides the conceptual framework for framing ‘the people’ and ‘the good guys’ before implementing DHA from the perspective of CDA on the relevant concepts in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). Furthermore, for the empirical analysis, Maalik (2016) is considered a paradigmatic case of the genre in a sense as it centralizes the overall socio-politics of Pakistan.

### **Conceptual Framework Understanding ‘the people’ and ‘the good guys’ in Pakistani context**

By integrating Wodak’s (2009) concept of ‘fictionalization of politics’, along with the experientialist account of understanding from the perspective of Lakoff’s

(2008, 2010) detailed discussion on Politics and Morality more specifically, the present study focuses to introduce the conceptual framework keeping in view the construction of frames of reference for ‘the people’ and ‘the good guys’ with particular reference to the post Afghan War Pakistani society.

By emergence of media as a dominated social institution, it has become a means of understanding and communicating political culture to develop ‘political frames’ highly ‘conceptual’ in nature. Lakoff and Johnson (2008) put forward the rationale for constructing conceptual frames in the following words; “We think using conceptual frames. Words name elements of those frames. Without frames and names, it is difficult to think and talk about truth.” It indicates that these conceptual frames can construct ideologies conceived by the communities to formulate elaborated societal structures in a particular setting. Therefore, conceptual frames are cognitive mappings to cognize the social reality. Media in the contemporary world being implicated in socio-politics of society, structure public opinion not only by television journalism but also by entertainment broadcasts. For this purpose, framing has been introduced as an alternative way to present political events and issues, endogenous to the given social and political environment (Dawn News, 2010).

Similarly, considering socio-political trends in Pakistan, audiences may be presented with frames of reference such as, corruption, systematic institutional failure, post Afghan refugee crisis, economic meltdown, law and order situations, and army along with agency as central state actor in the ‘by-default’ setting of the State. These ‘frames’ are reflective in societal context and can be considered perfect symbolic reality that adds to conscious, subconscious and unconscious mind of people, in turn influencing the overall cognitive patterns in a particular society. Hence these frames of reference instigated a reactionary response among ‘the people’ to stand up for their rights.

Hence, these contextual factors influencing the overall receptive ability of the masses can be considered significant in constructing the conceptual frames of reference depicting ‘the people’ and the ‘good guys’ indexical of the prevalent state of affairs, consequentially proposing the anticipated societal roles for the respective conceptual frames.

### **Analyzing socio-political rhetoric: A Discourse Historical Approach**

DHA from the perspective of CDA, being placed in the field of Critical Discourse Study (CDS) provides a base to study the underlying aspects of power. As proposed by Wodak (2001), DHA distinguishes between three dimensions that constitute textual meanings and structures: the topics spoken or written (content of Maalik); the employed discursive strategies (to convey the anticipated socio-political values of Maalik (2016) consciously or subconsciously); and the linguistic means that have been used to realize the topics and strategies.

Moreover, the present study employs Wodak's systematic qualitative analysis in DHA which takes four layers of context into account:

1. The inter-textual and discursive relationships between utterances, texts, genres and discourses (for instance, by approaching other related films or dramas, and fictional narratives in Pakistani entertainment media).
2. The extra-linguistic social/sociological variables (the events referred to such as, socio-politics of Pakistan).
3. The history and archeology of texts and organizations (for example, institutional circumstances of the cinema in Pakistan).
4. The institutional frames of the specific context of a situation (for instance, Maalik being the particular movie under investigation).

**Figure 1:** Four Layers of Wodak's Systematic Qualitative Analysis in DHA

Wodak (2001) is of the view that this systematic qualitative analysis in DHA helps us draw upon the way discourses, genre and text change owing to socio-political contexts and the effects they bring in societal context.

Furthermore, in order to analyze political rhetoric to explore the genre in Pakistani context with reference to Maalik (2016), intertextuality and recontextualization as suggested by Wodak (2001) are considered significant. Former refers to link or relate all texts from past and present in such a way that by continued reference to topic, actors, events or the reappearance of arguments in the texts. Latter is concerned with the decontextualization of topic, event, genre or discursive practice and then, restating it in a new context to produce a new meaning dependent on 'use' (Wodak, 2001). Thus, Maalik (2016) indicative of socio-politics of Pakistan can be recontextualized to contribute the genre.

### **Limitations**

The present study is limited to the DHA of the opening dialogue and the oath presented in Maalik.

### **Socio-political context**

Socio-political context of Pakistan being characterized by refugee influx due to Afghan war, Pakistan's State policy of Jihad to support 'good Taliban' against Russia in Afghanistan, dictatorial regimes of Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf with brief democratic intervals in between and post 9/11 crisis followed by American invasion in Afghanistan on one hand; the end of dictatorship in Pakistan on the other as a result of National Reconciliation Order between two major

political parties and the dictator Government has produced a complicated societal construct. The seeds of democracy planted by the dictators have cultivated the democratic political brethren of Pakistan. Hence, the feudal politicians galvanized by authoritarian system continued authoritative practices to retain power by configuring power structures influencing social institutions. All these circumstances have given birth to the contemporary Pakistan society portrayed in *Maalik*.

Four parallel stories move aside and by the climax all four fuse with each other. An officer from Special Services Group of Pakistan Military took early retirement as he went through a tragedy and set up a private security firm with his retired General father. His colleagues went on joining him on their retirements.

Second story revolves around a Pathan who escaped Afghan war in Afghanistan as he walked out of the battle taken place at home and get settled with his family; a wife and two daughters, in Karachi.

Third is the story of a visionary school master from middle class background residing in interior Sindh, believes in civil rights of all including females and favours girls' right for education and competence to establish professional skills. He had to suffer the Pharaohic egotism of a feudal lord; 'Saen', because this ordinary school teacher appeared to have an idealistic principle stance to recognize one's own uprightness, morality, mindfulness and right to serve the community after being elected indifferent of caste, creed, gender, ethnicity and social status which evidently challenged the authoritative mindset of 'Saen'.

Last but not the least, the security company comprising of retired officials from Special Services Group has been appeared to be serving 'the people' by working under oath to serve the nation.

### **The Narrative Plot**

The narrative plot can be seen as definitive evaluation of the societal construct of Pakistan to cope with the contemporary socio-political crisis; middle class resistance against feudalism and elitist culture by challenging their autocracy, sufferings of the Pathans due to Afghan War, compromised rule of law, bureaucratic corruption and manipulation among others. Moreover, the ideological perceptions of the 'good guys' are clear who appeared to be working in the wider national interest. This has been done by managing to introduce the re-defined socio-political values and the right to 'self' directly related to collective national duty. In this respect, the private security agency can be seen as social welfare organization working for the national interest hence maintaining its status as 'silent stakeholder'. This 'silent stakeholder' can be seen empowering the citizen to enter the premises of a judge by breaching security protocols at night to practice his 'citizen right to democracy' to account 'public servant'.

### **Fictionalized Politics in Maalik**

Maalik, a socio-political thriller encapsulating the current state of affairs of present day Pakistan depicts the ground realities along with the portrayal of our society from the grass root strugglers to the power corridors. Based on four stories moving parallel, Maalik is about post Afghan war life, politics, corruption, patriotism and ownership. It was released on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in cinemas across Pakistan. However, after being cleared by the censor board and being in cinemas for about three weeks, it was banned by the Federal Government due to political reasons. Moreover, police have been given orders to take action against the producer and the writer Ashir Azeem. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's government refused to comply with the ban by the Federal Government hence; it was run in cinemas over there. Being the only Pakistani film banned by the Federal Government, Maalik with hard-hitting trailers attracted viewers to watch 'behind the trailer' movie to know the reason of ban.

The interface between fiction and reality can be traced in the opening dialogues of the film where the conceptual frame of reference for 'the people' owing the ownership of Pakistan can be seen.

**Text 1:** Setting- Present Day Karachi; in case of Maalik, it was April 2016.

- Mohammad  
Mohsin: Mein aik shehri hon. Aap sai kuch kehna aya hon.  
(I am a citizen. I came to say something to you).
- Judge: Tum ander kaisay aye? Guards kahan hain? Raat k Is pehar?  
(How do you come inside? Where are the guards? At this hour of night?)
- Mohammad  
Mohsin: Aapki poori tawajo chahiya thi, is liya.  
(Because complete attention of yours was needed).  
(a citizen)
- Judge: Tum baihad pagahal insan tou nahi ho? Jantay ho is pehar meray  
ghar mei'n ghusnay, is trhan ki baat krnay ka nateeja kiya ho ga?  
(Aren't you an extremely mad person? Do you know what would be  
the result of intruding into my house at this hour and talking in this  
way?)
- Mohammad  
Mohsin: Or tum jantay ho, agr tum apna kaam theek trhan sai nahi kroye us  
ka nateeja kiya ho ga?  
(And do you know if you do not carry out your work justly what  
would be the result of it?)  
(a citizen)
- Judge: Kiya ho ga?  
What would happen?
- Mohammad  
Mohsin: Tou mei'n tumhain hta dnga or tmhari jagah kisi or ko yeh kaam  
sonp don ga.  
(a citizen) Zahair hai jb koi mulazim theek trhan sai apna kaam nahi kry ga tou  
— Maalik usay hta daiga.

(Then, I will dismiss you and someone else will be given this work in place of you.

It is obvious when an employee does not work properly, then, the owner will terminate him).

Judge: Mr. Maalik tb jb thanay mein tumhain jootay paraingye, tou tb tmhain apni or meri taqat ka andaza ho jayega or yeh bhi pta chl jayega k Maalik kon hai.

(Mr. Maalik when you will be beaten in the police station then you will be able to realize the power of mine and yours, and you will get to know who is the owner.)

Mohammad  
Mohsin:  
(a citizen) Or apni taqat pa ghumand na kro. Bl k us taqat ko is mulk ki or is mulk k awaam kibehtri k liya istemal kro. Yeh mulk tmharay baghair bhi sb kuch hai, tum is mulk k baghair kuch nahi ho. Yeh list hai un cases ki jo tum nai saalon sai apnay ghatiya faiday k liya latka k rakhy hain. Pandra din k ander ander un cases ka faisla kro, jo bhi faisla, laikin kro or aaj sai tamam faislay theek theek time pa kro.

(And do not boast your strength. Instead use that strength for the betterment of this country and its people. This country is everything without you; you are nothing without this country.

This is the list of those cases that you have lingered on for years for your own benefit. Decide your cases within fifteen days, whatever decision you make, but decide, and from today get all the decision done at the right time.)

Judge: Tou tum mjhy dhamki dairhy ho?  
(You are threatening me?)

Mohammad  
Mohsin:  
(a citizen) Maalik mulazim ko dhamki nahi notice daita hai.  
(The owner does not threat, it gives notice.

The dialogue between the Judge and the citizen; Mohammad Mohsin in which the judge being surprised with the presence of a common man in his premises wants to know ‘if he is being threatened’ by a common man without considerable ‘social status’ is a clear depiction of the slotting of the roles of people in a social setting due to social stratification. This offers the context of establishment of prejudicial beliefs and socio-cultural stereotypes governing the entire particular social set-up. This leads to the simplified clarification illustrating the status of ‘the owner’ and ‘the servant’. In addition, the fallacy of hasty generalization which is basically Judge’s threat of ‘exercising public servant power’ against the citizen presupposing the ‘all-powerfulness’ of entire chain of bureaucratic and political appointees.

Furthermore along with the opening dialogue, the framing of entire movie, particularly the title can be seen as a clear intertextual reference to the Iqbal’s

concept of “Self” in line with his recognition of individual and society in his book “Israr-e-Khudi”. Iqbal’s idea of “Self” in relation with citizens’ rights in an Islamic Republic can be seen practiced in the dialogue of Mohammad Mohsin and a Judge. Moreover, the way judge has been appeared to be responding in this dialogue ascertained the notion of “intoxication of power” presented by Russell and George Orwell. Here we encounter the link with real picture of the happenings mainly; the famous ‘thana culture’, social injustice and exploitation of power.

Hence, the opening dialogue of Maalik (2016) can be considered as an explicit illustration of the people’s presumptions and understandings in the wake of prevalent socio-political crisis, thus, drawing upon the reactionary response from ‘the people’ to reflect on the socio-cultural and socio-political beliefs rejecting the inherent stereotypes regarding power structures who have manipulated the entire societal construct.

### **Confronting the System – Re-defining Pakistani Socio-Political Values**

Mohammad  
Mohsin  
(Taking oath)

Mein Mohammad Mohsin  
Pakistan ka shehri hon  
Pakistan ka Maalik hon.  
Yeh zameen, yeh log meray hain  
Is k hukmaran meray mukararkrda or mjhy jawab dehhain  
Mein ehd krta hon, k meri, hr us shakh sy aidara, khw  
aandrooni, ya bairooni, jo is mulk k khilaf kaam kry ga, ya  
is k qanoon ko toray ga, us k khilaf bila biraadri, zuban or  
mazhab ki tameez k apni poor iqoowat istemal kroon  
ga. Kiun k, mein Pakistan ka shehri, is ka maalik, is ki baqa  
ka hatmi zamin hon.

(I, Mohammad Mohsin, is the citizen and the owner of Pakistan. This land, these people are mine. Its rulers are appointed by me and they are answerable to me. I promise that I would use my all my power without discrimination of cast, language or religion against every person or institution, no matter internal or external, who would work against this country or break its law because I being the citizen of Pakistan is its owner, its last line of defense.)

This oath taking scene sets forth the theme of the entire film depicting the need to revive the commitment and a sense of civic duty among the people of our country. The oath might appear to be implying and resonating with legitimacy and justification for the reactionary response of ‘the people’ defending their citizen rights in the wake of ‘crises’. Interestingly, this has been done with the assistance of the ‘good guys’ eventually introducing the army as ‘silent stakeholder’; ‘silent’ in terms of indirect association with the institution as the ‘good guys’ are retired

officials bound by their instinctive ‘sense of duty’. However, in the national setting of Pakistan, the role and authority of this ‘silent stakeholder’ can be argued in terms of ‘by-default’ institutional status of the armed forces.

In addition, the state of crisis associated with the concrete events in *Maalik* is socio-political which triggers the construction of specific social narrative; oath can be argued in this particular context as socio-political discourse instigating a public narrative. In this sense it can be seen as redefining the socio-political values of Pakistan by illuminating the public to own the citizen’s responsibilities to enjoy the perks of citizen’s rights. The oath in this film has proposed the topos of description redefining Pakistani socio-political values in which ‘the people’ with ownership of this country have the power hence, reformulating the very notion of power in Pakistan’s socio-political setting. These socio-political values can also be seen in *Chambaili* (2013) which has been the pre-election movie based on having a new political structure by resisting the power of ‘sardar’. This resistance has come from ‘the people’.

In this way the contemporary popular culture of entertainment media in general and *Maalik* (2016) being the genre in particular can be considered a confrontation with the present socio-political system as it has unveiled not only the crisis of present state of governance but also surfaced the unvoiced perceptions of ordinary citizens. This has manifested *Maalik* deeply culturally embedded mediatized discourse explaining the way certain events, experiences, and power patterns can be perceived and constructed in a specific way as public cognition is tied to particular ideologies in a specific time period in certain socio-political context.

For instance, this oath can be viewed as a result of complex socio-historical and socio-political factors, processes, and developments such as; ethno-religious ideologies, linguistic divide or language politics, institutional privatization and tug of war between conservatives and modernists on one hand and extremists and radicalists on the other. This web of complexities in social setting constructs preconceived public narratives that largely influence the socio-cognitive models of entire society.

### **Framing the Stakeholders**

Keeping in view the socio-political frames of reference presented in *Maalik* (2016) indicative of socio-political discourse, the roles of all the stakeholders; the citizens as ‘the people’, the retired officials of Pakistan Army’s Special Services Group as the ‘good guys’ and the civil bureaucracy and politicians as ‘bad guys’ are clear. However, contemporary socio-political values that have been conveyed to the public in this genre can be recontextualized in the national context of our country.

In *Maalik* (2016), Pakistan in general and Sindh province in particular has been truly depicted in terms of the portrayal of political system and the life of ordinary

citizens - 'the people'. Ground realities of political leadership, their facilitators at all levels of power and the sufferings of a common man can be seen in the characters of "Saeen" as politician, later as Chief Minister Sindh, Inspector who has been promoted by "Saeen" to the post of Deputy Superintendent of Police, Major Assad and other retired Army personnel as the patriots serving the nation for all intents and purposes, and the principled school teacher with his family being the ordinary citizens, respectively.

The character of 'Saeen' is a true depiction of interior Sindh feudal lord. The word "Saeen" is indicative of ethnic Sindhi identity that has been used as a socio-cultural reference in the film to bring up circumstantial conceptual frame as symbolic reality of particular society. Patriarchy, rule of gun, politics of fear among others are the few traits visible in relation to this particular character. This scenario can be found in line with George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984, when O'Brien gives description of the future to the captured Winston: "\_\_\_ always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler". This is exactly where the character sketch of 'Saeen' becomes related. The notions of morality, altruism, ideological social values and beliefs can be seen clearly disposed of by 'Saeen' in order to exist to perpetuate and excavate the absolute power for its own satisfaction. This mindset has been found characteristic of hubristic phenomenon as described by Bertrand Russell (1946) in his *History of Western Philosophy*.

Furthermore, the way police inspector facilitated 'Saeen' to exercise influence over masses to retain power is the perfect example of nexus between politics, power and crime to structure state mafia. This can be considered keeping in view the specific activities and private personal life of Chief Minister as presented in the film that have been found to be carried out with the help of his cronies in the government and his personal staff. However, the SSG based private security company who has been hired to provide security to Chief Minister after an assassination attempt has been demonstrated to confine itself to the security task only overlooking the personal affairs of 'Saeen' Chief Minister initially. Though after realizing the difference between following order and serving the nation in accordance with the oath SSG personnel took when joined the forces, they chose to stand with 'the people' in the wider national interest.

Moreover, Mohammad Mohsin, a school teacher and his family represent the country's middle class in general. He believed in the supremacy of all and encouraged his daughter to be a lawyer as he believes that corruption and power abuse can be challenged if masses become aware of their civil duties and the civil rights. But due to the strong roots of feudalism along with the continuity of the interests of feudal lords in landowning, which has provided the social base for politicians, common people in general and middle class in particular has been repressed to keep them out of the political process because in 1947, it was the educated middle class who brought the revolution in the subcontinent. This fear of

educated middle class penetration in politics to share power with reference to electorate is the worst nightmare of the political elite in Pakistan that would definitely challenge their vested socio-political value system. This can be seen in the narrative plot of not only *Maalik* being the genre but also in the popular culture of Pakistani entertainment media where politicians are clearly demonstrated at failure to create an atmosphere entrusting the masses with the provision of basic rights and justice.

Besides, a circumstance the Pathan family has gone through provides concrete evidence of their socio-cultural norms. Again the absence of rule of law along with misuse of power by the public office holders can be seen enforcing the Pathan family to take law in hands to get justice by attempting to assassinate the Chief Minister in Chief Minister House. This can also be regarded as the social construction of ‘good Taliban’ but it is interesting to note that the ‘good Taliban’ has been shot dead by the securityguard with SSG background. This social construction can be understood in context of post Afghan War socio-political setting of Pakistan which still founds its relevancy with present day Pakistani political discourse.

However, the point where the SSG retired security incharge and owner of the private security firm gunned down the political figure he has been hired to protect can be perceived in terms of ‘a call of conscious’ to serve the nation and ‘the people’. Here, the conventional issue of the weak democracy can be argued to recontextualize it as *argumentum ad exemplum*; a typical rhetorical device, to establish the necessity of the role of ‘good guys’ in the national socio-political setting in the time of crisis. Moreover, in considering the objective of the producer and writer of *Maalik* in general and the opening dialogue along with the oath in particular, it is significant to contemplate through ‘common man’s experiences of our present day society’. The producer and writer of *Maalik*, Ashir Azeem deliberates *Maalik* (2016) as, “a film that views Pakistan from the eyes of a common man, the perceptions of an ordinary citizen about the state of governance in our country. It is the voice of a common man, a voice that is never heard, a voice that is drowned under the unrealistic soaps on television and in music and dance fantasies in our cinemas”. Hence in line with this, it is understood that *Maalik* being indicative of genre has acted as a baseline to establish *argumentum ad exemplum* that eventually contribute the contemporary national narrative in times of crisis to instigate accountability drive to strengthen the entire socio-political system.

## **Findings**

*Maalik*, being the political movie, has been found to be interesting owing to its relevancy with present state of affairs in the Pakistani socio-political set-up. This is because of the fact that as a starting point *Maalik*’s relationship with ‘real socio-political process’ and the way things ‘really exist’ in Pakistan, it has made an

extraordinary mark. With the depiction of ‘owner-servant’ status, Maalik (2016) has contributed to the emerging public narrative; call for accountability and justice. Moreover, the knowledge systems of this genre can be seen visibly giving a picture of the ‘trust deficit’ between the politicians and ‘the people’. Conversely, ‘trust surplus’ can be observed between ‘the people’ and the ‘good guys’. In addition, the way frames of reference have been conceptually constructed has much to do with re-defining of socio-political values in the social setting of Pakistan. Besides, The ‘by-default’ status of the ‘silent stakeholder’ has been represented as the institutionally nationalized entity working in the wider public interest. Therefore, Maalik (2016) can be regarded as the genre situated in the wishful-fulfillment of socio-political yet emotional need to connect the sociopolitical sphere to the way politicians and the citizens need to conduct themselves.

## **Implications**

Keeping in view the findings, some implications are given; the nexus of politics, media and language (fiction) creates a world for its audiences that can be managed through negotiating the specific structural patterns of power in our society in a particular setting. In this way it carries implications for audiences’ beliefs and popular norms about politics in Pakistan. Moreover, politicotainment serves as an ‘educating’ medium to socialize the viewers to the redefined socio-political values of Pakistan by conceptualizing thus constructing the frames of ‘self’ and ‘other’ which offer various socio-political implications for Pakistani politics.

## **Conclusion**

The present article attempts to link the popular culture of Pakistani entertainment media with present day socio-political circumstances as a means to portray public perceptions about politics in our country. In addition, fictionalization of politics and politicotainment being the genre has emerged as a significant trend to highlight the ongoing socio-political processes. In addition, it has been found that entertainment media in Pakistan has become a vital source of opinion-making which formulates construction of socio-political culture and inform socio-political processes. Now more than ever, political representations, engagements, and interactional appearances engendered by prevalent socio-political concerns of present time, no matter if sensationalized or not, are converging in media entertainment hence, setting frame of reference by which societal construct can be governed. Therefore, Maalik not only presents discursive construction of contemporary Pakistani narrative in the time of national crisis but it also addresses the projected and recontextualized norms to establish the notions of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in relation with the redefined socio-political values of Pakistan.

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