

**This is Where You Belong - Shifting Representations of the Ideal Woman in Pakistani TV  
Serials from the 1980s to the Present**

Study of the rapidly growing, evolving, and influential electronic media in Pakistan is very limited; academic exploration of entertainment media is almost non-existent. My work addresses various aspects of entertainment programming in Pakistan and its link to politics, ideas of public/private spaces, religion, and consumerism, through the lens of gender.

Women have always been a part of media in Pakistan but how does their participation and representation affect, and is affected by, global media, culture, and politics especially in the context of Muslim women's visibility on screen? This presentation recounted the initial stages of my research that begins to delve into these questions.

Women often bear the brunt of international misrepresentation as they are then used as national/ religious symbols by their own society (to counteract the global distortion), the skewed image creating further stereotypes. I believe it is essential to study what is happening within a country to comprehend global connections and representations on a larger socio-political level; national and international are not water-tight categories but overlapping ones. My work begins to delve into this vastly unexplored territory of how state-media relations, local/ international politics, global cultural interactions, and socio-economic factors are influencing Pakistani and, more broadly, South Asian media.