FRAMING AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS IN ELITE PRESS OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the media coverage of Afghan peace process in elite print media of Pakistan. For this purpose, two widely circulated and influential Pakistani newspapers of English language (i.e. Dawn, the News) have been selected and their reportage for five continuous years (2015-2020) has been examined. This examination is conducted within the theoretical approach of peace journalism (Galtung, 1985; 2003) and framing (Goffman, 1974). Findings indicated that media remained inclined towards war-oriented journalism and war-frames dominated the coverage as compared to peace-frames. In comparison between both newspapers, the contents of The News were carrying more war-frames as compared to English media. The study concludes that increased war-oriented coverage might be attributed to the historical background and state policy towards Afghan peace process, which seem difficult to be disregarded in reporting. Furthermore, since the "objectivity" or "detachment" is considered to be foremost prerequisite of good journalism.

Key words: framing, afghan peace process, elite media, war oriented, peace oriented.

Introduction

As mass media have a global perspective, citizens are becoming more informed and looking at discords from different perspectives. According to war and peace journalism literature, the portrayal of discords during the conflict by mass media is one of the biggest interests among combatants, the community, and media professionals. Journalism plays a critical role in shaping war and peace. Both sides accuse each other of bias in conflict reporting (Lynch, 2005). Conflict- related news can be particularly challenging for the media (Zaheer, 2016). It is largely believed that mass media are capable of influencing community opinion (Shukla, 2013) and shaping reality (Hallgren, 2012). Accordingly, the media has a significant obligation to inform the community about various issues to increase their awareness and responsiveness. When dealing with conflict situations, the media's responsibility becomes much greater. This also means that the community must sometimes rely on the media when it comes to understanding what is going on in a distant land. Thus, media play an important role in shaping community perceptions of conflict. In the twentieth century, media dominated the world and this dominance has greatly increased with the advent of new media (Gadda, 2014).

The emergence of Taliban came in power in 1994 after Afghan war against Soviet Union. US claimed that Osama bin Laden, leader, Al-Oaeda, is main culprit of 9/11 incident. Due to support of Taliban to Bin Laden USA imposed sanctuary on Afghanistan. US demanded from Taliban to handover bin Laden. The Taliban rejected it. Due to enough evidence of his involvement in 9/11 attacks. On October 7, 2001 US with its NATO allies invaded on Afghanistan. US claims about al-Qaeda is now considered to be "eliminated", but the war with the Taliban is going on. The US president Donald Trump has said that US suffered from this war heavily and it should to come on end. The American strategy to close down war that resembles with the method to finish the Vietnam War longestwar of US. Before 2010 - after this Paris Peace Accords in 1973 was signed. The Afghan social process refers to both the approach and dialogue during a bid to finish the continued battle in Afghanistan. Even though infrequent attempts have happened since the beginning of war in 2001. Mostly meetings for settlements held in Doha, the capital of Qatar. The expectation of mutual agreement between the Taliban and US would be the outcome of Doha meeting. In this negotiation the neighboring countries Pakistan, China and Russia played a major role to settle down issues. In 2017 contacts and exploratory efforts for the establishment of negotiations were identified with major players like Pakistan, the USA and Afghanistan, who worked to bring peace within the region (Aspa, García, Arestizábal, Ariño, & Ariño, 2018). Peace talks with the Afghan Taliban started in November 2010, another attempt in 2015.

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Then in 2018, US and Afghan officialdom held several rounds of talks with Taliban (Bonesh, 2020). Idrees, Rehman and Nazeer (2020) also stated that Pakistan being a crucial neighboring country of Afghanistan can play an important role in bringing amity and stability through facilitating social process. Both the US administration and Afghan government demand Pakistan to influence and convey the Taliban to the table talks. In this context, we argue that Afghanistan, US and Pakistan are the key stakeholders for peace in Afghanistan. Therefore, present study seeks to explore the framing of Afghan social process within the elite press of those three countries. Scholars of political communication have long tradition of peace and conflict studies. However, in Pakistan a little work is found related to conflict studies. Moreover, Afghan Peace Process is being considered very important for the geostrategic and political development of the region.

Therefore, it will be interesting to find out, explore and compare the framing of Afghan Peace Process in elite influential Print media of Pakistan during 2017-2020. Because media framing is considered an important factor to influence the global perception of conflicts. Therefore, these factors encourage the researcher to study Afghan Peace Process regarding the cross-national framing of in elite press of US Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Literature Review

Afghanistan war and social process has become the key focus of international media scholars to review the role of media in peace and conflicts. Jawad (2013) studied the coverage of Afghanistan in American newspapers; USA Today, Washington Post and New York Times. He also studied the coverage given by Afghanistan Outlook to Afghanistan crisis. He concluded that peace talks, negotiation process, conflict, violence and military action, economic development and politics are the highly covered topics. Moreover, Shabir, Ali, and Iqbal (2011) also investigated the representation and portrayal of Afghanistan in the news coverage of leading American newspapers. They collected data from US magazines; News week and Time. They also found that the Americanmagazines discuss the Afghanistan with the lens of politics and policy. They also highlight the issue in the context of Afghan war and conflict. The American newspapers are interested to cover the Afghan peace process, with specifically reference to Afghan-US ties and in terms of economic consequences of Afghanistan war on US and Afghanistan. Moreover, the newspapers mostly portray Afghanistan negatively (57%) as compared to the positive coverage (7%). In this way, these theoretical studies provide enormous reason to study the coverage of Afghan Peace Process in the recent context of global economies. Therefore, aim to study the coverage of Afghan Peace Process in American, Afghan and Pakistani newspapers. Likewise, Carolyn Stephenson recognizes three "waves" of peace studies. The main started in the 1930s, with quantitative investigations of modern clash and war, and was to a great extent scholastically determined. The second happened in the 1960s. It widened the field to incorporate the investigation of the effect of types of savagery and shamefulness. As of now, peace research moved without doubt into classrooms in specific parts of the world.

The third wave rose in the 1980s and was affected more by developments and associations than by the educated community and teachers' .The field has its wealthiest history in Scandinavia, where colleges have had peace concentrates on since the nineteenth century (Stephenson, 1989). As Galtung brought an argument that media as proven by research is overwhelmingly war oriented. He further said, it is possible that media persons may not aware of it so maybe they are not intentionally scoping the war. By focusing on contents, news items are aiding the impression of contentions that news is essentially war filling. As the alternate option for war reporting, he structured a new dimension of reporting which he call peace journalism. However peace and war news dimensions are both different field; Galtung assert that: "Both are based on reporting facts, and are based on underlying cognitive and emotional assumptions rather than one being idealistic and normative and the other realistic and descriptive" (Galtung, 2006). Keeble, Tulloch, and Zollman (2010) argue that war reporting about what those who in power say they do but peace journalism is as reporting about what those who in power in reality do. They maintain that it is not important as much as to report violent situation of conflict, media should also provide information about those steps which leads to peaceful resolution of fight. Peace journalism is alternative way for media to step away from elite orientation of people, nation and negativism, it should focus on people, processes and looking for way forward. Keeping this viewpoint, media can give balance reporting of conflict by reporting from both sides not just elite views, more different sources, then a broader canvas emerge which create a depth for understanding the what actually going on and this lead to resolution. By joining the other forms of journalism such citizenship journalism, civic journalism and development journalism, peace journalism becomes another line of



journalism by holding a strong role in as pillar of state in democracy. In this conflict-afflicted area, as many scholars who advocates the peace journalism; an obligation should be retained by media to report in a balance way to promote peace building process and conflict resolution (Bratic, 2008; Galtung, Jacobson, Brand-Jacobson, & Jeong, 2003; Lynch &McGoldrick, 2005). The academic dialogue over Peace Journalism by the advocates of PJ, containing professional enhancement, boosting the journalistic ethics, endowment of better public service and expanding scholarly debates and professional field of views (Shinar, 2007). This sort of journalism likewise takes a gander at proposed government undertakings to enhance conditions in the nation, and dissects regardless of whether they will be powerful. Ogan (1980) explained that Peace journalism and Development Journalism offer comparable characteristics-one spares society from pulverizations, alternate spares it from torments of neediness. Development journalism coverage urges Journalists to go to remote territories, connect with the general population, and report back. Ultimately, the journalist may come up with proposed solutions and activities in the piece, recommending courses in which they may be implemented. Frequently, this type of development journalism supports an agreeable exertion between natives of the country and the outside world (Smith, 2007). Is likewise utilized as a part of a way like that of investigative reporting. Seen in this way, the part of a development journalist is to analyze basically the current advancement projects and tasks of government, contrast the arranged venture and its genuine execution, and report any observed deficiencies. Reporting on conflict-ridden area is very tough job and Johan Galtung theory of War and Peace Journalism based on two competing frames is productive increment in the field of Journalism. Ottosen (2010) scrutinized in his article "The war in Afghanistan and peace journalism in practice" that war frames were dominant during the first week of Afghan war 2001 in two mainstream,

Norwegian newspapers "Aftenposten" and "Verdens Gang" (VG). Total number of articles from Aftenposten were 104 and from Verden Gang 100. Aftenposten articles were favorable to US action but VG not. The editorials of VG was much clear that Norway could be the potential next target of terrorist that's why Norway should support US war in Afghanistan. Overall war journalism frames got much space than peace journalism frames. The researcher argues that the journalists who follow the model of Galtung should mention the civilian causalities. The war and peace journalism model is major theoretical contribution which defines agenda and encourage academia and working journalists for new ways for their work. For scientific work it is fruitful supplement. However, Citizens are well aware and enough informed that they can view the conflict from different angles as mass media gain global character. Fighting forces, audience and media practitioners all have apprehended on portrayal of conflict as past literature war journalism and peace journalism recommends. Conflict participants frequently asserted that reporting is bias toward them (Galtung& Vincent, 2004; Lynch &McGoldrick, 2005; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Media attentively emphasis on conflict when violence involve in conflict and causalities led conflict more worsen. so to rule out this criticism, Galtung (1969) who coined the term "peace journalism" then worked on to develop to 2 rival reports styles of wars, named as "Peace/conflict Journalism" and "War or Violence Journalism S. A. Siraj (2008) cited Hanitzsch (2004).

Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent Elite print media Pakistan give coverage to Afghan Conflict and Peace Process?

RQ2: Which frames are being used to cover Afghan Conflict and Peace Process by the elite Pakistani Press?

RQ3: Is there any difference in Peace/War framing of Afghan Conflict and Peace Process in Pakistani elite (Dawn and The News) Press?

Theoretical Framework

Coverage of conflict has always been taken as a very sensitive phenomenon among the communication researchers (Aslam, 2014). As the coverage matters more than the actual happenings. Therefore, this study focuses on the frames under which the Afghan Peace Process was discussed in the Pakistani media. As Entman described precisely the media framing, frames means, to pick some aspects of observed reality and develop them in a way that becomes more salient in communication text in such a way to support a specific problem (Chong &Druckman, 2007b; Entman, 1993, 2004). So framing theory is supportive to War and Peace Journalism model of Johan Galtung and communication researcher used these both for research especially to investigate the conflict-afflicted areas (M. T. N. Gavilán, 2012; N. Gavilán& Teresa, 2011).

Framing theory concentrates on the courses through which news organization depiction the truth. Media content limits general assessments, for example, by grabbing a few parts of war truths—like military advancement—and disregarding other substances of realities. During the coverage of international conflict, this may turn out to be



more noteworthy when national media may spread not at all like perspectives for national fellows. This created fluctuating beliefs and attitude in a state toward happening contrasted and assessment of other country which has diverse media exposure. It is conceivable that group of audience which has not seen enough of reporting about fierce conflict, challenges and war sufferers may have sense to support war endeavors. Those who comprehend war as a military success may become more supportive of it in the end (Dimitrova&Strömbäck, 2005). In mass media research framing is not new conceived, there are various definitions of framing theory in circle of the academic community. For the most part news framing is intangible nature; different viewpoints that frames the piece of media coverage as well as a feature of crowd scholarly mappings (Castells, 2007; Entman, 2004).

Galtung (1998) has addressed the power journalists hold, and coined the term "peace journalism" to describe reporters' responsibility to include new perspectives which diverge from the more typical conflict coverage which he calls "war journalism". Journalists can either take the "low road" (war journalism) or the "high road" (peace journalism) when writing about conflicts. The "high road" offers a more nuanced portrayal of conflicts, focusing on a peace rather than violence-orientation, truth on all sides instead of one-sided propaganda, voices of common people instead of elites, and a solution rather than victory-orientation (Galtung, 2006).

Peace journalism empowers readers by providing impartial news and challenging conventional wisdom about how conflicts are presented (Peleg, 2007).

This study designed to get benefit from framing theory; peace journalism frame and war journalism frame. The straightforward reason is to study the War and Peace Journalism model's implications in Pakistani Elite Newspapers about Afghan Peace Process.

Methodology

In the present study, we examine how elite print media in Pakistan and aim to analyze the Afghan peace negotiations. The quantitative content analysis of news reports examined the frequency, slant, and peace and war indicators of media coverage. The period for this study is consisted on five years (2015-2019), through this research find out the peace process on afghan conflict. This period has been chosen because peace process speed up in these years as USA wanted to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. So that afghan peace is as important for Pakistan as well for Afghanistan.

Sample

The sample of stories was drawn based on the basis on war and peace categories. All those stories from both the papers were kept in one category which had reported similar events/themes. 2279 news stories from both newspapers were selected which included in their titles/sub-titles the terms "war" or "peace 1048 were selected from The News, whereas 1233 were collected from the Dawn. Similarly, collected news stories also analyze according to language used to describe the peace process.

Results

War and Peace coverage in selected Newspapers

Finding of this study revealed that elite press (*The News and Dawn*) of Pakistan do more coverage on "war" or "conflict" and table 1 reported that 89% (n= 2028) of news stories were related to war categories while only a small percentage 6.7% (n=147) were covered peace related news, which shows clearly coverage pattern of elite press collectively (See table 2).

Similarly, in newspaper-wise coverage, it was noticed that both selected newspapers published more number of news reports tilted towards war frames compared to peace frames. It is relevant to mention that, amongst all newspapers, *The News* produced highest number of news reports on Afghan peace process and published 1233 (54.1%) reports compared to 1046 (45.9%) published by *Dawn* newspapers (See Table 1). Furthermore, *The News* remained obviously tilted towards war journalism frames and 1142 (92.6%) news items carried war frames. In order to examine the information statistically, Chi-square test was applied to data, which showed significant difference (chi-square= 36.294°, df= 2, p= .000) between the newspapers in terms of framing of news items (see Table 3).

Table 1



	Frequency	Percent
Dawn	1046	45.9
The News	1233	54.1
Total	2279	100.0

Table 2

	Frequency	Percent
War	2028	89.0
Peace	147	6.5
Neutral	104	4.6
Total	2279	100.0

Table 3

Newspaper		Frequency	Percent
	War	886	84.7
D	Peace	95	9.1
Dawn	Neutral	65	6.2
	Total	1046	100.0
	War	1142	92.6
The News	Peace	52	4.2
	Neutral	39	3.2
	Total	1233	100.0
	(chi-square= 36.29	94^{a} , df= 2, p= .000))



Comparison of both newspapers regarding language slant

Results showed that the overall coverage is negative, a large number of news stories 1233 (54.1%) were published in negative tone, while comparatively a good amount of news stories 781 (34.3%) were published in neutral tone and only 11.6% stories are published in positive tone (See table 4).

In comparison between elite English newspaper Dawn and The News coverage, it was found that Dawn newspaper used more negative tone to Afghan peace process and published 670 (64.1%) news reports as compared to The News, which published only 563 (45.7%) news reports in five years time-period. In order to examine the difference of coverage statistically, Chi-square test was applied to data. Results of the test revealed statistical difference (Chi square value = 110.879^a , df= 2, p= .000) between Elite print media coverage, which means that the coverage patterns of both newspapers were different (See Table 5).

Table 4

Slant	Frequency	Percent	
Positive	265	11.6	
Negative	1233	54.1	
Neutral	781	34.3	
Total	2279	100.0	

Table 5

Newspaper		Frequency	Percent
	Positive	136	13.0
D	Negative	670	64.1
Dawn	Neutral	240	22.9
	Total	1046	100.0
	Positive	129	10.5
The N	Negative	563	45.7
The News	Neutral	541	43.9
	Total	1233	100.0
(Chi square value = 110.879 ^a , df= 2, p= .000)			

War and Peace indicators wise coverage



Newspaper		Frequency	Percent	
	no conflict no peace	67	6.4	
	zero-sum orientation	249	23.8	
	Closed space, closed time	32	3.1	
Dawn	Making wars opaque/secret	51	4.9	
	"Us-them" journalism	68	6.5	
	See "them" as the problem Dehumanization of "them	57 21	5.4 2.0	
	Reactive	44	4.2	
	visible effect of violence	95	9.1	
	Expose "their" untruths	80	7.6	
	Help "our" cover-ups/lies	45	4.3	
	"our" suffering;	45	4.3	
	Focus on elite peacemakers	49	4.7	
	victory oriented	38	3.6	
	"win-win" orientation	23	2.2	
	Truth oriented	47	4.5	
	People oriented	19	1.8	
	Solution oriented	16	1.5	
	Total	1046	100.0	
	no conflict no peace	42	3.4	
	zero-sum orientation	281	22.8	
	Closed space, closed time	34	2.8	
	Making wars opaque/secret	92	7.5	
	"Us-them" journalism	99	8.0	
	See "them" as the problem	80	6.5	



The News	Dehumanization of "them	28	2.3
	Reactive	70	5.7
	visible effect of violence	135	10.9
	Expose "their" untruths	125	10.1
	Help "our" cover-ups/lies	53	4.3
	"our" suffering;	52	4.2
	Focus on elite peacemakers	60	4.9
	victory oriented	38	3.1



"win-win" orientation	11	.9
Truth oriented	18	1.5
People oriented	7	.6
Solution oriented	8	.6
Total	1233	100.0

Table 6 reported that both newspaper published news regarding zero-sum orientation, The News published 22% news while Dawn published 24% of news regarding zero-sum orientation. "Us- them journalism" "see them as a problem" and our suffering give more coverage on these aspects respectively. However "people oriented", "win-win orientation" and "solution oriented" categories of peace journalism get less coverage.

Conclusion

Employed by Galtung's (1986,1998) classifications of peace and war journalism, the purpose of this study was to assess differences in the use of war and peace journalism frames among different news outlets on the conflict of Afghan war. This study employed a comparative analysis on media coverage of an ongoing conflict of Afghanistan war and Pakistan-America involvement in peace proceess. Explicitly, this study examined war and peace journalism frames from stories published in elite English newspapers (The News and Dawn) from Pakistan. Forthwith, this discussion section will proceed by discussing important findings in detail. Firstly, dominant journalism framing in the coverage of Afgahan war conflict is discussed. Secondly, most prominent war frame and factors influencing its salience in the coverage are explored and thirdly, dominance of peace frames in the media is interpreted. War and Peace Journalism Framing Across Countries and Newspapers Results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between war versus peace journalism framing among all three countries. In other words, print media from each country produced more war journalism stories than peace journalism stories. Though not statistically significant, it is worth noting that a majority, or roughly 60 percent, of stories published in the U.S. were classified as war journalism Based War Journalism Frames Thus far, analysis of the results indicates that examined media of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S. covered the conflict from different perspectives by using distinctive news sources and dichotomized framework, while war journalism dominated the overall coverage. A definition of framing theory helps explain this pattern. According to de Vreese, news framing is the process of media selecting and promoting certain elements of a topic to make it more salient than others, providing a way to better understand an event or issue. To do so, journalists employ certain news frames in constructing and defining issues of the conflict.

Moreover, the individual media outlet has its own narrative and uses certain language to describe the conflict. The way stories were framed and depicted were, to a certain extent, different from one newspaper to another. In terms of language-based war journalism frames, results revealed that the prevalence of victimizing and demonizing language varied notably by news outlet. Both newspaper equally uses these reference of the frame.

All selected newspaper also use negative slant or tone to represent the afghan conflict While the foregoing discussion focuses on several aspects of war journalism frames, it does not detract from the prevalence and importance of peace journalism frames found in the coverage analyzed. Among the twelve indicators of peace journalism frames, the four most dominant salient indicators of peace journalism were: (1) multiparty orientation; (2) proactive reporting; (3) solution orientation; and (4) avoidance of demonizing language. Multiparty orientation and avoidance of demonizing language were among the most salient indicators, concurrent with findings from previous research (Fahmy & Eakin, 2013; Lee, 2010; Lee & Maslog, 2005). In the first empirical study to operationalize Johan Galtung's classification of war and peace journalism, Lee and Maslog (2005) explain that some peace indicators are not the strongest indicators for peace journalism framing even though they are important for the overall classification scheme. They conclude that these frames are "mere extensions of the objectivity credo: reporting the facts as they are," (p. 324). Because these indicators are less interventionist by nature, their prevalence does not truly reflect the role of journalists actively seeking and employing constructive news frames for peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Other peace journalism studies report similar findings suggesting a structural limitation inherent in the



peace journalism framework (Fahmy & Eakin, 2013; Lee, 2010). Consequently, previous research highlights a need to redefine the criteria of peace journalism because, "the pattern of salient indicators supporting the peace journalism frame falls short of Galtung's conceptualization of peace journalism as an advocacy and interpretative approach oriented in peace-conflict, people, truth and solution" (Lee, 2010, p. 379). In this study, analysis of peacejournalism indicators yielded findings similar to previous studies. The multiparty orientation and the avoidance of demonizing language among the most salient peace journalism indicators found in this study do not necessarily represent peace journalism but objective and factual reporting.

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