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NUCLEARIZATION AS NATIONAL SECURITY
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FRAMING AND FRAME BUILDING
IN INDIAN AND PAKISTANI NEWSPAPERS

By
AWAIS SALEEM

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Awais Saleem defended this dissertation on July 19, 2017.

The members of the supervisory committee were:

Stephen D. McDowell
Professor Directing Dissertation

Christopher Coutts
University Representative

Andrew Opel
Committee Member

Brian Graves
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the dissertation has been approved in accordance with university requirements.

This effort is dedicated to the two most important women in my life - my mother, Nuzhat Saleem, and my wife, Ayiesha Awais - for always standing by me through every thick and thin.

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ABSTRACT

Global politics is a complex game, particularly when conflict dominates the relationship between countries. South Asia is no different as both India and Pakistan have fought four wars since achieving independence from the British in 1947. Both countries have acquired nuclear capability but the tense nature of the bilateral relationship has given rise to fears of a potential nuclear war in the region. There were hopes of a thaw in relationship after the new governments assumed power following the general elections in Pakistan (2013) and in India (2014). However, these hopes were quickly dashed following an escalation in cross-border firing incidents along the line of control (LoC) in the Kashmir valley. The status of Kashmir valley has become a flashpoint of bilateral conflict between India and Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan occupy parts of the valley and blame each other for illegal occupation and infiltration to justify the use of aggressive tactics. India and Pakistan have a collective population of close to 1.5 billion (almost twenty percent of the global population). Both countries rank consistently low on human development and press freedom indices, but the respective governments in India and Pakistan continue to divert large chunks of their annual budgets for defense-related expenditures instead of providing better health, education, and infrastructure facilities to their citizen. In such a scenario, the media's role in framing this conflict becomes critical. It merits attention to explore whether the media is part of the problem or part of the solution.

Therefore, this dissertation applies Galtung's (2002) peace journalism model to the coverage of Kashmir conflict during 2016. The news coverage of the Uri attack on September 18, 2016 in the Indian-administered Kashmir that killed 16 Indian soldiers and the Bimber attack in the Pakistani-administered Kashmir that killed seven Pakistan soldiers was chosen for the content analysis to explore how the English-language newspapers in India and Pakistan

(three top-circulating newspapers in each country) framed the bilateral conflict. The findings showed that the coverage in both India and Pakistan had a similar pattern. It was primarily episodic, was using mainly conflict frames and lacking focus on solutions of the conflict, was relying on official sources to further the national security narrative prevalent in each country, and was showing a clear tendency to promote war journalism at the cost of marginalizing the human cost of war.

The second part of the analysis in this dissertation was based on interviews with journalists (15 each from India and Pakistan) to explore the processes attached to frame-building. The journalists were asked questions about the framing of stories related to bilateral conflict and which factors were likely to affect this coverage. They were also asked about the presence of pressure groups, censorship, organizational policy, alternatives available, and suggestions for improvement in the standards of coverage. The responses indicated that news television had gained a place of prominence in each country and was driving the content of print and social media as well. It was revealed that the private media ownership structure in both India and Pakistan, backed by big media houses, was aggravating the situation. The media owners in India were found to be hand in glove with the religious right-wing that had seen a rise in Indian mainstream politics after 2014 elections while the media owners in Pakistan had a nexus with the powerful military establishment in their country. The journalists revealed during the interviews that these media owners were getting good ratings on television by focusing on bilateral conflict, which meant good business, while they were able to use that clout in the ruling establishments for tax breaks and other benefits as well. The journalists generally did not express much hope in the track-II dialogues or social media as an alternative forum unless the overall environment

between both countries improved. It was surprising that the interviewed journalists showed little concern about what impact such coverage could likely have on the public perception.

The study also explores an interplay of framing and securitization. The findings provide a clear idea that the coverage of bilateral conflict in India and Pakistan justifies war and has a securitization agenda (Buzan, 1997). The implications of such coverage in making the audience more accepting of the hawkish foreign policy steps taken by their respective governments as well as the consequences for the overall peace and stability of the region have been discussed. How the findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on conflict framing, war/peace journalism, and securitization is also part of this dissertation. It shows that researchers should also focus on frame-building processes to put the news frames in context. In the conclusion, limitations of this research as well as future directions for researchers interested in the study of framing and framing-building have also been discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

India and Pakistan have had a fragile and conflict-riddled relationship spanning almost seven decades and both countries have remained engaged in building nuclear weapons at the cost of environmental and poverty priorities (Kreft & Eckstein, 2013; Ganguly & Hagerty, 2006). Despite growing concerns shown by the global community on the spread and safety of Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenal (Waltz & Sagan 2003; Kapur, 2005; Panda, 2016), the civil and military leadership in both countries have justified acquisition of nuclear capability on the grounds of deterrence towards the enemy state and to safeguard national security (Express Tribune, 2015; Athale, 2009). The disputed status of Kashmir valley is at the core of the conflict between India and Pakistan and cross-border firing across the line of control (*the effective international border*) in Kashmir has raised fresh concerns of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan (Singh, 2016; Dean & Summers, 2016; CNN, 2016).

The Indo-Pak Conflict

What if a war between Pakistan and India went nuclear? This was the headline of an article in Newsweek magazine that raised concerns about the escalating tensions in South Asia leading to a potential nuclear confrontation (O’hanlon, 2015). The question raised in the article’s headline wasn’t just rhetorical. Rather, it was based on consistently deteriorating relationship and steadily increasing war hysteria spanning several decades in both Pakistan and India, two neighboring countries in South Asia. India and Pakistan have had a hostile bilateral relationship since achieving independence from the British empire in 1947 (Hodson, 1985). Both countries have fought four wars and have remained engaged in building nuclear weapons at the cost of environmental and poverty concerns (Kreft & Eckstein, 2013; Ganguly & Hagerty, 2006). Three

of these wars (1948, 1965, and 1998) were fought over control of Kashmir valley, which is a disputed region in the Himalayas (Hashim, 2014; Vij, 2015). The Line of Control (LoC) marks the international boundary that divides the Kashmir valley in two parts, each of the two parts under the administrative control of India and Pakistan, and cross-border firing across LoC has become a regular feature (CNN, 2016; BBC, 2016; Kumar & Masood, 2016). Das (2010) has argued that the rhetoric of using nuclear capability for deterrence in both India and Pakistan was rooted in respective cultures, national identities, and an urge to gain regional superiority. Zook (2000) found it troubling that the official narrative on the justifications offered for testing nuclear weapons in the late 1990s both India and Pakistan was hardly challenged in either country. Both countries have regularly accused each other of indulging in cross-border terrorism and the media has been quick to follow the official line (Haider & Haider, 2015; Jain & Tiwary, 2015; Khan, 2015; Abbas, 2016).

This unending rivalry between India and Pakistan, spanning almost seventy years, has taken its toll on the people of both sides of the border. Because of these issues, both India and Pakistan have been allocating huge chunks of their respective resources for defense and military expenses each year (Deger & Sen, 1990; Iqbal, 2014). This has resulted in a situation where the social development indicators in both countries are consistently dismal but the governments have not paid any heed to this challenge. The United Nations (2014) showed that India is the single largest country with the largest share of the extremely poor population across the globe. Kiani (2014) pointed towards Pakistan's national economic survey to highlight that more than half of the country's population was living below the poverty line. It also showed that the Pakistani government had missed targets for economic growth and progress and was relying on fudging of figures instead of doing anything concrete for their people. Paul (2006) argued that the power

imbalance between India and Pakistan in terms of military capability and the quest to gain regional superiority was behind this antagonism towards each other. He saw no chances of this rivalry coming to an end in the near future if the race for superiority continued. One of the major reasons for poverty in both countries in that both India and Pakistan, having become hostage to hostile bilateral relations, have not been able to maximize the benefits of trade with each other. Independent analysts believe that the current volume of Indo-Pak trade has the potential of increasing by 5-10 times, if relations between both countries were normalized (Taneja, 2013; Khan, 2016). However, the political leadership in India and Pakistan has not been receptive to this potential. Instead, they have contributed in heightening the political tensions through aggressive statements and policies towards each other. Rajendram (2014) regretted that such political rhetoric completely disregards what consequences it may have at the regional and international levels.

Significance of the Problem

Successive regimes in India and Pakistan have failed to address the adverse nature of bilateral relationship. However, the regime changes in Pakistan (2013) and India (2014), respectively, raised fresh hopes for a thaw in strained ties (Grare, 2014; Mallet & Bokhari, 2013). Pakistan's prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who assumed power after the country's general elections in 2013, had a reputation of being favorable towards trade deals and improved relations with India (Boone, Burke, & Graham-Harrison, 2013). After becoming the prime minister of India following national elections in 2014, Narendra Modi also called upon both India and Pakistan to cooperate economically and become allies in fighting poverty instead of fighting with each other (Nelson, 2014). Pakistan's prime minister, Nawaz Sharif visited Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's oath-taking ceremony in India on a special invitation while Modi visited

Pakistan as Sharif's personal guest to attend his grand-daughter's wedding (Singh & Saifi, 2015; Buncombe, 2014). Following these overtures, both countries announced resumption of peace talks aimed at finding a solution to contentious issues, after a hiatus of almost seven years, in the latter half of 2015 (Haider & Bhattacharjee, 2015; Razdan, 2015). The optimism expressed on both sides was short-lived though and a terrorist attack on an airbase in India in the first week of January 2016 reversed all efforts that were underway for normalizing the India-Pakistan relationship (Yousaf, 2016; Guha, 2016). The Indian government leveled accusations of Pakistan's involvement in Pathankot attack, but Pakistan refuted these allegations outright (AFP, 2016; Express Tribune, 2016). This was followed by another terrorist attack on an army camp in Uri town (*part of Indian-administered Kashmir*) which killed seventeen Indian soldiers (Ahmad, Phillip, & Berlinger, 2016). India again accused Pakistan of masterminding the attack and also made claims of sending troops inside Pakistani-administered Kashmir for a surgical strike against the perpetrators of Uri attack (Roggio, 2016; BBC, 2016). Pakistan also accused India of killing nine people in Pakistan-administered Kashmir in an attack on a bus in Bhimber town (Dewan, 2016).

These back-to-back terrorism incidents not only brought the India-Pakistan relationship to a standstill once again but also raised fresh concerns about misuse of nuclear weapons in case both countries went to war. The Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi, accused Pakistan of waging proxy wars in India ahead of the peace talks between both countries (Tomkiw, 2014). The Indian army chief made a statement in which he said that India was ready for war with Pakistan (Dawn, 2015). In response, Pakistan's defense minister was reported as saying that his country was ready for any kind of war with India and will "*inflict heavy losses on India*" (Firstpost, 2015). Pakistan's interior minister said that Pakistani forces were ready to respond to

any foreign aggression and “*Pakistan was capable of teaching India a lesson*” (Haider, 2015). Thompson (2015) maintained that India and Pakistan appeared to be drifting towards a full-scale war because cross-border firings between the security forces of both countries had substantially increased since 2012 and the bilateral ceasefire agreement signed by both India and Pakistan in 2003 had lost meaning. Thousands of people along the border on both sides had to evacuate when armed clashes between Indian and Pakistani security forces intensified (Reuters, 2015). The international community has reacted to the rivalry between India and Pakistan with considerable concern and urged restraint (Carsten, Blanchard, & Macfie, 2016; Haider, 2015; Brunnstrom & Ali, 2015). However, the situation has worsened instead of showing any signs of improvement. The security forces of both countries have continued to exchange fire on the border and the government functionaries have also issued open threats of using nuclear weapons against the *enemy country* in the case of a full-fledged war (Dean & Summers, 2016; Singh, 2016). In the book ‘*War Made Easy*’, Solomon (2005) has pointed towards a similar trend in the United States where the planning and arguments in support of different wars have been an outcome of the deliberations among a select group within the ruling elite and these plans are only made public after all final decisions have been taken and executed, more often than not. The public and the media are then expected to follow the official narrative and any dissenting opinion is viewed as being against the national interest. The same appears to be happening in India and Pakistan as well.

The news coverage in both India and Pakistan has flashed statements made by civilian and military leadership about giving a fitting response to the *enemy* while calls for sanity and restraint or any voices questioning the rationale of a potential war have largely been marginalized (Abbas, 2016; Singh & Nauman, 2016). This dissertation analyzes the coverage of

the fresh round of conflict that started in 2016 in Indian and Pakistani newspapers and asks whether it has contributed to promoting peace or war. A United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report in 2015 pointed out that India had the highest number of illiterates in any country while almost 70 percent of the country's population was living in rural areas (Kumari, 2016; PTI, 2016). Almost 67 percent of the Pakistani population lives in rural areas while the literacy rate is only 58 percent (World Bank, 2016; Haq, 2015). The combined population of India and Pakistan is close to 1.5 billion which is almost twenty percent of the world population (Worldometers, 2016; IndexMundi, 2016). Several surveys have found that Indians and Pakistanis have a very negative perception of each other and view the neighboring country as the biggest threat to their own country's security (Pew, 2014; Pew, 2011). Therefore, how the media in India and Pakistan frames this conflict becomes very significant in the context of long-term peace and prosperity of these countries and the entire region.

Research Focus

For the purpose of this research, the Uri attack in Indian-administered Kashmir on September 18, 2016 that killed 18 soldiers and the Bhimber attack in Pakistani-administered Kashmir on November 15, 2016 that killed nine people (including seven soldiers) were selected as the universe of study (Abbas, 2016; Ahmad, Phillips, & Berlinger, 2016). The rationale for selecting these two incidents (one on each side of the LoC) is that both targeted the soldiers and the framing in newspapers was most likely to invoke national security concerns after an incident like that. Moreover, both these incidents (Uri and Bhimber) resulted in the largest number of casualties across the line of control (LoC) on the Indian and Pakistani side ever since the fresh round of conflict between the security forces of both countries broke out in early 2016. The news

stories were selected from three English-language newspapers each, from India (The Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Hindu) and Pakistan (Dawn, The Nation, The News). The selected newspapers are the top three newspapers in each country in terms of circulation (RSCI, 2016; Rasheed, 2016). The news stories in these newspapers (including news stories, editorials, op-eds, and letters to the editor) for the content analysis were selected using the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe database. The duration specified for the selection of news stories was one week from the day of incident in both India and Pakistan. The rationale behind looking at the coverage beyond the first day of the incident was to explore how the emotions running high immediately after the incident sustained or withered away during the subsequent days. The tendency to promote war or peace was likely to be on display in the most obvious manner in the immediate aftermath of these incidents. The content was coded based on the themes emerging from the data and analyzed accordingly. The assumption was that the data will highlight reliance on conflict and national security frames and marginalization of the consequences for general public because of heavy defense spending and a potential war.

This dissertation went a step further and also explored the process of frame-building (Scheufele, 1999). For this purpose, interviews were conducted with thirty journalists (fifteen each in India and Pakistan) who cover defense, politics, diplomacy, and national security issues in either country. A snowball sampling technique was used to select these journalists (Bernard & Ryan, 2009). They were asked questions about the frame-building process, reasons and motivations for selecting the frames emerging from the content analysis of news coverage related to bilateral conflict, and their thoughts on the implications of such an approach. The data was analyzed to contextualize the framing approach and how it was contributing to the cause of war and peace in the region. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the

understanding of framing national security issues, frame-building processes attached to such practice, and the consequences of such a trend in the public in countries like India and Pakistan.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research was to analyze the coverage of cross-border conflict and terrorism incidents in Kashmir valley in the Indian and Pakistani print media (Dewan, 2016; Ahmad, Phillips, & Berlinger, 2016). The frames used in six leading newspapers, three each from India and Pakistan, were analyzed to find out whether the media in both countries was contributing to war rhetoric or promoting peace. In addition to analyzing the media frames, frame-building was also discussed in interviews with journalists, who cover such issues in both India and Pakistan. The purpose of these interviews was to find out the reasons and motivations of these journalists in using certain frames in their news stories, and whether there were any alternatives available for journalists in such a situation instead of toeing the official policy (Senn, 2016; Pinto, 2014).

Research Questions

This research aimed to explore the following research questions:

RQ-1: Does conflict framing dominate the coverage of India-Pakistan relationship in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers?

RQ-2: Does the coverage of the Indo-Pak conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers focus on solutions and the human cost of war in each country?

RQ-3: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers indulge in thematic or episodic framing while covering the Kashmir conflict?

RQ-4: What is the process of frame-building when journalists in India and Pakistan cover incidents related to bilateral conflict?

RQ-5: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote war journalism?

RQ-6: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote peace journalism?

RQ-7: Does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote securitization in India and Pakistan?

RQ-8: Does social media offer an alternative voice in the coverage of issues related to India-Pakistan conflict?

RQ-9: Do the track-two initiatives between India and Pakistan offer an opportunity to address issues related to the coverage of bilateral conflict in both countries?

RQ-10: Do the journalists in India and Pakistan have any suggestions for improvement in the existing standards of coverage related to bilateral conflict?

Research Approach

The research approach taken in this dissertation is two-dimensional. Galtung's (2002) war and peace journalism model guided the content analysis of news stories in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers. The peace journalism model not only focuses on problems arising out of war and violence-based framing but also presents a solution to such problems by focusing on the humans attached to such issues (Galtung, 2002). This approach looks at journalism as solution-oriented instead of the traditional media framing that posits security issues as victory-oriented (Galtung, 2007; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). I have argued that the newspapers in India and Pakistan promote conflict and highlight official versions of national security issues instead of focusing on the problems caused to the common people. Lynch (2008) has made a case that the journalists need to present the root causes associated with the conflicts, e.g. poverty and prior abuse, instead of just reporting what exists on the surface. This is likely to be true in the case of conflicts originating from national security concerns as well. Therefore, it is all the more

important to apply the theoretical lens of peace journalism to the Indo-Pak print media's coverage of security issues and analyze whether the newspapers in both countries are part of the problem or part of solution in the existing volatile situation. Ottosen (2010) has pointed out that peace journalism "presents a conscious choice: to identify other options for the readers/viewers by offering a solution-orientated, people-orientated and truth-orientated approach" (p. 262). Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) have defined peace journalism as the choice made by the reporters and editors "about what to report and how to report it, which creates opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent, developmental responses to conflict" (p. 5). Galtung & Fischer (2013) have maintained that conflict is a low road that is presented as a battle in the media whereas peace journalism can potentially be a high road that presents opportunities for resolution to that conflict and human progress. Lee & Maslog (2005) analyzed the coverage of conflicts in ten Asian newspapers from five countries (including India and Pakistan) and found that the major emphasis in this coverage was on war journalism instead of promoting peace. Hanitzsch (2004) has maintained that the settlement of conflicts was essentially a responsibility of the political and military leaderships, but peace journalism could play a contributory role in achieving that purpose. In the case of India and Pakistan, where press freedom has consistently ranked low on global indices (Rana, 2014; Siraj, 2009), and the work of journalists is constantly threatened by different pressure groups, commercial considerations, and state censorship, choosing a peace journalism path is easier said than done. However, if the stakeholders can be involved and made to believe that peace journalism can bring them dividends and public approval on the same lines as the war framing has traditionally done, it might be a viable way forward when it comes to the coverage of security issues in the mainstream media.

Therefore, the second part of this research investigated the process of frame-building (Brüggemann, 2014; Hänggli, 2011). Interviews with the journalists in both India and Pakistan were conducted to find out their reasons for using certain frames in the conflict between both countries. The purpose of qualitative interviewing is “to capture how those being interviewed view their world, to learn their terminology and judgments, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences” (Patton, 2015, p. 442). I argue that the journalists covering national security issues justify the use of war journalism framing during the frame-building process. Therefore, the interplay of securitization and framing was the second area of investigation focused in this dissertation. The traditional security complex theory proposed by Buzan (1997) posits that security was not a content of military action alone but a political game played by the relevant stakeholders to highlight existential threats in order to muster support for emergent actions. The securitization theory further builds on this argument and calls for studying securitization through the study of “discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise be obeyed?” (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, p. 25). Therefore, when the political and security actors achieve the purpose of taking steps beyond rules and procedures, the securitization process is completed. The reluctance of Pakistan and India to adhere to the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) protocols on the premise that nuclear capability is necessary for regional peace is a case in point (Weitz, 2011; Kimball & McGoldrick, 2007). Senn (2016) has maintained that in the process of securitization, “actors use speech-acts, so-called securitization moves, to persuade an audience that a valued referent object faces an existential threat and that extraordinary measures should be taken to avert this threat” (p. 2). These characteristics of securitization theory are in line with

Galtung's (2002) war journalism model, which is "violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, elite-oriented and victory-oriented" (Ottosen, 2010, p. 262). The traditional conflict and violence framing used by the journalists in their work can contribute towards the process of securitization (Barone & Swan, 2009; Bickerstaff et. al., 2008). The process becomes even more complex when the conflict is not internal, but involves multiple countries (Ahn, 2010; Das, 2010). This study asks how the same appears to be happening in the case of Indian and Pakistani media's coverage of cross-border conflict in the disputed Kashmir valley through the lens of national security.

Methods

The methodology used in this dissertation includes qualitative content analysis and interviews. Content analysis is an important technique that helps to make sense of the data and make it more analyzable. Content analysis has been used to study media content since the 19th century (Harwood & Garry, 2003). The arguments in favor of the qualitative content analysis, to go beyond the numbers and find out their underlying meanings), also make a compelling case (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis is useful for identifying themes, trends, and patterns over a certain period of time (Herring et. al., 2007; Stemler, 2001; Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989). Krippendorff (1980) has pointed out that each content analysis should focus on answering six basic questions (data to be analyzed; definition of the data; population from which data is drawn; context relative to the data analysis; boundary conditions for the analysis; target of the inference). Evidence from previous literature points out that content analysis can be an effective methodology for making cross-national comparisons and for identification of the differences in coverage as well as emerging themes and patterns in respective countries (Singh, Zhao, & Hu, 2005; De Vreese. Peter, & Semetko, 2001; Browne,

1998). Therefore, qualitative content analysis was used as one of the data collection and analysis techniques for this research. This dissertation used a combination of conventional (what does the content say) and summative (what it means) content analysis techniques (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The content in the media has an agenda-setting function as well and can influence the formation of public opinions (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004; De Vreese, 2001; McCombs & Shaw, 1993). However, audience effects and making any kind of causal connection between the content analyzed and how it shapes the public opinion was beyond the scope of this dissertation. This dissertation only analyzed the inherent meanings of coverage involving two hostile neighboring countries and discusses the implications of such a coverage for the future of general public in both the countries. When two neighboring countries like India and Pakistan with a hostile bilateral history have nuclear capability, whether the print media's coverage contributes to promoting this conflict or raises questions against this practice merits scholarly attention. This dissertation aims to fill that gap.

Roadmap of the Dissertation

The second chapter of this dissertation places the India-Pakistan rivalry in the historical context and explores how Kashmir valley and cross-border tension across the Line of Control (LoC) have become a flashpoint pointing towards escalating war hysteria over the last few years. This chapter also discusses the way Indian and Pakistani media have traditionally covered the bilateral conflict, efforts in the mainstream media and track-II dialogues to improve the coverage focused on conflict. The concerns raised by the media, think-tanks, and international community regarding the potential of this conflict to snowball into a full-fledged war threatening the (*mis*)use of nuclear weapons have also been discussed. The third chapter of the dissertation discusses theoretical definitions and implications of conflict framing (De Vreese, 2012), the

interplay of framing with war and peace journalism (Galtung, 2002), and securitization (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998; Buzan, 1997). It shows how media framing promotes conflict and war journalism on priority, particularly when two countries are involved in conflict, in addition to showing how frame-building processes are important to understand the framing approach. It further points out how conflict framing and war journalism can promote securitization. The fourth chapter details methodological choices taken during the course of this research, interviews and content analysis, and how these methods are used for sampling, data collection, coding, and analysis of the data gathered. The fifth chapter of this research presents key findings from the content analysis and how those are related to the research questions of this study. It shows how the framing of bilateral conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers shows a kind of homogeneity. The newspapers in each country were found to be focusing on conflict framing and war journalism, and relied on official sources to promote the national security narrative prevalent in their own country while marginalizing the human cost of war. The sixth chapter presented key findings from the interviews and how those findings relate to the research questions of this project. The findings showed that the news television was driving conflict framing and war journalism in each country and was dominating the agenda of print newspapers as well. The data also showed that the frame-building processes were affected by the private media ownership and presence of pressure groups that didn't leave any space for the pro-peace elements in the media content. The journalists did not express any hope for improvement in the coverage unless the overall relationship between both countries improved. The seventh chapter discussed the implications of key findings, and how the conflict framing and frame-building process were contributing to the securitization process in each country. The consequences of such trends for India-Pakistan bilateral relations, as well as the media, and general public in both countries was

also highlighted. The limitations of research and future directions for researchers interested in this topic were also discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE INDIA-PAKISTAN CONUNDRUM

This chapter provides historical context of the troubled history between India and Pakistan and why it turned volatile immediately after partition from the Britain in 1947. The background of the disputed status of Kashmir valley as an issue central to the conflict between both countries and how it has led to three of the four full-scale wars between India and Pakistan has also been discussed. The second half of this chapter outlines how Indian and Pakistani media has traditionally framed bilateral conflict through the lens of national security narrative defined by the ruling elite, efforts in the mainstream media and track-II dialogue to address the prevalent situation, as well as the important contributions of this research project.

Kashmir Conflict: Background

Britain ruled the Indian subcontinent for almost nine decades (1858-1947) before they decided to leave in the wake of growing unrest and demands of independence (Kaul, 2011; Bates, 2011). In united India, Muslims were about 22 percent of the total population as compared to 68 percent Hindus (Kaufmann, 1998). The political forces demanding independence were also strongly divided on ethnic and religious grounds, which made the Muslims apprehensive that they might face discrimination in united India after the departure of Britain (Ali, 2011; Kuran & Singh, 2010; Ahmed, 2002). Indian National Congress was campaigning for a united India after independence but All India Muslim League (*representing the Muslim population of the Indian subcontinent*) demanded a separate country for Muslims based on the Muslim-majority areas. When the leadership of All India Muslim League and Indian National Congress failed to agree on a joint plan for partition, the British government announced the plan to create two separate states (Kaufmann, 1998; Ahmad, 2003). The process of partition itself was riddled with conflict

and violence. It was the largest mass migration in history till that time, involving more than twelve million people, who were forced to leave their homes and belongings, more than 75,000 women were raped, and over one million people were killed (Ahmed, 2002; Bates, 2011). This sowed the seeds of bad blood between the two newly created independent states (Pakistan and India) from the outset instead of resolving the already existing differences between the Hindu and Muslim population in united India.

The primary dispute between India and Pakistan to begin with was on the partition of princely states and distribution of other resources (Mir, 2014; Schofield, 2000). When the Indian subcontinent was divided into two separate and independent countries (Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan) by the outgoing British rulers in 1947, there were more than 500 princely states in the Indian subcontinent that were given the option to align with India or Pakistan (Schofield, 2002). In most of the cases, the decision was taken based on the sentiments (and religion) of the majority population. The ruler of Kashmir valley, Raja Hari Singh, chose to stay neutral (Telegraph, 2001). Unlike some other princely states, the status of Kashmir was unique in a way because the ruler, Raja Hari Singh, was Hindu but majority of the population (more than 77 percent) in the valley were Muslims (Das, 1950). Raja Hari Singh, instead, wrote to both the governments, in India and Pakistan, and asked them to sign a “*standstill agreement*” with Kashmir. Pakistan signed the agreement whereby some services like post, telegraph, and railways in Kashmir valley were to be handled by Pakistan (Das, 1950). India never signed this agreement. This sparked a controversy as an internal revolt broke out against Raja Hari Singh while he faced hostility on the external front from Pakistan as well (Hashim, 2014). The government in the newly created state of Pakistan considered the decision of Raja Hari Singh to stay neutral as an unjust decision and argued that it should have aligned with Pakistan, given the

majority of the population were Muslims. When the ruler of Kashmir refused to acknowledge this demand, armed tribesmen from Pakistan invaded Kashmir in October 1947 (Hashim, 2014). Overwhelmed by internal and external pressures, Raja Hari Singh sought military aid from India. The Indian government refused to send in troops unless Kashmir ceded to India (Devdas, 2015). Therefore, Raja Hari Singh signed the accession document on October 26, 1947 to pave the way for the Indian military to enter the Kashmir valley and fight Pakistan.

The signing of Kashmir's accession document with India has been a subject of controversy in itself. The Pakistani side claims that the accession document was signed with India under duress because India had threatened Raja Hari Singh with the use of force and the accession document had already been signed before the Pakistani tribesman went in (Schofield, 2002; Gupta, 1967). The accession document was supposed to be a temporary arrangement that handed over Kashmir's defense, communications, and foreign affairs to India until a time when a plebiscite could be held under normal circumstances to determine the future and governance of Kashmir valley (The Hindu, 2016). Both India and Pakistan claimed Kashmir was their *integral* part and it started a bitter conflict that has spanned almost seven decades (Hunt, 2016). Both countries have fought four full-fledged wars during this period, in addition to several cross-border conflicts in Kashmir and other fronts, and this issue has become a major roadblock in the efforts to normalize Indo-Pak relations.

Indo-Pak Wars on Kashmir

Three out of the four wars between India and Pakistan have been fought on the issue of Kashmir. The first war between India and Pakistan started soon after partition in May 1948 when the Pakistani troops followed armed tribesmen, who had already entered Kashmir a few months ago for guerilla fighting, to fight the Indian military that was called in by the ruler of the valley,

Raja Hari Singh (Swami, 2006). The war ended on January 1, 1949 when the United Nations intervened and a ceasefire was reached on the promise that the Indian government will conduct a referendum to grant the Kashmiri population the right to self-determination. At the time of the ceasefire, almost two-third area of the Kashmir valley was under the Indian control which now forms the Indian-administered Kashmir while the remaining one-third area is the Pakistani-administered Kashmir while the ceasefire line is referred to as the Line of Control (LoC) overseen by a United Nations observer mission (Subramaniam, 2016; Telegraph, 2001). The second Indo-Pak war was fought in 1965 after troops of both countries consistently clashed across the line of control (LoC). The war went on for a couple of weeks but the international community quickly got involved to defuse the situation. The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution asking both countries to ceasefire and find a solution to the Kashmir conflict while the United States and United Kingdom threatened to cut-off arms supplies to both countries (US State Department, 2016; Vij, 2015). Both sides agreed to the ceasefire following the intervention of international community, and each of them claimed victory despite the war ending in a stalemate (Vij, 2015; Amin, 2001). The third war between India and Pakistan was fought in the then East Pakistan, which became a separate country (Bangladesh) after the war as the Indian troops supported the uprising there (Dummett, 2011; BBC, 2002). This was the only war between both countries that had no direct link to Kashmir valley. The fourth war between the hostile South Asian neighbors was fought again in the Kargil sector (part of the Himalayan region) to gain control of the Kashmir valley. The United States had to intervene to bring the war to an end after troops from both sides suffered heavy casualties (Abbas, 2017; Henderson, 2015). This war conspicuously started only a couple of months after the prime ministers of both India and Pakistan had initiated a peace dialogue and the military in Pakistan staged a coup to topple

the elected government soon after the war ended (Haqqani, 2003; Haider, 2002). The military ruler of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, after assuming power in October 1999 declared that Pakistan had won the Kargil war but India had done better propaganda because it had more news television stations compared to only a state-run television station in Pakistan (Punathambekar & Kumar, 2015; Mufti, 2007). This shows a mindset prevalent in both countries, India and Pakistan, where media is viewed by the ruling elite as a propaganda tool to further the official national security narrative instead of looking after the public interest and working as an independent watchdog for the government, military, and other powerful pressure groups.

Role of Media in Indo-Pak Relations

The role of media in Indo-Pak relations has come under considerable scrutiny from the independent observers, opinion writers, advocacy groups, and think-tanks in both countries as well as internationally. Jawad (2016) argued that the media on both sides of the border was aggravating the conflict instead of making any attempt to resolve it. The media on both sides is mainly being used for propaganda purposes as the media professionals give a spin to news stories that fit the national security narrative in their own country instead of challenging the official accounts (Islam, 2016; Mustafa, 2004). On the other hand, international media often challenges the official narrative peddled by the Indian and Pakistani governments on matters related to bilateral conflict because they are not under any pressure (Subramaniam, 2016; Khan et. al, 2015). Kamath (2005) found that media becomes an extension agent of their respective government's narratives in India and Pakistan and the choice of words as well as headlines given to news stories like sports and business etc., which are even unrelated to bilateral conflict, are also written in a way to portray a clear winner and a loser. Chattarji (2011) argued that the framing of a game of *cricket* (most popular sports in India and Pakistan) as war was a deliberate

strategy to promote stereotypes, in addition to nationalism and religious identities, in line with the two-nation theory (Muslim and Hindu) that led to the partition of united India in 1947. These themes could only be reinforced if the focus remained on conflict, instead of talking about problem solution and moving away from the troubled history of the neighboring countries. In fact, the growing conflict in South Asia had provided an incentive to media professionals and there had been a mushrooming growth of new media outlets eying this conflict as an opportunity to attract more readership and viewership (Tekwani, 2008; Lloyd & Howard, 2005). This trend is quite similar to other developing countries in the region with authoritarian regimes where the media focuses on conflict, and national security narratives are framed as being of utmost importance (Ozohu-Suleiman & Ishak, 2014).

The popularity of primetime talk-shows on television has shown phenomenal growth in both India and Pakistan during the last two decades. These shows consistently take-up the issue of bilateral conflict, which generates high ratings and viewership numbers. However, how the topic is approached, the choice of guests, and arguments that potentially add further fuel to fire in these primetime television talk-shows have been viewed as contributing to war rhetoric (Seth, 2016; Mustafa, 2013). These talk-shows promote the idea of suspending peace talks and going to a full-scale war as the only viable option to settle the conflict once and for all (Saleem, 2016; Jagdev, 2013). There have been several talk-shows and television stations in both countries that have taken extreme positions each time there is a cross-border conflict between both countries and have urged their governments to go all out in a military response to teach the *enemy* a lesson (George, 2016; Kugelman, 2016). Whenever the tension between both countries escalates, the first step that is taken by each government is to ban media content from the other country, so that the audience are only exposed to one-sided propaganda (Paneerselvan, 2016; Dearden, 2016;

Safi, 2016). The media in Pakistan has always been a mouthpiece of the ruling elite. Because the official narrative has been primarily influenced by national security and conflict, the same has consistently reflected in the media coverage as well (Hussain, 2016; Keeble, Tulloch & Zollman, 2010). There have been occasional changes in this trend only when the governments have shifted focus from war to peace, economic cooperation, and people-to-people contact. However, these maneuvers have mostly been short-lived given the nature of the bilateral relationship that is always on tip of an iceberg. One prime example of such peace framing was during the 2004-06 era when both governments decided to engage in high-level dialogue to find a resolution to outstanding issues, keeping Kashmir on the backburner. The then president of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, and the Indian prime minister at the time, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had even initiated back-channel efforts to find a viable solution to the Kashmir conflict (Mishra, 2016; Bukhari, 2015; Naqvi, 2006). However, the terrorist attack in the Indian city of Mumbai in 2008 derailed the entire process when India accused a Pakistan-based militant group of carrying out those attacks (Constable, 2011; Ramesh et. al, 2008). A similar effort championed by the prime ministers of India and Pakistan in the late 1990s was wrecked when Pakistan's powerful military took over in a bloodless coup in 1999, a couple of months after an armed conflict with India in Kargil (Haqqani, 2003; Haider, 2002). Several independent observers have maintained that India and Pakistan didn't want a political settlement of the Kashmir issue because both of them feared *losing an integral part* to the enemy. Therefore, maintaining status quo that promoted conflict and shifted the attention away from any possible solutions or alternatives works in favor of the ruling elite in both countries (Dobhal, 2017; Ashraf, 2016; Wiseman, 2002). Therefore, it suits the designs of the ruling establishments, be it the civilian governments or the military, to use the

media as an extension agent for that agenda. The media owners and professionals working for them also seem to be happy to keep towing the line for personal gains.

Peace Journalism and Track-II Initiatives

It has not always been an entirely gloomy scenario in the Indian and Pakistani media and there have been occasional calls for using the power of media for constructive purposes to promote peace instead of adding to the trust deficit between the two countries that have always been on the brink of war (Dutt, 2016; Khan, 2011; Lakshmi, 2009). However, any practical attempts to promote peace between both countries through constructive use of the power of media, e.g. the '*Aman ki Asha*' (*Destination Peace*) project jointly initiated by the Times of India media group in India and Jang media group in Pakistan, have been quickly dubbed as a conspiracy despite showing initial promise, only because these efforts were not in line with the official narrative (Mastikhan, 2015; Ashraf, 2012; Shah, 2010). Any other efforts in either India and Pakistan that questioned the tactics of the powerful civil and military establishment in each country have also been dealt with highhandedness and arm-twisting to silence their voices (Ali, 2017; Varadarajan, 2016; Vij, 2016). It comes as no surprise then that both India and Pakistan rank consistently low on press freedom indices and among the most dangerous countries for working journalists (Freedom House, 2016; PTI, 2016). Despite the criticism on the role of mainstream media in further escalating Indo-Pak conflict and how the ruling elite in each country has used censorship to silence independent voices, the emergence of social media has offered a ray of hope. How the social media users in India and Pakistan are engaging in debates that challenge preexisting notions and offer a chance to build peace through alternative platforms and active citizen diplomacy has received attention recently (Seth, 2016; Ali & Ajaz, 2014). Khalid (2014) has argued that citizen diplomacy had the potential to put pressure on elected

representatives in both countries and offer solutions to the prevalent hostile environment. This is easier said than done though. There have been times when social media users have also used these alternative platforms as a battleground to promote conflict and hate towards each other, similar to mainstream media (Khan, 2016; Munir, 2015; Khan, 2013). The governments in both countries, on the other hand, are making efforts to curb freedom of expression through social media, because of the potential it offers to challenge the prevalent national security narrative and disseminate dissenting views at the mass level (Ali, 2017; Islam, 2016).

Some advocacy groups promoting bilateral peace through track-II diplomacy between India and Pakistan have made an effort to include media professionals in such dialogues as well in order to sensitize them to the crucial role media can play in improving relations between both countries (Maini & Hamdani, 2014; Malik, 2012). These track-II dialogues are positive in a way that these have at least initiated a dialogue on contentious issues by bringing stakeholders from both countries on a joint platform to make policy recommendations after taking stock of the existing situation in a candid manner (Ahmad, 2016; Goldberg, 2013). However, these track-II dialogues have not been able to bring about an improvement in the framing of news stories and conflict reporting in India and Pakistan for three basic reasons. To start with, these dialogues are held at offshore locations with only like-minded participants. Therefore, these dialogues have no official backing and the recommendations they make are hardly ever followed up by the ruling elite at the official level. Similarly, those journalists who are really involved in promoting war journalism in decision-making roles are seldom part of these dialogues. The reports and press releases of these track-II dialogues are carried infrequently in the media in India and Pakistan because the organizers of these meetings are generally secretive about it fearing backlash and also because the recommendations made during these dialogues are not in line with the popular

national security narrative (Menon, Majid, & Shankaran, 2016; Syed, 2015). Because of these reasons, the track-II initiatives have seldom had any tangible impact on media framing in either of the two countries.

Rationale for this Study

The role of media and how they were framing conflict and other bilateral issues in India and Pakistan has received substantial focus of the academic community. Hussain (2015) provided evidence that news framing in Indian and Pakistani newspapers was heavily dominated by conflict and Kashmir-centric news stories, in addition to showing tendencies of war journalism. Riaz & Pasha (2009) found that Pakistan's largest circulating English-language newspaper, Dawn, had framed India as enemy in majority of the news stories while the reliance predominantly in those news stories was on official sources. Viswam (2010) has pointed out that the tendency in the media is to promote the popular narrative to suit the preexisting mindsets in both countries when it comes to reporting about the Kashmir conflict. Lee & Maslog (2005) also found strong war journalism framing in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers and argued that it was not unexpected given the tensions between both countries. Zaheer (2016) compared framing related to Kashmir conflict in English-language and vernacular language (*Urdu*) newspapers in Pakistan. She found that war framing was dominant in both kinds of newspapers, but it was being practiced by Urdu-language newspapers a lot more than the English-language newspapers. Similarly, Gadda (2015) showed that the reporting of protests in the Indian-administered Kashmir valley was lacking impartiality and was relying on the official narrative. This finding makes sense particularly because the newspapers in local language mostly cater to the lower-income and less-educated population, which is likely to be more receptive to conspiracy theories and conflict framing. The framing in print media in India and Pakistan has mostly been found as

promoting violence and conflict when it comes to the Kashmir issue and there has been hardly any focus on promoting peace alternatives (Zia & Syedah, 2015; Sreedharan, 2009).

Aslam (2011) has maintained that there was greater acceptance of peace journalism in the newsrooms but there were several existing challenges in practicing it, in addition to not having any universal standards for reporting conflict. The fact that the governments in countries like India and Pakistan view media outlets as a propaganda tool aggravates the situation even further (Mustafa, 2004; Thussu, 2002). In the given scenario, it is evident that most of the scholarly focus has been on the framing of news stories related to conflict on Kashmir and bilateral issues in Pakistan and India. There has been hardly any evidence in the literature either in India or Pakistan where the scholars have analyzed the interplay of framing and securitization (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998; Buzan, 1997). This research aims to fill that gap because the combination of framing and securitization can have serious implications for the future generations in a nuclear-armed South Asia. Similarly, there has been hardly any focus in India and Pakistan on frame-building, i.e. the underlying processes and factors that play a role in framing of news stories (Hänggli, 2011; Scheufele, 1999). It is very difficult to understand *what* frames are being used without digging in-depth *how* those frames are being created and whether there are any impeding factors. The interviews with journalists in India and Pakistan have helped to provide answers to that important question. Providing a better understanding of the frame-building processes in India and Pakistan promises to be a pioneering contribution of this research project.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter looks at the framing approach, and its conceptual and operational definitions in relation with the existing research. Framing has been used extensively to investigate media content by researchers. This research focused on the selection of frames and what are the underlying factors that influence frame-building or the construction of frames. Theoretical underpinnings of the prevalent framing and frame-building practices in India and Pakistan and how these are contributing to promoting conflict and war journalism, marginalizing human cost of war, and showing a tendency of securitization in the region are other important points discussed in this chapter.

What is Framing?

Anthropologist, Gregory Bateson is credited with discussing the concept of framing for the first time in his 1972 book, “Steps to the Ecology of Mind” (Bateson, 1972). Goffman (1974) built on this work in sociology, from where it was picked up and used by scholars in psychology, communication, and other fields. There is considerable debate in the academic literature regarding Framing as a theory because of its conceptual diversity. Entman (1993) calls it “scattered conceptualization” (p. 51) because frames, framing, and framework have a common connotation and could be considered a part of one big umbrella. “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). This means that selected frames not only highlight certain parts of some information (text, image etc.), but also make it more salient for the audience. It must be noted that the frames are believed to influence

the majority of audience under certain conditions, and everybody who is exposed to a particular kind of framing at all times. The intensity of such an influence can vary from person to person though (Lecheler & De Vreese, 2011).

Scheufele (1999) has classified frames in two distinct types: media frames (used by the journalists to convey the information to the audience) and individual frames (used by the audience members to process the information). Framing in political communication has mostly studied media frames, in which certain aspects of a news story are highlighted and others are downplayed. Entman (1993) has provided an example of this practice from pre-war debate surrounding the U.S. policy towards Iraq in the first gulf war during 1990s. “The news frame included only two remedies, war now or sanctions now with war (likely) later, while problem definitions, causal analyses, and moral evaluations were homogeneous” (p. 55). Any viewpoint other than these two dominant frames was not considered newsworthy by the media and thus marginalized. Political elites, through careful manipulation of media, can influence the framing used by journalists and therefore have a subtle impact on public opinion as well. Scheufele (1999) believed that the journalists could themselves be influenced by frames used by other media organizations. Fishman (1980) has termed this phenomenon as *news wave*.

Entman (1993) has called for bringing different approaches related to framing under one umbrella that primarily deals with the selection and salience of frames. D’Angelo (2002), however, has disagreed with Entman’s (1993) perspective and argued that there was no need to strive for a single paradigm of framing because, in his opinion, the current diversification had led to research on framing in a comprehensive manner. He believed that “various, even competing, theories may be required to understand framing” (p. 872) and called for research on news framing to provide future directions. D’Angelo (2002) divided framing research in three

paradigms; cognitive, critical and constructionist. Both critical and constructionist paradigms are directly in line with the assumptions of this research. The constructionist paradigm addresses the processes behind the creation of frames while the critical paradigm argues that the frames are a direct outcome of the newsgathering routines of journalists where the information that dominates the coverage is conveyed from the perspective of ruling elites (D'Angelo, 2002). Responding to Entman (1993), D'Angelo (2002) stressed that the different definitions of framing were necessitated by different realities through which these frames were created. Therefore, there was no need for uniformity as such.

Scheufele (1999), on the other hand, lends support to Entman (1993) when he points out that “the term framing has been used repeatedly to label similar but distinctly different approaches” (p. 103). That is why framing has also been called an extension of agenda-setting (McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 1997). Scheufele (1999) identifies construction of social reality as the hallmark of the ongoing era of framing research and urges to build on that. “Within the realm of political communication, framing has to be defined and operationalized on the basis of social constructivism. Mass media actively set the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss public events” (p. 105). However, other factors (e. g. personal relevance to the issue, and willingness to engage in action etc.) can also play a role in how journalists frame an issue or how the audience members interpret it (Scheufele, 1999). To further emphasize on the importance of people involved in creating and interpreting frames, Scheufele (1999) proposed a process model of framing with four components; frame building, frame setting, individual level effects of framing, and a link between individual frames and media frames (p. 114-115). Both frame building (dealing with the processes behind the creation of frames) and frame setting (concerned with salience of issue attributes) have been borrowed from McCombs

and Shaw's (1972) agenda setting theory. Scheufele (1999) also argued that other than salience, perceived importance of the issue for the audience was also an important factor in how the frames worked. This dissertation, however, analyzes only frame-building and frame-setting because these are concerned with the working of journalists in India and Pakistan. The other two elements (individual level effects of framing and a link between individual frames and media frames) are concerned with audience analysis and framing effects. Therefore, those are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Importance of Framing in the Indo-Pak Context

This research looks at the framing of India-Pakistan conflict in the Kashmir valley in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers. With huge stakes attached to peace or conflict on both sides, how the media on both sides of the border covers two nuclear armed neighboring countries merits an investigation. The purpose is to find out whether framing used in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers to cover the terrorism incidents in Kashmir valley was highlighting conflict. With a joint population of close to 1.5 billion, the framing approach taken by the media can have serious implications for lasting peace in the region and the future of common people. How the people on either side look at the neighboring countries and whether they see a realistic chance of the resolution of these problems or not is an important outcome of how the issue has been framed in the media. McGoldrick & Lynch (2000) have made an important point when they argued that the understanding of conflict by journalists could contribute towards war and peace. For India and Pakistan (who have fought four wars with each other since independence in 1947), framing of conflict in the media becomes even more important. Iggers (1998) questioned the norm of objectivity of news reporting and believes that it is as good as dead. Even in a crumbling state, this norm of objectivity continued to remain an obstacle in the journalists playing a more

responsible role in social life or in conflicts. This objectivity becomes quite subjective in the case of India and Pakistan because instead of presenting both sides of the picture as the standard practice, the coverage in India and Pakistan relies predominantly on official narrative of the state.

Pan & Kosicki (1993) pointed out that news media played a very active role in framing public policy issues. “News discourse concerning public policy issues is carefully constructed. This occurs in part because both politicians and interest groups take an increasingly proactive approach to amplify their views of what an issue is” (p. 55). The same argument can be made in the case of India-Pakistan hostility, when politicians make well thought-out fiery speeches about nuclear capability as being necessary for national security and these are reproduced verbatim in the media. These politicians make news with their words, but the way these are highlighted and framed by the media, instead of questioning the official narrative, serves the purpose of the politicians. Wolfsfeld (1997) said that the “news media consider elites (political figures or otherwise) inherently newsworthy and rely on them as their major sources of information” (p. 17). Iyengar (1991) calls the reproduction of these political statements *episodic* coverage that do not explore the issues being discussed more *thematically*. It appears that when a politician is saying anything about a rival country, the journalists’ need to examine the facts is minimized even more. Nelson, Clawson & Oxley (1997) offer an explanation for this trend in the media. They believe that “journalists’ common reliance on elite sources for quotes, insight, analysis, and information means that the media often serve as conduits for individuals eager to promote a certain perspective to a broader public audience” (p. 568). They showed evidence how framing of conflicts could have a direct impact on the tolerance level of media’s audience. In doing so, the news media often presents a tailored version of reality by framing events or comments in a

way that can resonate with its target audience instead of annoying them. More often than not, any dissenting voices questioning the official narrative are dubbed as anti-national and unpatriotic.

Lee, McLeod & Shah (2008) looked at the issues of such dualism in media and pointed out that this was being practiced by an increasing number of journalists. “Depending on which particular aspects of conflict are highlighted in news stories, framing research has shown that individuals respond differently to news coverage (p. 696). When an element of national interest becomes involved when media outlets in rival countries become a party in pointing fingers towards the other, this tendency to tailor reality and offer different interpretations to their respective audience can aggravate. Johnson-Cartee (2004) maintained that media was the primary agent for constructing social realities for most Americans. Framing, according to them, is a way to construct that social reality. It was very difficult to ignore the framing used in media. Iyengar (1987) found evidence that the way television reported an issue resulted in changing the explanation of that issue for different people at individual level. As the general public primarily depends on the media for information and for making them aware about the alternatives and the possible course of action, it does matter how the media is framing these issues. The importance of framing is multiplied when relationship between two countries are at stake.

Conflict Framing

Media scholars have used the framing approach to look at the coverage of media on a variety of issues and in different contexts. Frames used by the media in political communication and cross-national relationship have been extensively studied as well with the results pointing towards the effectiveness of this approach in understanding how media highlights salience of certain issues and minimizes the others. Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) looked at five different news frames (attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and

morality) in both television and print media in the context of European politics. Although prior research suggested that conflict was the dominant frame in the US media, they found that attribution of responsibility was the most common frame in the Dutch media, both newspapers and television (p. 103). Although, the overall coverage in Dutch television was primarily episodic, the coverage in newspapers was opposite to this trend (more thematic). This is in case of Europe where the hostility towards each other is not as high as perhaps is apparent between India and Pakistan. It merits attention then if conflict would be the preferred frame when it comes to reporting terrorism related incidents in India and Pakistan (RQ1: Does conflict framing dominate the coverage of India-Pakistan relationship in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers?). There is evidence that when the journalists focus on conflict and marginalize the concerns of the general public attached to this conflict, they are showing a clear bias. Entman (2007) expressed the opinion that a particular slant in a news item reflects bias made by the decision-makers in that media organization. “Degree to which a single news construction favors one ideology, interest, group, issue stand, or individual against opponents is a function of the perceived facts plus the interactions of each side’s skill at news management with journalistic decision biases” (p. 167). In most cases, this bias is not even intended, but happens in an unassuming manner as part of an accepted daily routine. In the case of Indian and Pakistani media, it has been observed that they have considered it an obligation to keep the *national interest* (as defined by the government or military) supreme without caring for the fact that it can render their coverage biased.

Pinkley’s (1990) pointed out that “situational cues encourage or discourage the development of that frame in each specific conflict situation” (p. 124). If the media is portraying something as bad, and the audiences already have a negative perception of that (like India and

Pakistan as enemies of each other), that view is likely to be reinforced with such framing. De Vreese, Peter & Semetko (2010) looked at the media coverage in four different European countries surrounding the launch of currency *euro*. They believed that “journalists in all countries were more likely to emphasize conflict (rather than economic consequences) in framing general political and economic news” (p. 107). This may well be true in the case of India and Pakistan as well. While framing the relationship through the lens of conflict, the media on both sides tends to neglect the economic rewards on offer, in case a thaw in bilateral relations can be achieved. Lee & Maslog (2006) found out that the coverage of Kashmir dispute in Indian and Pakistani newspapers had a very strong tendency to invoke *war journalism* framing. Siraj (2008), quoting Wolfsfeld (2004), maintained that the “default mode of operation for the press is to cover tension, conflict, and violence” (p. 3). Galtung (1998) was critical of the role played by the media in promoting wars as they essentially remained silent through the use of traditional frames and were content in seeing two opponents engage in a tug-of-war on certain issues. He wanted the media to become proactive and promote peace journalism by rejecting conflict. However, that is easier said than done in the case of Indian and Pakistan media with a background of almost seven decades of hostility towards each other. Lee (2010) believed that the excuse offered by journalists of being objective to justify their use of a certain kind of framing was also a flawed one. “Objectivity is also one of the biggest obstacles to journalists playing a more responsible and constructive role in public life” (p. 363). When it comes to India and Pakistan, the journalists in each country are no different than their ordinary countrymen in thinking of the other country as an enemy and the same thought-process reflects in the framing of their news stories as well when the responsibility for any unrest or terrorism is placed on the *enemy* country. In doing so, they fail to provide any solutions and marginalize the human cost of

war, which becomes the basis for the second research question of this study (RQ2: Does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers focus on solutions and human cost of war in each country?).

Druckman (2001) has maintained that media frames could include words, images, phrases, and presentation styles when it comes to conveying information about any particular issue to the audience. Chong & Druckman (2007) found out that the media frames repeated most frequently have the most effect on the thought-processes and opinions of the audience. Maslog, Lees & Kim (2006) have referred to news frames as “an interpretive structure that sets specific events within a comprehensive context” (p. 25). They pointed out that conflict as a news frame points towards its usage as a news value by the journalists. They argued that news was not just a reflection or reporting of a conflict, but it was rather influenced by the construction of the conflict for members of a society. With traditional rivalry towards each other trickling down to the level of general public in both India and Pakistan, it is not beyond comprehension that the elite press can also pick up that sentiment and start looking at bilateral issues through a conflict-oriented lens. Richards (2001), who studied conflict resolution language, showed that journalists rely on conflict to tell the news and apply a ‘*fighting frame*’ by focusing on positions without exploring what lay behind them.

Crandon & Sigletary (1999) looked at the environmental coverage of two competing newspapers in the United States and found that economic interests of a given community can make a newspaper tailor its coverage in order to make an environmental issue look less threatening than it actually is. They argued that this tendency becomes particularly dangerous because most of the people never experience the issue in question first-hand and only come to know about it through the media. Therefore, they start believing what they are made to see. It is

interesting how one media outlet can frame an environmental issue as threatening and the other frames it as non-threatening, despite there being scientific consensus about it. The same can be said about the political and national interests in the context of this study, which can easily push dividends of a peaceful relationship in the background. The messages communicated through media can be confusing instead of providing clarity if the frames are under the influence of vested interests. Entman (1993) has maintained that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). Tankard et. al. (1991) have identified media frame as “the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (p. 3). In analyzing such coverage frames, it is also important which details related to the issue are presented to the audience as facts and who is given a voice. Reis (1999) found that government officials were the most dominating voice in the media when it comes to talking about the environmental issues. It is the same in other issues as well, particularly when the issue relates to national security, politics, or foreign policy considerations. It is quite imaginable then that these officials will thrive on misinformation to suit their own interests.

McCombs, Shaw & Weaver (1997) have pointed out that framing is an extension of agenda setting. They described the agenda-setting function of media to make people understand not what to think, but rather what to think about. This is an important distinction in the context of conflicts like the one between India and Pakistan, where the framing in media can transform public opinion to look at any bilateral issue as a political and national security issue. Lynch (2001) has maintained that the production of news is not a one-way stream, because its

consumption and feedback by the audience can have a significant influence on the course of events. In their study of European politics, Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) defined conflict frames as emphasizing conflict “between individuals, groups, or institutions as a means of capturing audience interest” while human interest frame was operationalized as attaching a “human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem” (p. 95). They argued that the economic consequences frame reported “an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, group, institution, region, or country” (p. 96). Whether the newspapers in India and Pakistan highlight the consequences of bilateral conflict and a potential war or marginalize the human cost of such violence during the framing of news stories is a focus of this research as well.

Framing National Security

National security is an important topic for the global leaders as well as the media. In the countries where the civil-military balance keeps fluctuating, national security becomes a dominant agenda and influences policy making (Malik, 2003; Karaosmanoğlu, 2000). Gadarian (2010) argues that media’s emphasis on provocative images and threatening information in the accompanying texts increases the chances that the audience will become more accepting of the hawkish foreign policy agendas pursued by their leaders to fight terrorism. In the light of this argument, it makes sense when such coverage also contributes to approval ratings of the leaders who are portraying themselves as leading the war against terrorism (Gadarian, 2014). Miller, Andsager, & Riechert (1998) emphasized that the politicians used images in their press releases strategically to gain coverage in the media. Even in the coverage of war and terrorism, the media framing relied on government’s narrative without really questioning the motives behind it (Schwalbe, Silock, & Keith, 2008). However, there have been some exceptions to this trend as

well. For example, Canel (2012) found that the Spanish media did not support the government's framing in the immediate aftermath of the 2004 Madrid bombings. Similarly, Andén-Papadopoulos (2008) argued that the visual coverage of Abu Ghraib was in no way reflective of the dominant news frames and elite political discourse prevalent about the Iraq war at the time and was in fact completely opposite. However, such exceptions are only few and far between. India and Pakistan have remained engaged in building nuclear weapons at the cost of peace and poverty concerns (Kreft & Eckstein, 2013; Ganguly & Hagerty, 2006).

Despite growing concerns shown by the global community on the spread and safety of Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenal (Panda, 2016; Kapur, 2005; Waltz & Sagam 2003), the civil and military leadership in both countries has justified acquisition of nuclear capability on the grounds of deterrence towards the *enemy* state and to safeguard the national security (Express Tribune, 2015; Athale, 2009). Both countries have regularly accused each other of indulging in cross-border terrorism (Dwivedi, 2008), and the media has been quick to follow the official line (Haider & Haider, 2015; Jain & Tiwary, 2015). Since 9/11, threat perception caused by terrorism has shaped the face of global foreign policy and the case of India and Pakistan appears no different. How the journalists choose to frame these events through their choice of words and images can have important consequences (Norris, Kern & Just, 2003). Hannah (2006) has expressed concern that the perceived threat of terrorism had turned into the notion of national security in America where it has become an accepted part of the social order. The media portrayals contribute to maintaining that social order through the words and text choice. An evidence of that was seen in Iraq when the images of the demolition of Saddam Hussain's statue were seen as a sign of victory and subsequently reduced coverage of war-related news stories despite the fact that heavy fighting was still ongoing in different parts of Iraq (Aday, Cluverius,

& Livingston, 2005). Messaris & Abraham (2001) have argued that visual images are effective for ideological positioning and manipulation “because of their lack of explicitness, may provide a broadcaster or journalist with a shield of deniability, of a kind that cannot be claimed with verbal persuasion” (p. 220). The accompanying text with these images in the form of captions, headlines and news stories is no less important in promoting conflict and war hysteria.

One important distinction in framing research is to find out whether the frames are looking at the obvious or behind the obvious as well. This is what Iyengar (1991) has called as thematic or episodic framing. Nitz & West (2000) have looked at the framing of environmental news stories during the presidential campaign of Al-Gore and George W. Bush in 2000 while using the framing design of Iyengar (1991). They divided news content primarily in two categories, thematic and episodic, in terms of their content. Thematic framing was defined as an attempt to “place events in a broad context of related events, show effects of events, and discuss possible implications of outcomes that may result” (p. 208). This could apprise the audience with relevant knowledge regarding the social, political, and historical details, in addition to the cause and effect, of the issue concerned. On the other hand, episodic framing mainly “presents public issues as single, concrete events, as specific case histories, and instances occurring more or less in isolation. It only provides snapshots of an issue, with any explanations based upon sensational and emotional appeal” (p. 208). Iyengar (1991) had argued that it is difficult to find a news story that is either entirely thematic or entirely episodic, and it was normal to find stories invoking both kinds of frame. However, it was possible that the focus of the news story was either predominantly thematic or predominantly episodic. It was up to the audience of a news story to make-up their mind after reading it whether they considered it primarily thematic or episodic. Papacharissi & Oliveira (2008) analyzed the coverage of American and British newspapers after

the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and subsequently in the U.K. and Spain. They found significant difference in the framing approach of newspapers in both countries as the coverage in the U.S. newspapers was more episodic whereas the coverage in the U.K. papers was more thematic. It is quite likely that the coverage of Kashmir conflict in Indian and Pakistan media will be justified with arguments tailored to suit the respective audience and news makers. Many studies, including Iyengar (1991) and Nitz & West (2000), found that majority of the environmental news stories used the episodic framing. This resulted in giving an impression to the audience that the issue was not that important and the focus tended to shift away from the real problem. This is the most likely tendency in the case of India and Pakistan as well when it comes to framing terrorism incidents on either side, when national security's importance is highlighted and the consequences for the general public are compromised. Therefore, the third research question in this research has looked at the thematic or episodic framing of the coverage surrounding Kashmir conflict in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers a (RQ3: Do the Indian and Pakistani newspapers indulge in thematic or episodic framing while covering the Kashmir conflict?).

Factors Behind Frame Construction

While covering security related incidents, highlighting fear is one of the main tendencies of the media. Powell (2011) looked at the coverage of terrorist events in the U.S. after 9/11 and found that the media was invoking fear frames in which *Muslims/Arab/Islam* were portrayed as the major threat waging an organized attack against a *Christian America* whereas the threat of homegrown terrorism in the U.S. was discarded as isolated events that were only caused by troubled individuals. The newspapers in India and Pakistan show a similar tendency when they accuse the other country as the mastermind behind every terrorism incident without giving any attention to homegrown terrorism. There are several insurgency movements underway in India

and Pakistan, and those disgruntled elements fighting against the state can also cause terrorist acts (Siddiqi, 2010; Zurutuza, 2015). Instead, the media in each country blames this insurgency on the *enemy* country as well instead of looking inwards (Khan, 2015; Nauman, 2016). The framing is used to promote a sense of fear and promote a national security narrative in line with the government and military in each country (India and Pakistan). Entman (1991) has argued that “frames can be detected by probing for particular words and visual images that consistently appear in a narrative and convey thematically consonant meanings across media and time” (p. 7). Giroux (2002) pointed out that visuals were being used by television stations in the U.S. to perpetuate fear and exploit emotions of the public under the garb of calling for unity and patriotism in the aftermath of 9/11. Liebes & First (2003) analyzed the Israel-Palestine conflict and maintained that conflict framing had been used to personify terrorism. Parry (2010) studied images related to the Israel-Palestine dispute in British newspapers and found that the presence of conflict frame was most likely to get a photograph front-page placement. This conflict is at the heart of India-Pakistan rivalry as well and is used by the journalists on both sides in their coverage frequently. Any voice challenging the official narrative is dubbed as anti-national and unpatriotic (DNA, 2016; Express Tribune, 2015).

The presence of stereotypes in India and Pakistan, despite being largely similar cultures with different majority religion, is another problem. Shaw (2012) has argued that there is a tendency of stereotypical representations in the media coverage of terrorist events which can have larger implications for intercultural communication and the potential efforts to prevent such incidents from happening. Messaris & Abraham (2001) have maintained that media’s use of symbols to shape a story “not only direct readers’ attention away from the complexity of social and political issues but also direct readers how to interpret these events” (p. 163). Gamson et. al.

(1992) argued that media's use of imagery is a constructed reality that assumes meaning by becoming part of a larger frame. O'Neill (2013) has maintained that images used by the media don't exist in isolation and are not value-neutral either. "They can portray highly ideological messages, and act as normative statements portraying a particular way of viewing the world" (O'Neill, 2013, p. 10). The cultures and prevalent biases in the journalists of respective countries also influence this coverage (Mahony, 2010; Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008; Dimitrova, & Strömbäck, 2005). The division on ideological grounds is even more profound in the media of Muslim and non-Muslim countries when it comes to making framing choices related to war or alleged terrorists (Maslog, Lee, & Kim, 2006). Entman (1993) has explained it through his emphasis on four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture" (p. 52). Although, human interest and consequences of national security policies for the general public is no less important, but this aspect is mostly marginalized in the mainstream media. More often than not, the human interest frame is not that visible in news coverage or is adjusted to accommodate other similar discourses, although with the same underlying intention (Zhou & Moy, 2007). At other times, the human interest or public good is often compromised by media organizations for commercial purposes (Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2011). The stereotypical framing can also lead to more frequent attribution of responsibility (Power, Murphy, & Coover, 1996). There is evidence that the attribution of responsibility frames is one of the most commonly used frames in media coverage of political issues following conflict frames (De Vreese, 2005; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

The frames used by the media to cover national security issues have also been far from objective. Framing refers to the choice of words and images by the journalists to help the audience interpret an event. However, academic scholars have been critical of media's biases in

selecting frames. “The essence of framing is selection to prioritize some facts, images, or developments over others, thereby unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events” (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). Craft & Wanta (2004) found evidence of second-level agenda-setting of such coverage after 9/11 that considerably changed the thinking of American society about air travel, homeland security, and the ways to fight against terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan. Wanta, Golan, & Lee (2004) have pointed out that first-level agenda-setting is related to the obvious level of salience in the coverage of certain issues in the media and how it influences the salience of such issues in public perception, whereas the second level agenda-setting is related to other attributes of such salience and how it shapes the public’s mindset in a subtle manner. The choice of texts and images is symbolic of a media organization’s slant towards a story. Griffin (2004) and Schwalbe et. al. (2008) looked at the photo-coverage of the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq and found that these images were in line with the official narrative and “rarely contribute independent, new or unique visual information” (p. 381). This stands true in the case of India and Pakistan as well where the frames used by the media focus on shifting the blame on the rival country, highlight fear, justify stereotypical approach towards national security, and minimize the risks attached to general public and regional peace because of the race to acquire nuclear weapons. The terrorist attacks on either side have given a justification to policy makers and the media to continue with this agenda.

Pan & Kosicki (1993) have maintained that news discourse is a socio-cognitive process that has three components, including “sources, journalists, and audience members operating in the universe of shared culture and on the basis of socially defined roles” (p. 55). Yarchi et. al. (2013) have contended that media professionals are more interested in constructing dramatic events with a political overtone, and the terrorist attacks provide them with this opportunity.

Grünewald (2005) said that discourse around terrorist acts was more focused on the ideological divide between *east* and *west* after 9/11. The threat was objectified as real and imminent that needed to be dealt exactly the way government wanted to go about it (Hodges & Nilep, 2007). Steuter (1990) has gone a step further by arguing that news production is a social form that can inform as well as obscure, depending on the situation. “The ideological uniformity and lack of diversity apparent in terrorism news suggests that this kind of treatment results in a lack of understanding of the media/terrorism relationship and serves to support conservative views about the nature of terrorism and appropriate responses to it” (p. 257). Who is being given a voice by the media when it comes to security issues is also important. Chong & Druckman (2007) have posited that the ruling elite influences framing which subsequently shapes the public opinion. However, what frames will prove to be more powerful depends on the context of that message in case of simultaneous exposure to multiple messages (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 99). When the media is more focused on the official narratives to convey fear in the public about the imminent threat of terrorism, several related policy changes made by the government go unnoticed (Altheide, 2007). Slovic (2004) considered such framing inherently flawed. “The state's preoccupation with risk from terrorism neglects the complex nature of crises associated with poverty, disease, hunger, and global warming, increasing the vulnerability of the poorest and weakest members of society” (p. 1). It is quite likely that the national security narrative concerning the bilateral conflict in both India and Pakistan serves the same purpose for the ruling elite in each country.

This difference in approach becomes evident when the media in each country reports homegrown terrorism threat as compared to the threat from the neighboring country. Weimann & Winn (1994) pointed out that the mass media was not as careful in reporting incidents of

international terrorism as they were about the incidents that took place domestically. Gadarian (2010) has argued that it wouldn't be wise to think of media as just a means for conveying information from the ruling elite to the public, because the media workers influence the public perceptions through their own choice during work as well. Barnett & Reynolds (2009) have suggested that news media started blurring the lines between fiction and reality after 9/11 and the introduction of breaking news scenario had provided further impetus to terrorists to get their message across and promote fear at a large scale through such coverage. There is considerable evidence that the mass media relies on previously established frames to convey information to the general public (Entman, 1993; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Therefore, it merits attention to explore the process of frame-building and how it contributes to promoting conflict, which is the fourth research question in this investigation (RQ4: What is the process of frame-building when journalists in India and Pakistan cover incidents related to bilateral conflict?). There is evidence in literature that when emotions are running high and the audience are made to believe that the national security is at stake, foreign policy related responses of the public will be different from how they will respond under normal circumstances (Gadarian, 2010). In the Vail et. al. (2012) study, respondents reported having more hostile worldviews and support for war after seeing images of destruction. While the critical media scholars have pointed towards the prevalent situation and the barriers towards effective media coverage of security-related issues, they have also presented theoretical frameworks to guide research and analysis of security issues, and to overcome the barriers in mainstream media coverage.

Framing and Peace Journalism

Galtung (2002) proposed the peace journalism model, which not only focuses on problems arising out of war and violence-based framing but also presents solution to such

problems by focusing on the humans attached to such issues. This approach looks at journalism as solution-oriented instead of the traditional media framing that posits security issues as victory-oriented (Galtung, 2007). Ottosen (2010) has pointed out that peace journalism “presents a conscious choice: to identify other options for the readers/viewers by offering a solution-orientated, people-orientated and truth-orientated approach” (p. 262). Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) have defined peace journalism as the choice made by the reporters and editors “about what to report and how to report it, which creates opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent, developmental responses to conflict” (p. 5). Galtung & Fischer (2013) have maintained that conflict is a *low road* that is presented as a battle in the media whereas peace journalism can potentially be a *high road* that presents opportunities for resolution to that conflict and human progress. Lee & Maslog (2005) analyzed the coverage of conflicts in ten Asian newspapers from five countries (including India and Pakistan) and found that the major emphasis in this coverage was on war journalism instead of promoting peace. Hanitzsch (2004) has maintained that the settlement of conflicts is essentially a responsibility of the political and military leaderships, but peace journalism can play a contributory role in achieving that purpose.

The conflict framing traditionally used by the journalists influences the minds of the audience in favor of war, whereas peace journalism provides the same audience with an opportunity to think about peaceful alternatives over time (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2006). Kempf (2007) has pointed out that the only aim of peace journalism is to represent reality accurately, which remains one of the core principles of good journalism anyways. He, however, has cautioned that this approach needs to be practiced responsibly by the journalists so that the peace agenda does not cross the line of journalism and begin sounding like advocacy or propaganda journalism. There is evidence around the world about the practice and effectiveness of peace

journalism, for example in the case of Palestine-Israel conflict, but its success depends on the interest and involvement of the elite nations and people in the decision-making roles (Shaw, Lynch, & Hackett, 2011). Lynch (2006) looked at the coverage of Iran nuclear crisis in the U.K. newspapers and found that the left-wing newspapers were practicing war journalism whereas peace journalism was found prevalent in right-wing newspapers. This tendency is in line with the argument that existing biases and cultures can influence the contents produced by the journalists (Mahony, 2010; Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008; Dimitrova, & Strömbäck, 2005). Ottosen (2010) looked at the coverage of the war in Afghanistan in the Norwegian news media and found that peace journalism model could provide an alternative to the audience who were generally presented only one side of the picture, mostly based on the perspective of ruling elite, by the mainstream media. Lynch (2008) has made a case that the journalists needed to present the root-causes associated with the conflicts, e.g. poverty and prior abuse, instead of just reporting what exists on the surface. This is likely to be true in the case of conflicts originating from the national security concerns as well. Therefore, it is all the more important to apply the theoretical lens of peace journalism to the Indo-Pak media's coverage of security issues and analyze whether this approach has any space in both countries to bring about some improvement in the existing situation. Whether the newspaper journalists in India and Pakistan are promoting peace journalism or not through their coverage of bilateral conflict is related to the fifth and sixth research question that this research has explored (RQ5: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote war journalism? RQ6: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote peace journalism?).

Understanding the working of the mainstream media and working around these limitations is essential for the success of peace journalism. Bläsi (2004) pointed out that

reporting of conflict situations was “a complex interaction of six factors: (1) structural aspects of the media, (2) conflict situation on-site, (3) personal features of the individual journalist, (4) the political climate, (5) lobbies, (6) the audience” (p. 1). The journalists are much more likely to practice peace journalism when their own country or close allies are not involved in the conflict (Bläsi, 2004). However, if the journalists and media organizations can be made aware of the consequences of war journalism for all stakeholders including themselves and provided with alternatives, the situation might change.

The peace journalism approach has not been without its critics. Loyn (2007) has rejected this approach on the grounds that “creating peacemaking politicians is not the business of a reporter” (p. 1) and thinks that all journalism, which is dubbed as *war journalism* by the proponents of *peace journalism* is actually good journalism. Hanitzsch (2007) has also criticized the peace journalism approach as overestimating the role of journalists in political decision-making and conflict settlements. “Peace journalism is, to a considerable extent, based on an overly individualistic perspective and ignores the many structural constraints that shape and limit the work of journalists: few personnel, time and material resources; editorial procedures and hierarchies; textual constraints; availability of sources; access to the scene and information in general - just to name a few” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 1). Kempf (2007), however, has disagreed with this criticism and argued that peace journalism is not an anti-thesis of the present day journalism, but a realization of the possibilities that exist for the journalists to work in a better way during the wars and crisis situations. Hackett (2006) has addressed the criticism on peace journalism and argued that “PJ (*peace journalism*) must translate its normative concerns, rooted in the discipline of peace research, into a strategy based on a theoretically-informed analysis of the governing logics of news production” (p. 2).

Shinar (2007) has pointed towards the contradiction between the peace journalism approach and the expectations of the stakeholders, in addition to the difficulties in creating a peace discourse in the media. He, however, has argued that increasing the news value of peace in framing news stories, prioritizing the creation and marketing of a peace discourse in the media, and adopting media's values and practices to current realities could be the building blocks of peace journalism within the given circumstances (Shinar, 2007, p. 7). In the case of India and Pakistan, where press freedom has consistently been under scrutiny (Siraj, 2009; Rana, 2014), and the work of journalists is constantly threatened by different pressure groups, commercial considerations and state censorship, charting a peace journalism path is easier said than done. However, if the stakeholders can be involved and made to believe that peace journalism can bring them dividends and public approval like the war framing has traditionally done, it might be a viable way forward when it comes to the coverage of security issues in the mainstream media. The interviews with the journalists in India and Pakistan to explore frame-building processes will also provide an insight into their orientation and acceptance of the peace journalism model and which factors are hampering such a practice in both countries in the given circumstances.

Framing and Securitization

The traditional security complex theory proposed by Buzan (1997) posited that security was not a concept of military alone but a political game played by the relevant stakeholders to highlight existential threats in order to muster support for emergent actions. The securitization theory further builds on this argument and calls for studying securitization through the study of “discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise be obeyed?” (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, p. 25). Therefore, when the

political and security actors achieve the purpose of taking steps beyond rules and procedures, the securitization process is completed. The reluctance of Pakistan and India to adhere to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) protocols on the premise that nuclear capability is necessary for regional peace is a case in point (Weitz, 2011; Kimball & McGoldrick, 2007). Another example of securitization is the *Patriot Act* passed by the United States Congress after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and subsequent legislation in other countries that mandated extraordinary measures to fight terrorism (Greer, 2010; Ramraj, Hor, & Roach, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2003; Whitehead & Aden, 2001). Senn (2016) has maintained that in the process of securitization, “actors use speech-acts, so-called securitization moves, to persuade an audience that a valued referent object faces an existential threat and that extraordinary measures should be taken to avert this threat” (p. 2). These characteristics of securitization theory are in line with Galtung’s (2002) war journalism model, which is “violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, elite-oriented and victory-oriented” (Ottosen, 2010, p. 262). The perception of national identity and national security propagated by the state and the media can contribute significantly to how these countries react to any external power. Guang (2004) found that the Chinese response to the Indian nuclear tests in 1998 was not as intense as it was in 1962 after border clashes with India because the Chinese threat perception and the concept of national security had shifted during the intervening period.

The traditional conflict and violence framing used by the journalists in their work can contribute towards the process of securitization (Barone & Swan, 2009; Bickerstaff et. al., 2008). The process becomes even more complex when the conflict is not internal, but involves multiple countries (Ahn, 2010; Das, 2010). Dai & Hyun (2010) studied framing of North Korea’s nuclear tests in the news agencies of the United States, China, and South Korea. They found that a

common threat perception was there in the news stories of each news agency, but each of them framed the story in line with their own country's stated national interest and position in the global power system. Culley et. al. (2010) looked at the framing of proposed nuclear reactors in the U.S. state of Georgia and found that the informational nature of news articles was primarily based on regulatory processes and financing of reactors. Only one of the two newspapers studied (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*) published editorials that discussed the economic and environmental consequences of proposed reactors whereas the other newspaper (*Augusta Chronicle*) primarily published pro-nuclear reactor articles. Dunne & Wheeler (2004) have regretted how the national security framing tends to ignore the humanitarian concerns and the important aspect of human rights. Ellner (2008) argued that the concept of regional security adopted by the European Union (EU) countries was actually undermining "political agency, the universalism of liberal values, legitimacy, sovereignty, the notion of security as a collective goal and the external as well as internal dimensions of the EU as a security community" (p. 9). The inherent problem with the concept of securitization is its elitist-centered and top-down approach, which tends to isolate the concerns of the very same people for whom the security policies are supposedly being made. Unfortunately, the media framing becomes just an extension of this securitization agenda. This interplay of framing and securitization needs to be focused more by the academic scholars. In the case of India and Pakistan though, the national security framework has consistently centered on hostility towards the other country and provided enough justification in the elite narrative and media framing to promote a securitization agenda. The seventh research question in this project aims to analyze the interplay of framing and securitization in the working of journalists in India and Pakistan (RQ7: How does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote securitization in India and Pakistan?).

Entman & Rojecki (1993) studied the framing of anti-nuclear movement protests in the U.S. media (*Time* and *The New York Times*) between 1980 to 1983. They found that the coverage was more focused on political actors and appeared to marginalize the participants and their demands as the protests gathered momentum. Hotchkiss (2010) analyzed the national security discourse in media frames in French and the U.S. newspapers and found that nationalism had dominated the national security discourse throughout the two decades (1984-2004) studied. However, cultural schemas in each country could contribute to such framing. Such framing can have serious implications for the audiences exposed to such coverage. Jang (2011) has argued that the complex relationship between elite media systems and the national interest paradigm of security states can exert considerable influence for using media coverage for propaganda purposes. Such coverage can sometimes have unintended consequences as well, like Fekete's (2004) study found that the anti-terrorism legislation and policing across different countries of Europe after 9/11 had resulted in structured anti-Muslim racism. Benam (2011) has cautioned that securitization can further increase the risks for vulnerable groups. In such a situation, it becomes imperative to seek alternatives avenues to raise awareness. There is enough evidence that traditional media and social media's boundaries were blurring (Ceil, 2011; Rahimi, 2011). Hackett (2006) has conceded that the powerful profit-oriented media organizations are increasing their global reach and it might be difficult to shift their agendas. However, the emergence of social media and other internet-based media has given rise to a new kind of journalism and provided voices to those who couldn't break in the mainstream media earlier. The mainstream media has been feeling the pressure from social/new media and has had to provide room for alternative voices, although the dominant framing is still based on the elite voices. This might be a good starting point for the practice of peace journalism instead of trying to change the existing

media structures from within to begin with. Barberá (2014) looked at Twitter profiles of online political audience and concluded that social media use could reduce political polarization. Bennett, Breunig & Givens (2008) looked at anti-war protests in the United States in 2003 and argued that digital communication networks at an individual level could explain how protest campaigns could be organized at national and transnational level quickly. That is in line with the eighth research question of this study (RQ8: Does social media offer an alternative voice in the coverage of issues related to India-Pakistan conflict?). Such constructive use of social media has also given rise to the phenomena of citizen journalism. Goode (2009) pointed out that citizen journalism had presented a challenge to traditional mass media. Realizing this challenge, the mainstream media had started incorporating the element of citizen journalism or at least feeding off it in terms of follow-ups. “Citizen journalism allows members of the public to engage in agenda-setting not merely by producing original content (though this is certainly a significant development) but also by rendering the agenda-setting processes of established professional media outlets radically provisional, malleable and susceptible to critical intervention” (p. 7).

Taking advantage of the open-ended nature of interviews with journalists in both India and Pakistan, this research has also explored the role of advocacy groups and track-II initiatives to build bridges of peace between both countries (RQ9: Do the track-two initiatives between India and Pakistan offer an opportunity to address issues related to the coverage of bilateral conflict in both countries?). Several scholars have discussed strategies to overcome the securitization agenda. Senn (2016) has maintained that the discursive strategies adopted during the securitization process (authority, fidelity, presence, and emotionality) can be used in alternative resources like documentaries to promote the consequences of such policies. Time element is also important in the emergence and dissolution of a security agenda because the

national security narrative and priorities keep changing for respective countries from time to time (Balzacq, 2010; Guang, 2004). Therefore, this tenth research question of this study explored what suggestions the journalists working in India and Pakistan had to offer in order to improve the existing standards of the coverage of bilateral conflict (RQ10: Do the journalists in India and Pakistan have any suggestions for improvement in the existing standards of coverage of bilateral conflict?).

Peace Journalism and Securitization

Both theoretical frameworks, war/peace journalism, and securitization, used in this research to analyze media coverage of security issues are similar in more ways than one. To begin with, both approaches rely on media framing for analysis (Carvalho, 2014; Lee & Maslog, 2005). Both securitization and war journalism promote threat perception; are violence-based; and rely on elite national security narratives through media frames (Galtung, 2002; Buzan, 1997). However, peace journalism, despite criticism on its practical viability, is one step ahead of securitization in the sense that it provides an alternative and a sense of direction for the journalists in the existing circumstances (Hackett, 2006; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). The frames used by journalists in their coverage of Indo-Pak conflict can have important implications for influencing public perceptions towards war and acquisition of nuclear weapons or in favor of peace, thereby focusing on the human cost of war. The interplay of framing with securitization and promotion of peace journalism in the Indian and Pakistani media has remained a neglected area previously and this research has attempted to fill that gap.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

This chapter provides an explanation of the methodological choices to explore the research questions outlined in chapter three (RQ1-RQ10). To investigate RQ1-3 and RQ5-7, a qualitative content analysis methodology was used while qualitative interviewing technique was used to answer RQ4 as well as RQ8-10. This research has explored how the newspapers in India and Pakistan frame bilateral conflict related to the coverage of terrorism incidents on either side of the border while ignoring the human cost of this conflict. The interviews with journalists provided insights into the underlying factors that play a role in framing Indo-Pak conflict and how they contribute to promoting war/peace journalism and securitization in each country. These interviews also helped understand whether the journalists working in mainstream media in India and Pakistan agreed with the frames being used, their motivations and limitations behind using such frames, and whether there were any alternatives available for journalists in such a situation instead of promoting the official national security narrative (Senn, 2016; Pinto, 2014). The unit of analysis, sample selection, search terms and timeframe of the data, selection criteria, coding categories, and operational definitions of the key terms are also discussed in this chapter.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is an important technique that helps to make sense of the data and make it more analyzable. Content analysis has been used to study media's content since the 19th century (Harwood & Garry, 2003). This approach deals primarily with manifest instead of latent content (Padgett, 2008). Because media's content that has to be analyzed is available in manifest form (text or images) and since latent variables like emotions and feelings are not a focus of this research, therefore using this approach to investigate how the newspapers in India and Pakistan

have framed national security issues for their respective audiences makes sense. Holsti (1969) has defined content analysis as a technique “for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (p. 14). Krippendorff (1989) has pointed out that conventional content analysis has mostly included content (*what*) and context (*who says it to whom*) but other circumstances and contexts of communication like the psychoanalytical (*explaining a particular statement*), institutional (*socio-economic backgrounds behind a choice*) and cultural aspects have also become part of the formal definition over the years. These sub-categories of conventional content analysis serve the purpose of this research as well because it not only looks at the content (*framing*) but also at the institutional and cultural aspects behind the creation of that content (*frame-building*). A researcher uses the data available in any of these contexts to make meaning and make it more interpretable through the content analysis technique. Although several researchers (Riff, Lacy, & Fico, 2014; Lasswell, Lerner, & de Sola Pool, 1952) have emphasized the importance of a quantitative approach to content analysis, but the arguments in favor of the qualitative content analysis, used in order to go beyond the numbers and find out their underlying meanings, also make a compelling case (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Qualitative content analysis is useful for identifying themes, trends, and patterns over a certain period of time (Herring et. al., 2007; Stemler, 2001; Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989). Forman & Damschroder (2007) have argued that qualitative content analysis is a systematic, rule-guided technique used to analyze informational contents of textual data, in which categories are largely derived from the data. Krippendorff (1980) has pointed out that each content analysis should focus on answering six basic questions (data to be analyzed; definition of the data; population from which data is drawn; context relative to the data analysis; boundary conditions for the

analysis; target of the inference). This dissertation has made a cross-national comparison of the framing of terrorism incidents in the Kashmir valley in Indian and Pakistani newspapers and how the journalists involved with creating these frames are contributing to war/peace journalism and securitization in their respective countries. The objective is not to look at the numbers and word frequencies only, but also analyze the inherent meanings and the implications of such coverage for the future of general public in both the countries. Evidence from previous literature points out that content analysis can be an effective methodology for making cross-national comparisons and for identification of the differences in coverage and emerging themes and patterns in respective countries (Singh, Zhao, & Hu, 2005; De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001; Browne, 1998). Therefore, qualitative content analysis was used as one of the data collection and analysis techniques for this research.

An inductive approach was used for this content analysis, which helped to organize the available data in few categories (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Hsieh & Shannon (2005) have discussed three approaches (conventional, directed, and summative) to qualitative content analysis of texts with coding schemes being the only difference among the three categories. Coding categories in the conventional content analysis are derived directly from the textual data whereas summative evaluation also involves the interpretation of underlying meanings. Summative analysis of the data can also serve as a guiding light for policymakers (Patton, 2015). This dissertation has used a combination of conventional (*what does the content say*) and summative (*what it means*) content analysis techniques. Schreier (2012) has recommended that content analysis should be used as a meaning-making process because meaning in the data is never a given, but has to be constructed by the researcher through the proper analysis. Coding the data is not the analysis itself but just a way to

make the process of analysis and interpretation more manageable (Richards & Morse, 2012). De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko (2001) have maintained that the content analysis of news frames fulfills an important prerequisite in the study of potential effects of these frames on the audience (although this research is not an effects study). They have also argued that cross-national studies are a good way to overcome the universalism bias in studies focusing on a single country or comprising national samples. The content in the media has an agenda-setting function and can influence the formation of public opinions (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004; de Vreese, 2001; McCombs & Shaw, 1993). Although audience effects are beyond the scope of this research, the findings of the content analysis formed the basis of questions for the journalists in the second part of the data analysis. Asking whether these journalists understand the consequences of war journalism was an important component of that investigation. When two neighboring countries like India and Pakistan have a hostile bilateral history, have nuclear capabilities, and which have remained constantly engaged in a military conflict, asking whether the framing of events in newspapers of India and Pakistan promotes peace or conflict merits scholarly attention. This dissertation has fulfilled that purpose.

Content Analysis and Framing

Content analysis has been used in a variety of contexts to investigate how the media frames certain issues for the audience. Dardis (2006) looked at the coverage of protests against the Iraq war in the U.S. newspapers and found that the protesting groups were marginalized in such coverage and the overall tone towards them was negative. Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) analyzed the frames used to describe politics of the European Union in the EU newspapers and found that conflict was the major theme in that coverage. An issue like nuclear weapons and national security also enables the journalists to invoke the conflict frame in the context of India

and Pakistan, which will not be the case if they were to discuss the consequences of spending on nuclear weapons, such as ignoring poverty and infrastructure issues. Friedman, Gorney, & Egolf (1987) looked at the coverage of the Chernobyl accident and found that the press and television did not provide enough radiation and risk information to the public and promoted fear. Culley et al. (2010) analyzed the content of two newspapers in the state of Georgia in the United States and found considerable differences in the coverage of green solutions to nuclear energy. One newspaper consistently published editorials and news articles in support of nuclear energy while the second paper published a combination of pro and anti-nuclear content while also accommodating the economic and environmental concerns related to such technology. Boyd & Pavaglio (2014) have argued that media's role becomes important, particularly when it comes to controversial topics that divide opinions. They analyzed the coverage of carbon capture and storage in two national and two regional Canadian newspapers and found that the coverage had a negative tone. Roux-Dufort & Metais (1999) and Teräväinen, Lehtonen, & Martiskainen (2011) investigated the discourse around the energy security and climate change in Finland, France, and the United Kingdom and found that there were subtle variations in how the discourse was framed in each country. This points to the fact that journalists use frames that suit their respective audience and refrain from going against the popular stance, which more often than not is based on the official narrative. Desai (2012) analyzed the framing in the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal after the Fukushima disaster in Japan and the results showed a reliance on primarily official and authoritative sources. Morrone, Basta, & Somerville (2012) found a relationship between how a nuclear facility was portrayed in the U.S. regional newspapers and the public concerns about it. Wang, Li & Li (2014) found that the coverage of nuclear power plants in the Chinese newspapers was in line with the policies of the government of China and

contributed towards forming opinion in favor of these nuclear plants. This can have serious implications because the public is a major stakeholder in such decision-making. When their concerns are ignored and ruling elite's national security narrative is highlighted, it has the potential of escalating conflict even further. Both framing analysis as well as interviewing methodology has been used in these studies, which provides evidence that these methodologies can be used to answer the research questions in the present study as well. Content analysis of the news framing does not always reveal universal opinions, particularly in the complex political environment involving hostile neighbors. Li et. al. (2014) have looked at the widening split in the opinion of stakeholders on the issue of nuclear energy and attributed this change to the shift from traditional mainstream media to online media sources. Taking a different approach, Burscher, Vliegthart, & de Vreese (2015) have suggested that using cluster (finding groups in a given dataset) and sentiment analysis (contextual-usage meaning of words) could increase the conceptual validity of news frames and discriminate more accurately between the news articles with different frames instead of the traditional content analysis. The final decision on what approach to take is determined by the research question, type of data available, and the purpose of the research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Neuendorf, 2002). Semantic analysis is beyond the scope of this research, because the focus is not on meanings of specific words, but on overall themes emerging from the data. Moreover, the themes emerging from the data were organized in groups, which is slightly different from the conventional cluster analysis approach.

Content Analysis: Strengths and Limitations

Weber (1990) has argued that one of the main advantages of the content analysis method is the unobtrusive nature of the measure where neither the sender nor the receiver are aware of being analyzed. Therefore, the concern over the presence of researcher or respondents having an

effect on the data collection or analysis process can be eliminated through this technique. Neuendorf (2002) has questioned the human decision-making of the coding categories in content analysis. However, Weber (1990) has argued that the reliability of the analysis will be increased if the content categories are consistent. Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken (2002) have suggested that the researchers should report inter-coder reliability instead of just percentage agreement. Computer-generated coding schemes can also be used for this purpose for further efficiency and precision in results (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009; Neuendorf, 2002). Tesch (2013), though, has pointed out a deficiency of the computer programs used for content analysis on the grounds that these may not fit the requirements sometimes because they were not developed according to specific requirements of the researcher. In such cases, doing some work with the data (like subdividing it in smaller units) to suit the computer program could be an option. Computerized coding can offer better reliability, improved stability, comparable results, and is less expensive than the human coders (Morris, 1994). Peter & Lauf (2002) studied reliability issues in cross-national content analysis and found out that the main problems occurred during the coding process because of the coder characteristics like language skills, political knowledge, coding experience, and coding certainty. This project's research is inductive and data-driven, which means that data was categorized according to the themes that emerged from the content of newspapers in India and Pakistan. That is why reliability of coding and coder consistency is not a concern in this project. All the content to be analyzed has been selected from the English-language newspapers in India and Pakistan. Therefore, language proficiency and consistency was not a problem as well as translation of frames was not required.

Schreier (2012) has pointed out that quantitative content analysis does not allow a researcher to describe full meanings of the data. Rather, the analysis is limited to the specific

categories. However, the categories in qualitative content analysis emerge from the data instead of a pre-decided coding frame in the quantitative content analysis. The advantage in this approach is that all data is analyzed before fitting it into relevant categories depending on the research question. Conceptual clarification of coding categories is important in order to categorize the data in quantitative content analysis. In qualitative studies, however, there is an emergent flexibility in coding categories (Schrier, 2012; Krippendorff, 1980). Unlike quantitative content analysis, the qualitative approach is flexible and allows for changes in the coding frame in line with the themes emerging from the data (Braun & Clarke 2006; Boyatzis, 1998). However, it must be noted that content analysis is not only about word frequencies, but also about their inherent meanings (Stemler, 2001). Titscher & Jenner (2000) have cautioned, though, that during the analysis, conclusions should not be drawn about the whole text based on the sample or about the underlying constructs like motives and attitudes based on the text.

Qualitative research is also naturalistic and relies on real-life contexts, which increases the external validity of the findings (Schreier, 2012). Stemler (2001) has argued that the inferences drawn through the content analysis approach can be corroborated using other methods of investigation. This triangulation technique lends more credibility to the findings. The validity of results can also be ensured through the triangulation technique (Humble, 2009; Meadows & Morse, 2001). The use of interviews with journalists in India and Pakistan in the second part of data collection and analysis for this research is an attempt at triangulation. Morse (1991) has cautioned against using qualitative and quantitative methods for the purposes of triangulation because of the problems in weighing and interpreting information coming from different sources as well as the issues in assimilation of results obtained from different methods. However, this dissertation did not combine qualitative and quantitative methods and only relied on qualitative

methods (content analysis and interviews). The questions asked in the interviews were also based on the themes that originated from the content analysis, so that there was no disconnect.

Question-marks are often raised over limited generalizability of the qualitative content analysis (Shrier, 2012). However, this approach seeks to understand a phenomenon in a certain context. Therefore, generalizability beyond that setting is not sought. Potter & Levine-Donnerstein (1999) have maintained that if the researchers are clear about the kind of content they want to analyze and what role theory plays in that analysis, then they would be in a better position to show the reliability and validity of their findings.

Content Analysis and this Research

The unit of analysis of this research are stories in six nationally circulating English-language newspapers (three each from India and Pakistan). These newspapers include The Times of India, Hindustan Times, and The Hindu from India and Dawn, The Nation, and The News from Pakistan. These newspapers were selected for being the top three circulating newspapers in each country (RSCI, 2016; Rasheed, 2016). For the purpose of this research, stories about Uri attack in Indian-administered Kashmir on September 18, 2016 that killed 18 soldiers and Bhimber attack in Pakistani-administered Kashmir on November 15, 2016 that killed seven soldiers were selected as the universe of study (Abbas, 2016; Ahmad, Phillips, & Berlinger, 2016). The rationale for selecting stories about these two incidents (one on each side of the line of control (LoC) is that both targeted the soldiers and the framing in newspapers is most likely to invoke national security concerns after incidents like these. Moreover, both these incidents (Uri and Bhimber) resulted in the largest number of casualties across the LoC on the Indian and Pakistani side ever since the fresh round of conflict between the security forces of both countries broke out in early 2016. The stories in these newspapers (including news stories, editorials, op-

eds, and letters to the editor) for the content analysis have been selected using the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe database. The search terms “Uri” and “Bhimber” generated a total number of 172 stories (123 related to Uri attack and 49 on Bhimber attack) using the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe. After removing duplicate and irrelevant stories, 81 stories were selected from the Indian newspapers (67 for Uri and 14 for Bhimber) while 29 news stories were selected from the Pakistani newspapers (18 for Uri and 11 for Bhimber) for the final analysis. The duration specified for the selection of news stories was one week from the day of the terrorist incident in both India and Pakistan. The rationale behind looking at the coverage beyond the first day of the incident was to explore how the emotions running high and the tendency to promote war or peace was on display in the immediate aftermath of the incident and the subsequent days. The content was coded based on the themes emerging from the data and analyzed accordingly. The data highlighted reliance on conflict frames (operationalized as focus on India-Pakistan rivalry) and national security frames (operationalized as giving voice to military’s perspective), marginalization of the consequences for the general public because of heavy defense spending and a potential war (operationalized as not highlighting issues like poverty and absence infrastructure because of Indo-Pak conflict). War journalism (operationalized as focus on justifying use of military) and peace journalism (operationalized as focus on alternatives for a better bilateral future instead of war) was also analyzed during the content analysis.

Qualitative Interviews

Interviews or asking questions to find answers are part of our daily routines. It is an even more important part of how news content is generated by journalists. Qualitative interviewing is a more structured research methodology (Britten, 2007; Rapley, 2001). Atkinson & Silverman (1997) introduced the concept of the modern society being an *interview society*. While content

analysis is considered a good method for investigating *what* is being produced in the media, we are unable to tell from the text what could be the motivations of the journalists who produced that content and which other factors influence the process of content generation or frame-building. Previous academic literature informs that media's content has the potential to influence public opinion. The current research is not investigating public opinion in response to frames. Rather, the researcher is interested in finding out how those responsible for shaping opinions through certain framing choices look at their work and what their understanding is of the possible contribution of this content towards promoting war and peace between two hostile neighbors, Pakistan and India. But how can we find that out? Surveys are one option but most surveys have close-ended questions, in order to save time for the respondents. This limits the response categories (Reja et. al., 2003; Dillman, 1978). In order to go beyond the response categories and look for unique answers, the interviewing technique offers a better option (Britten, 2007). Lindlof & Taylor (2011) have identified the purposes of qualitative interviews as “understanding the social actor's experience and perspective through stories, accounts, and explanations; eliciting the language forms used by social actors; gathering information about things or processes that cannot be observed effectively by other means; inquiring about the past; verifying, validating, or commenting on information obtained from other sources; and achieving efficiency in data collection” (p. 173).

Qualitative interviews are not structured like surveys and questionnaires, which are designed to achieve a desired end. The intent in qualitative interviews is to find diverse information from as many angles as possible related to the research questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Qualitative interviews can be of different types, with each type having a specific focus. However, the eventual objective for each type of interview is to seek explanation and

elaboration of a phenomenon related to the broader research question. Another purpose of qualitative interviewing is “to capture how those being interviewed view their world, to learn their terminology and judgments, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences” (Patton, 2015, p. 442). These purposes are in line with the objectives of this research, that is interpretive in nature and has explored the underlying factors that drive the working of journalists covering bilateral conflict and national security issues in India and Pakistan. Rapley (2001) has maintained that interviews should be thought of as social encounters between the interviewer and the interviewee, in which the interactional context matters a lot for the analysis of the obtained data. Reflecting on the theoretical conception of interview, the researcher’s subject positions regarding the projects and participants, as well as the methodological examinations of interview interactions to inform research design could enhance the chances of a researcher to come up with significant findings concerning social problems (Rouston, 2010). Therefore, this researcher’s background of working as a journalist in South Asia proved helpful in asking questions that highlighted the issues concerning conflict framing and war/peace journalism in both India and Pakistan. The researchers interpret the data obtained from the interviews for meaning-making and to understand the perspectives and experiences that may not come to light in normal circumstances (Järvinen, 2000). The findings and interpretation from the interviews conducted as part of this dissertation particularly focused on the interplay of framing and securitization, and how this tendency shifts focus away from the real issues of general public. Murray et. al. (2009) have suggested that instead of a typical single interview methodology, a longitudinal analysis makes more sense because it can help track the changes in the views and perceptions of the respondents occurring overtime. However, attrition can be an issue in such studies which needs to be taken care of during the sampling stage. However, there

was no such concern in this research because it was only doing interviews with journalists in India and Pakistan about a certain issue at a certain point in time. Therefore, longitudinal analysis was not targeted and attrition was not a likely concern.

Using Interviews to Find Patterns and Themes

Qualitative interviews have been used under a variety of conditions and theoretical applications to understand the underlying realities attached to a phenomenon. Reichstadt et. al. (2010) conducted interviews in a community to find out the reasons for successful aging and two primary themes (self-acceptance and engagement with life) were identified during the process. Christianson et. al. (2003) interviewed young adults diagnosed with chlamydia trachomatis about their sexual risk-taking and found that lust and trust were the driving themes for the sexual interactions to take place. This sensitive subject and related answers would not have been as easy to analyze without conducting in-depth interviews. DeMarrais & Tisdale (2002) tried to understand the anger among the female respondents of their study and found out that recalling those emotions made them experience a similar anger, frustration or anxiety while being interviewed. Dobernig & Stagl (2015) used in-depth interviews with 28 urban farmers and volunteers associated with a project in the New York City to find out the motivations behind the urge to grow food in a big city like that. Personal desires and socioecological motives emerged as the two major themes behind the urban farming movement in the city. The methodological dimension of these interviews was problem-centered and questions were asked from urban farmers and volunteers at different locations to find out motivational mechanisms and underlying meanings. This shows that qualitative interviews can provide answers that show different aspects of the problem as well as the possible solutions, which was a primary objective of this research as well. Tamale (1999) interviewed parliamentarians, non-governmental workers and people

living in rural areas to understand how the increased political participation of women in the Ugandan politics had been achieved. Ramage (1997) conducted 175 in-depth interviews to understand the concept of national ideology in Indonesia and how the democratic and Islamic parties had extraordinarily differing views about it. Teräväinen, Lehtonen, & Martiskainen (2011) conducted interviews about the energy security and climate change discourse in Finland, France, and the United Kingdom. They found out about the substantial differences in the discourse in each country as it was “technology and industry knows best” in Finland, “government knows best” in France, and “markets know best” in the U.K. Nilsson (2005) studied the learning patterns in Swedish institutions about climate and nuclear policy formation. Using the qualitative interview technique, the findings showed that trust building, institutional roles, capacities, and incentives were the major themes or drivers that enhanced the learning process. Nohrstedt (2008) studied Sweden’s nuclear policy making process after the Chernobyl accident and found three main themes (ideological salience, level of conflict, and previous crisis experiences) during the interviews as the factors influencing policy choices. Poortinga, Pidgeon, & Lorenzoni (2006) interviewed the British public about their perceptions of nuclear energy, climate change, and alternative energy options and found that the respondents were more interested as well as concerned in climate change compared to nuclear energy or alternative energy sources. How the journalists frame these issues and which factors influence this frame-building process can have a considerable bearing on how the general public views that problem.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Interviews answer the ‘*what*’ and ‘*how*’ questions, but these are unable to answer the *why* questions or offer causal inferences like quantitative studies (Mann, 2010). If the purpose of the research is to find out how something happens and what are the different views existing among

the respondents about it, then qualitative interviews offer an opportunity that cannot be provided by quantitative research or sheer numbers of cases. There has been severe critique on how the qualitative research and interviews are conducted by several researchers. The primary focus of this criticism is the tendency of the researchers to consider the qualitative interviewing to be much more than what it actually is, and thus put the reliability of data and validity of findings into question. Novick (2008) has maintained that the researchers may have a bias against telephonic interviewing primarily because it does not offer the opportunity to record non-verbal data and context like a face-to-face interview. However, the respondents on the phone may feel more comfortable revealing sensitive information and may not be affected by the researcher's presence like in a face-to-face interview. Validity and reliability of the responses in qualitative interview can also become a limitation if the coding is not done properly and pre-deciding categories for this purpose aggravates this problem. This research tried to overcome that threat through the inductive nature of coding where the themes emerged from the data. Kurasaki (2000) has suggested a three-part procedure, starting from codebook development (annotating the text, labeling thematic categories, applying numeric codes, refining final codebook); establishing inter-coder reliability (training, coding procedures, agreement calculation, calibration check at midpoint, inter-coder agreement to themes, examining text segmentation patterns); and finally applying the codebook systematically to the data.

One problem with the data collected in qualitative interviews, though, is that it is difficult to reanalyze, unlike quantitative data which may be used for secondary analysis from different angles. What makes qualitative data different is the unique context and purpose of collection, which makes it unsuitable for secondary analysis most of the times (Van den Berg, 2008). However, there can be multi-perspective qualitative interviews that encompass more than one

angle (Murray, 2010). The dissertation aimed to understand the views and perceptions of the journalists in India and Pakistan about conflict framing, war and peace journalism, and interplay of framing and securitization by conducting wide-ranging interviews. The basis for these questions were the themes that emerged from the content analysis of news stories selected from six top circulating English-language newspapers, three each in India and Pakistan.

Potter & Hepburn (2005) have raised concerns over the tendency to remove the interviewer from the analysis of the interview data, which can result in several contingent and necessary problems. They argue that interaction analysis should be focused to overcome the existing issues in the design, conduct and interpretation of interview data. Another problem can be the interviews conducted by inexperienced researchers who may not be able to probe and steer the conversation towards the research purposes. To overcome this problem, training an interviewer and using focus groups to pilot test what needs to be asked from the respondents is a possible solution (Barbour, 2008). However, the researchers must remain cautious of the urge to agree or disagree with the given answers or ask leading questions or cues. "Interviewers need to minimize their own, potentially biasing role, limiting their interactions to encouraging nods and expressions and nondirective, neutral cues" (Klenke, 2008). Sample sizes in qualitative interviews have also been considerably debated because these studies use non-random samples and since reaching the saturation point might not be very easy (Mason, 2010). Several researchers have indicated that a sample size ranging somewhere from 30 to 50 respondents could serve the purposes in the studies using qualitative interviewing method. Baker, Edwards, & Doidge (2012) asked social scientists and researchers about their thoughts on the number of interviews that should be conducted for a research project and the consensus was on 14-15 interviews. However, Leech (2005) has cautioned against the assumption that all qualitative

research must have small sample sizes because some studies, e.g. Mohrman, Tenkasi, & Mohrman (2003), have interviewed as many as 350 respondents as well. In cross-national analysis or in national studies where different cultures are involved, translation of the interview contents or the use of an interpreter can pose a problem to the reliability of data (Kapborg & Berterö, 2002). However, in the case of India and Pakistan, cultures are quite similar and the interviews were conducted in English by the researcher without the help of any interpreter. Therefore, the validity of the data was not likely to be jeopardized. One of the major points of concern in qualitative interviewing is related to the ethics and responsibilities of the interviewer and the rights of the interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Patton, 2015). Unlike content analysis which is an unobtrusive measure, the researcher becomes very much a part of the qualitative interview methodology. Therefore, the respondents should be properly briefed about the nature of the project, no offensive questions should be asked and steps should be taken to ensure the privacy of the participants and the data collected from them. To achieve that objective, no personal information was sought during the interviews conducted from the subjects in India and Pakistan and they were debriefed about the nature of the project at the end of the interviews as well.

Interviews and this Research

The site of analysis for the qualitative interviews (using available technology – skype or phone) were the mainstream newspapers and news television channels in India and Pakistan. The sample comprised of journalists who had covered defense, politics and national security for their respective English-language newspapers as reporters or editors in different cities, for different media outlets. Although the first part of data analysis (content analysis) was based on newspapers content, interviews with electronic media journalists were conducted as well during

the second part of data collection and analysis because the content analysis had revealed how electronic media was driving the content of print media in both countries.

The criteria for the selection of these journalists was direct experience of covering bilateral conflict during the last five years (2012-2017). They should have covered these issues at the bilateral level during the last five years and should have remained closely involved in the framing processes. This timeframe (2012-2017) was selected keeping in mind the time leading up to the general elections in Pakistan in 2013 and in India in 2014. It was believed that the journalists would likely have experienced the changes in the framing before after elections that resulted in the topsy-turvy bilateral relationship. One advantage of that choice was that the journalists were also familiar with the current practices and provided a better insight into the prevalent frame-building issues. The initial target was to conduct twenty-five interviews with the journalists in each country (Pakistan and India). However, this researcher stopped after conducting fifteen interviews in each country (30 in total) because the saturation point was reached after almost ten interviews in each country and the responses of the journalists had started to sound repetitive.

A snowball sampling technique was used to select these journalists. Biernacki & Waldorf (1981) have defined snowball sampling as a method that “yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest” (p. 141). When it comes to asking a specific set of questions about a certain phenomenon with a specialized group that might be hard to reach otherwise, snowball sampling can be very effective (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Noy, 2008; Baltar & Brunet, 2012). However, the researchers have cautioned that a random sample should be selected from a finite given sample while doing snowball sampling instead of going for a completely convenient sample that can

jeopardize the validity of the findings (Goodman, 1961; Oliver & Jupp, 2006). Convincing the journalists to speak to this researcher was a challenge to begin with (given the sensitivities nature of the bilateral conflict). However, the contacts that this researcher had established in both countries while working as a journalist proved handy during the snowball sampling process.

After the approval (Appendix C) of the Florida State University's Institutional-Review Board (IRB), the subjects were contacted through an email and were invited to become part of the research. They were informed that their participation was totally voluntary and that their answers would remain completely anonymous. No identifying information was sought or mentioned in the findings to protect the privacy of the respondents. The answers were recorded only as an audio file and notes were also taken using a paper and pen. The coding categories emerged from the data collected to allow emerging flexibility, in line with the inductive approach undertaken for this research. The questions asked had emerged from the content analysis. These questions explored the following points related to the research questions:

- 1) Which frames dominate the coverage of bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan in newspapers of each country?
- 2) What do you think about the focus on conflict in the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 3) What are your views about the focus on solution of conflict in the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 4) Do you think Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote war journalism?
- 5) Do you think Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote peace journalism?
- 6) In the coverage of conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers, who do you think should be held responsible for the unrest in your country?

- 7) What are your views on the national security narrative in the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 8) What are your views about human cost of war in the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 9) How does the presence of pressure groups affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 10) How does the organizational policy of the newspaper you work for affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 11) What are your views about the budget allocation each year on defense and nuclear arms?
- 12) How do commercial considerations affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 13) How do any unforeseen consequences of challenging the status-quo affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 14) Does social media offer an alternative voice to the promoters of peace between India and Pakistan?
- 15) Are there any laws or regulations that affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 16) What training options are available for the journalists covering conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 17) What can be done to enhance the understanding of India-Pakistan bilateral issues among the journalists in India and Pakistan?
- 18) What can be done to improve the existing coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?

These questions helped to provide answers to the research questions (RQ-1-RQ10) outlined in chapter three, that emerge from the previous academic literature on framing, war/peace journalism, and securitization (Nitz & West, 2000; Galtung, 1998; Buzan, 1997). Pressure groups have been operationally defined as the political, religious, and security forces present in India and Pakistan that target any dissenting voice as anti-national. Organizational policy (operationally defined as the policy of the organization for which the journalist is working), national security state's narrative (operationally defined as focusing on war rhetoric), status-quo (operationally defined as the populist narrative of what the ruling elite's definition of nationalism and national security is), and lack of training (operationally defined as professional training as a journalist to understand consequences of war journalism) were also focused during the data collection and analysis. Peace journalism has been operationally defined, similar to Galtung (2002), as focusing on solutions instead of war journalism (operationally defined as focusing on war). The basic question that these interviews will help answer is the interplay of framing and securitization. Securitization has been operationally defined as the focus on national security and conflict while ignoring the people involved and their issues like consequences of war, poverty, and lack of infrastructure.

CHAPTER 5

CONTENT ANALYSIS – KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes the content of newspapers in India and Pakistan and how these newspapers frame stories related to Indo-Pak conflict. A qualitative content analysis approach was used for this research. Qualitative content analysis has been used by several scholars to study media's content, and to see what themes emerge from this data before making inferences about it (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013; Padgett, 2008). The unit of analysis were news stories selected from six newspapers (three each in India and Pakistan). These newspapers include The Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Hindu (India) and Dawn, The Nation, The News (Pakistan). These newspapers were selected for being the top three circulating newspapers in each country (RSCI, 2016; Rasheed, 2016). For the purpose of this research, stories about Uri attack in Indian-administered Kashmir on September 18, 2016 that killed 18 soldiers and Bhimber attack in Pakistani administered Kashmir on November 15, 2016 that killed seven soldiers have been selected as the universe of study (Abbas, 2016; Ahmad, Phillips, & Berlinger, 2016). The rationale for selecting stories about these two incidents (one on each side of the line of control (LoC) was that both targeted the soldiers and the framing in newspapers was more likely to invoke national security concerns after such incidents. Moreover, both these incidents (Uri and Bhimber) resulted in the largest number of casualties across the LoC on the Indian and Pakistani side ever since the fresh round of conflict between the security forces of both countries broke out in early 2016. The media in each country called these attacks as the deadliest attacks targeting the security forces on each side in the troubled bilateral history. The stories in these newspapers (including news stories, editorials, op-eds, and letters to the editor) for the content analysis were selected using the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe database. However, the

selection of stories was a challenge of sorts. The data for each newspaper was on the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe database was not very structured and there was a lot of repetition as well. The attempt made by this researcher to scan the websites of the selected newspapers as well as do a google search for stories related to Uri attack and Bhimber attack ran into similar problems. Therefore, a decision was made to stick to Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe to ensure consistency and validity of the data. The search terms “Uri” and “Bhimber” generated a total number of 172 stories in Indian and Pakistani newspapers (123 related to Uri attack and 49 on Bhimber attack) using the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe. After deleting the stories that were not directly related to either Uri or Bhimber attack, or were repeated in the data, the final data comprised of 81 stories in Indian newspapers (67 related to Uri attack and 14 on Bhimber attack) while 29 news stories (18 for Uri attack and 11 on Bhimber) in Pakistani newspapers. The duration specified for the selection of news stories was one week from the day of the incident in both India and Pakistan (September 18-25, 2016 for Uri attack and November 15-22, 2016 for Bhimber attack). The rationale behind looking at the coverage beyond the first day of the incident was to find out how emotions running high on the first day after the attack promoted war or peace in the most obvious manner and whether such a tendency sustained or tapered off a few days after the actual incident. The content was coded based on the themes emerging from the data (RQ1-3 and RQ5-7) and analyzed accordingly (Appendix A). The research question number 4 and RQ8-10 were not included in the content analysis because they were relevant for frame-building part of this research only (see chapter-6).

Findings from the Content Analysis

RQ-1: Does conflict framing dominate the coverage of India-Pakistan relationship in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers?

Conflict framing

It was clear from the data that both Indian and Pakistani newspapers were framing the bilateral relationship only through the lens of conflict. On the first day of the attack as well as on the subsequent days, almost all stories mentioned the conflict between India and Pakistan but blamed the other country for this conflict and the tendency didn't appear to subside during the week analyzed. Both Indian and Pakistani newspapers primarily relied on official sources. There was a kind of homogeneity in this coverage and it was really difficult to separate the coverage in one newspaper from the other.

Pakistan: The data showed that all 18 stories related to Uri attack and 11 stories related to Bhimber attack invoked conflict as the dominant theme. There was no difference in this theme when the stories appearing on the first day were compared with framing in the stories during the remaining days of the week. The Pakistani newspapers were dismissive of the Indian accusations related to Uri attack and relied on official sources for that. Daily Dawn, on September 18, 2016, quoted Pakistan's foreign office spokesman as saying that "putting the blame on Pakistan was an old tactic of India before seriously investigating the case." Daily The Nation also carried press statements from the civilian and military leadership to dismiss the Indian accusations related to Uri and argued in one of the stories on September 20, 2016, that India had perhaps hatched the Uri plan itself as a conspiracy to defame Pakistan. Daily The News had the most number of stories (nine stories) on Uri attack on the Pakistani side with inputs almost always from the civilian and military sources. In one of the op-eds on September 20, 2016 in The News, the

writer appeared to invoke communal and religious conspiracy theories to lend credence to the argument. The op-ed mentioned that “India wants to achieve more than one targets, including accusing Pakistan of backing terrorism, diverting the world attention from the killings by its forces in occupied Kashmir, undermining Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s address at the UN General Assembly session and creating hatred between the Sikh and Muslim communities in Indian-held Kashmir. Sources in the security establishment insist that the military brigade headquarter, which has been the target of what is believed to be India’s false flag operation, is Sikh dominated, chosen deliberately to antagonize the Sikhs from supporting the Muslims’ struggle in Kashmir. The Pakistani newspapers did reproduce the accusations made by the Indian side, but with a hint of conspiracy behind it. For example, Daily The News ran a headline about the situation in India on September 23, 2016 that read “Panic mounts following Uri attack”.

The stories about Bhimber attack on the Pakistani side blamed India for starting the fire first. Daily The News, in first reporting of the incident on November 15, 2016, justified the action by mentioning that the Pakistani security forces had replied to the intense firing. All the information in the story came from the security sources. “Indian madness grows even wilder” was the headline of another follow-up story in Daily The Nation. The *conspiracy* theme seemed to echo in other newspapers as well. In a story carried by Daily Dawn, Chairman of Pakistan’s Senate, Mian Raza Rabbani was quoted as saying that India was resorting to unprovoked firing and “India’s war hysteria was a massive conspiracy to destroy regional peace.”

India: Conflict emerged as the dominant theme in the Indian newspapers’ coverage of the Uri and Bhimber attack as well. The Indian newspapers almost immediately blamed Pakistan for the attack in Uri and used the quotes from civilian and military leadership for it. The Times of India quoted Indian home minister, Rajnath Singh, in the first report after the incident as

saying that “the initial investigations by the Army indicated the role of Jasih-e-Mohammed (*a Pakistan-based militant group*) in the attack with weapons recovered from the slain terrorists having Pakistan marking. The Director-General Military Operations, Lt Gen Ranbir Singh, of the Indian military was the other primary source in the Indian newspapers to point fingers towards Pakistan. The Hindustan Times quoted Inspector General of the Border Security Force, Kashmir Frontier, Vikash Chandra in a story on September 19, 2016, to showcase how the conflict on the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan was intensifying. “There has been an increase in the number of encounters along the LoC this year, and seeing that there is no denial that infiltration has taken place...Around 150-200 militants are waiting on the other side of LoC to infiltrate.” In another story in Hindustan Times on November 18, 2016 about the governments of the U.S. and the U.K. condemning the militant attack on Uri army camp, the writer did point out that the reactions from both countries had failed to name Pakistan or the Jaish-e-Mohammed, which has been blamed by India for the attack. The same report went on to quote a couple of American think-tank experts as agreeing with the Indian assessment of the origin of the attack to drive home that point. In another report in Daily The Hindu in the aftermath of the Uri attack on September 21, 2016, the attack was used to justify the ramped-up security. “Security has been beefed up in the sector and the entire town of Uri is sealed and in lockdown. Combing operations in and around the installation are underway and security on vital roads connecting the Line of Control (LOC) has been beefed up”, the report read without mentioning anything about the problems it was creating for the general public in that area.

Even in the follow-up stories after the day of the attack, sources that made insinuation towards Pakistan were used on priority. For example, The Hindustan Times on September 20, 2016, ran a story in which the hardline political party, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (*an affiliate of the*

ruling Bhartiya Janta Party), wanted the Indian government “to storm into Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) to destroy terror camps” and take control of what they asserted as "Indian territory". An interesting observation related to conflict-dominated coverage in the Indian newspapers was how social media was tactfully used for this purpose. A headline in Hindustan Times on September 18, 2016, read “Twitterati flares up post Uri attack.” In another report in Daily The Hindu on September 24, tweets of Indian celebrities that promoted conflict were picked as the core content. The stories about Bhimber attack on the Indian side blamed Pakistan for starting the firing. The news story in The Hindu on November 15, 2016, quoted military sources as saying that it was Pakistan which resorted to firing that was “effectively retaliated”. “Indian Army sources said that there was ceasefire violation by Pakistan in Naushera sector on Sunday night and they had responded appropriately.” A follow-up story in The Hindu mentioned that only Pakistan had suffered casualties in the fire exchange and there had been no loss on the Indian side. The Times of India ran a report on the arms and ammunition being used in the crossfire without any mention of the environmental impact of such activities or problems for the villagers living on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC). “Both sides are now increasingly resorting to heavy-calibre weapons like artillery guns (155mm howitzers and 105mm field guns), anti-tank guided-missiles and 120mm mortars in their daily exchanges of fire since the Indian Special Forces carried out surgical strikes against terror launch pads in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir on September 29.” The same was the case in Hindustan Times quoting unnamed officials who said that “Indian troops had fired in retaliation after Pakistan pounded Indian outposts and border villages on the LoC with heavy machine guns and mortars. Sources said 22 Pakistani soldiers were also wounded in the Skirmish.” One op-ed in the Hindustan Times mentioned that both armies had to share some of the blame. “Both armies are known to have

mounted harsh retaliatory actions against the killings of soldiers, in some cases even conducting retaliatory beheadings.”

RQ-2: Does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers focus on solutions and human cost of war in each country?

Solution frames

There was hardly any mention of the human cost of war or long-term solutions of the bilateral conflict between India and Pakistan in the newspapers in either country. Even if some solutions were mentioned occasionally, those only furthered the Indian position in the Indian newspapers and the Pakistani sentiment on the Pakistani side. Both countries mentioned the soldiers or civilians killed or injured in the crossfire as just numbers. There were no names mentioned and there was no mention or quotes of their families about how they were suffering.

Pakistan: Daily Dawn ran a story on September 19, 2016, that appeared to indicate that the attack in Uri could be a result of “the death of an 11-year-old Nasir Shafi, whose body was found riddled with pellets used by Indian security forces, has deepened the anger and instigated fresh protests in IHK (*Indian-held Kashmir*) over the weekend.” Another report in Daily The Nation on September 23, 2016, appeared to be calling for solutions of the outstanding issue of Kashmir in an op-ed, but from the Pakistani standpoint. “The vicious and unending clampdown by Indian security forces in IHK ought to have pricked the world's conscience, but the outside world has prioritised good relations with India over compassion for the oppressed people of Kashmir.” Daily The News echoed the same sentiment in another report and used unnamed military sources for this purpose. “The Indian Army's top brass is using the allegation of infiltration of Mujahideen (*referred to as terrorists by India*) to conceal their shortcomings from their people and government. In another report in Daily The News, it was reported that the

armies of Pakistan and India in the backdrop of Uri attack had established hotline contact. “It did mention that the Pakistani side had asked the Indians to share any actionable intelligence because no infiltration was allowed from Pakistani soil.” The report didn’t mention whether both sides had discussed any long-term solution to the dispute as well. Daily The Nation reported about the background of Uri attack on September 24, 2016, that “87 civilians had been killed and thousands injured in the protests against Indian rule, sparked by the killing of a popular rebel leader in a gunbattle with soldiers on July 8.” However, the report only pointed fingers at India and who those killed were and whether Pakistan had any role in this uprising was missing from the report. Daily The News also carried another report quoting the Northern Command of the Indian army that point out in passing towards the shambolic conditions in which the soldiers were living. "The base had a large strength of troops of units turning over after their tour of duty who were stationed in tents/temporary shelters which caught fire and resulted in heavy casualties." When it came to attaching a human face to the casualties, the report only added that “most of the dead soldiers were from the Bihar Regiment. Two soldiers of the Dogra Regiment also died.”

The same was the case in the reporting of Bhimber attack that killed seven Pakistani soldiers. Daily The News carried a report on November 19, 2016, with comments of the adviser to the prime minister on foreign affairs, Sartaj Aziz, expressing grave concern on the frequency and duration of indiscriminate firing/shelling from the Indian side “deliberately targeting villages and civilian populated areas, which has resulted in the death of 26 civilians and injuries to 107, including women and children, in complete violation of the 2003 ceasefire understanding and international law.” However, the report was devoid of the details of who those killed or injured were or any other details of which laws were being violated and just relied on reproducing the

remarks of the advisor to prime minister. Another report in Daily The News on November 19, 2016, mentioned that “Indo-Pakistan border near and within Kashmir has witnessed heavy firing from both sides with significant loss of lives and property” without going in any details. An op-ed in Daily The Nation on November 21, 2016, pointed towards the loss being incurred by both sides before quickly blaming India for it. “There have been repeated outbreaks of cross-border firing, with both sides reporting deaths and injuries including civilians on the Pakistani side are suffering the most as Indian forces often target them intentionally.” Another op-ed in the same newspaper traced the roots of the Kashmir conflict in the bitter separation of Indian subcontinent in 1947 and argued that no country was prepared to let go an inch because it would mean showing weakness.

India: The Indian newspapers after Uri attack blamed Pakistan for masterminding attacks in Kashmir and cross-border firing to gain sympathies of the Kashmiri people and provoke further resentment against India. However, no such report mentioned the sufferings of Kashmiri people of either side because of it. A report in the Hindustan Times on September 19, 2016, quoted the chief minister of the Indian-occupied Kashmir who warned that such incidents were “aimed at triggering fresh violence in Kashmir and creating a war-like situation in the region. Those responsible for sponsoring and aiding violence must understand the futility of their exercise as it would yield nothing but misery for the people.” There were no details of those miseries of the people in the report though. The Times of India did carry a report in which a couple of residents of Uri town were quoted as recalling their impressions of the Uri attack and what kinds of sounds of gunfire they had heard. However, they were not asked any questions about their difficulties because of such situation. After the Bhimber attack on the Pakistani side, a report in the Hindu mentioned that the cross-border firing had injured a 27-year-old

commando, Vinay Devrai of Uttarakhand, but he was stable. Another report in the Times of India on November 22, 2016, quoted Indian military sources as saying that had lost ten Army soldiers and four personnel of the border security forces in cross-border firing since September 2016. “Pakistan has lost many more soldiers, and is now being forced to acknowledge its casualties for the first time, said a senior officer”. Hindustan Times also ran a report that mentioned that “more than 10 Indian jawans were martyred during the Pakistani aggression. Civilians casualties on the Indian side of the border were also high in villages bordering Pakistan.” However, none of these reports went beyond reporting number of casualties or tried to contact the families of the deceased or the ones living in constant fear because of the ongoing crossfire.

RQ-3: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers indulge in thematic or episodic framing while covering the Kashmir conflict?

Thematic / episodic framing

Both Indian and Pakistani newspapers used primarily episodic framing in the coverage of Uri and Bhimber attack. If at all some background was mentioned occasionally in a couple of stories on either side, it was to paint the rival country as a villain in order to justify the use of aggressive tactics. The Uri attack had happened a few days before the United Nations general assembly summit in 2016, and the newspapers in both countries believed that their leadership would use the global platform to settle scores with the other country.

Pakistan: The Daily Dawn said on September 19, 2016, that the Uri attack could catapult the Kashmir dispute to the forefront of global issues that will be discussed at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The spokesperson of the Pakistani foreign ministry was quoted in another report saying that the Uri attack was a conspiracy to divert attention from the alleged

human rights violations in the Indian-occupied Kashmir. “Zakaria said India had killed 100,000 Kashmiris since the start of the freedom movement. He said that in the recent wave of human rights violations, the Indian forces had killed 104 Kashmiris including children and women. The spokesman said 10,000 Kashmiris had been injured in the “recent brutal activities by the Indian forces.” Daily The News furthered the same argument on September 22, 2016, using security sources. “Pakistani security officials are confident that the latest attack on the Indian Army base in occupied Kashmir is a Pathankot-like Indian-staged drama to trumpet its terrorism mantra against Pakistan and to counter Islamabad’s diplomatic moves to expose the Indian atrocities in Kashmir at a time when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is all set to expose New Dehli at the UN General Assembly session. Daily The Nation, in an op-ed on September 23, 2016, highlighted the ongoing violence in the Kashmir valley on the Indian side for almost two months “with protesting residents clashing almost daily with security forces, in the worst violence to hit the region since 2010” as the possible reason behind the Uri attack. In another report in The News on September 19, 2016, it was argued that India was accusing Pakistan of having a hand in Uri attack “to deflect the security failures.”

After the Bhimber attack in Pakistani-occupied Kashmir, Daily The News mentioned in a news story on November 16, 2016, that the attack was not a violation of ceasefire agreement because the agreement reached in 2003, as mentioned in some other sections of the media, was actually only an understanding. The report went on to blame India when it mentioned that “Pakistan last month had once again asked India to formalise this agreement to end the firing at the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir region. India has ignored the proposal.” Daily The Nation quoted Pakistan’s ambassador to India, Abdul Basit as saying that India should accept the proposals put on the table for ceasefire. However, there was no detail of any of those proposals.

In another story after Bhimber attack on November 22, 2016, Daily Dawn traced the reasons for the border skirmishes “against the backdrop of months of protests against Indian rule of Kashmir, sparked by the killing of a popular freedom fighter, Burhan Wani, in July (2016).” Daily The News accused Indian security forces of “killing more than 100 protesters, most of them young, and blinded thousands of them in the occupied valley.” Most of this information came from the civil and military sources in Pakistan and there was no tendency to question the official narrative.

India: The coverage in the Indian media after the Uri and Bhimber attack was based on the happenings on ground without any background as such. For example, the Times of India, immediately after the Uri attack, reported the casualties as mere numbers but there were no related details. “Among the dead, 15 soldiers were from the Bihar regiment while two were from the Dogra regiment. Seven of the 20 injured soldiers, who were evacuated in helicopters to the 92 Base Hospital in Srinagar, are said to be in critical condition.” Some reports in the Indian newspapers did mention the unrest in the Indian-occupied Kashmir as the background of the Uri attack but blamed Pakistan as having a hand in it. The Hindustan Times quoted security officials in a report carried on September 19, 2016, that “the attack was part of a fresh infiltration attempt from across the Line of Control to foment further unrest in the Valley that has been rocked by two months of violent protests that have killed 86 people and injured thousands.” A couple of news stories did mention that site of attack could be approached from three sides, and only one of that was bordering Pakistan. This could imply the possibility of a homegrown attack as well but none of the reports highlighted that. All fingers were pointed towards Pakistan. The Hindu carried an op-ed on September 23, 2016, that argued that “a deadly attack in the midst of the turmoil that has engulfed Kashmir suggests that this is time for some serious strategic and

tactical thought. India will not only have to calibrate its response vis-a-vis Pakistan; it will also have to factor in how it moves forward in regaining control of the Kashmiri street.” The coverage was also largely based on statements from the ruling elite. The leader of the opposition in the Indian parliament, Ghulam Nabi Azad (*hailing from Indian-occupied Kashmir*) was quoted in Hindustan Times after the Uri attack as saying that this had resulted in uniting the Indian nation while his party chief, Sonia Gandhi, was quoted as saying (*hinting towards Pakistan*) that the “perpetrators should be severely dealt with along with the forces behind them.” The Times of India did give some background of the conflict in a story but that used the security sources to blame Pakistan for all the incidents on the Indian side. “There has been a spike in infiltration bids. As compared to 2015, when 30 terrorists are suspected to have crossed over from Pakistan, the figure for 2016 has already spiked to 70.” The Hindustan Times was the only newspaper that carried an op-ed urging the Indian leadership to look inwards for a solution to the Kashmir conflict. “That the youth in Kashmir are beginning to jettison pragmatic, self-preserving instincts and are contemplating armed violence again must worry Delhi. There are calls in social media and in television studios for a strong reaction. The Modi government must ensure that reprisals against the neighbour do not translate into fresh crackdowns on Kashmiri civilians. That will make matters a lot worse and set in train events that may not be easy to control.”

After the Bhimber attack in Pakistan, Hindustan Times did concede that the border clashes had started after the killing of a militant commander in the Indian-occupied Kashmir in July 2016. Although both countries had expelled diplomats, “Pakistan continued to push an anti-India line at global forums”, the report quickly added. The Times of India reported on the Bhimber attack using security sources as a retaliatory effort. "Suspecting an effort by terrorists to

penetrate the LoC, troops opened fire to preempt the threat. The Pakistani soldiers, who were killed, were probably outside their bunkers or on patrol," the paper quoted an unnamed senior officer of the Indian military. Giving details about the exchanges of fire across LoC after the Bhimber attack, the Times of India reported in a follow-up story that the cross-border incidents were in single digits since January (2016) but had exceeded over 200. "Last year, less than 50 similar incidents were recorded, down from 250 in 2013, the highest since an unsigned ceasefire went into place on the LoC." Daily The Hindu carried a similar report with different figures. "Over 130 incidents of ceasefire violations have been reported on the LoC (*line of control*) and over 180 violations on the IB (*Indian border*) since the surgical strikes. So far 13 security personnel were killed on the Indian side including 10 Army soldiers along the LoC and three jawans of the Border Security Force at the IB." However, all the information was coming from the security officials and no details of the loss of life and property was found in any of these news stories.

RQ-5: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote war journalism?

War journalism

The framing of news stories related to both Uri and Bhimber attacks in both Indian and Pakistani newspapers was a clear case of promoting war journalism. The focus on each side was predominantly on promoting war hysteria, and justifying aggression against the *enemy* state. There was a similar pattern to such coverage in both countries as both civil and military sources were used in this coverage, and the general public, which was likely to get affected because of any potential war, was largely absent from such coverage.

Pakistan: Pakistani newspapers used quotes of politicians and military sources from both countries to create a war-like situation after the Uri attack in India. Daily Dawn, on September

19, 2016, complained that the Indian Home Minister, Rajnath Singh had made a statement about being disappointed with “Pakistan's continued and direct support to terrorism and terrorist groups” despite the fact that no group had claimed responsibility by that time. The Nation ran a similar story with Rajnath Singh’s tweet that said “Pakistan is a terrorist state and it should be identified and isolated as such.” Daily The News, in another report, accused Rajnath Singh of “spewing venom” against Pakistan and suspected that his cancellation of a trip to Russia a day before the Uri attack could have been part of a sinister plan to defame Pakistan. “Hope he wasn't waiting to see the unfolding of virtual play which he and Ajit Doval (*India's national security advisor*) had jointly scripted.” Another report in The News on September 23, 2016, quoted unnamed military sources to suggest that the “Uri attack was nothing more than another drama in Kashmir to trumpet the Indian mantra of terrorism and scuttle Pakistan’s diplomatic moves to expose the Indian atrocities in the UNGA (*United Nations General Assembly*).” Daily Dawn quoted Pakistan’s foreign office spokesman, Nafees Zakaria, to discredit the Indian accusations. “The Indian involvement in terror financing in Pakistan has been exposed by the Indian spy Kulbhushan Yadav arrested in Pakistan (*on spying charges*), revealing that India had been financing terrorist activities in Balochistan, Karachi (*Pakistan's southern region*) and other areas.” Daily The Nation ran a follow-up report in which Pakistan’s defense minister, Khawaja Asif said that “Pakistan will continue moral, political, and diplomatic support to Kashmiris (*which India believes is a factor in aggravating the situation*), adding that India should acknowledge the reality and resolve the Kashmir dispute according to the UN resolutions.”

The same was the case after the Bhimber attack in Pakistan when the Pakistani newspapers used official sources to whip-up jingoistic sentiments. Daily The News carried a news story on November 16, 2016, based on the reaction of the Pakistani prime minister who

sounded out a warning to India. “We are fully capable of defending our soil against any aggression. The Indian forces have resorted to escalating tension on the LoC only to detract the world's attention from the grave human rights situation in the Indian Held Kashmir (IHK).” Daily Dawn’s follow-up story on November 17, 2016, quoted Pakistan’s foreign secretary, Aizaz Chaudhry, who summoned the Indian high commissioner, Gautam Bambawala, and reminded him that that “this belligerent attitude of Indian occupation forces was a serious threat to the regional peace and security and may lead to a strategic miscalculation.” It was apparent that these reports were trying to justify the use of aggression because of the threat from the *enemy state* but any consequences of such an action for Pakistan itself were missing from all these news reports.

India: After the Uri attack, the Indian newspapers were almost unanimous in calling for action against Pakistan for its alleged involvement in the attack. Some of the reports even urged the government to carry-out a full-scale attack against the perpetrators in the Pakistani territory, without mentioning any evidence to this effect. Mostly military sources, sometimes unnamed, were used to justify such an action and wage a war on Pakistan because it was *creating unrest in Kashmir*. The Hindustan Times story on September 19, 2016, said that “sources in Army's Northern Command as well as the 15 Corps said intelligence suggested Pakistan wanted a 'spectacular' strike to demonstrate to the leaders of the civil unrest in the valley that it was not sitting by silently in military aspects.” Another report in The Hindu suggested that the aim of the Uri attack was “to boost the morale of the civil unrest handlers by assuring them that the capability to hit out across the Line of Control still exists.” Whether there was any evidence or investigation behind such a claim was non-existent in these reports. Based on such insinuation, warnings to Pakistan were carried in these newspapers as well. The director general military

operations of the Indian army, Lt. Gen. Ranbir Singh, was quoted by the Times of India on September 20, 2016 to assure that “Indian army is prepared for any evil design by the adversary and will give a befitting response.” Another follow-up report in the Hindu mentioned that a soon-to-be meeting of the civilian and military leadership was considering to launch action against Pakistan. “The option of India launching covert military strikes inside Pakistani territory is in focus following Sunday's militant strike on an army base in Kashmir's Uri town.” Some news reports even sounded unhappy with the government’s response towards Pakistan after the Uri attack because it was not *aggressive enough*. For example, Hindustan Times on September 24, 2016, attacked the Indian prime minister and the foreign minister for not maintaining an aggressive stance against Pakistan. “In his first rally after being anointed the BJP's prime ministerial face for the 2014 parliamentary polls, Narendra Modi (*Indian prime minister*) claimed before an impressive gathering of ex-servicemen at Rewari in Haryana that the “problem” was in Delhi and not at the borders. That was Modi in September 2013. In January that year, Sushma Swaraj, then leader of opposition, dared the Manmohan Singh (*India's former prime minister*) government to get 10 heads from the other side of the border if Pakistan did not return the severed head of martyred soldier Hemraj. Three years to those muscle-flexing, the BJP is being pulled down by the weight of expectations it created with promise of a decisive leadership that will deal aggression with an iron fist.”

If the serving military sources were not enough to whip-up war-like sentiments for the readers, retired military officials were also quoted to call for an action against Pakistan and Hindustan Times appeared to take the lead in that. In one of the stories, the Hindustan Times quoted the former northern army commander Lieutenant General BS Jaswal that “the (*Indian*) army had not been used effectively in Jammu and Kashmir and its posture was mostly defensive.

You have to hit Pakistan where it hurts.” A similar report in daily The Hindu India carried remarks of the former Indian army chief, Shankar Roy Choudhury, that “India should form its own “fidayeen (*suicide*) squad” to launch operations against Pakistan. There were several op-eds that discussed how Pakistan was playing mischief and India needed to respond to it to *teach Pakistan a lesson*. All kind of suggestive rhetoric was used for this purpose without any conclusive evidence. The author of an op-ed in The Times of India said that “Rawalpindi (*city where Pakistan army is headquartered*) has a number of motivations to sanction this attack - the principal one being to establish a measure of symbolic parity with India. From its vantage, it sees Delhi seizing the initiative and setting the pace of bilateral ties in recent weeks. Islamabad (*Pakistan’s capital*) has cynically used Kashmir to serve its own purposes in the past.”

Interestingly, social media was also scanned for content that was in sync with this war hysteria. The headline of a Hindustan Times story after Uri attack read “Twitterati ask PM to shed ‘strategic restraint’, let Pak ‘have it’.” The entire content of the story included random tweets without any names attached to them. Daily The Hindu also published a similar follow-up story that mentioned that the call for an aggressive response, especially on social media, was because of a perception that India had been not reacting properly to alleged Pakistani *hostilities* for a long time. There was only one op-ed in the Hindustan Times that cautioned that such an action inside the Pakistani territory might not be a good idea. “The consequences of Pakistan being a nuclear-armed state, which advocates first use, have to be weighed in before launching an operation as borne out by Operation Geronimo- in which US special forces killed Osama bin Laden.”

The Indian media didn’t cover the Bhimber attack in Pakistan in as much detail as it had covered the Uri attack. The stories that did cover this incident largely called it an incident of retaliation by Indian army because *Pakistan had started the firing first*. Again, the sources used

were from the Indian military and the details that were mentioned justified the action by the Indian army. The Hindustan Times report on November 15, 2016, mentioned the Bhimber attack as an “unprovoked ceasefire violation by Pakistani army. They are using 82mm mortar shells and automatic weapons. Indian troops are responding befittingly” while quoting military spokesperson Lt. Col. Manish Mehta. The report did mention that Indian troops had damaged at least three Pakistani posts but there was no mention of the casualties on the Pakistani side. Daily The Hindu published a story to provide a similar justification for Indian action when it said that “in the aftermath of the surgical strikes (*which India claimed to have carried in the Pakistani territory after the Uri attack*), Pakistan had repeatedly violated ceasefire, resorting to unprovoked firing at BSF (*border security forces*) forward posts in Kashmir.” The details mentioned in some of the reports were so gory that these could easily incite any common reader’s sentiments. “The deaths come just days after the killing of 17 Sikh Regiment's Sepoy Mandeep Singh ignited fury within the Indian Army. Singh's mutilated body was discovered after he got lost during a patrol near the LoC ahead of Kala Post, one of the several Indian forward positions in Machil sector.”

RQ-6: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote peace journalism?

Peace journalism

With the focus on conflict and war journalism, peace journalism appeared to be a missing element in the coverage of Uri and Bhimber attacks in Indian and Pakistani newspapers. There were hardly any quotes from the peace activists in both countries after these attacks.

Pakistan: Daily Dawn op-ed after the Uri attack feared that “the raid is likely to further sour ties between the nuclear-armed neighbours given the high death toll and heightened tensions in the Occupied Kashmir following weeks of deadly clashes between residents and security

forces.” Daily The Nation mentioned Lt. Gen. Ranbir Singh, Indian army's director general of military operations, who had pointed fingers towards a Pakistan-based militant group for masterminding the Uri attack. The report went on to add that “the war of words, at least from the Indian side, will not abate in the days ahead. India's automatic blaming of Pakistan for major violence in that country is very much a part of the problem.” Daily The Nation quoted Pakistan’s foreign ministry spokesman, Nafees Zakaria, and asserted that peace was only possible if India agreed to Pakistan’s demands for a plebiscite in the Indian-held Kashmir (IHK). “Pakistan had taken up the issue of Indian atrocities in IHK and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has written letters to secretary generals of the UN (*United Nations*) and OIC (*Organization of Islamic Countries*). Daily Dawn also related the Uri attack to the alleged human rights violations by the Indian army in the Indian-occupied Kashmir. “The OIC Human Rights Commission had condemned the Indian brutalities in IHK and the UNHRC (*United nations Human Rights Commission*) had asked for sending a fact-finding commission to the region that was rejected by India,” the report mentioned while implying that Indian policies in Kashmir valley had led to the Uri attack. In a report in daily Dawn though, the writer opined that the decision of Indian prime minister to skip the United Nations meeting after a few days of the Uri attack had potentially averted a high-level diplomatic clash. Daily The News, on September 19, 2016, carried a report that stressed that Pakistan “would continue extending diplomatic, political and moral support to the people of Kashmir until they are given their right to self-determination as provided by the UN Security Council resolutions.” This was clear that the Indian stance that Pakistan’s involvement in Indian-held Kashmir was part of the problem didn’t have any space in the Pakistani newspapers. Some reports went as far as justifying the killing of the Indian soldiers. In Daily The Nation on September 22, 2016, Pakistan’s defense minister, Khawaja Asif, was

quoted as saying that “Indian forces were sowing a crop of torture and violence and will reap the same.” In another report in the same paper that called for peace in Kashmir, the defense minister was quoted again to justify the infighting in Indian-held Kashmir because “the Kashmiris were fighting for freedom, which was their basic right.” Pakistan’s advisor to the prime minister, Sartaz Aziz, was also quoted in a report of daily The Nation. The report urged both government to take steps for peace in the region, albeit with a Pakistani perspective. “Foreign Office had been organizing multiple activities to highlight the Kashmir issue by engaging the civil society.” Whether there were any alternative solutions being offered in the civil society or what the Indian concerns were had no space in these reports either.

After the Bhimber attack, the Pakistani media reports suggested that perhaps it was a drama staged by India to blame Pakistan. Daily The News on November 15, 2016, mentioned that “the situation in the (*Kashmir*) valley is becoming downright depressing for the Indian government and the establishment.” In another follow-up report, The News blamed India for having a Pakistan-centered skewed world view. “They measure victory in a conflict of this nature by killing more and more civilians. But fighting the Kashmiris with boots on the ground could only be a short-term measure. There has been a massive failure on the political landscape once again following the killing of Burhan Wani.” It was easy to interpret that the Pakistani newspapers were peddling the official Pakistani narrative that the only solution to the Kashmir conflict was to free Indian-held Kashmir. Daily Dawn blamed India for escalation along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. “Pakistan asked the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to report Indian escalation along the LoC and Working Boundary to the United Nations Security Council.” Dawn was also the only newspaper on

November 15, 2016, that mentioned the Pakistani soldiers killed in the Bhimber attack by name, but there were no other details.

India: All the solutions offered in the Indian newspapers for peace with Pakistan blamed Pakistan for the conflict and argued that it was only possible if Pakistan stopped backing terrorism. Almost all reports mentioned that peace was not possible unless Pakistan stopped playing a bad role. The Hindustan Times said on September 20, 2016, citing unnamed government sources that “militants from across the border were instigating Kashmiris and were behind the current unrest in the Valley.” When the same newspaper reported a seminar on ‘Challenges in Jammu and Kashmir’, the only quotes used were of the hawkish speakers who argued that “there is no scope for soft pedaling or expediency now.” The Indian newspapers quoted the Indian politicians to point fingers towards Pakistan. For example, Loksatta party (*an Indian political party*) founder Jayaprakash Narayan urged to bury the hatchet and evolve strategy, but that was only possible if “Pakistan must choose between self-destruction and prosperity.” Similarly, the Communist Party of India general secretary, Sitaram Yechury’s statement was also carried by the newspapers which did call for a long-standing solution to the Kashmir issue, but went on to add that “Pakistan must stop aiding and abetting the extremist forces.” The Times of India carried an op-ed in which security lapses on the Indian side that led to the Uri attack, perhaps implying that the security should be tightened more. “What kind of security protocols does the Indian Army follow in Kashmir, already in the grip of the most tension in recent memory, that such an attack could even be conceived?”

There were some reports that called for peace in the region by initiating a political dialogue with all stakeholders in the Kashmir valley without any further delay. The Times of India on September 22, 2016, urged the leadership in both countries to show restraint. “India,

Pak need special leadership to deny warmongers what they want. Warmongers in both countries want war. It may take some very special leadership to deny them again.” The Hindustan Times carried another op-ed that argued that “the Modi government must ensure that reprisals against the neighbour do not translate into fresh crackdowns on Kashmiri civilians. That will make matters a lot worse and set in train events that may not be easy to control.” The Hindu quoted a tweet by the Indian film director, Navdeep Singh, that warned against going to war. “So easy calling out for War from the drawing room when you do not wear uniform or have no relative serving in uniform. Is War entertainment?” Another Hindustan Times report also detailed what impact such warmongering was having on the psyche of the Indian public. “India is changing. Its vast nationalist middle-class respects the armed forces, sees Pakistan as an incorrigible enemy, believes that problems in Kashmir are the creation of Islamabad (*Pakistan’s capital*), and is regularly fed a dose of patriotism by some aggressive television. A military offensive is no guarantee of providing a solution to the crisis.” However, such rational arguments for peace were lastly marginal and majority of the reporting in the Indian newspapers after the Uri attack chose to ignore this angle.

After the Bhimber attack in Pakistan, the Indian newspapers offered solutions for peace from the Indian vantage point. The Hindu report argued that Pakistan couldn’t afford to go for an all-out war with India because India was a superior military power. "For obvious reasons, that is a situation that they (*Pakistan*) would like to avoid. They have got over 2,00,000 troops committed to counter-insurgency in their north-west, and have had to denude their anti-India offensive formations to that end”, the report said quoting military sources. Another report in the Hindustan Times trivialized the expenses on beefing-up security apparatus as no big deal for India, as long as it hit Pakistan hard. “Although a significant escalation on the LoC would

impose costs for India, by preventing the reconstruction of defenses after the spring snow-melt and thus facilitating infiltration, it would also force Pakistan to move troops to the area.”

RQ-7: Does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote securitization in India and Pakistan?

Framing and securitization

It is not difficult to infer that the newspapers in India and Pakistan are promoting securitization in each country but focusing on conflict and war-mongering and ignoring the consequences of such a policy for the general public. The news reports justified the use of aggression and acquisition of military capability as a necessity to thwart the aggression being shown by the rival country, even if it was at the expense of the general public.

Pakistan: Daily Dawn carried reaction from the Indian side after the Uri attack, even though they pointed fingers towards Pakistan, in an apparent attempt to showcase the Indian aggressive stance towards Pakistan. “We strongly condemn the cowardly terror attack in Uri. I assure the nation that those behind this despicable attack will not go unpunished. Our men are ready to give a befitting response.” However, in another report, daily Dawn mentioned that the accusation levelled by India against Pakistan had “plunged Pak-India relations into a dangerous and unstable new phase.” The news stories also mentioned how Pakistan was trying to internationalize the conflict instead of taking steps to resolve it. Daily The Nation quoted Pakistan’s foreign ministry officials to inform that Pakistan had submitted three dossiers with the United Nations, “furnishing evidences of terror financing by India in Pakistan.” Daily The News traced the reason of this securitization trend in the bitter bilateral history of both countries. “The threads of Indian efforts to destabilize Pakistan go to 1947 and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had admitted the Indian role in the 1971 break-up of Pakistan.” The remarks of Pakistan’s

defense minister, Khawaja Asif, in daily Dawn said that Indian forces were sowing a crop of torture and violence and “will reap the same.” An op-ed in The News in the aftermath of the Uri attack accused India of promoting religious conflict because Uri was a Sikh-dominated area. “This seemingly is aimed to save the Hindus and make Sikhs scapegoats. Hindus know it well that their appointed army chief and Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh will handle the community to keep them silent.” Another report in daily The Nation said that India was conspiring to “antagonize the Sikh-Muslim affinity in Kashmir as Sikhs have openly supported the just cause of Muslims of Indian-occupied Kashmir for independence.” The source of all these insinuations were the security officials in Pakistan. Daily The News also reported in a follow-up story that the Uri attack will further escalate tensions. Quoting the chief minister of the Indian-occupied Kashmir, Mehbooba Mufti, the report said that “the heightened tension in the wake of the Uri attack is set to further vitiate the atmosphere in and around Jammu and Kashmir amid increasing India-Pakistan hostility.” In another story in daily The News on November 21, 2016, to show how India was responsible for aggression, Jitendra Singh, the minister of state in the Indian prime minister's office was quoted as saying that “describing it as an ‘act of cowardice’ will not suffice, not countering it is also an act of cowardice.” The author argued that Pakistan needed to prepare accordingly and implied that people in the area should accept that as a necessary measure in such a situation.

After the Bhimber attack in the Pakistani territory, the Pakistani newspapers relied solely on security officials instead of doing any independent reporting from the area. When Pakistan’s army chief, Gen. Raheel Sharif, visited the affected area immediately after the attack, daily The News carried a story with his comments about *giving a befitting response to India*. “The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif directed his soldiers at the Line of Control (LoC) to

“effectively respond to India's unprovoked firing across the border, promising that his army would continue to respond effectively and leave no stone unturned to defend the motherland.” A similar story in daily The Nation quoted the president of the Pakistani-occupied Kashmir, Masood Khan. “Let this be clear to India that a befitting response would be given by Pakistan Army to this dastardly and cowardly act. By such attack, India would not be able to divert attention from its crimes against humanity and genocide in occupied Kashmir.” None of these reports mentioned how the people in the area were being affected by such a military action or the expenses being incurred on the military that could have been used on the public welfare.

India: The Indian newspapers, after the Uri attack, also showed a clear tendency to securitize the region to combat the challenge being presented by Pakistan. All newspapers carried stories about the beefed-up security without giving any space to the people affected by these strategies. The Hindustan Times, on September 24, 2016, mentioned that the army and border security force had upped security on the borders, army formations and bases. Quoting an unnamed army officer in Jammu, the report said that “this attack has obviously compelled us to have a thorough re-look at all the army formations and bases and a detailed security audit will be conducted shortly.” Even the legislators jumped in this debate. In a news story picked up from twitter in daily The Hindu, member of parliament from the opposition party, Indian National Congress, Shashi Tharoor, who otherwise has a reputation of being pro-peace, called for an urgent review of India’s defense systems, preparedness, and firepower. The existing and former government officials were unanimous in calling for further expediting the security measures. “Former home minister P. Chidambaram (*whose government before 2013 had a reputation of being soft towards Pakistan*) urged the government “to mobilize all resources, manpower and material to strengthen border defense to prevent infiltration of terrorists” in a report in the Hindu.

The newspapers used the same strategy of quoting remarks of hawkish security experts in the follow-up stories. The Times of India, on September 23, 2016, quoted former home secretary, R.K. Singh, who said that “these attacks are planned by ISI (*Pakistan’s intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence*) and Pakistan Army. Only way to handle these attacks is to hit back.” The Hindustan Times used remarks of a communist party leader, Sitaram Yechury, who asserted that Pakistan should stop “aiding and abetting the extremist forces. Such acts only compound the situation further, and are a big impediment to the peace process in the region.”

Almost all the newspapers carried reports as to what measures had been taken by the government and the military after the Uri attack to increase security along the vital roads that connected the town of Uri to the Line of Control. The Times of India mentioned on September 19, 2016, that “red alert has been sounded across Kashmir and security measures at all Army installations have been stepped up. The government also put all airports in the country on high-alert following the attack.” Whether any flights or road traffic was disturbed because of such measures was not mentioned in the report. A follow-up story in the Times of India on September 20, 2016, said that the defense minister had been briefed on the security steps and implied that such measures were the need of the hour. “The need for heightened vigil both on the LoC and hinterland, including the deployment of the additional forces, and to remain prepared for any developing situation was stressed upon.” There were news reports that suggested that the government was not doing enough in the name of security, which implied the need for more securitization. “As military protocol suggests, the maximum security cover must be deployed on the vulnerable directions-in this case the sides towards LoC from where maximum attacks are expected.” These reports suggested that the local community was hardly a stakeholder, but only a fodder of the conflict. “As we are providing outer security cover and the BSF (*border security*

force) is guarding the borders, we will ask locals, particularly those living near the India-Pakistan border, to help security forces and inform us about any suspicious movement. We have intensified checking along the state borders. We have also started frisking those entering the state by state and private transport.” None of these reports bothered to speak to any of the locals about such steps and the information fed by the security officials was considered enough. The Times of India, on September 19, 2016, unnamed government sources were quoted to justify that “all the militant activities in Jammu and Kashmir are being directed from across the border and therefore some hard steps need to be taken in this regard.” When the newspapers chose to carry remarks from somebody outside the official circle, it carried only those voices that supported the official narrative and justified securitization. For example, the Hindustan Times, on September 24, 2016, reported a seminar on Jammu and Kashmir problems and quoted writer and analyst, Sant Kumar Sharma, who urged that “all the patriotic forces have to resolve to fight and be ready for sacrifice.” When the general public and members of intelligentsia start defining patriotism through the lens of official national security narrative and justify public sacrifices in the name of security, that is enough of an indication of the securitization process taking place in a country.

The Indian newspaper were generally unconcerned with the Bhimber attack in Pakistan and the reports only rebuked the accusations being made by Pakistan and to further the official narrative vis-a-vis Pakistan. The Times of India, on November 15, 2016, mentioned that the Indian forces were responding in a punitive manner to each and every ceasefire violation by Pakistan Army and Rangers,” inflicting heavy damage on military bunkers and posts across the Line of Control (LoC) and international border (IB).” The military officials quoted in these stories didn’t mention any details of that damage. The newspapers were quick to absolve the Indian forces of any involvement in aggravating the conflict. “Our forces only respond when

Pakistani troops first violate the ceasefire. But we respond with the aim to achieve maximum impact.”

From the analysis of the news stories in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers after the Uri and Bhimber attack, it was quite clear that the newspapers in India and Pakistan had become a mouthpiece of their respective governments and security establishments. By focusing on conflicts, war-mongering, and episodic framing, these newspapers were promoting the securitization agenda in each country. They were also marginalizing the human cost of this conflict and a potential war between two nuclear-armed neighbors.

CHAPTER 6

INTERVIEWS – KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The interviews conducted as a part of this research aimed to explore the framing approach used by journalists in India and Pakistan while covering bilateral issues between the two countries. The purpose of the interviews was to move beyond simply analyzing the content and find out how that content was being generated. The triangulation technique is also important to demonstrate if there is any consistency in findings if different methods are used to answer the same research questions (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Flick, 2004). Initially, the target was to conduct 25 interviews in each country (India and Pakistan). However, the researcher reached the point of saturation after almost 10 interviews in each country and finally stopped after 15 interviews in each country (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The mainstream media in India and Pakistan is divided into both English and vernacular languages. Therefore, an effort was made to conduct interviews from journalists belonging to diverse ethnic and organizational backgrounds and platforms. A snowball sampling technique was used to contact these journalists (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). The most striking finding from the interviews was the role of visual news media, primarily television news stations in India and Pakistan, as the driving force behind the content and framing related to bilateral conflict between both countries. Although the content analysis in the first part of data analysis (chapter-6) was focused on the framing in newspapers in India and Pakistan, but an effort was made to include journalists having experience of both print and electronic media in the interview process. This approach made sense because cross-media ownership in India and Pakistan has brought in a kind of homogeneity in the content generation and framing processes (Sarkar, 2013; Rasul, 2012). The questions asked from the respondents

during the qualitative interviews (Appendix B) related to all the research questions mentioned in chapter number one (RQ 1-10).

Findings from Interviews with Indo-Pak Journalists

RQ-1: Does conflict framing dominate the coverage of India-Pakistan relationship in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers?

Conflict framing

The respondents in India and Pakistan were more or less unanimous in pointing towards the tendency in the framing of newspapers related to Indo-Pak issues to focus on conflict. However, they blamed it on the mushrooming growth of television news industry in India and Pakistan during the last 10-15 years, which had a wider reach and its popularity had influenced the content of print media as well.

India: The journalists in India said that newspaper framing for a long time could be divided into objective or biased when it came to reporting on issues related to Pakistan. However, that had changed in the last decade or so. “There is a lot of pronounced bitterness and more so this has come about because of the TV news channels because the print media earlier used to be a little subdued in covering, calling names and things like”, said one respondent. Another journalist argued that TV news channels had to be on air 24/7 and need to blow up even small issues. “The print media has no other option but to follow because TV is showing so many things that print media also has to follow somewhere to please the owners because both TV and newspapers, in most cases, belong to the same media house”, pointed out another respondent.

Some respondents said that the journalists covering bilateral conflict in border areas had developed their own biases and had started to rely solely on the information supplied by the intelligence agencies on either side. “The young journalists who have grown up seeing this

hostile environment and are just started their career don't think that challenging the official narrative is necessary, as Pakistan is an enemy state," one senior Indian journalist. The respondents in India believed that the Mumbai attacks in 2008, the accusation of which was levelled on Pakistan by the Indian government, had really been a game-changer in aggravating the hostile environment in the media. This tendency to focus on conflict, however, is different in the journalists who are covering these issues for international media in either India and Pakistan. "I think the Indian media jumps the gun. Sometimes even the Indian government starts accusing Pakistan of being involved in those incidents even before there is any evidence or soon after that incident has happened, which I think is irresponsible behavior because even the police or the security forces had no clue as to who could have been involved in those attacks", said a journalist who has switched over to an international outlet based in India after covering Indo-Pak issues for an Indian newspaper for many years. Talking about the reasons for such a trend, the respondents said that the tensions on the border were being used to fuel the anger through media. "When an Indian soldier is killed or when there are killings on the borders or on the line of control, then the bodies are brought to mainland India, and it becomes more of a jingoistic outcry against Pakistan", a journalist said. Another respondent said that there were even suggestions in the Indian media to do what America does in the Middle East or do aerial strikes against so-called terrorists places in Pakistan.

Pakistan: The majority of respondents in Pakistan said that the reporting about India in Pakistani newspapers had historically been aggressive in the vernacular press and rather subdued in the English media. However, all this started to change in 2002 with the advent of private news television in the country almost immediately after the Kargil war between both countries. "Since 2002, aggression and aggressive reporting against India started and is ripe now, much more than

it was before”, said a senior journalist having experience of both English-language newspapers and news television. The respondents said that the trend had reached a point where the margin for those not focusing on conflict was shrinking in the Pakistani media. “Whenever some people here in Pakistan try to build peace with India or peaceful contact with Indian people, they are trying to brand them pro-India journalists or activists or whatever.” Some respondents also pointed towards the tendency to respond to Indian media in the Pakistani media, given the fact that private television in India started 6-7 years before Pakistan. “We have been watching Indian news channels, where the tone of anchors and participants is very aggressive towards Pakistan, so now Pakistani TV channels are following the same line”, said a respondent who works in a Pakistani newsroom. Talking about the framing prevalent in the Pakistani media about India, one journalist said that it was by and large negative. “It is full of venom and it is mainly derogatory. It is more like two countries at war.”

RQ-2: Does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers focus on solutions and human cost of war in each country?

Solution frames

Both the Indian and Pakistani journalists were united in mentioning that the solution frames were only infrequently mentioned in print media, but were totally absent from the electronic media. Another observation related to the lack of focus on the human cost of war, and how the resources in each country were being used for acquisition of arms, instead of diverting them to the provision of education, health, and infrastructure facilities for the common people in India and Pakistan.

India: The respondents in India said that solution frames were a casualty with the focus on bilateral conflict all the time. “Whenever there is a major issue between India and Pakistan

that is played up, they don't always tell the readers or viewers that a war between these two nuclear nations might end up eliminating millions of people on both sides of the border”, said a respondent. Another journalist said that solutions were highlighted once in a while but the frequency was very low compared to conflict frames. “If there were to be escalation of violence, we go on showing our hostilities regardless of what might happen if actually India and Pakistan were to get into another war”, said another Indian journalist who has remained involved in making editorial decisions for a television channel.

The respondents said that whenever there was tension on the border, thousands of people living in nearby villages were affected but the human angle was missing from the framing in the media. “In our reports, we are just trying to blame each other. Nobody is talking about the solutions how to stop the ceasefire violations, so these things are aggravating the situation”, said a respondent. The Indian journalists also said that whatever solutions were offered in the media framing had become even more infrequent during the past few years. “I have not read or seen any piece talking about peace on how to settle down these things or possible solutions. Instead, just pointing fingers at others is the only thing that media is doing because media is only interested in something that sells”, observed a respondent who has experience of reporting on terrorism incidents from an Indian town near the Pakistan border.

Another key finding from the interviews was that any solutions offered in the Indian media only accommodated the Indian viewpoint and gave no consideration to what the other side had to say. Commenting on this trend in the Indian media, an Indian journalist associated with an international media outlet said that “particularly in Kashmir affairs, whatever is India's position, that is the only thing that should prevail. Pakistan should accept it and then there will be peace. That is the solution they are giving.” Some respondents did point out that there had been a small

section of media that had started criticizing the current Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi for his inability to engage Pakistan to resolve outstanding disputes.

Pakistan: The Pakistani journalists said that the human cost of war had been conveniently ignored and justified on the grounds that fighting an enemy in the neighborhood was paramount. “When we speak about more than one billion people in India and more than 200 million people in Pakistan, the cost of war is very high but nobody here is bothered about it”, he said. The respondents said that there had been so much talk about preserving more funds for education and health on both sides but the prevailing situation and the establishment (*thereby meaning military*) had created such a situation where the political government was found helpless and they had to increase the military budget. With that trend increasing, the respondents believed that space for those who wanted to talk about potential solutions was reducing very fast in Pakistan. “If you read newspapers or watch TV, everybody is speaking against India, so nobody on the streets talk about peace either. They all want our media and our government to respond to Indian allegations or Indian aggression”, said a Pakistani journalist. “Those discussing the issue objectively and discussing peaceful means of resolution of that conflict are a fringe element and hardly found in the mainstream”, said another respondent. As a result, the news agenda had been compromised, the respondents believed. “It is full of conjectures, adjectives, and name calling in news. So if there is any news about India and Pakistan specially in news on television even on front pages of newspapers, vernacular as well as English, the headlines will be oozing hate and venom, which is a big tragedy”, said the editor of a Pakistani newspaper. However, the respondents in Pakistan believed that the print media in Pakistan, despite its problems, still offered some hope for peace building and solution-oriented journalism, which was non-existent in electronic media. “Sadly the voices of sanity in print media have been ground or

booted out by the noise on television because the television format of information, reporting, and commentary is heavily biased towards escalating the tension and presenting a kind of sense that the continuing conflict is the only way forward, said another respondent.

RQ-3: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers indulge in thematic or episodic framing while covering the Kashmir conflict?

Thematic / episodic framing

Both Indian and Pakistani respondents said that the newspapers in their country were practicing episodic framing and didn't go behind the obvious to do thematic reporting. However, the reasons given for this trend were different. The Indian respondents believed that their media found it easy to just report conflict-based incidents between both countries without any other thematic background because it was giving them stronger readership and viewership, so they felt no need to change it. The newspapers in India and Pakistan were also found to be relying mainly on official sources, and those challenging the official line were discouraged. "You would see that propaganda on mainstream media of both countries being challenged but those people are not mainstream. They are in minority and on fringes. Such people are viewed with suspicion and regularly categorized as traitors and anti-Pakistan and anti-India", said one of the respondents.

"Pakistan dominates our affairs with other countries, so it is a sensitive issue all the time and the media does play it up", said an Indian respondent while acknowledging the tendency to rely mainly on official sources. Some respondents from Pakistan argued that thematic framing in Pakistan would mean challenging the defense expenditures, which remained an out of bounds area for the journalists. "In the last budget we had, it was around 4000 billion rupees budget. Out of that around, 1500 billion rupees was for debt servicing and we were told that only 800 billion rupees is allocated for defense but that was not the case because it did not include 175 billion

rupees for the pensions of the defense forces. It did not include any money for the nuclear or the missile program. It also did not include the development budget which is the military hardware that we buy, or any allocations for counter-terrorism operations underway within the country. If you include all the items, a colossal amount is being spent on defense and it comes to around 1500 or 1600 billion rupees. So that makes it over three thousand billion rupees for defense and debt Servicing and only the remaining 860 billion for the 200 million people of Pakistan”, outlined a journalist based in Pakistan’s federal capital. The journalists in both countries were also asked supplementary questions about how and why such episodic or thematic frames were selected.

How frames are selected?

India: The respondents in India overwhelmingly believed that the newspapers in India had started changing and were following the coverage trends of television. Because news television was mainly practicing spot coverage and television cameras reached everywhere within minutes, the electronic media considered it enough and in-depth reporting had become extinct. The newspapers were getting swayed by it and following suit. “Even people are sharing videos after actual incident from their phones, so every major incident related to terrorism or even incidents along the border or line of control get reported and highlighted very fast with the actual footage, so that is being built up in the minds of people”, said a respondent. Talking about the reliance on official sources, the Indian respondents believed that the newspapers were following television here as well. “On Indian channels, lot of Pakistani ex-army and air force officers, ex-diplomats and people are invited who fight like cats and dogs with their Indian counterparts”, said an Indian journalist working for a big media house who added that the same quotes from these shows later made headlines in newspapers. “Sometimes you feel that there is a

desperate attempt to create that bitterness. These days this bitterness sells”, said another respondent.

Pakistan: Pakistani journalists said that the situation in Pakistan was no different from what was happening in India. “Unfortunately this has been happening for the last couple of years specially for the last three to five years as Pakistani channels are trying to respond to the Indian news channels who are taking very aggressive point on Pakistan side”, said a Pakistani media executive. The respondents believed that the newspapers had started following this trend after seeing it becoming popular in the masses. “The owners, particularly in media houses having both print and electronic media outlets, want uniformity in content”, revealed another journalist from Pakistan. Another journalist working for an international news agency in Pakistan argued that the journalists in India and Pakistan had started considering it their national duty to frame stories about the country as aggressively as possible. “We consider the state of Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory as per the UN resolutions. We do not report as if we are supporting Pakistan or supporting India, even though we do get a flak from the Indian side as well as from the Pakistani side, but we have no axe to grind and have nothing at stake.”

Why such frames are selected?

India: The respondent in India was unequivocal in blaming the aggression towards Pakistan in the media on the corporate media bosses. “Whether it is TV news channels or print media, a lot of commercial interest dictates not only India-Pakistan relations but also issues related to other issues, for example cricket (*most popular sport in South Asia*), and crime incidents in India”, said one of the respondents. Another journalist associated with a large media house in India echoed the same sentiment. “If a World Cup or a Champions Trophy (*of cricket*) is taking place, other news just melts away. It is not that anybody who is indulging in crime or

terrorism, they just shut their shop and go away. It is just that the commercial interest of the advertisers is so paramount that news channels just want to play up cricket related issues”, he said. Another female journalist involved with making editorial decisions said that lots of commercial interests were dictating behind the scenes about what needs to be played up and what doesn't need to be shown up at all, so it is not that the agenda setting is happening only vis-a-vis India-Pakistan, the agenda setting is happening on a lot of issues in India as well. This agenda setting is coming from the advertisers, and the promoters. The Indian journalists observed that even India-China issues were played up in the same manner in the Indian media.

Another reason offered by the journalists for the aggressive trends in the media towards Pakistan was that it was a way to showcase the strength of the country using the power of media. A few journalists did point out that the aggressive posturing had increased since the BJP government had come to power in 2014, which is known to have right-wing religio-political leanings. Even the current prime minister, Narendra Modi promised an aggressive stance towards Pakistan in his electoral campaign, and the media seems to have followed suit.

Pakistan: The respondents in Pakistan pointed fingers towards the ruling elite of the country and the powerful military for the continued aggression towards India. “They have this strong view that this conflict is ongoing and this is not going to get settled very soon, so that creates that cycle of hate and hatred when you don't see any chances of a resolution of that conflict through peaceful means”, observed a senior Pakistani editor. The respondents also pointed towards a sort of duality within the ruling elite who were avid readers of English print media but hardly ever paid any heed to the calls for peaceful relationship with India. “The ordinary public minds are shaped by the voices of jingoism. The local vernacular media including TV whips up anti-Americanism, and the English press, try to balance that with some

logical and reasonable balanced kind of journalism, but they were outnumbered very easily”, argued another journalist who has had experience of working in both vernacular and English language newspapers.

RQ-4: What is the process of frame-building when journalists in India and Pakistan cover incidents related to bilateral conflict?

Frame-building process

The respondents in India and Pakistan were asked questions about the background processes that contributed to frame building related to the India-Pakistan conflict. The answers were divided into four categories. In terms of the presence of pressure groups, advertisers were found to be the biggest pressure group in India while the intelligence agencies played that role in Pakistan. The respondents in both countries said that organizational policy affected the content in media and could force the journalists in either country to use or change certain kinds of framing in their stories. Then there is the issue of political economy of mainstream media in both India and Pakistan that stood out during interviews with the journalists in each country. The ownership structures, corporate interests, and the quest to be close to the ruling elite has a strong influence on the framing of content vis-a-vis India-Pakistan relations. The lack of proper laws and regulations to ensure freedom of the press in India and Pakistan further aggravate matters.

Presence of pressure groups

India: The respondents said that the media in India enjoyed considerable freedom in India compared to Pakistan. “When it comes to commercial interests, because advertisers are paying the money to the channels and print media, they can dictate in real terms at all levels”, pointed out a journalist. However, another respondent mentioned that all such dealings took place at the top management or the owners’ levels, and the staffers at the lower levels hardly got

a sniff of how it was happening. “Everything happens behind the scenes, so there is no proof of who is doing what”, she said. The respondents in India did acknowledge that there were tools available for the government to pressurize the media, if they wanted to. “There is a quota system of news print, so you get certain number of rolls based on your circulation. But if you are going after the government, then the government might try to not release that quota of newsprint. So you cannot be extra critical of the government in any case”, said a journalist based in South India.

Pakistan: For the respondents in Pakistan, the intelligence agencies were the biggest pressure group that tried to ensure an anti-India sentiment in the public and similar coverage in the media. “Actually the other pressure groups are also influenced, patronized, and supported by the ruling establishments (*military is referred to as establishment in Pakistan*). So the fountainhead of venom and hate in both countries are the ruling establishments”, said a journalist who has worked in ethnic and mainstream media. When asked how the establishment influenced the content, the respondents said that these pressure groups tried to threaten people who were pro-India or pro-peace. “These people call them agents of India or having anti-Pakistan approach and these pressure groups have been trying to build their own narrative, since it is in their interest so they want all the people talking in the same language,” said a Pakistani journalist who has been privy to such incidents. Some journalists also mentioned the ongoing civil-military imbalance in Pakistan, and said that the military wanted to keep the India policy in their hands to hoodwink the civilian government. “Since late 1990's when we saw Nawaz Sharif (*the current prime minister elected to office for the third time*) as the architect of peace with India, we saw this duality. Apparently one arm of the state was talking about moderation and peace, and the other arm of the state was pushing for conflicting or adversarial journalism”, recalled a

respondent and others were found to be offering similar arguments. “The bulk of Pakistani media have taken the line argued by the military because that is the dominant and powerful institution and those who defy it pay very heavy price. The corporate owners of TV channels and media groups cannot afford to do that even for a day”, said a seasoned journalist who has been a victim for his bold stance on such issues in Pakistan.

Organizational policy / unforeseen consequences

India: The respondents in India believed that organizational policies were also being dictated by the people in the management rather than top journalists, and they were based on the demands of the advertisers. “If you challenge that, you fear losing your job, so everybody tries to save his own seat and his own skin”, said a respondent. The majority of respondents thought that electronic media appeared to have a conscious policy to sensationalize stories related to Pakistan, as compared to print media. “When it is a slow news day, they start talking about Pakistani border violations, shelling and damage caused to houses etc. They run such footages and debates over and over again because it gets them good ratings as well, which shows that there is a segment of audience in India which is more interested in doing what Indian forces are doing on the other side of the border”, said another Indian journalist. The respondents in India also pointed towards the private ownership of media houses in India, which meant that commercial or personal interests of the owners had to be kept in mind. “If one owner is close to the government in power, then of course a lot of interests of the government in power and other people have to be safeguarded”, said a respondent. They said that the media organizations and professionals attached with these organizations knew their limitations, even within an apparently free atmosphere. “If a media organization is seen as pro-Pakistan in India, it can go about doing its work without any interference or fear but then they also know within their mind and heart that

where they have to draw a line. There is no written rule about it”, mentioned one journalist. The majority of the Indian journalists, however, argued that India was still freer than Pakistan or China where reports of midnight raids on editors or journalists getting picked up, or their passports getting seized surfaced quite frequently.

Another interesting finding was related to the changing ownership structures of large media houses in India since the government of prime minister, Narendra Modi came into power. “Most of the mainstream Indian media outlets are now partly owned by Mukesh Ambani (*the richest man in India*). Obviously he is very close to Mr. Modi, so any negative news against Mr. Modi will not appear in any of these media outlets. The owner of another big media outlet, Zee TV, is also linked to the ruling BJP. I would say that more than 60% of Indian media today will toe the line of Modi government because they are owned by people who are very close to him”, said an Indian journalist while assessing the existing trends in the country’s media.

However, some other respondents said that there were still some media organizations in India that criticized the current prime minister for his approach towards Pakistan or other countries like China. “Today people are saying that India stands isolated vis-a-vis China and its neighbors because of the fact that India boycotted this two-day meet in Beijing, which was on China's one belt-one road initiative. China wants India to be part of it, 68 countries have signed up for this including Russia but India has shown its reservations and boycotted the meet. So people here are saying that this is very silly and it is being criticized”, pointed out a scribe associated with an international media outlet. However, he was quick to add that anybody who criticized prime minister Modi in the media becomes anti-India for the section of the press supporting him. According to a few respondents, this had forced the journalists in India to be cautious and apply self-censorship every now and then.

Pakistan: The journalists in Pakistan said that the seniors in the profession had faced enough pressures for talking about peace, and the juniors saw what hardships they had to face. As a result, the newcomers in the profession lacked basic desire or capacity to challenge the official narrative. “When somebody tries to break this rule, or break the narrative, they have been threatened are cornered, like Hamid Mir (*a veteran and outspoken Pakistani journalist who survived an assassination attempt*), who has been advocating peace with India. He was shot in Karachi (*Pakistan’s post city in the south*) and received six bullets. So far no culprits have been punished in this case. This is a kind of message to other journalists”, observed a Pakistani mid-career journalist. Pakistan’s largest media outlet, Jang group, that partnered with Times of India for a major program "Aman ki Asha" (*Destination Peace*) to bring people of both the countries to talks or closer had to face similar pressures and had to be closed down. “We don't hear any word from them that they are advocating peace. So there is not one organization left in Pakistan that is taking any stance to challenge this narrative and I think the same is happening in India. There have been channels like NDTV and other channels that have been advocating peace but now they are silent”, said a Pakistani journalist who has been active in cross-border journalist exchange programs previously. The Pakistani journalists also pointed out that the private ownership of the media in Pakistan and lack of proper laws and regulations for job security had made it difficult for the journalists to challenge the interest of owners. “The organizational policy of most of the media houses is primarily based on the revenue and the ability to be acceptable to the ruling establishments of both countries. So the people or the owners who own these media shops, they have almost total control over what is aired or published. There are no professional editors empowered enough to work as the gatekeepers in mainstream media in Pakistan”, pointed out a Pakistani journalist. Many other respondents also pointed towards the vanishing institution

of professional editors in the Pakistani media and said that the existing trend was of owners assuming dual role as editors as well. Whatever laws and regulations have been introduced over time, those have only weakened the media in Pakistan”, said a journalist while recalling the press advisories in successive regimes to control and tailor the media content. Several Pakistani journalists said that the government traditionally controlled print media through advertisements (*because government itself is the largest advertiser for print media in Pakistan*) media, newsprint quota, and other means (Riaz, 2003). Since the deregulation of electronic media in 2001-02, the private channels, more than 90 of which are in operation now including more than 30 news related channels, are much freer in terms of their revenue collection. However, the respondents said that the electronic media had other stakes. “They have to remain safe and to safeguard their corporate interest, they have also followed a very clear policy of self-censorship when it comes to issues related to the military. India is the foremost issue in the Pakistani military as the military strategy and security policy is by and large India-centric”, informed a Pakistani journalist. Another journalist who had to pay a price for advocating peace with India said that he had to remain very careful in what he was saying. “The little window that I opened, in terms of building peace with India and arguing trade with India throughout my work on TV was not appreciated and I used to have a lot of pushback, even though these were very mild statements that argued for peace with India. You can imagine how tough it is to be asking for peace building or arguing for some resolution of long-standing conflicts”, he regretted. The journalists said that since the Kargil war in 1999 between both countries and particularly since the Mumbai attacks in 2008 in India, which the Indian government blamed on Pakistan, were the most significant flashpoints in recent memory that had completely changed the media landscape in Pakistan and India, as the media had apparently become a party to the war. “The media channels and the state

have two objectives, one is to ensure that their profits are maximized and the second is that their relationship with the powerful establishment in the country, particularly the military, is leveraged to achieve the objective of maximizing profits, tax relief, and other special favors”, said a journalist who has also worked in managerial positions in Pakistan’s leading media houses. The tendency to take the line fed by the intelligence agencies was not just India-centric but the Pakistani media had been used every now and then by the intelligence agencies against the civilian government as well, some of the respondents said. They also pointed out that the Pakistani journalists had been forced to create various levels and layers of censorships. “Before a journalist writes or speaks anything about any issue in both countries, you start self-censoring yourself as you have to first measure and analyze what can you say that your network will allow to get it published or aired to keep itself unharmed”, another respondent said. A journalist shared an interesting example of censorship a couple of days before the creation of Pakistan as a separate country in 1947. The country's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah made a very important speech, in which he talked about a state that was not going to discriminate against the minorities and his dream was to bury the hatchet with regards to India. “There was an official advisory issued by the top bureaucrat of the country at that time, trained by the British colonial force, to censor that speech and all newspapers, except Dawn, complied. I think they were doing it to the founder of the country and since then this trend has continued unabated and has actually become a norm in Pakistan, especially when it comes to India and other national security issues”, he observed.

Political economy of Indo-Pak conflict coverage / commercial considerations

India: The majority of interviewees in India pointed towards the relationship between media owners and political elite of the country, and their common commercial and political

interests as a significant part of the whole picture related to India-Pakistan conflict. “Whenever there is a standoff and media plays it up, the nationalistic angle has to be there and when you are targeting this kind of jargon, then objectivity does get played down”, said chief reporter of a major Indian English newspaper. The reporters in the field or the newsroom staff editing stories were expected to follow the same policy. “If he is asked that you have to speak against the Pakistan forces and you have to project Pakistan negatively, then he has to do that”, said another respondent. The decisive factor in this decision-making, particularly for electronic media, appears to be television rating points (TRP). “The more animosity you show with Pakistan, the more TRP you will get. But there is a genuine animosity and hostility developed during the time when the relations are not good and the media is quick to cash on that sentiment”, said a producer working in a news channel’s central newsroom. The majority of the Indian journalists, though, said that the way the relationship with Pakistan was projected in the media had a lot to do with the government’s stance. “As long as the government has that hostile relationship with Pakistan, you will see this negativity. The moment the relations improve, the public perception also changes and the media also changes. That is what I have seen over the years”, said a very senior journalist who works in a consultative role now.

Pakistan: The respondents in Pakistan also pointed towards the commercial angle, but combined it with what they were allowed to say given role of the powerful military in Pakistan. “Most of the media, especially electronic media in our country (*Pakistan*), they are not in profit as it is a much smaller market compared to India. But the owners of these media houses run them as one of the shops, they have many shops where they are in profit. They use media only to reinforce their power clout and they adjust their losses compared to their other businesses that they have”, explained one of the respondents. The same sentiment was echoed by other

respondents, so said that the nexus of state apparatus and media owners was benefitting both. “Advertising is the source of revenue which again is set by a very skewed system of rating (*only one rating company in Pakistan and the rating is based only on a few major metropolitans*), and the second instrument is through leveraging with the state and through bargains with the state on taxes, other concessions because Pakistan is not a fully developed market economy. The state is very powerful and it controls a lot of economic activity. It has a lot of discretion and media owners like any other businessmen exploit that to their advantage”, said another media executive while elaborating on the political economy of Pakistani media. As far as the ratings of the television stations were concerned, aggressive and hawkish news shows were getting good ratings and space for serious content was reducing quickly. The low literacy rate in Pakistan meant that the readership of newspapers, particularly those in English, was already very low and print media were fighting for survival. “In such a scenario, the easy route for the journalists is to become yes-men to the owners and other powerful institutions of the country instead of running against the tide and talk about peace. I mean when you don't get television ratings or readership number, the owner is worried and the journalists are worried about their job, so they have to adopt this policy of India bashing because it is an easy option”, remarked one of the interviewees.

Laws & regulations / training

India: The majority of Indian journalists said that there were not any written press laws in the country that could dictate terms to the Indian media. They pointed out that the Indian constitution, under Article 19, guarantees freedom of speech and the freedom of press. However, some of the respondents did point out that there was a lot of self-regulation as an unwritten rule based on conventions as well as political and commercial interests of the owners. Other than that,

local laws were also used to control media under the pretext of maintaining law and order from time to time. “For example when such things (*terrorism incidents*) happened in Srinagar (*largest city in the Kashmir valley*), they used to ban internet services so that the panic doesn’t spread more”, said a journalist. The opinion on the training opportunities available for Indian journalists, particularly with response to the coverage of conflict with Pakistan, was not very encouraging. The interviewees said that such training was mostly on the job and not very structured.

Pakistan: The journalists in Pakistan were very vocal about the direct enforcement of rules and regulations every now and then to control the media. “There have been a couple of new rules from the government bodies that are monitoring Pakistani media. For example, they say that no content should be on any anti-Pakistan issue or against the national interest”, said a journalist. However, the interviews pointed out that these laws were very vague and had a very broad interpretation of the national interest, which could be interpreted by the state institutions in any manner to suit their designs. The fact that the civilian government and military leadership were not often on the same page in Pakistan made things even more difficult for these journalists. “In Pakistan, where military has ruled for more than half of its history, the powerful groups are not only the groups that have de jure powers but de facto powers. It really does not matter what is on the statutes, a lot of times the whims and wishes of the powerful groups in the country would dictate what goes and what doesn't go on air or in print”, a journalist said while trying to put the existing situation in perspective. Within such an environment, the media owners and journalists always needed to be on guard about what would be acceptable to the powerful groups of the country from time to time. No amount of training, they believed, could improve the situation unless the overall environment improved. “The pressure groups try to threaten these

journalists. But if they are trained enough, they can get people or international journalists into action, or find a way to express themselves”, one of them said while stressing the need for proper training of newcomers to combat the existing challenges.

RQ-5: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote war journalism?

War journalism

The responses of journalists from both India and Pakistan clearly pointed towards the tendency to promote war journalism within the media in each country. However, in the opinion of a majority of the respondents, the content of the newspapers was driven by the jingoistic frenzy created by the electronic media.

India: Giving an example of how war journalism with regard to Pakistan had become an agenda of the Indian media lately, a journalist based in one of the border towns said “media houses, some of them, are really overdoing the stuff where ground reality might be totally different you know. Like if you take the Kashmir turmoil, the valley has been burning since 1989 but earlier there used to be major incidents and still it never used to be in national headlines 4-5 days together. Now every small thing happening there has to have a Pakistan angle.” It was evident from the responses of most of the journalists that they did believe in the accusations levelled by the Indian government against Pakistan of sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir. However, they conceded that there was a general trend to build up hysteria and war-mongering in the Indian media overall, be it print or electronic media. Another emerging trend that some of the journalists pointed out was the concept to cover everything from *ground zero*. “I think our media is more looking for mileage in covering the war and the crossfire in the context of India and Pakistan. Those violations give them more mileage and a wider and eager audience”, said an Indian newspaper editor.

When asked about specific examples of war journalism, the respondents said that enmity with Pakistan comes out very strongly almost every day in newspaper headlines and stories, the anchors on television shout at the top of their voices, and the participants in programs most of the times spew venom against Pakistan. “They do not often understand the difference between the Pakistani people and Pakistani establishment. So for them Pakistan as an entity is bad, a villain”, one of them stressed. The respondents believed that the English newspapers in India were more nuanced, but the television channels were often used by the Indian establishment. “I have seen programs on Indian news channels where anchor sounds more jingoistic than all the participants, more like a government of India representative than an anchor who is supposed to be independent”, said an Indian newspaper reporter.

Pakistan: The majority of Pakistani journalists maintained that the print media, some section of the English language media and particularly the vernacular Urdu-language media, had historically promoted war hysteria. “Even the country's largest newspaper is named “Jang” (*means war*). I don't know whose war, but it launched itself as fighting something all the time. The second largest paper, Nawa-i-Waqt, which was historically been very influential with the middle class, has always argued for war. Its late founder-editor several times supported going to war in his newspaper and used to make an argument that even if Pakistan had to use nuclear weapons to liberate Kashmir and defeat India it should, without mentioning that nuclear war is going to finish Pakistan itself”, recalled a senior Pakistani journalist. The respondents said that the English print media had been different as its coverage of India-Pakistan conflict had been more nuanced and on many occasions, different from the state narrative. However, the electronic media, because of their power and influence over a much larger audience than the print media, had amplified the hostile trends in the media. “Unfortunately what we have seen in these

channels is hostility towards India and the idea of conflict with India forever. In part, that is due to the fact that a lot of staffers from the vernacular Urdu print media actually came to occupy positions of influence in the broadcast media”, argued a Pakistani journalist. The responses suggested that there was a very small minority in the Pakistani media that had balanced and nuanced views on the conflict. Otherwise the media had been promoting conflict and making significant profits out of it.

RQ-6: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote peace journalism?

Peace journalism

The Indian and Pakistani journalists were almost unanimous in calling peace journalism a casualty of the hostile environment between both countries that has led to war journalism being preferred. They argued that peace journalism had not vanished altogether and was being practiced rather infrequently, particularly in the print media, but it had lost in the noise being created by the electronic media.

India: The Indian journalists believed that the focus on war and conflict, and the fact that it was generating good audience and revenue numbers, meant that peace journalism was not a priority in the Indian media. While giving example of the case of Kalbhushan Jadhav (*an Indian national arrested and given death sentence in Pakistan on alleged charges of spying, following which India appealed the verdict in the International Court of Justice*), an Indian journalist said that the way Indian and Pakistani media were covering it was very similar. “Media outlets in the two countries are very jingoistic, not following the norms of journalism, and basically both are on the side of their government”, he said. However, quite a few Indian journalists insisted that peace journalism had not vanished altogether from the Indian media. They also gave examples of some sections of the English press calling the aggressive policy of prime minister, Narendra

Modi and his inability to engage Pakistan in peace talks as his biggest failure on the foreign policy front since coming into power. “Some sections in the Indian media still believe that you have to make a distinction. You have problems with the government of Pakistan and with the Army of Pakistan, but not with the people of Pakistan, but the percentage of such people is small and their voices are not being heard properly at the moment because of the jingoistic people becoming louder and louder”, said one of the respondents. However, they argued that India was a huge country and there were sections of media, for instance in South India, where conflict with Pakistan was not an agenda item as such, unlike the media closer to border towns and in the federal capital.

Pakistan: The Pakistani journalists echoed the sentiments of their Indian counterparts that peace journalism was not being practiced in Pakistan with as much vigor as before. Those role of intelligence agencies and other pressure groups was cited as the main reason for that. There were still some isolated voices in the Pakistani media that were fighting and trying to make their voices heard for the cause of peace between both countries. “The organizations or the journalists, they have been challenging (*adverse circumstances*) but with the passage of time, their voices have been subdued or silenced”, a respondent said. Talking about the electronic media trends, another journalist, himself belonging to a leading television station, said that those people were not getting much air time who wanted peace in the region and who wanted social issues to be solved on a priority basis.

RQ-7: Does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote securitization in India and Pakistan?

Framing and securitization

From the responses of the journalists in India and Pakistan, it appeared that the journalists in India were not really concerned about securitization and how such a tendency to focus on conflict and warmongering could make the people in each country more accepting of the hawkish foreign policy agendas. They considered this to be a phenomenon created by commercial considerations and more of a passing phase. The journalists in Pakistan were more conscious of this fact, perhaps because of the more overt role of the country's powerful military and intelligence agencies in the national affairs and foreign policy, particularly with regards to India.

India: The Indian journalists conceded that the media had built an image over time that that Pakistan was the most disturbing neighbor. The responses suggested towards an increasing element of securitization in the Indian society. "There is a lot of bitterness in the army and the politicians and everybody, so it (*hostility*) is around and Pakistan of course gets a lot of prominence", a journalist said. A few of the journalists said that it was bound to happen since there were constant clashes with Pakistan alongside the border and on the line of control in Kashmir. However, the Indian journalists didn't think that this constant hostility and bitterness in the media affected the common people in any manner. "I don't think it affects the daily life of people at all because only once in a while, if there is a major incident, that is built up on the ground or there is a war, like last year there were these surgical strikes by India in Pakistan's territory and then there was a buildup by the government side, villages were evacuated in some parts of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. So that kind of incident can affect the daily life of

people but that is only for a limited period of time, but generally in day-to-day life nobody really bothers”, argued a journalist who covers border areas for an Indian media outlet. When the journalists were asked what happens when the audience are constantly fed with content that Pakistan is responsible for all the terrorist incidents in India, they believed that it might remain at the back of their mind but it was not that people were affected on a day-to-day basis by this warmongering. They cited the visits of delegations from Pakistan, and student exchange programs despite the media hostility, in support of their argument. Some journalists said that the constant exposure to conflict framing had desensitized the audience, who didn’t consider it important anymore. “Everybody knows that after one month or two months or after a short gap, the shelling on the border will start again. This is now a routine thing and routine reporting. Nobody other than the man close to border areas is interested in knowing what will happen next because it has become a routine since the BJP government came to power three years ago”, said a journalist keeping a tab on the cycle of Indo-Pak relations over the years. One journalist shared an interesting anecdote about how the Indian politicians were maintaining different stances towards Pakistan in public and in private without realizing what effect it might have on the audience. “Recently I met a BJP (*ruling party of India*) politician from Jammu and Kashmir, who went to Pakistan unofficially, and he was talking so positively about Pakistan off the record. The same guy, if you hear his speeches, he will be very very critical of Pakistan as if Pakistanis are our enemy number one”, he said. Another journalist who had experience of covering State elections in Uttar Pradesh (*a state in North India*) just a few months ago, said that the BJP candidates were talking openly about anti-Pakistan stuff to get votes. The journalists believed that this was a temporary phase that had intensified with the BJP government coming into power and could subside as soon as relations between both countries started improving.

Pakistan: The respondents from Pakistan said that the national security narrative propagated through the media had become popular in the public as well, and was clearly overshadowing peace efforts. “When you have multiple programs on TV channels that are bashing India or multiple programs on the other side of the border bashing Pakistan, you don't find people talking peace or taking such initiatives”, said a Pakistani journalist. Another journalist who was supposed to lead a delegation of journalists to India shared that they had been advised by the official circles in Pakistan as well as their hosts in India to postpone the visit because the circumstances were not conducive for it. Some of the Pakistani journalists traced the reasons for this securitization trend in the way both countries achieved independence. “In a way the mainstream Indian imagination of Pakistan is an aberration, an artificial and unnatural state, which was carved out by the British, as a blow to the unity of India, and the media has been articulating that line throughout. Pakistan, on the other hand, views India as a mighty enemy neighbor that has not accepted the creation of Pakistan from day one and will do anything to destroy it”, said a senior Pakistani journalist who has witnessed these events unfold during the last few decades. The respondents in Pakistan argued that the idea of the national security being more important than other priorities had been ingrained in public mind, particularly after the 1971 war with India that resulted in the separation of east Pakistan as an independent country, Bangladesh. “The issues of national security are taken totally as a sacred duty of journalists to promote the government point of view, and any dissenting voice within the media community that challenges the dominant narrative are named and shamed and called a traitor’, maintained a mainstream media executive. It was clear from a majority of the responses that the media in Pakistan was considered an instrument of propagating nationalism.

“The narrative historically propagated by the Pakistani military is that it is a superior military compared to India and even Pakistan's military rulers like General Ayub Khan in his autobiography had ridiculed the Indian army specially the Hindu soldiers as being unfit for war and that idea has somehow immersed into the public mindset that Pakistan's Army is invincible, Pakistan's defense is invincible, the threat of India is real”, said a senior journalist. This media in Pakistan, as per the views of a majority of respondents, is being used to propagate and reinforce this narrative on a consistent basis and it was having an effect on making rivalry with India more acceptable for the audience. “When you talk to the common people, you don't find them talking peace. They think that we cannot build good relations with India since they have been very aggressive against Pakistan”, explained a Pakistani journalist. However, another journalist said that the degree of anti-India sentiment was different in different parts of Pakistan. “In the heartland of Punjab (*province that comprises more than 50% of Pakistan*), you would see more anti-India narrative of the people colored by the mainstream media. You will find varying degrees of anti-India attitudes and no staunch anti-Indianism in Sindh and Balochistan (*southern parts of Pakistan*) though”, she said. Some respondents insisted that there was a large body of public opinion which recognized the commonalities between the two countries and wanted peace or at least normalization between the two countries. Still, these people, mostly belonging to Pakistan’s middle class, were caught in a contradiction of sorts under the influence of jingoism in the Pakistani media. “Bollywood (*Indian film industry*) movies and music still remains popular that is followed all over Pakistan, but the jingoistic narrative on that is that it is India's cultural war against Pakistan”, pointed out a respondent. The responses indicated that this constant pushback by the media against the peace initiatives were contributing to the cause of securitization.

RQ-8: Does social media offer an alternative voice in the coverage of issues related to India-Pakistan conflict?

Social media as an alternative

The respondents in India and Pakistan believed that social media had initially offered some promise, particularly because it was free from the commercial considerations, from the role of political and security forces, and from the national security narratives that was keeping the mainstream media in both countries under hostage. However, in their opinion, the same kind of hatred and conflict appeared to be spilling over in the social media which was being used by the public in both countries to fight a war of sorts in the cyberspace. Another trend that was alluded to by the respondents in both India and Pakistan was that the ruling elite in India and Pakistan had also started to use social media in an organized manner to further their hostile agendas.

India: The journalists in India said that the social media users appeared to be using this platform to vent their anger instead of using it for constructive purposes. “If I write something against Pakistan, there will be more than 500 responses from Pakistan within the next few minutes, and a big fight will start on social media. That happens not only on issues related to India and Pakistan, but even if I write something regarding the cleanliness of my city because everything about India is bad in the eyes of the Pakistani social media user”, said an Indian journalist active on social media. The Indian journalists thought that given the low literacy rate and lack of access to technology in predominantly rural areas, social media was not such serious business in India that it could change things or the users could start a movement or anything like that. A few of the Indian journalist pointed towards the negative impact of social media on mainstream media. “One channel was showing fake videos which people were sharing on social media. They were running these videos and asking are these fake ones? I think social media is

more aggressive and more damaging than print and electronic media for spreading false information and that too in a few seconds”, a journalist said. The same tendency was found to be in the reporting of terrorism incidents involving Pakistan. The respondents said that too many different and unverified accounts of that incident start to surface on social media and ended up further confusing the public. An Indian journalist heading the social media desk of a mainstream television channel said that the governments in India and Pakistan were adding to that confusing environment in their own ways. “I think both sides are now very good at using social media. For example, when the so-called surgical strikes by India in Pakistan happened last year, Twitter was used to make people believe the official account. There is a huge army on social media which follows prime minister Modi, so whatever is claimed on Twitter is seen as gospel truth”, he respondent pointed (Figure-1).



Figure-1: Sushma Swaraj, Indian Foreign Minister (Twitter, 2017)

Pakistan: The journalists in Pakistan were found to be apprehensive that the sensitive agencies were running fake accounts on social media to keep a check on those challenging the official narrative and to discourage them. The fact that some Pakistani bloggers and social media activists were picked up by the Pakistani security agencies in January 2017 on the grounds that they were working on anti-national agendas had further dampened the spirits of those who wanted to further agenda of peace with India through social media (Zahra-Malik, 2017). “When somebody who tries to give his or her point about peace or anything, they are bombarded with retweets or critics. he or she has to face lots of criticism from unknown people or maybe some fake accounts”, said a Pakistani journalist active on social media. Some Pakistani journalists hinted that that the ruling establishment had assessed the power of social media and poured huge resources in to social media to promote further conflict and hate. “People masquerading as independent operators but heavily financed and supported by the ruling establishments in both countries use social media as a weapon to intimidate and to harass critical voices”, said a pro-peace journalist associated with mainstream news television but equally active on social media (Figure-2).

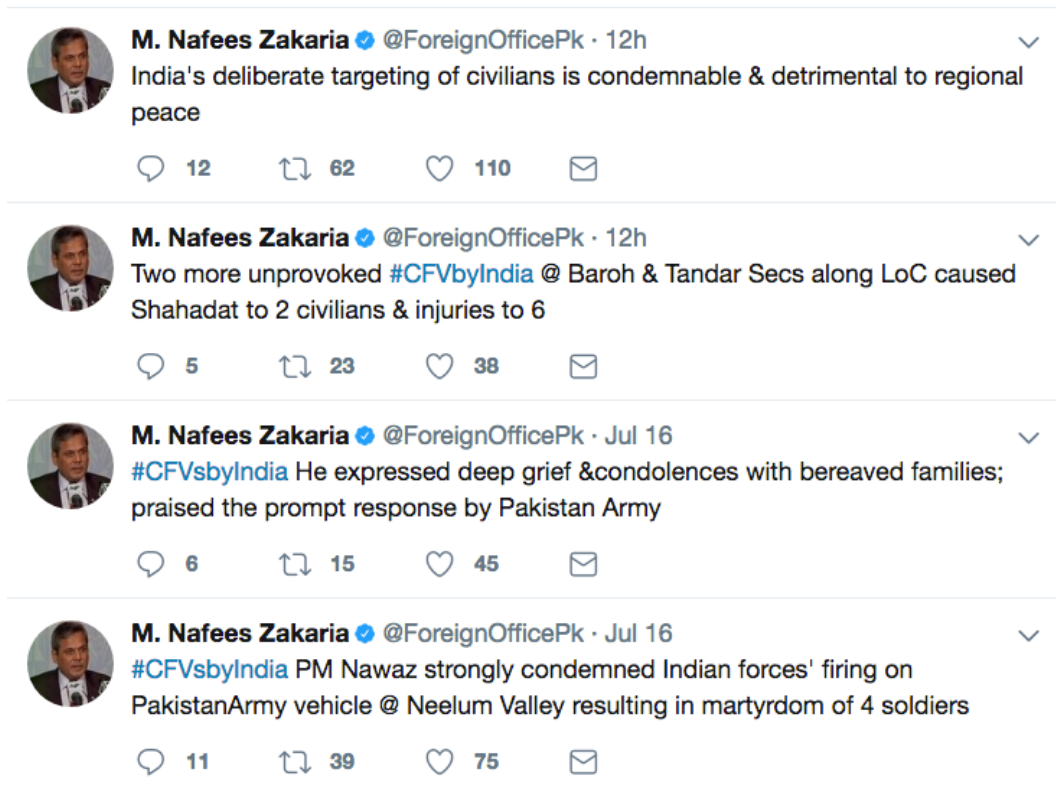


Figure-2: M. Nafees Zakaria, Pakistan’s Foreign Office Spokesman (Twitter, 2017)

A Pakistani journalist who has been associated with efforts to build bridges between the journalists of both countries said that official narrative coming out of both countries on social media was pretty similar. “The ruling BJP in India has created a social media Army of trolls that not only attacks the opposition of BJP in India but also perpetuates the hardcore RSS point of view that Pakistan being evil and that Pakistan being a Muslim country cannot exist. This is a mirror image of our right-wing that Hindu country and Hindus are inherently evil, anti-Islam and out to get us through whatever means possible”, he explained. The journalists in Pakistan, however, believed that despite the noise, social media did allow for a lot of engagement and reasoned interaction between the two countries and also peace journalists between the two countries.

RQ-9: Do the track-two initiatives between India and Pakistan offer an opportunity to address issues related to the coverage of bilateral conflict in both countries?

Track-II initiatives / advocacy groups

The respondents in neither country, India or Pakistan, expressed any hope in the track-two initiatives to bring about any improvement in the strained bilateral relationship, particularly in the existing highly charged atmosphere that was being further intensified by the media in both countries on a day to day basis.

India: The Indian journalists believed that the NGOs and track-two people had been operating to build bridges of peace between India and Pakistan for several decades but had not been able to significantly influence the environment of hate and hostility. “A lot of people like us have friends across the border on one on one basis. Such friendships and associations remain unaffected by whatever hysteria is built by certain sections of the media, but the track-two initiatives do get affected by it”, said a respondent who has also visited Pakistan several times. Several Pakistani artists working in Bollywood films and music industry also had to leave India after the recent 2016 wave of conflict in Kashmir, who had nothing to with any politics as such, pointed out a few other journalists while implying that this made the job of track-two people even more difficult. Another Indian journalist said that he had been in touch with track-two diplomacy people from both countries in the last 20-25 year, but was unsure how active they were or whether they were active at all or not since the BJP government took power in 2014. Some Indian journalists that the NGOs (non-governmental organizations) could plug the gap in terms of providing better orientation to journalists on bilateral issues, because the employers were not keen on it.

Pakistan: The Pakistani journalists said that the effectiveness of NGOs had considerably been affected in Pakistan because of heavy scrutiny and new regulations imposed by the government during the last few years. “They may wish well but can do nothing because their reach is heavily restricted, and their activities are heavily regulated and controlled”, said a journalist who has previously covered track-two initiatives between India and Pakistan. Some respondents also pointed towards some issues in the selection of participants and overall approach of track-two initiatives which hampered their effectiveness. “I think there is a general problem with these track-two efforts that these are not purpose oriented, they pass these resolutions but they don't have a mechanism to follow up on whatever they resolve”, said a Pakistani journalist who has attended three Indo-Pak track-two meetings at different offshore locations. Almost all Pakistani journalists mentioned "Aman ki Asha" (*Destination Peace*) which had the backing of two biggest media houses from each country, but they soon got into trouble domestically because of this initiative and had to shelve it. “In Pakistan, the "Aman ki Asha" (*Destination Peace*) effort was branded as a covert operation by the Indian intelligence agency RAW, and there is even a Supreme Court case pending against that initiative”, mentioned one of the respondents.

RQ-10: Do the journalists in India and Pakistan have any suggestions for improvement in the existing standards of coverage of bilateral conflict?

Suggestions of journalists for improvement

Towards the end of each interview, the interviewees in both India and Pakistan were also asked about their suggestions for improving the existing standards of coverage of the Indo-Pak bilateral conflict. The Indian journalists called for more access and exchange of journalist delegations in order to enhance understanding of the other country's issues and point of view.

They also believed that the media professionals should apply some restraint to not let the heat of the moment affect their working. The Pakistani journalists suggested that more training opportunities for young journalists on sensitive issues, sensitizing the owners of media houses about the benefits of bilateral peace, and improvement in the overall working environment in Pakistan were vital if there was to be any improvement.

India: The Indian respondents said that the journalists needed to realize their first responsibility as professionals instead of getting swayed by the heated environment. “A couple of years down the line, once things settle down, it will be back to bonhomie and all those things as it used to be there earlier till about a decade back”, hoped a senior journalist. A few other journalists believed that more exchanges of journalists could prove helpful in building bridges at least within the fraternity. “Exchange of media between both countries should be more frequent, and the governments should also promote and take this initiative to invite journalists from the other side and different states including Jammu and Kashmir, particularly those who are covering war areas”, suggested a respondent. They also called for easy issuance of journalist visas, who at present have to go through an extremely lengthy and tedious security clearance and accreditation process. “Look at a young Indian reporter who has never been to Pakistan, who has always seen hostilities against Pakistan on television, who has developed a thinking that Pakistanis are all terrorists, they are sponsors of terrorism, they are mullahs, and there are burqa-clad (*veil wearing*) women. But if he goes to Pakistan, he finds a very different picture. So he will write something very different on return. That's how the hostilities will be reduced”, suggested another senior journalist concerned about the increasing level of hate against Pakistan in the younger lot of Indian journalists. Most of the respondents believed that more exchanges and people to people contact could put pressure on both governments to improve relations.

Pakistan: The Pakistani journalists were generally not hopeful that their suggestions carried any weight, unless the State and other pressure groups changed their current practices. “If these politicians on both sides and the establishment start talking about peace and obviously people on both sides, they will start talking about peace as well”, maintained one of the respondents. Most of them were of the view that improvement was not just a matter of understanding of journalists, but of overall operational environment which made it hard for journalists to go about their business freely. “I think one important thing to start with is that the media owners need to talk to each other. I mean they need to find a way in which they seek or at least practice some measure of independence from the state. The second thing is the institution of editors. The editors from India and Pakistan need to form an alliance of some sort where they meet and exert pressure on media owners as well as showing some light that good journalism has at least some distance from the State propagated information and facts or what the state calls as facts”, remarked one of the editors of a Pakistani English-language daily. The respondents from Pakistan also called for more investment in independent media outlets, which broke free of the problems of mainstream media, as well as promoting media critics.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides an overview of this research and the themes that have emerged after the data analysis. It also summarizes key findings from the content analysis of newspapers in India and Pakistan when it comes to covering the Indo-Pak conflict as well as interviews with journalists in each country who have had experiences of covering these stories. How these findings relate to the research questions outlined in chapter one, and the implications of these findings for the media as well as the general public in India and Pakistan are also part of this chapter. In addition, the contribution of this research to the existing body of theoretical and methodological knowledge of framing and frame-building, limitations that were experienced during the course of this research, and some ideas for future research are also discussed.

Overview of the Study

This research is informed by my background as a print and broadcast journalist in South Asia. Both India and Pakistan are known for having challenging working conditions for journalists, and press freedom has always remained under scrutiny during successive regimes (Jyoti, 2017; Abbasi, 2017). This challenge becomes even more daunting when it comes to reporting about each other because of a long and troubled bilateral history since achieving independence from the British in 1947 (Henderson, 2015; Bates, 2011). Having worked for media organizations in Pakistan and India, I have gained firsthand knowledge of how press laws, pressure groups, official circles, non-state actors, business interests, and other related factors have undermined the freedom of press in both countries vis-a-vis independent reporting of bilateral issues. When the new governments took over in Pakistan in 2013 and in India in 2014, there were hopes of a new beginning in the bilateral relationship and media was expected to

contribute to the cause. There were some early signs towards this cause when the media covered Pakistani prime minister, Nawaz Sharif's visit to India for prime minister, Narendra Modi's oath-taking ceremony, and the Indian prime minister subsequently visited prime minister, Nawaz Sharif's home in Pakistan completely unscheduled to pay a courtesy call. However, these hopes proved to be short-lived as the relationship between both countries plummeted even further since the start of 2016 following a new wave of conflict and cross-firing along the Line of Control (LoC) in the restive Kashmir valley, which happens to be at the heart of dispute between both countries. Therefore, this research has explored how the newspapers in each country were framing this conflict. Two major incidents, the Uri attack in September 2016 that killed 17 Indian soldiers in Indian-administered Kashmir and the Bhimber attack that killed seven Pakistani soldiers in the Pakistani-administered Kashmir in November 2016, were selected for this analysis. Both these attacks were the deadliest in each country since both countries signed a ceasefire agreement along the line of control in Kashmir in 2003 and were likely to attract maximum attention of the media in each country. The coverage period was one week from the day of the incident to explore whether the initial focus shifted and the emotions subsided or sustained as the days passed by. Three top circulation English-language newspapers were selected from each country (India and Pakistan). Going a step further, interviews with journalists were also conducted to find out whether this coverage was promoting war journalism, factors behind such conflict framing, how the coverage was contributing to securitization in each country, their views about the working conditions, and the role of pressure groups. The objective was to find out whether the media was part of the problem or part of solution in terms of the Indo-Pak bilateral conflict and how it was justifying aggression towards the *enemy* country for the audience in their respective countries. Galtung's (2002) peace journalism model and Buzan's

(1997) securitization theory were applied in this study to analyze the data. Key findings are presented in the next section.

Summary of Key Findings

Although the framing in newspapers was the focus for the content analysis of this research, it was quite a striking revelation during the interviews how the electronic media had taken a dominant role in each country to drive the content. The reliance on social media to create content to suit the conflict agenda was also quite apparent in the content analysis and interviews. It was evident that the coverage as well as the journalists responsible for that coverage didn't think too much about what kind of implications a jingoistic agenda might have for their audience or for the future of both countries.

Conflict frames: The first research question aimed to explore whether the newspapers in India and Pakistan were framing bilateral issues through the lens of conflict (RQ-1: Does conflict framing dominate the coverage of India-Pakistan relationship in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers?). There is enough evidence in research literature that conflict tends to be the preferred mode of framing for journalists anywhere in the world (De Vreese, Peter & Semetko, 2010; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The data analysis showed that the practice in Pakistan and India was no different and newspapers in both countries were framing the bilateral relationship only through the lens of conflict. It was not just the incident that was being reported, but the choice of words and angle of the story, headlines, and primarily official sources quoted in the story pointed towards a conscious effort to further showcase the conflict. Moreover, these newspapers attributed the blame for this conflict to the rival country. After the terrorist incident in Uri, Indian newspapers pointed fingers towards Pakistan and the same happened in Pakistan when India was blamed after the Bhimber attack. There was a kind of homogeneity in this

coverage as the use of aggression was justified because of the presence of the *enemy* on the border and both civil and military sources were used for this purpose. There was hardly any story done independently in which this official narrative was challenged. When the journalists in India and Pakistan were interviewed about this trend, they conceded that the focus of media in both countries was on conflict. However, they blamed it on the mushrooming growth of the television news industry in India and Pakistan during the last 10-15 years, which had a wider reach and its popularity had influenced the content of print media as well. The journalists in India believed that the rise of the religious right wing in India after the 2014 elections had contributed to this trend as well because their election rhetoric was based on Pakistan-bashing. Similarly, in Pakistan, the powerful security agencies were in sync with the media owners to fight the *propaganda war*.

Solution frames: The second research question in this study explored if the newspapers in each country offered any solutions or mentioned the human angle as well in the stories related to Indo-Pak conflict (RQ-2: Does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers focus on solutions and the human cost of war in each country?). Galtung's (2002) peace journalism model posits that the journalists covering conflict and violence should also point out some solutions of that conflict by focusing on the humans attached to such issues. Ottosen (2010) has pointed out that peace journalism "presents a conscious choice: to identify other options for the readers/viewers by offering a solution-orientated, people-orientated, and truth-orientated approach." There was hardly any mention of the human cost of war or long-term solutions of the bilateral conflict between India and Pakistan in the newspapers in either country though. Even if some solutions were mentioned occasionally, those only furthered the Indian position in the Indian newspapers and the Pakistani sentiment in the Pakistani press. Both

countries mentioned the soldiers or civilians killed or injured in the crossfire as just numbers without mentioning their names or surviving family members and their suffering. The Indian newspapers blamed the unrest in Kashmir on the alleged cross-border terrorism backed by Pakistan whereas the Pakistani newspapers accused India of atrocities in the Kashmir valley that were leading to further violence. The common people on each side of the border being affected by this conflict, and whether either country considered them stakeholder as well, were not seen in this coverage. The Indian and Pakistani journalists agreed that the solution frames were mentioned infrequently in print media, but were totally absent from electronic media. Another observation related to a lack of focus on the human cost of war, and how the resources in each country were being used on military budgets in the wake of conflict instead of providing education, health, and infrastructure to the general public in both countries. With the rise in conflict, those promoting solutions of the conflict were being marginalized in media.

Thematic/episodic framing: The third research question related to the presence of thematic or episodic framing in the Indian and Pakistani media when they covered bilateral conflict on Kashmir (RQ-3: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers indulge in thematic or episodic framing while covering the Kashmir conflict?). The episodic framing just covers the happenings on the ground while the thematic framing looks behind the obvious and also highlights the related background as well (Nitz & West, 2000; Iyengar, 1991). It was clear from the data analysis that the newspapers in India and Pakistan had an overwhelming tendency to rely on episodic framing in the coverage of the Uri and Bhimber attack. If at all some background was mentioned occasionally on either side, it was a charge sheet of sorts against the other country to justify that they were involved in aggression, therefore further aggressive posturing against them was in order. As the Uri attack had happened a few days before the United Nations general

assembly summit in 2016, the newspapers in both countries wanted their respective leadership to use the platform to settle political scores. The journalists interviewed in India and Pakistan believed that the media found it easy to just report conflict-based incidents between both countries without any other thematic background because it was giving them good readership and viewership, in addition to the ruling establishment's approval, so they felt no need to change it. The newspapers in India and Pakistan were also found to be relying mainly on official sources, and those challenging the official line were discouraged.

Selection and salience of frames was also part of this analysis (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004; Entman, 1993). The respondents in India overwhelmingly believed that the newspapers in India had started following the coverage trends of television. Because news television was mainly practicing spot coverage and television cameras reached everywhere within minutes, the electronic media considered it enough and in-depth reporting had become extinct. The newspapers were getting swayed by it and following suit. It was revealed that the aggression had increased since the new government had come to power in 2014. The current prime minister, Narendra Modi, had promised an aggressive stance towards Pakistan in his electoral campaign and the Indian media had kept reminding him to follow-up on that. For the Pakistani journalists, the situation was no different and the media outlets were trying to respond to the aggression of Indian news channels. The respondents in Pakistan pointed fingers towards the ruling elite of the country and the powerful military for pushing the aggressive agenda towards India. Be it the political elite in India or the military establishment in Pakistan, the media owners appeared to be happy to form a nexus and fulfill their demands.

Frame-building: The fourth research question pertained to the process of frame-building in India and Pakistan (RQ-4: What is the process of frame-building when journalists in India and

Pakistan cover incidents related to bilateral conflict?). Frame building deals with the processes behind the creation of frames (Scheufele, 1999). Therefore, the journalists in India and Pakistan were asked questions about the reasons that contributed to this process. The answers were divided in four categories (presence of pressure groups; organizational policy / unforeseen consequences; political economy / commercial considerations; and laws and regulations / training). Advertisers were found to be the biggest pressure group in India while the intelligence agencies played that role in Pakistan. However, political pressures appeared to be on the rise in India after prime minister Narendra Modi came to power and his financial backers bought majority stakes in major media houses. The journalists in both countries accepted that they knew the red lines which they should not cross. The respondents in both countries said that organizational policy affected the content in media and could force the journalists in either country to use or change certain kinds of framing in their stories. Any attempt to challenge the policy of the organization, often set by the top bosses, could easily result in the loss of a job, so hardly any journalist dared to go that route. However, some alternative media houses were criticizing government policy towards Pakistan, but that remained a neglected area in Pakistan. The issue of political economy of mainstream media in both India and Pakistan was also highlighted. The ownership structures, corporate interests, and the quest to be close to the ruling elite has a strong influence on the framing of content vis-a-vis India-Pakistan relations. The lack of proper laws and regulations to ensure freedom of press in India and Pakistan further aggravates the matters. The constitution in each country guarantees freedom of speech and the independence of media. However, respondents accepted that self-censorship was being practiced to serve the political and commercial interests of the owners. The respondents thought that

training alone couldn't be helpful unless the overall environment and the establishment's policy changed.

War journalism: The fifth research question explored whether the Indian and Pakistani media was promoting war journalism (RQ-5: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote war journalism?). There is evidence in the literature that the media relies on traditional frames to promote wars and conflicts (Lee & Maslog, 2006; Galtung, 1998). The framing of news stories related to both the Uri and Bhimber attacks in Indian and Pakistani newspapers was in line with the assumptions of existing research. The focus on each side was predominantly on promoting war hysteria, and justifying aggression against the *enemy* state. There was a similar pattern to such coverage in both countries, as both civil and military sources were quoted to point fingers towards the other country (almost always without mentioning any evidence). There was no mention of common people, who would be affected first and the foremost in case a war actually broke out. Some reports in the Indian media even wanted their government to go for a full-scale attack in the Pakistani territory. The responses of journalists also pointed towards the tendency to promote war journalism within the media in each country. However, in the opinion of a majority of the respondents, the content of the newspapers had started changing for the worse after the warmongering became a norm in television talk shows. Because such reporting on television was getting good ratings, the print media was being forced to follow the same trend by their owners.

Peace journalism: The sixth research question was related to the presence of peace journalism in the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in the newspapers of both countries (RQ-6: Do Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote peace journalism?). Peace journalism is defined as the choice made by the reporters and editors in reporting stories to promote non-violent, and

development-oriented responses to conflict in a society (Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). With the focus on conflict and war journalism, peace journalism was a missing element in the coverage of Uri and Bhimber attacks in Indian and Pakistani newspapers. There were hardly any quotes from the peace activists in the coverage from both countries after these attacks that were analyzed as a part of this research. If at all any solutions were offered in India or in Pakistan once in a while, it was only to extend the official narrative (Indian newspapers wanted Pakistan to stop terrorism and Pakistani media wanted India to free Kashmir) and expect the other country to accept it in order to have any hopes of peace. The Indian and Pakistani journalists believed that space for peace journalism was reducing because of the hostile environment being created by the news television channels in both countries. The fact that those calling for peace were being branded traitors in the Indian and Pakistani media had discouraged such sections in the media and civil society even more.

Securitization: The seventh research question aimed to find out whether the conflict-based coverage in India and Pakistan was promoting securitization in both countries (RQ-7: Does the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote securitization in India and Pakistan?). The securitization theory argues that the national security narrative of the ruling elite makes the general public more accepting of the hawkish policies (Buzan, 1997). The same agenda appeared to be evident in the coverage of the Uri and Bhimber attacks in India and Pakistan. The newspapers in India and Pakistan have apparently become a mouthpiece of their respective governments and security establishments. They appear to become an agent of warmongering at the cost of humans attached to escalating conflict between two nuclear-capable neighbors. There was a combative tone in the news reports from both countries because they justified the use of aggression and increasing military capability as a prerequisite to

combat the aggression of the rival country. The surprising finding was that the journalists in India were not really aware of concerns about securitization and how it could translate to public perceptions. They conceded that the media had built an image over time of Pakistan as a villain, but considered it more of a passing phase. However, the Indian journalists didn't think that this constant hostility and bitterness in the media affected the common people in any manner. This finding is not in line with the literature, which shows that media frames repeated most frequently could also have the most effect on the thought-processes and opinions of the audience (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The journalists in Pakistan were more conscious of this fact, perhaps because of the more dominant role of the country's powerful military and intelligence agencies in the country's foreign policy towards India over the years. Pakistani journalists accepted that media had made the national security narrative popular in the public as well, and that had undermined peace efforts. The respondents in Pakistan reasoned that the national security had become more important than anything for the ruling establishment after the 1971 war with India that resulted in the separation of east Pakistan.

Social media: The eighth research question was about social media having any potential to offer an alternative to mainstream media in the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict (RQ-8: Does social media offer an alternative voice in the coverage of issues related to India-Pakistan conflict?). There is enough evidence that traditional media and social media's boundaries were blurring and the social media users were also using it to express their political ideologies (Ceil, 2011; Rahimi, 2011). This research question was only part of the interviews and had not been a part of the content analysis. However, there were instances in the coverage, particularly in India, where Facebook and Twitter posts were forming the content of mainstream news stories related to Pakistan after the Uri and Bhimber attacks, albeit with a conflict-riddled overtone. Therefore,

it made sense to ask the journalists questions about it. During the interviews, the journalists in both countries believed that social media had initially offered some hope, as it didn't have the same commercial considerations, or fear of pressure groups to promote the national security narratives at all costs. However, both sides believed that hate and conflict had started spreading on social media as well, not only among the public but the journalists and other stakeholders as well. The Indian respondents were not very hopeful that social media can be a game-changer in a huge country like India with low literacy rate and lack of technology access in rural areas. They did sound apprehensive of the negative impact of social media on mainstream media, which had started carrying unverified reports of social media on television. The journalists in Pakistan were more circumspect about the role of security agencies and how they were clamping down on Pakistani bloggers and social media activists for challenging the popular national security narrative. Despite such challenges, both sides believed that social media could promote meaningful interaction between the peace activists and journalists of both countries if used purposefully.

Track-II initiatives: The ninth research question related to the potential of track-II initiatives and advocacy groups to bring about any improvement in the coverage of Indo-Pak conflict (RQ-9: Do the track-two initiatives between India and Pakistan offer an opportunity to address issues related to the coverage of bilateral conflict in both countries?). This question was also primarily for the interviews with journalists, because such stories were non-existent in the coverage of the Uri and Bhimber attacks. Whenever there is bilateral conflict, track-II dialogues can offer a possibility to create small openings (Kaye, 2007; Kraft, 2000). The respondents in neither country, India or Pakistan, expressed any hope, though, in the track-II initiatives to bring about any improvement in the strained bilateral relationship. Their pessimism originated from

the highly vitiated bilateral environment created by the media in both countries. The biggest example offered by the journalists in both countries was “Aman ki Asha” (*Destination Peace*) started by Pakistan’s Jang group and Times of India (Figure-3).

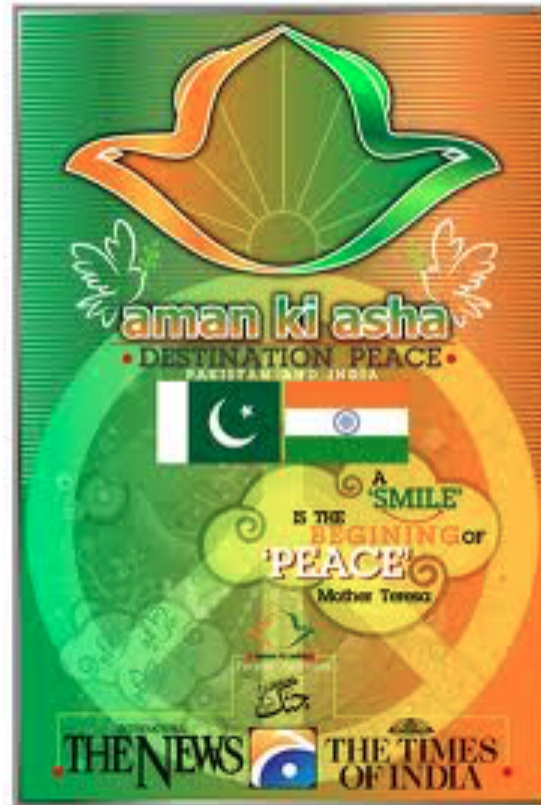


Figure-3: Aman ki Asha (*Destination Peace*) advertisement (Jang, 2016)

The journalists believed that if such heavyweight media groups couldn’t sustain their peace efforts in the wake of hostility being shown towards them in their respective countries, there was no hope for any other individual or organization. The Indian journalists believed that the NGOs and track-II initiatives had not been able to influence the environment of hate and hostility. The Pakistani journalists said that the effectiveness of NGOs had been affected because of heavy scrutiny and new regulations imposed by the government during the last few years.

Improvement potential: The tenth research question for this study was based on the future predictions of journalists interviewed in India and Pakistan and whether they had any

pragmatic suggestions for improvement in coverage (RQ-10: Do the journalists in India and Pakistan have any suggestions for improvement in the existing standards of coverage of bilateral conflict?). In a way, it was similar to the solutions frames question (RQ-2) but the open-ended nature of the interviews allowed them more options to answer what they might not have been able to write. The Indian journalists called for more access and exchange of journalist delegations in order to enhance understanding of the other country's issues and point of view. They also called for easy issuance of journalist visas, who at present have to go through an extremely lengthy and tedious security clearance and accreditation process. They suggested that more training opportunities for young journalists on sensitive issues, sensitizing the owners of media houses about the benefits of bilateral peace, investment in independent media outlets, and improvement in the overall working environment in Pakistan were the key elements for any improvement. Most of them were of the view that improvement was not just a matter of understanding of journalists, but of overall operational environment which made it hard for journalists to go about their business freely. The Pakistani journalists were generally not hopeful that their suggestions carried any weight, unless the State and other pressure groups changed their murky policies.

Implications of this Research

The findings of this research have some important implications for the media and the general public in South Asia. It is also pertinent to mention here what these findings mean for the study of conflict framing, war/peace journalism, the interplay of framing and securitization, and the processes that lead to frame-building as outlined in chapter three. First, the journalists are likely to prefer covering the Indo-Pak relationship through the lens of conflict as is the case elsewhere in the world (De Vreese, Peter & Semetko, 2010; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

However, unlike the rest of the world where conflict is the default mode of framing, it seems that it is part of a well thought out plan in India and Pakistan to not only cover conflict but cover it in a way that will escalate it even further in the minds of the audience. In framing studies, journalists mostly use official sources because they are easy to access and considered more newsworthy (Wolfsfeld, 1997). In India and Pakistan, it is much more than access or newsworthiness that is at stake for the media because they appear to choose sources purposefully to promote conflict and the official national security narrative. The journalists in framing studies have been found to refuge behind the norm of objectivity. However, the journalists in India and Pakistan hardly care about that and are pretty comfortable with taking an extreme position in line with the worldview of ruling establishments in each country (Johnson-Cartee, 2004; Iggers, 1998). It is evident that they are framing these stories with a particular slant to keep the image of *enemy* country fresh in the minds of the audience without trying to dig deep as to what the consequences might be (Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008). This research has contributed to understanding of such framing as an extension of agenda setting and also as a manifestation of the popular ideology taking over professional considerations for the journalists in each country (O'Neill, 2013; McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver, 1997).

Second, as McGoldrick & Lynch (2000) have showed that understanding of conflict by journalists could contribute towards war and peace, the findings from the Indian and Pakistani media strongly indicate a conscious effort to promote war hysteria in both countries. There also appears to be a lack of understanding or a careless attitude as to how this war could spell disaster for the already suffering general public in both countries. When the journalists show this contradiction where they understand a problem but do not show any effort to resolve it, they become part of the problem (Lee, McLeod & Shah, 2008; Lee & Maslog, 2006). The casualties

of this war journalism model being practiced in India and Pakistan are marginalization of the human cost of war, due consideration to peace options, and thematic framing (Richards (2001; Galtung, 1998). When the media lack the urge to question the government policies, the public is likely to perceive war as a necessity and any hope of an improvement in the situation is lost (Powell, 2011; Schwalbe, Silock, & Keith, 2008; Hannah, 2006). This research has shown how external factors like government pressures and commercial interests could affect the working of media in third-world countries.

Third, the interplay of conflict framing and securitization is an important subject in the present day and age where there is an imminent threat of terrorism everywhere in the world and the media is being used to propagate that threat. This research shows how the governments can push the securitization agenda and increase acceptance of hawkish policies in the public through strategic and tactful use of media (Gadarian, 2014; Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997). The case of India and Pakistan is an indication that the media owners are happy to become an extension agent of securitization agenda as long as that is reaping personal benefits for them. This research has also provided evidence that electronic media can become a dangerous tool to further securitization in a region where the literacy rate is not very high and the rural population outnumbered the urban folk. Although this is not an effects study, it is not difficult to ask whether that the audience in each country would respond favorably to particular aspects of conflict being highlighted in news coverage (Lee, McLeod & Shah, 2008; Maslog, Lees & Kim; 2006). The findings also show that it is not only the general public, but the journalists covering these issues who have also become desensitized to the perils of war and are happy to look the other way only to safeguard personal interests.

Fourth, this study has also shown how working conditions and external factors can affect the process of frame-building. There is evidence in the literature that the angle promoted by journalists in news stories reflects the bias in their working and the same happens to be the case in India and Pakistan (Lee, McLeod & Shah, 2008; Entman, 2007). While the research literature shows that the general public can become more accepting of the official narrative in such cases, it seems that those responsible for creating frames can also be affected by it if the environment generally is not conducive for independent reporting related to terrorism (Gadarian, 2014; Gadarian, 2010). Such bias in reporting comes through even if it is not intended because the journalists can get affected by their environments (Entman, 2007). There are exceptions elsewhere in the world when the media has not supported the government's point of view in the coverage of terrorism (Canel, 2012; Andén-Papadopoulos, 2008). However, the mainstream media in India and Pakistan hardly shows this tendency because they are more vary of being hoodwinked by the ruling establishment as well as by their own owners. Therefore, this study has shown that the process of frame-building can be seriously affected by organizational policies and the ownership structures in the media. The frame-building process in such a scenario can have serious consequences for the general public (Gadarain, 2014; Norris, Kern & Just, 2003). This research has highlighted such concerns through these findings. Finally, this study has also shown that it is not enough to look at *what* the frames are but the media scholars also need to focus on the *why* question about the creation of frames. This research has pointed out how the electronic media has become a dominant force in India and Pakistan and is driving the content of print media as well. That wouldn't have been possible if this research had not used the triangulation technique (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Therefore, it is important that the

scholars doing framing research also give due importance to frame-building simultaneously to put the findings in proper context.

The main takeaway from the data analysis was that there were different types of nexus at play in both Indian and Pakistani media. In Pakistan, the media owners are hand in glove with the powerful security agencies that dictate terms when it comes to setting the foreign policy agenda, particularly related to India. On the other hand, the rise of Bhartiya Janata Party (*right-wing religio-political party*) to power in India after the 2014 elections has created a nexus of media owners with right-wing political leadership. The Pakistani security establishment views India as responsible for breaking up the country in 1971 and wants to avenge that scar at all costs. That is why they keep the intensity of conflict high at all times and make it a point to drill the necessity of it in the public minds (Figure-4). The fact that the media in Pakistan remains apprehensive of the state censorship during the process of content generation makes matters even more difficult and any thought of challenging the state narrative remains elusive (Figure-5).

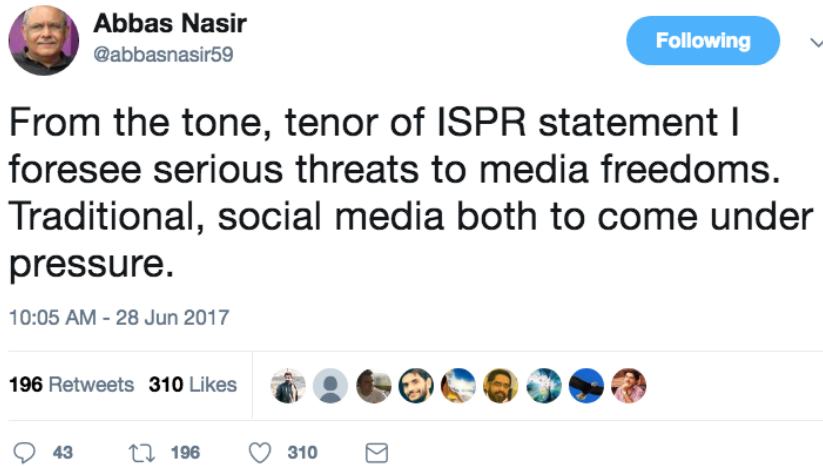


Figure-4: Abbas Nasir, former editor, Daily Dawn, Pakistan (Twitter, 2017)



Asad Hashim ✓

@AsadHashim

Following

[For AJE] In ongoing crackdown, Pakistani journalist arrested for social media posts criticising armed forces:



Pakistan: Zafar Achakzai charged for anti-army post

Reporter Zafar Achakzai is accused of posting illegal material on Facebook, his father and rights groups say.

aljazeera.com

4:07 AM - 30 Jun 2017

Figure-5: Asad Hashim, Pakistan correspondent, Al-Jazeera English (Twitter, 2017)

On the other hand, the Indian political elite, particularly the right-wing religio-political groups, view Pakistan as an artificial country that was created because of a conspiracy by the British. Otherwise, India would have been one big country and the Hindus, being the majority, would have ruled the entire subcontinent. The rising religious overtone in the Indian media is starting to come under a spotlight in the social and alternative media (Figure-6).



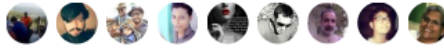
Siddharth ✓
@svaradarajan

Follow

Something extraordinarily sinister going on in the Indian media. Leading TV channels blatantly promoting Islamophobia. Day in, day out.

Retweets
1,422

Likes
1,492



11:25 AM - 23 Jun 2017

354 1.4K 1.5K

Figure-6: Siddharth, founding editor, online news site, The Wire (Twitter, 2017)

This mentality on both sides doesn't allow them to make any compromises and Kashmir has become a cornerstone of this conflict. The media owners in both countries, however, are not becoming a party with the ruling establishments in their respective countries because of any ideology. At the heart of it is the commercial agenda. The media outlets in Pakistan and India are privately owned enterprises and the owners directly call the shots. Falling in line with the ruling establishment brings them two-fold benefits. They are able to create their clout in the powerful ruling elite as well as get commercial benefits (licenses, tax breaks etc.) by fulfilling their demands. What they don't realize is that how this tendency continues to drive the public in both countries towards war hysteria. Both countries have low literacy rate, rank consistently at the bottom of human development and press freedom indices, and more than 60 percent of the population in each country lives in rural areas (Kumari, 2016; PTI, 2016; World Bank, 2015; Rana, 2014; Siraj, 2009). This population is highly at the risk of getting swayed by this content as consistent surveys have shown Indian and Pakistani public viewing each other's country as the biggest threat (Pew, 2015; Pew, 2012). However, it suits the designs of the ruling elite who are

able to divert attention from their failings when it comes to delivering for the public welfare. “The state's preoccupation with risk from terrorism neglects the complex nature of crises associated with poverty, disease, hunger, and global warming, increasing the vulnerability of the poorest and weakest members of society” (Slovic, 2004, p. 1). Given the low literacy level, the conflict framing in newspapers had limited influence, but the proliferation of news channels in both India and Pakistan in the last decade or so has opened the floodgates. As far as the ratings of the television stations are concerned, aggressive and hawkish news shows are getting good ratings in both countries and space for serious content appears to be reducing fast. When a primetime television station in India uses “Pakistan’s Migraine” as its tagline for the launching campaign, it is not difficult to understand the ground situation (Figure-3).



Figure-7: Arnab Goswani, anchor/managing director, Republic TV, India (Twitter, 2017)

Significance of this Research

There have been media and think-tank reports from time to time during the last decade or so about how the media is contributing to promoting conflict even further between India and Pakistan but there has not been much scholarly attention on this issue. The media scholars have largely remained focused on content analysis of framing in the Indo-Pak print media. However, there has not been much attention on application of peace/war journalism model to the Indo-Pak media. To begin with, this study has made a concerted effort to find out if these newspapers are promoting war or peace. Secondly, the concept of frame-building related to a historical conflict like India and Pakistan in a challenging and nuclear-armed region for the journalists has not received any attention. This is the first such effort in this regard that has interviewed journalists in both countries to explore processes behind the creation of frames and find answers to common problems and concerns. My background and contacts as a journalist in India and Pakistan and firsthand knowledge of the issues challenging the independence of media placed me in a unique position to accomplish this task. Thirdly, how the framing and frame-building is contributing to securitization in India and Pakistan at the cost of general public's miseries has also been focused on for the first time in the context of the media environment in these two rival countries.

Although this research was primarily about the social media, but the interpretive nature of analysis and emerging flexibility in research design allowed the room for some unique findings as well. This research was able to identify how the electronic media and social media had become a force in changing the dynamics of the print and overall media landscape in India and Pakistan.

Limitations and Future Research

This research was limited in scope because of some logistical reasons. First, the research only included nationally circulating English-language newspapers from India and Pakistan. The interviews with journalists revealed their claims that regional and vernacular language newspapers in each country were adopting more hawkish framing. Perhaps a future researcher can compare the framing of these regional and local-language newspapers with mainstream English-language newspapers to explore the differences. Second, accessing structured data of the selected newspapers was also a limitation. This researcher experienced difficulty in retrieving date-wise data related to Uri attack and Bhimber attack because it was not available through any of the databases or the websites of the newspapers. Therefore, a decision was taken to stick to Lexis-Nexis Academic database. Still, it required a lot of data cleaning to come up with analyzable data. Perhaps a researcher based in India or Pakistan can have a better access to the archives of these newspapers. Third, the number of stories were slightly skewed in favor of Indian newspapers. However, it was not much of a concern because this study was more concerned about the common themes emerging from the data instead of numbers. Fourth, this research only looked at stories one week after the actual date when the incidents (Uri and Bhimber) took place. The results might be a little different if the future researchers expand the duration of research to find out the intensity of conflict-framing and war journalism going up or down during the extended coverage period. Fifth, conducting the interviews was the most challenging limitation of this research. To begin with, it was difficult to convince the journalists to respond to the questions in a candid manner because they feared for their safety. The Pakistani journalists were fearful of the agencies and the Indian journalists were reluctant to trust a Pakistani researcher. I started with my contacts and used the snowball sampling technique to

finally have data from enough respondents for analysis. My background as a journalist played a role in overcoming this limitation to a certain extent. However, future researchers might want to explore frame-building in regional and local-language media and interview journalists associated with those media outlets as well for a better understanding of these processes at different level. Sixth, when the interviews were being conducted, India and Pakistan were fighting a case in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over Kalbhushan Jadhav, an alleged Indian spy given a death sentence in Pakistan and the media environment was quite charged (Chakraborty, 2017). This might have been a confounding variable for some of the answers. Finally, this research was interpretive and qualitative in nature. Future researchers might want to try quantitative analysis as another form of triangulation to see if the results remain the same or show any change. It is hoped that this pioneering effort to explore conflict framing, war/peace journalism, frame-building and securitization in India and Pakistan will inspire other researchers as well to carry this work forward.

APPENDIX A

CODING SHEET FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis coding sheet

Story #	Newspaper name ToI= 1 The Hindu = 2 HT = 3 The News = 4 The Nation = 5 Dawn = 6	Country India= 1 Pakistan= 2	Conflict frames present Yes = 1 No = 0	Focus on solutions Yes = 1 No = 0	Mentions Human cost of war Yes = 1 No = 0	Thematic framing Yes = 1 No = 0	Episodic framing Yes = 1 No = 0	Promotes war journalism Yes = 1 No = 0	Promotes peace journalism Yes = 1 No = 0	Promotes securitization Yes = 1 No = 0

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

The journalists in India and Pakistan were asked these open-ended questions during the qualitative interviews.

- 1) Which frames dominate the coverage of bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan in newspapers of each country?
- 2) What do you think about the focus on conflict in the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 3) What are your views about the focus on solution of conflict in the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 4) Do you think Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote war journalism?
- 5) Do you think Indian and Pakistani newspapers promote peace journalism?
- 6) In the coverage of conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers, who do you think should be held responsible for the unrest in your country?
- 7) What are your views on the national security narrative in the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 8) What are your views about human cost of war in the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 9) How does the presence of pressure groups affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 10) How does the organizational policy of the newspaper you work for affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 11) What are your views about the budget allocation each year on defense and nuclear arms?

- 12) How do commercial considerations affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 13) How do any unforeseen consequences of challenging the status-quo affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 14) Does social media offer an alternative voice to the promoters of peace between India and Pakistan?
- 15) Are there any laws or regulations that affect the coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 16) What training options are available for the journalists covering conflict between India and Pakistan?
- 17) What can be done to enhance the understanding of India-Pakistan bilateral issues among the journalists in India and Pakistan?
- 18) What can be done to improve the existing coverage of conflict between India and Pakistan?

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I freely, voluntarily, and without element of force or coercion, consent to be a participant in the research project entitled “Nuclearization as National Security: A comparative analysis of framing and frame-building in Indian and Pakistani newspapers.”

Awais Saleem, who is a Ph.D student in the School of Communication, Florida State University, is conducting this research. This research is being supervised by Dr. Stephen McDowell, who is a professor in the School of Communication at Florida State University. I understand the primary purpose of this research project is to better understand the working of journalists covering India-Pakistan relationship and the conflict in this relationship. I understand that if I participate in the project, I will be asked questions about my professional work, news framing and frame-building, and other related processes.

I understand I will be asked to questions during an interview. I also understand that by completing and submitting the online consent form, I am agreeing to be a part of the research project. The total commitment would be approximately 25-30 minutes.

I understand that I am at least 18 years or older and that my participation in totally voluntary and I may stop participation at any time. All of my answers to the questions will remain confidential to the extent allowed by law. I will not be asked to type my name or any information that could identify me on the survey. Also, I understand that no individual responses will be reported, but only group finding will be reported. I understand that the composite interview data are stored on a secure server hosted by Florida State University.

I understand there is a possibility of only a minimal level of risk involved if I agree to participate in this study. I may stop participation at any time and can feel free not to answer any

questions I do not want to. I will not experience any penalties or loss of privileges if I chose to do so. If I would like more information about this survey result, I may contact Awais Saleem, or Dr. Stephen McDowell, University Center C, School of Communication, Florida State University, Tallahassee.

I understand there are no personal benefits for me for participating in this research project. I will not receive any gifts or remuneration for answering questions during the interview. If I have any question about my rights as subject/participant in this research, or if I feel I have been placed at risk, I understand that I can contact the Chair of the Human Subject Committee, Institutional Review Board through the Vice President for the Office of Research at Florida State University (850) 644-8633, or by email at humansubjects@fsu.edu.

APPENDIX D

HUMAN SUBJECTS (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER



Office of the Vice President for Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 03/30/2017

To: Awais Saleem

Address: , School of Communication, Florida State University, Tallahassee

Dept.: COMMUNICATION

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research

Nuclearization as National Security: A comparative analysis of framing and frame-building in Indian and Pakistani newspapers.

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 03/29/2018 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Stephen McDowell , Advisor

HSC No. 2017.20684

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Awais Saleem has worked as a print and broadcast journalist for mainstream media organizations in Pakistan and the United States before returning to graduate school to pursue a Ph.D. His main research interests are political communication, social media analysis, and political economy of media. He has taught reporting, broadcast media production techniques, and mass media writing at undergraduate and graduate level in Pakistan and the U.S.