Old and new media assignment

OLD AND NEW MEDIA: CONVERGING DURING THE PAKISTAN EMERGENCY (MARCH 2007-FEBRUARY 2008) Abstract Arguments about digital technology, civic engagement, and collective action are often framed in the context of political participation in developed nations, particularly, the United States. Many have concluded that the availability of digital technologies and new media platforms facilitates democratic practices and participatory behavior. Whether this is equally true of the developing world remains to be critically examined.

Pakistan is a developing nation where digitally networked technologies and new media platforms are emerging, and where a struggle to establish democratic norms amidst authoritarian superstructures is underway. Between March 2007 and February 2008, a period referred to colloquially as the ' Pakistan Emergency,' a state of emergency was imposed, the constitution suspended, a popular politician assassinated, media censorship enforced, and general elections conducted.

To help address the knowledge gap about new media and democracy in the developing world, this research paper examines how digital technologies– such as cellphones and live internet streams–and new media platforms– including blogs, YouTube, Flickr, and Facebook–were used to promote democracy, coordinate action, and disseminate citizen journalism during the ' Pakistan Emergency. This research finds that the Pakistani media landscape is multifaceted, comprising a combined–or alternating–use of different mainstream media sources, digital technologies, and new media platforms, depending on availability and security. Moreover, the study finds that the participation gap–the ability to meaningfully use digital technologies and

new media–impacts participatory behavior and civic action far more than the digital divide, which is often overcome through the combined use of different technologies.

The study also concludes that new media platforms are increasingly effective as tools for community organizing and information dissemination, that authoritarian regimes are quick to adapt digitally networked technologies to their own ends, and that news reporting in Pakistan is gravitating towards a hybrid model whereby old and new media platforms collaborate to keep the public informed. About the MIT Center for Future Civic Media The Center for Future Civic Media (http://civic. mit. edu) supports research at MIT to innovate civic media tools and practices and test them in communities.

Bridging two established programs at MIT–one known for inventing alternate technical futures, the other for identifying the cultural and social potential of media change–the Center for Future Civic Media is a joint effort between the MIT Media Lab and the MIT Comparative Media Studies Program. It is made possible by a four-year grant from the Knight Foundation. About the author Huma Yusuf holds a master's degree from MIT's Comparative Media Studies program and a bachelor's degree from Harvard University. She was a research associate at the MIT Center for Future Civic Media during the 2007-2008 academic year.

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She is the recipient of the European Commission's 2006 Natali Lorenzo Prize for Human Rights Journalism and the UNESCO/Pakistan Press Foundation 2005 Gender in Journalism Award. Table of contents 1. Introduction 2. Media vacuum: Blocking independent television in Pakistan 3.

Disconnected: Jamming cellular networks 4. Student activism/digital activism 5. Citizen journalism: Redefining media and power 6. New media and citizenship 7. Civilians with camera phones 8. Pakistani vs. Western new media use Appendix A: Timeline of events Appendix B: Pakistani blogs Footnotes 1. Introduction On March 13, 2007, a few days after Pakistan's president General Pervez Musharraf suspended the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, an online petition condemning the government's abuse of the independent judiciary was circulated via mailing lists and blogs. [1] But over the course of several eeks, the petition only attracted 1, 190 signatories. Less than a year later, in February 2008, Dawn, the country's leading English-language media group, launched a citizen journalism initiative, inviting Pakistanis to submit images, ideas, news reports, and analyses that they wanted to share with the world. In a matter of months, the Pakistani media landscape evolved from a point where a politically relevant online petition failed to gain momentum to one where a prominent mass media group felt the need to include citizen journalists in the process of news gathering.

This paper aims to explain why this evolution occurred, how it was facilitated by both old and new media, and what impact it had on the political process and civic engagement. To that end, the paper describes how certain communities–for example, university students–came to use digital

technologies and new media platforms to organize for political action and report on matters of public interest. In The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom, Yochai Benkler advances the concept of a networked public sphere.

With reference to the internet and online tools, he argues that the networked information economy produces a public sphere because " the cost of being a speaker … is several orders of magnitude lower than the cost of speaking in the mass-mediated environment. "[2] He adds, " the easy possibility of communicating effectively into the public sphere allows individuals to reorient themselves from passive readers and listeners to potential speakers and participants in a conversation. In Benkler's words, then, this paper shows how some Pakistanis became " speakers and participants" in the political process. Enabled to create a networked public sphere, they began in the spring of 2007 to participate, reciprocate, and engage in many-to-many rather than one-to-many communications. Interestingly, a networked public sphere emerged during a time of heightened political instability that has been colloquially termed the ' Pakistan Emergency' (March 2007-February 2008). 3] Digital technologies that were harnessed during this time for political advocacy, community organizing, and hyperlocal reporting include cellphones, camera phones (mobile-connected cameras), SMS text messages, online mailing lists, and internet broadcasts (live audio and visual streams). Meanwhile, popular new media platforms utilized during the Pakistan Emergency include blogs (live blogging), YouTube, Flickr, Facebook and other social networking or sociable media sites. 4] Writing about mass-mediated markets that are slowly inundated with new media tools, Benkler

points out that a transition occurs " as the capabilities of both systems converge, to widespread availability of the ability to register and communicate observations in text, audio, and video, wherever we are and whenever we wish. "[5] During the Pakistan Emergency, a similar convergence of old–that is, traditional broadcast–and new media occurred. In a time of turmoil and censorship, Pakistanis were driven by a desire to access information and thus turned to multiple media sources when the mainstream media was compromised.

One could say the media landscape became hydra-headed during the Pakistan Emergency: if one source was blocked or banned, another one was appropriated to get the word out. For example, when the government banned news channels during the November 2007 state of emergency, private television channels uploaded news clips to YouTube and live streamed their content over the internet, thus motivating Pakistanis to go online. In this context, the mainstream media showed the ability to be as flexible, diffuse, and collaborative as new media platforms.

A combined use of digital technologies and new media tools also helped bridge the digital divide in a country where only 17 million people have internet access and the literacy rate is less than 50 percent. In " Democracy and New Media in Developing Nations: Opportunities and Challenges", Adam Clayton Powell describes how the internet can help open up developing democracies: Many argue that in much of the world, the Internet reaches only elites: government officials and business leaders, university professors and students, the wealthy and the influential.

But through Net-connected elites information from the Internet reaches radio listeners and newspaper readers around the world, so the Internet has an important secondary readership, those who hear or are influenced by online information via its shaping of more widely distributed media, outside of traditional, controlled media lanes of the past. [6] No doubt, traditional broadcast media relay information from the internet to the Pakistani public.

But the national " secondary readership" was established in a far more dynamic and participatory way during the Pakistan Emergency thanks to the prevalence of cellphones and the popularity of SMS text messaging. Indeed, this paper shows how citizen reporting and calls for organized political action were distributed through a combination of mailing lists, online forums, and SMS text messages. Emails forwarded to net-connected elites containing calls for civic action against an increasingly authoritarian regime inevitably included synopses that were copied as SMS text messages and circulated well beyond cyberspace.

This two-tiered use of media helped inculcate a culture of citizenship in Pakistanis from different socioeconomic backgrounds. In other words, the media landscape witnessed a convergence of old and new media technologies that also led to widespread civic engagement and greater connection across social boundaries.. Despite such multivalent uses, this paper shows that the overall impact of digital and new media tools in Pakistan has been nebulous.

After all, General Musharraf's dictatorial regime retained control over access to the internet and other communications infrastructure throughout the

period of widespread civic engagement. As an increasing number of Pakistanis turned to YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, and SMS text messages as alternate media portals, the government clamped down on these sources. Between March 2007 and February 2008, cellphone networks were jammed, internet service providers were instructed to block the YouTube website, internet connectivity was limited or shut down, and blogging softwares were banned.

Moreover, the authorities came to monitor the public's use of new media platforms: images of anti-government rallies posted to Flickr were used to identify and arrest protesters. The only antidote to the government's control of digital and new media tools, this paper shows, was the widening of the networked public sphere to include Pakistanis in the diaspora and global media sources. For example, when the government blocked news channels and jammed cellular networks in November 2007, young Pakistanis across the globe continued to plan and organize protest rallies via the social networking site Facebook.

Similarly, when university students demanding the restoration of an independent judiciary realized that security officials had prevented journalists from covering their protest, they submitted self-generated video clips and images to CNN's iReport, an online citizen journalism initiative. Indeed, as Pakistan's media landscape became a hybrid model in which professional and amateur journalists generated and disseminated news by whatever means possible, international mainstream media outfits such as CNN, the BBC, and the UK-based Channel 4 increasingly sought out hyperlocal reporting posted to ocal blogs, YouTube, and Facebook.

Ultimately, this paper identifies how the means of communication in Pakistan became dispersed, accessible, and decentralized, leading to a freer flow of information during the Pakistan Emergency. By focusing on how Pakistanis have harnessed digital technologies and new media platforms, the paper aims to illuminate the way for Pakistan to become a full-fledged digital democracy. Indeed, as a product of MIT's Center for Future Civic Media, this project hopes to play a prescriptive role.

By analyzing digital technologies in the context of existing technologies and social practices in Pakistan, the paper emphasizes the importance of real-world deployment. It shows that users adopt and adapt tools in a way that responds to local needs. As such, the paper can be considered a call for members of the civic media community to design tools that bridge the digital divide, adapt to local circumstances, and are flexible enough that different communities can use them in creative and relevant ways. After all, as Benkler puts it, " the networked public sphere is not made of tools, but of social production practices that these tools enable. [7] 2. Media Vacuum: Blocking independent television in Pakistan November 3, 2007: State of emergency declared President Musharraf's declaration of a state of emergency on November 3, 2007, arguably had a greater impact on Pakistan's media landscape than on its political history. The manner in which the government handled media outlets during the emergency, which ended on December 15, 2007, demonstrated the vulnerability of mainstream media and created an opportunity for the systematic, sustained, and nationwide use of new media platforms.

Indeed, barely five years after independent television stations were established as the go-to medium for news and infotainment for one-third of Pakistan's 150-million strong population,[8] Musharraf's crackdown on news channels during the emergency demonstrated how easily the boom could go bust. During emergency rule, a media vacuum was created that allowed for the rise of new media outlets as viable alternatives for information dissemination and community organizing. Mediated practices that facilitated civic engagement and citizen journalism during the six-week-long emergency continue to be widely adopted and refined.

On November 3, soon after proclaiming emergency rule in a televised address, Musharraf demanded that cable television operators block the broadcasts of all local and foreign news channels, except those of the state-owned Pakistan Television Corporation. Nearly 30 privately owned channels were promptly taken off the air. The next day, policemen raided the Islamabad offices of Aaj TV, an independent news channel, and attempted to confiscate the channel's equipment. The telephone lines of Pakistan's first independent news channel Geo TV were cut and their broadcasters were threatened with long jail terms. 9] The crackdown on the television channels was in some ways more remarkable than Musharraf's emergency announcement. The general's decision to block television channels reveals how powerful the medium had become since 2002. 2. 1. Tightening Control in the run-up to emergency rule Ironically, the very media freedom that Musharraf stifled was one of the hallmarks of his rule until the emergency declaration. After coming to power in 1999, he increased freedom for the

print media and liberalized broadcasting policies to mitigate the perception that military rulers are authoritarian.

In March 2002, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) was established to induct the private sector into the field of electronic media. Since then, 56 privately owned television channels have been licensed in Pakistan and 48 were fully operational as of May 2008. [10]Geo TV became Pakistan's first private news channel in 2002. The recent proliferation of independent television channels is a marked departure for the Pakistani media landscape, which had been dominated by the state-owned channel Pakistan Television (PTV) until the early 1990s.

In the previous decade, access to international satellite television channels, via illegal satellite dishes, had many Pakistanis tuning in to Indian channels such as Zee TV and other regional offerings via Star TV, the Asian news and entertainment network owned by News Corp. These illegal channels gained popularity as they circumvented the censorship and religiosity that defined Pakistani media throughout the 1990s. Since 2002, independent news channels had been operating with unprecedented freedom as per Musharraf's directives.

Cable television thus become the fastest growing media property in Pakistan: subscribers increased from 1. 5 million to 3. 27 million from July 2004 to July 2007, meaning that one-third of all Pakistanis had access to private news channels in 2007. [11] News content was increasingly investigative and often openly critical of the government. However, signs

that the mainstream media remained vulnerable to the government's whims began appearing well before the emergency declaration of November 2007.

The freedom of the newly empowered broadcast media was first questioned in October 2005, when a deadly earthquake the struck the country's northern areas. As a reporter for The Christian Science Monitor put it: " Pakistan's earthquake, while at once a story of national tragedy, is also the coming of age story of the country's fledgling private television channels. Their unflinching coverage of the disaster… showcases an era of unparalleled media freedom and influence. But it has also, by creating rifts with the government, underscored the very limits of that newfound freedom. [12] Media coverage of the government's response to the disaster–often featuring angry villagers criticizing the Pakistan Army's inefficient or corrupt relief efforts–highlighted official shortcomings and portrayed the true extent of the disaster that the government was slow to acknowledge. The regularity with which the government was criticized in the months following the earthquake established the electronic media's watchdog role and approach to news coverage, which was biased toward analysis rather than objective reporting.

Signs that the government had become wary of this practice emerged in 2007, once the stage for the Pakistan emergency had been set. On March 16, 2007, government forces raided the most popular news channel Geo TV's offices after it broadcast live coverage of a rally for Chief Justice Chaudhry, who had been dismissed by Musharraf the previous week. Security forces broke into Geo TV's offices, shattered windows, fired tear gas, and harassed the channel's employees. But the channel defied orders to stop the

transmission, and later received an apology from Musharraf. 13] On June 3, 2007, the channel was again taken off air for broadcasting a public affairs show on the chief justice's suspension. [14] These initial attempts to stifle the broadcast media were acknowledged by online communities–for example, the Karachi-based Teeth Maestro blog ran a post about the March 16 interrupted transmission. [15] The blogger protested the " media gag" but did not suggest that blogs might have to increasingly play the role of media watchdogs if government censorship became a trend. 2. 2. New Legislation, new limitations

After failing to reign in Geo TV, Musharraf promulgated the amended PEMRA Ordinance (2007), a new regulation that imposed curbs on media freedom, in June 2007. The new laws restricted live coverage, empowered the government to interrupt broadcasts that were deemed inappropriate, and gave government regulators the power to seal buildings and seize privately owned equipment. [16] Again, bloggers and other posters in online communities did not document or debate this development, even though the print media vociferously criticized the new regulations.

In this response, it is apparent that the traditional forms of mainstream media–print and broadcast–felt united in their goals to ensure media freedom and fight censorship, while citizen journalists had yet to consider themselves part of the broader media landscape. Significantly, Musharraf's emergency order expanded on the June 2007 PEMRA amendments and increased restrictions on the media. As he announced the broadcasting ban, he also declared that broadcast journalists were banned from covering live incidents of violence such as suicide bombings and militant activity.

Journalists were also prevented from expressing opinions that might undermine the " ideology … or integrity" of Pakistan and defaming the president, the military, or state offices. 2. 3. From small screen to satellite and YouTube These new regulations alerted members of the broadcast media that their freedoms were being significantly curtailed, and they prepared to counter the government's attempt at control and censorship. After most channels were blocked during the emergency, two independent news channels made every effort to continue live broadcasts.

Geo TV and ARY One World, another independent station, transmitted live broadcasts from their bureaus in Dubai. The news that some independent news channels were continuing to broadcast prompted Pakistanis across the country to obtain illegal satellite dishes–which had declined in popularity since the 1990s–so as to continue receiving independent coverage of the unfolding political crisis from their favorite news anchors and broadcast journalists. Despite a prompt government ban on the purchase of satellite dishes, they sold like " hotcakes". 17] The fact that Pakistanis resorted to satellite dishes in the wake of the government ban indicates that broadcast media were considered the most important form of news delivery in Pakistan (the English- and Urdu-language print media was not censored during the emergency, nor did they see an increase in sales). Interestingly, it was this desire to seek out live television broadcasts that also drove many Pakistanis to the internet, in many cases, for the first time. Geo TV, ARY One World, and Aaj TV live streamed their coverage on the stations' websites. 18] As soon as Geo TV initiated live streams, its website registered 300, 000 simultaneous users, up from 100, 000 before the emergency. Through November, the site

received as many as 700, 000 hits after breaking news. News broadcasts featuring important updates were also uploaded both by station producers and users to YouTube to allow for easy circulation. [19] Moreover, websites such as Pakistan Policy compiled streaming audio and video content from the independent news channels to allow users across the country and diaspora to enjoy uninterrupted news reporting on political events. 20] Initially, then, broad Pakistani interest in finding news online was an example of old and new media colluding: content was produced by traditional media outlets and intended for consumption along the one-to-many model. But the distribution of that content was diffuse and collaborative. On November 8, most international and local news channels were allowed to resume broadcasting on cable networks, but only after agreeing to adhere to guidelines laid down by the government. But Geo TV and ARY One World remained off the air, hoping to provide genuinely independent coverage via satellite and the internet.

On November 16, however, Musharraf's government escalated its attempts to block the electronic media and convinced the emir of the United Arab Emirates to cease the transmission of Geo TV and ARY One World from Dubai. [21] In an attempt to maintain good diplomatic relations, the emir complied with Musharraf's request, and the last two independent news broadcasts in Pakistan were completely silenced. It was not until November 30 that the government of the UAE allowed Geo TV and ARY One World to resume broadcasting.

The weeks during which all independent electronic news outlets were completely shut down or censored by the government marked a significant

turning point in the Pakistani media landscape. It was in this media vacuum that other alternatives began to flourish: the public realized that to fulfill its hunger for news in a time of political crisis, it had to participate in both the production and dissemination of information. Activist communities established blogs and generated original news coverage of hyperlocal events, such as anti-emergency protests on university campuses.

Civilians increasingly used SMS text messages to keep each other informed about the unfolding political crisis and coordinate protest marches. Young Pakistanis across the diaspora created discussion groups on the social networking site Facebook to debate the pros and cons of emergency rule. 2. 4 Overheard: FM Radio and Public Participation The Pakistani public's ability to use both old media and new digital technologies to ensure communications flow was demonstrated before the imposition of emergency rule.

Indeed, before citizen journalists turned determinedly to blogs and social networking sites, citizens had been using FM radio broadcasts and cellphones as a way to organize and disseminate information. The emergent, ad hoc, and hyperlocal networked public spheres thus created served the public well under emergency rule. Despite the burgeoning popularity of FM radio stations–by July 2008, there were nine operational FM radio stations in Karachi and 162 licensed stations nationwide [22]–the medium did not emerge as a site for civic engagement or community building.

This is because unlike television, all FM radio stations–whether state- or privately-owned–were forbidden even before the Emergency from

broadcasting news, current affairs shows, or any time-bound content with political implications. According to PEMRA regulations, FM radio stations were required to broadcast a " diversified mixture of programs on information, education, entertainment, culture, religion, public service, and such other areas of public interest. This clause was widely interpreted to mean that no local, national, or international news content, or any information that directly referred to political parties, politicians, or their policies might be broadcast. Traffic and weather reports were, however, permitted. Unable to provide news updates, Karachi's most popular community radio station, Apna Karachi FM 107, negotiated violent flare-ups in the city by issuing regular " traffic reports" which followed the law but signaled the real situation.

On May 12, 2007–when Karachi was affected by violent rallies, widespread gun battles, and the indiscriminate torching of vehicles after Chief Justice Chaudhry was prevented from properly visiting the city–the station punctuated its programming at five-minute intervals with these special " traffic updates. " Throughout the tumultuous afternoon, the station's radio journalists–reporting on the move via cellphones–called to indicate which roads were heavily congested, which were blocked, and which were seeing only sporadic traffic.

Karachiites accustomed to urban conflict understand that the density of traffic hints at the relative safety of a road or neighborhood–after all, traffic thins out in areas where gunbattles are underway. At 11: 57 a. m. that day, the reporter Mohammad Qayyum stated: " the roads to the airport are empty. Public transport is at a standstill and the few taxis and rickshaws operating in the area have inflated their fares. " Just after noon, he alerted

drivers, " although we had earlier told you that Mai Kolachi Road was seeing normal traffic, we are now suggesting that you take a diversion and choose an alternate route. At 12: 22 p. m. , his colleague Waqarul Hasan reported, " buses have been torched near Karsaz, so people wanting to come to Drigh Road shouldn't head in this direction because traffic is bad. " Later in the afternoon, the radio journalist Waqar Azmat advised drivers to avoid the area known as Gurumandir, " because the conditions there are not good, there is no traffic in the area. " A few minutes later, at 2: 26 p. m. , he returned to the airwaves to say, " traffic on Shaheed-e-Millat Road is very bad, as it is on Sharah-e-Faisal. There's madness all the way until Tipu Sultan Road.

Drivers should choose their routes carefully so that they don't become victims of bad traffic. " In its efforts to stay within the law while also providing coverage of violence throughout the city, Apna Karachi FM 107 was aided by Karachiites themselves. Throughout the day, hundreds of peopled called the station, from their cars, homes, and workplaces, to report on the traffic situation–and thus the security situation. For example, at 3: 15 p. m. the station broadcast this call: " I'm Akhtar calling from my office on Shahrah-e-Faisal Road.

I cannot leave right now because there are no buses on the road. They say buses will resume here by 5 p. m. " Calls such as these helped Karachiites keep each other informed about which spots in the city were dangerous at any given time. Moreover, Apna Karachi FM 107 broadcasts were used as a way for people to stay in touch with their families and assure them that they were safe. This was particularly true for people who did not have access to a

phone. For example, at lunchtime that day, the station aired this call: " I am Salim Mohammad from New Town area.

My family hearing this should know I am safe and have found a place to hide until I can get a bus home. Five minutes ago, I met Jehanzeb from NIPA area, Naveed Khan from Sohrab Goth area, and Mohammad Khan from Sohrab Goth block 5. They want their families to know they are also safe and in hiding. " Subsequently, a similar combination of FM radio broadcasts, landline phones, and cellphones were used by Karachiites to create a networked public sphere and monitor protest rallies through the cities during emergency rule and general elections.

This shows how people empowered by creativity and a commitment to aiding their community can use old and new media technologies to make a difference, even on an ad hoc basis. 3. Disconnected: Jamming cellular networks November 6, 2007: Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry addresses the nation As the public adopted alternative media platforms, the government escalated its efforts to control communication and news dissemination. On November 6, the ousted chief justice of the Supreme Court, who had been placed under house arrest when emergency rule was declared, chose to address the nation via cellphone.

In his talk, he called for mass protests against the government and the immediate restoration of the constitution. Justice Chaudhry placed a conference call to members of the Bar Association, who relayed his message via loudspeakers. That broadcast was intended to be further relayed by members of the crowd who had planned to simply hold their cellphones up to

the loudspeakers to allow remote colleagues and concerned citizens to listen in on the address. More ambitious members of the crowd planned to record the message on their cellphones and subsequently distribute it online.

However, most mobile phone services in Islamabad went down during Chaudhry's address, prompting suspicions that they had been jammed by the government. [23] In the first few days of the emergency, sporadic efforts to cut telephone lines and jam cellphone networks were common, even though the telecommunications infrastructure in Pakistan is privately owned. Mobile connectivity at the Supreme Court, protest sites, and the homes of opposition politicians and lawyers who were placed under house arrest was jammed at different times.

In off-the-record interviews, employees at telecommunications companies explained that the government had threatened to revoke their operating licenses in the event that they did not comply with jamming requests. The government's attempts to jam cellphone networks during the emergency demonstrates that, much like television, cellphones had become an integral medium of information dissemination and community organizing across Pakistan. This is not surprising given that cellphones have been the most rapidly adopted–and adapted–technology in Pakistan's history.

Between the late 1990s and July 2006, mobile penetration in Pakistan increased from 0. 2 percent of the population to an unprecedented 43. 6 percent. [24] Months before the emergency declaration, in August 2007, there were 68. 5 million mobile phone users across Pakistan, which amounts to 60 percent of the total potential cellphone market in Pakistan. [25] Given

Pakistan's leapfrog into the era of wireless communications, it is not surprising that the authorities were intimidated by the public's unprecedented and instantaneous connectivity during a time of political instability.

Indeed, citizen journalists and activists harnessed this connectivity in subsequent protest rallies as well as during the February 2008 general election. SMS text messaging also played a large role in helping communities organize protests during the emergency. Owing to the low literacy rate and the non-availability of mobile platforms in local languages, SMS traffic has remained low. That said, 2007 saw a marked increase to 8, 636 million text messages exchanged from 1, 206 million in 2006. [26] On July 20, 2007, when the Justice Chaudhry was first reinstated, 400 million SMS messages were sent nationwide.

According to the PTA, that is the highest number of SMS generated in one day in Pakistan. But mobile service providers claim that a record number of SMS messages were exchanged in the five days after emergency rule was declared (statistics to support this fact are not available). No doubt, in the absence of independent news channels, text messaging emerged as an instantaneous way for people to update each other on developments such as protest rallies and the numerable arrests of lawyers, journalists, and activists.

In the early days of the emergency, SMS text messaging was lauded across the Pakistani blogosphere as the savior of communication in a time of crisis. 4. Student activism/digital activism November 7, 2007: Police surround the

Lahore University of Management Sciences In the media vacuum created by the censorship of television channels, Pakistani university students turned to new media platforms such as YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, and blogs to facilitate hyper-local reporting, information dissemination, and community organizing against emergency rule.

As such, student activism during the Pakistan Emergency was synonymous with digital activism. On November 7, over 1, 000 students of the privately owned Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)–Pakistan's most prestigious business school based in Lahore–gathered to protest the imposition of emergency rule. Students at universities across Pakistan had begun protesting and organizing vigils immediately after Musharraf's televised emergency announcement on November 3. But the gathering at LUMS was among the largest of the civil movement launched by lawyers, journalists, and students against the emergency. By contrast, about 90 students attended a protest the same day at Lahore's National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, FAST-NU, a federally chartered university.) The protest took place amidst heavy police presence. Prior to the gathering, policemen warned LUMS students that they would be baton charged and arrested in the event of civil agitation. On the morning of the scheduled protest, police surrounded the campus, while plainclothes officers patrolled its grounds. Still, students managed to march through the campus grounds and eventually staged a sit-in at the main campus entrance, in front of the dozens of police officers.

Broadcast journalists for Geo TV and other stations that were continuing to provide live coverage of emergency-related events via satellite and internet

streams were present to cover the LUMS protest. However, police officials successfully prevented media personnel from entering the LUMS campus and eventually confiscated their cameras and other recording equipment. After successfully removing all journalists from the premises, the police ramped up their presence on the campus grounds. 4. 1. Creating the News, Organizing the Community

Once LUMS students realized that major Pakistani news networks had not been able to cover their protest, they took it upon themselves to document the authorities' intimidation tactics and their own attempts at resistance. Midway through the day-long protest, a student narrated the morning's events in a post on The Emergency Times blog,[27] which had been established to help students express their opinions about democracy and organize against emergency rule. This post was then linked to by other blogs, such as Metroblogging Lahore, that are frequented by Pakistani youth. [28] The Emergency Times blog also featured pictures of the protest.

Within an hour of the LUMS protest commencing, a Karachi-based blogger Awab Alvi, who runs the Teeth Maestro blog, also helped those behind The Emergency Times blog set up an SMS2Blog link, which allowed students participating in the protest to post live, minute-by-minute updates to several blogs, including Teeth Maestro, via SMS text message. [29]Students availed of this set up to report on police movement across campus, attempts to corral students in their hostels, the deployment of women police officers across campus, and the activities of LUMS students to resist these actions.

On the night of November 7, students posted video clips of the protest that were shot using handheld digital camcorders or cellphone cameras to YouTube. [30] These videos showed the students gathering to protest, confronting the university's security guards, and the heavy police presence at the university's gates. Many clips focused on protest signs that students were carrying in an attempt to convey their message in spite of the poor audio and visual quality of some of the video clips. Anti-emergency speeches delivered by students were posted in their entirety.

Some students uploaded their video footage of the protest, shot on cellphone cameras, to CNN's iReport website, which solicits contributions from citizen journalists across the globe in the form of video, photos, or blog posts. [31] Footage from iReport was then used in a regular CNN broadcast about the student protests. That CNN broadcast was then posted to YouTube for circulation amongst Pakistanis who no longer had access to the channel because of Musharraf's blanket ban on news programming. 32] Through this confluence of citizen reporting and the international broadcast media, Pakistanis–and a global audience–were informed about the LUMS protest. Interestingly, between November 3-6, video clips of protests and gatherings at LUMS had been posted to YouTube. But none of these were as well produced or contextualized as those uploaded on November 7. In the days after the emergency, posted videos up to 10 minutes in length were not clearly titled for easy searchability, nor did they provide any explanation of the events portrayed in the footage. [33] In contrast, November 7 video clips were clearly titled and tagged.

In many cases, the clips included captions that dated the event, identified the location, and contextualized the students' activities. [34] This difference suggests that university students were aware within days of the emergency that their collectively generated coverage of the campus protests was the primary source of information for those looking for coverage of responses to the political crisis, including local and international journalists. For example, Dawn News, Pakistan's first English-language news channel, first broadcast news of the student protests on November 10 in a clip that was made available via satellite and YouTube. 35] It is worth nothing that university students became savvier in their use of new media platforms over the course of the emergency. On December 4, policemen and intelligence agents once again surrounded and barricaded the LUMS campus to prevent students and faculty from attending a daily vigil for civil liberties. As soon as police appeared at the LUMS campus, a post warning students that traffic in and out of the university was being inspected appeared on The Emergency Times blog. 36] Once again, an SMS2Blog link allowed students protesting against the barricade to post live updates to the Teeth Maestro blog. This time, the live updates were used to identify particular members of the security agencies [37] so that students could remain on guard and included messages from political parties advising students on how to conduct themselves during the protest. [38] This content indicates that students were using them as a dynamic resource for community organizing during the protest, and not merely for archival and documentation purposes.

In all emergency-related demonstrations between November 3 and December 15, university students posted images from the events to Flickr.

[39] However, security forces soon began using these images to identify student activists and subsequently arrest them. In an attempt to one-up the authorities, students began blurring the faces of protestors in images before uploading them to Flickr and other blogs. [40] The fact that the authorities were monitoring new media platforms such as Flickr is an indication of how quickly alternative resources gained influence in the media vacuum created by the television ban.

Meanwhile, young Pakistanis who were unable to join university protests and youth across the diaspora turned to the social networking site Facebook to express solidarity and oppose emergency rule. Within three days of the emergency declaration, a Facebook group titled " We Oppose Emergency in Pakistan" boasted over 5, 000 members. [41] The group's homepage featured links to online petitions, up-to-date news reports from the Pakistani print and broadcast media, and blogs with original news content, such as The Emergency Times.

Embedded video clips of messages by detained opposition leaders were also uploaded to the Facebook site. The group's discussion board quickly became the site of lively discussion, with teenagers and twenty-somethings–who previously did not have a voice in the Pakistani public sphere–debating the implications of Musharraf's decision. As the emergency dragged on and the movement to restore the judiciary gained momentum, Facebook was harnessed by diaspora communities as a tool for organizing protests. The internet also allowed students outside Pakistan to play key roles.

For example, Samad Khurram, an undergraduate at Harvard University, helped mobilize the protesters in Pakistan from his dorm room in Cambridge, Massachusetts by maintaining an online newsletter and mailing list. It is not surprising that university students were amongst the first Pakistanis to turn to the internet as a venue for information dissemination in the wake of the television ban. Owing to low literacy rates and high service costs, the internet has not been as widely adopted in Pakistan as cellphones. In December 2007, there were 70 internet service providers covering 2, 419 cities and towns in Pakistan, but only 3. million internet subscribers. Owing to the popularity of cyber cafes, however, the total number of internet users was estimated by the PTA to be closer to 17 million. Pakistani universities are among the few venues where internet saturation is high: by 2005, over 80% of all university libraries had internet access. And in July 2007, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan enhanced bandwidth four-fold at public sector universities–at private universities, bandwidth was doubled–to facilitate video conferencing and other online communications.

Private institutions such as LUMS boast two internet access nodes in each double- or triple-occupancy room. 4. 2. In times of emergency, The Emergency Times The following case study of one blog during the Pakistan Emergency shows that new media platforms can facilitate civic engagement if they are harnessed to provide original reporting in a timely and consistent manner. Moreover, the success of the Emergency Times (ET) blog and newsletter show that to truly succeed in the developing world, civic media initiatives must straddle multiple mediums (in this case, for example, a blog, an online mailing list, and an SMS text message network).

The Emergency Times (ET) blog and newsletter exemplify the collision and collusion between old and new media that helped shape civic action against increasingly authoritarian rule. What began as an informative on-campus handout quickly evolved to become the mouthpiece and major news resource for the Student's Action Committee (SAC), the umbrella organization that rallied student activists across Pakistan and the diaspora against Musharraf and his policies.

Launched online on November 5, 2007, ET described itself as " an independent Pakistani student information initiative providing regular updates, commentary, and analysis on Pakistan's evolving political scenario. " An early experiment in youth citizen journalism and digital activism, ET became one of the most regular and reliable sources of information about the Pakistani civil society's movement against the government between November 2007 and June 2008. At its height, the blog claims to have reached over 150, 000 people in over 100 countries.

Although many students were involved in generating the blog and its accompanying online mailing list, Ammar Rashid, a LUMS student who served as editor-in-chief for the blog, and Samad Khurram, an undergraduate at Harvard University who managed the mailing list, led the initiative. Khurram explains that Musharraf's crackdown on news channels during the emergency motivated his and Rashid's work: the blog was conceptualized as a daily newspaper while the mailing list was meant to emulate the one-to-many distribution model of traditional broadcast mediums. Providing these were important to us," says Khurram, " since all the private TV channels were banned and the print media faced serious curbs. " The choice of a blog

and mailing list was further motivated by the fact that these mediums are " simple, reliable, and cost-effective. " Khurram, Rashid, and other SAC members initially experimented with a web-based television channel titled Freedom TV, but dropped the idea owing to time constraints and the lack of resources. The idea of launching an online radio station was also floated, but rejected.

Eventually, Khurram and Rashid determined that the combination of a blog and mailing list would be the most effective in terms of disseminating information about the political crisis and organizing community action. While Rashid compiled and edited news, Khurram focused on coordinating and mobilizing different groups that included lawyers, journalists, and politicians in addition to students. This combined use of a blog and mailing list suggests that at the time of the emergency, Pakistanis with internet access were not yet accustomed to the interactive, collaborative, and user-generated culture of the blogosphere.

Instead, they were seeking a broadcast alternative to the independent television channels that had come to dominate the media landscape in recent years. Initially, the ET blog was limited in scope, catering primarily to the Lahore-based community of student activists. Anti-emergency vigils and protest marches demanding the restoration of the judiciary were documented on the blog through original images, video clips, and first-person testimonies posted by university students. 42] As the SAC movement gained momentum, the blog became the go-to website for information about the campaign, upcoming meetings and protests, and related events such as a lecture series featuring leading activists. Politicians and lawyers hoping to

woo, inspire, or advise student activists also used the ET blog as a communications platform. Moreover, students who had the opportunity to meet or speak with leaders of the movement for democracy–such as deposed judges, detained lawyers, or opposition politicians–would share notes from their conversations with the SAC community at large through the blog.

Significantly, the ET blog was one of the few resources for original reporting on the government crackdown on student activism. Reports of students being harassed or arrested were regularly posted. [43] After emergency rule was lifted and Musharraf surrendered his post as chief of army staff, the blog shifted its focus to campaign for the restoration of an independent judiciary. Broadening the ET's mandate in this manner kept it relevant and timely in the context of the unfolding political crisis, but resulted in a reduction of original content.

Since most students were not directly involved in what came to be known as the " lawyers' movement"–a campaign to restore the independent judiciary that was in office on November 3 under Chief Justice Chaudhry–the ET blog increasingly featured news articles and opinion pieces from the mainstream print media, both Pakistani and international. Other online resources also began posting to the ET blog to generate traffic. For example, Parliament Watch, a political blog, announced its launch on ET. [44] To its credit, the ET blog did maintain its link to the students' movement by emerging as a mouthpiece for the SAC.

The blog became a venue for stating and clarifying the goals and political agenda of the movement both for SAC members and the activist community at large. For example, a post on January 26, 2008, claims that SAC members would like to prioritize the restoration of the judges and believe that boycotting elections would be an effective way to pressurize the government. The post acknowledges voices of dissent within the SAC community and goes on to outline a methodology and rationale for upcoming activism. 45] The mailing list, meanwhile, gathered momentum and gained credibility as it expanded to serve the activist community at large, particularly in the context of the lawyers' movement. By March 2008, during Black Flag Week, a week-long protest against the lawyers' deposition, the mailing list reached over 50, 000 people. Khurram explains that he initially pushed his e-mails to prominent journalists, columnists, bloggers, newspaper editors, and political party leaders. The list was then forwarded by these 'influentials' to wide networks that were eventually incorporated into the original mailing list.

Thanks to the regularity of updates and its distribution of original content–posts from the ET blog or forwarded correspondence from high-profile lawyers, activists, and politicians–the ET mailing list came to be seen as a credible news source by most of its recipients. In a big moment for alternative news sources, Chief Justice Chaudhry chose to circulate a letter responding to allegations against him by Musharraf's government via the ET mailing list. Indeed, news items and statements originally circulated on the ET list were eventually cited by publications such as The New York Times and The Washington Post.

The mailing list's credibility also allowed it to function as a fund-raising resource: " When I made a call for donations for the SAC long march [in June 2008] we were able to raise over US$ 1, 000 with one email," says Khurram. Interestingly, both the ET blog and mailing list relied on their audience using SMS text messaging to push their content and community organizing efforts well beyond the limited online audience. For example, the blog coordinated a " mass contact campaign": readers were asked to forward protest messages and campaign demands to politicians via SMS text essage. The coveted cellphone numbers of relevant recipients, including top-level politicians, diplomats, and army personnel, were posted to the blog. [46] For his part, when forwarding e-mails with logistical details about protest marches, Khurram would also make sure to circulate SMS text messages containing the same information. " We had a few key people in each segment of the population on an SMS list: a couple of lawyers, a couple of students, a few civil society activists, and some journalists," he explains. They would then [forward the message] and inform others [in their network]. Text messaging was a primary source of communication and the mailing list was a close second. " Despite its success during the Pakistan Emergency, the ET blog suspended operations on June 25, 2008. In his final post, Rashid indicated a lack of time and resources to maintain the blog. As such, the fate of the ET blog raises questions about the sustainability of new media platforms beyond times of emergency.

Can tools of digital activism also be harnessed as tools of expression? Can young Pakistanis overcome the participation gap and use new media platforms to enact democratic and participatory practices on an everyday

basis and not only as tools for community organizing during crises? More importantly, is it necessary for new media platforms to be used in a sustainable way, or is it adequate that developing nations muster ' silent armies' of networked citizen journalists and community organizers who can mobilize during crises?

To help address the knowledge gap about new media and democracy in the developing world, this research paperexamines how digital technologies ??? such as cellphones and live internet streams ??? and new media platforms ??? including blogs, YouTube, Flickr, and Facebook ??? were used to access information, organize political action, generate hyperlocal news reports, and promote citizen journalism during the " Pakistan Emergency," a period of heightened political instability between March 2007 and February 2008. 5. Citizen Journalism: Redefining Media and Power December 27, 2007: Benazir Bhutto assassinated

In the developed world, a single event often triggers the widespread realization that citizen journalism has forever changed a nation's media landscape. For example, within six hours of bombs exploding on London subway trains and a bus on July 7, 2005, the BBC received over 1, 000 photographs, 20 amateur videos, 4, 000 text messages, and 20, 000 emails. This influx of citizen reporting prompted Richard Sambrook, director of the BBC's World Service and Global News Division, to write: " We know now that when major events occur, the public can offer us as much new information as we are able to broadcast to them.

From now on, news coverage is a partnership. "[47] In Pakistan, the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007, redefined Pakistani news media as a hybrid product generated by professional and amateur reporters and disseminated via old and new media sources. Bhutto's death shocked and enraged Pakistanis as well as the international community, heightening the sense of political instability across the country. By the time of Bhutto's death, Musharraf had lifted his ban on news channels and the incident received 24-hour news coverage for several days.

The assassination was also extensively covered by the international press and broadcast media. In fact, Pakistani FM radio stations, which are legally prevented from broadcasting news, also spread word about Bhutto's death and its fallout with impunity. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most Pakistanis were glued to their television screens for information about Bhutto's last moments and the perpetrators of the attack. And yet the assassination marked a turning point in Pakistan's media landscape and ushered in a new era of citizen journalism.

We have seen how new media platforms were harnessed after the imposition of emergency rule for information dissemination and community organizing. By the end of 2007, young Pakistanis and activists of all ages were increasingly turning to SMS text messaging, Flickr, and YouTube to help coordinate and document protests, provide original news coverage of hyperlocal events (such as rallies on the LUMS campus), and offer alternative media distribution models to offset government censorship. Such mediated

civic engagement was limited to activist communities and those at home and abroad with ready access to the internet.

In the wake of Bhutto's assassination, however, the circulation of an amateur video and images by one blogger catapulted citizen journalism to the center of the Pakistani media landscape and earned the work of nonprofessional reporters unprecedented credibility. The following case study illustrates how media coverage of the investigation into Bhutto's assassination transformed the course of citizen journalism in Pakistan. Soon after Bhutto's death had been verified, its cause was contested. Eyewitnesses in Rawalpindi reported hearing gunshots before an explosion.

Members of Bhutto's entourage and her colleagues in the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) claimed that the leader had been shot. In the immediate wake of the attack, a team of doctors examined her body and stated in a report that she had an open wound on her left temporal region. A day after the assassination, government officials claimed that Bhutto had died when her head hit the lever of the sunroof of her car as she ducked to avoid an assassin's bullets and/or in response to the sound of a blast caused by a suicide bomber.

The question of whether Bhutto died of gunshot wounds or a head injury riveted the nation because the truth would have implications on allegations about lax security and government complicity in the assassination. An important piece of evidence to help settle this debate came in the form of images and an amateur video generated by a PPP supporter at the rally

where Bhutto was killed and subsequently circulated by a popular Karachi-based blogger.

By making the footage and images available to the mainstream media and public at large, these citizen journalists sparked an accountability movement that eventually forced the Pakistani government to revisit its account of Bhutto's death. 5. 1. The Teeth Maestro Blog: From Online Diary to Citizen Journalism The blogger who initially circulated the key images and video clip is Dr. Awab Alvi, a dentist by day who runs a blog called Teeth Maestro.

Alvi also contributes and cross-posts to Metroblogging Karachi, an English-language blog maintained by a community of Karachi-based bloggers. Alvi came to blogging early, launching Teeth Maestro in 2004 and signing up as part of the Metroblogging Karachi team in April 2005, soon after the launch of the group blog. Alvi is aware of the trajectory of his blogging career: " It started with me keeping an online diary. Then it became a serious hobby. "[48] Since playing a significant role in the coverage of Bhutto's death, Alvi describes himself as a citizen journalist.

His posts are regularly featured by Global Voices Online, an international blog aggregator. [49] Before the imposition of emergency, Alvi's contributions to Metroblogging Karachi were quirky observations that fit with the blog's mandate of celebrating Pakistan's largest city, Karachi. [50] He posted musings about flawed urban infrastructure, calls for the eradication of poverty and crime, links to news reports about the city, announcements and reviews of cultural events, critiques of advertising campaigns and rants against traffic jams.

Umar Siddiqui, who manages the Metroblogging Karachi team, says that Alvi's popularity helped the blog generate traffic: 3, 000 unique visitors and 40, 000 page views each day, significant statistics in the Pakistani context, where the digital divide curtails the popularity of local websites. Interestingly, Alvi did not primarily consider blogging as a means to community organizing and political advocacy. For example, when Bhutto was first targeted by a suicide bomb attack that killed 134 people in Karachi on October 18, 2007, Alvi chose not to acknowledge the violence in his posts. When all these bad incidents were happening," he says, " I thought we should cover Karachi in a positive light and so I went to Flickr and picked up all these inspirational pictures and for several days I just kept a photo blog. I wanted to Karachi to remember its beauty and how it is really a good place. " During the emergency, however, Teeth Maestro–motivated much like The Emergency Times by the media vacuum created by Musharraf–emerged as a go-to blog for information about the students' activist movement.

Alvi also proved to be one of the most technologically forward bloggers in Pakistan. He was the first to introduce the SMS2Blog feature for live updates and helped others covering anti-emergency protests install the technology as well. At the time of Bhutto's assassination, Alvi was arguably the most prominent Pakistani blogger and his interests had clearly shifted from cultural observations to political commentary, advocacy, and community organizing.

This is evidenced by the fact that on the day of Bhutto's death, he posted four blogs on Teeth Maestro, including live updates via SMS. The next day, he posted 12 times: his own updates from the streets of Karachi and links to

important news items and insightful commentary from the global print media were supplemented by contributions from other bloggers and citizen journalists. For example, he posted an eyewitness report of the violent response across Karachi to Bhutto's death that he received via email. [51] 5. 2.

Hybridity: Citizen Journalists Inform Mainstream Media Coverage Two days after the assassination, someone contacted Alvi claiming to have obtained images and a video clip that confirmed that Bhutto was shot by an assassin, and therefore did not succumb to a head wound as government officials were suggesting. These images and video footage had been posted by a PPP supporter to his home page on the social networking site Orkut. However, after being inundated with questions and comments about the new evidence, the original source removed the images and clip from Orkut.

Luckily, Alvi's contact was able to grab screen shots of those uploaded images before they were taken down. Alvi then contacted the original source, the PPP supporter, and convinced him to share the images and video. Soon after, Alvi had obtained four images indicating that Bhutto had indeed been shot. However, the video clip proved harder to obtain. The PPP supporter was based in Islamabad and only had access to a dial-up internet connection. Since the video was a 56MB file, he was having trouble uploading and electronically forwarding it to Alvi.

At that point, Alvi contacted two employees at Dawn News, an independent, English-language Pakistani news channel, and arranged from them to collect the video from the PPP supporter's house the next morning. The goal, after

all, was to make the images and video clip available to the public as soon as possible, whether via the Teeth Maestro blog or a mainstream media broadcast. After a late-night phone call with Alvi, the PPP supporter agreed to share the video clip with the Dawn News team. But the next morning, the original source could not be reached on his cellphone, and the handoff of the video clip did not occur.

In the meantime, by the end of the day on December 29, Alvi had posted the four images he received from the PPP supporter to his blog. [52] Teeth Maestro was thus the first media outlet to circulate images of Bhutto's assassination that could help clarify whether she died of gunshot wounds or a fatal head injury. " The moment I saw these images, I knew I had to get them out publicly as soon as possible," says Alvi. " I quickly edited the posts, published them online on my blog and circulated the link far and wide, letting the dynamics of the free and open internet protect me and the [original] source. The images were soon cross-posted on other Pakistani blogs, such as The Emergency Times. [53] Alvi also contacted CNN iReport with his story about fresh evidence and forwarded the images to the Dawn News channel. But these mainstream media outlets were slow to pick up on the story. Dawn News first broadcast the images in the context of an interview with a security analyst at 3 p. m. on December 30. Meanwhile, CNN iReport did not contact Alvi until the next day. On December 31, the UK-based public service Channel 4 first roadcast the video clip of Bhutto's assassination that Alvi was not able to obtain from the PPP supporter. [54] This video was then endlessly circulated within the Pakistani blogosphere and on YouTube. [55] Interestingly, Channel 4's analysis of the video clip

borrows heavily from the annotation on the pictures uploaded by Alvi. The similarity indicates that the citizen