

**Analysis of Balochistan Conflict through the War and Peace Journalism  
Theory**

Asmat Ullah<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

This study investigates the conflict in Balochistan through the war and peace journalism. Using content analysis as a data collection technique, the researcher collected all the conflict related news stories in the daily Dawn from January 2013 till the end of December 2017. The investigation found that the daily Dawn primarily applied war journalism approach in its coverage of Balochistan conflict. In terms of topics, war journalism was more prominent in violent events as compared to peace events. In terms of intensity of war and peace events, more active war journalism was applied by the newspaper while some passive peace journalism frames were also present. The findings of the study support the literature on war-media nexus that media usually do conflict escalatory reporting due to structural and agential pressures.

**Keywords:** Balochistan conflict; peace journalism; war journalism; daily Dawn; violence; political dialogue; propaganda; Baloch insurgents; content analysis; structure-agency tension

**Introduction**

Media is a double-edged sword and could well be used either to promote peace and harmony or could stimulate chaos and warmongering among the comity of nations. In views of Hemer (2005) media in itself cannot pronate or supinate the structural movements of a polity but could definitely eliminate bulwarks on the way to problem solving. Researchers usually describe the peace-oriented media practices as peace journalism as compared to the jingoistic media, which is often dubbed as war journalism.

Though a number of Pakistani researchers have analyzed conflicts in Pakistan through the perspective of war and peace journalism (Hussain 2017; Hussain and Lynch, 2018; Hussain, 2015), a more detailed analysis is missing to know the entire nuances of peace journalism. This quantitative content analysis study is an attempt to operationalize war and peace journalism frames to investigate reporting of Balochistan conflict. It's high time for all the stakeholders including media to play its due role bringing people together (peace journalism) rather pushing people apart (war Journalism). The main objectives of this study

---

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.

are to identify the main discourse in Pakistan's elite English press on the Balochistan conflict in terms of its war and peace potentials and to discuss how the attributes of war and peace are related with the different events occurring in the province.

### **Peace journalism**

Conscious of the partisan and belligerent functioning of media in the times of wars and conflicts, numbers of communication scholars urge structural functional harmony in a society through peace journalism approach. Before embarking upon the domain of peace journalism it would be helpful to unfold the beats of conflict and violence added with variegations of violence. This would help understand the concept and functionality of peace journalism in all-encompassing manner to an extent.

Conflicts flare out owing to irreconcilable signposts of two or more factions of society say a well-known peace studies stalwarts Professor Johan Galtung and Ruge (1965) also demarcate the difference between conflict and violence in a way that violence crops up when conflicting factions opt to force resolving conflict(s) in hand. Delving further into the realm they classified violence into direct, structural and cultural expositions where the direct violence exhibits full scale war; the structural violence projects institutional dysfunction in a situation like unequal distribution of power, social disparities and institutional tyranny; and cultural violence twists upon figurative milieu that flourishes over prevailing setups and maintain stereotypes. To them the non-existence of discernible or outright violence could not tantamount to peace. Galtung (1998) labeled it as negative peace that stands fragile to its core and his contriving of "positive peace" equals to egalitarianism, equity and a fair distribution of power that pave the way for mellifluous society. Galtung (1998) model propounds four prime orientation indicators of war journalism (violence, propaganda, elite, differences) and peace journalism (peace, truth, people, solution). Moreover, as alternative to traditional reporting practices that circumambulates around the orientations of war and violence; propaganda; elites as peacemakers; and victory vocals for peace journalism now suggestively focuses upon peace and conflict; truth; people as peacemakers and solutions.

The 'us versus them' antithetic traditional journalism galvanizes the spree of war and violence on one part while on the other it reduces the place and worth of parties involved in the matter and in this way it reduces the chances of amicable settlement of contentious knots (Lynch, 2013; Galtung, 1998). It has widely been reckoned through the peace journalism perspective that customary underpinnings

of media reporting are skewed to war journalism practices (Hussain, 2017; Lynch, 2013).

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) stretching upon the theory and practice of peace journalism contend that it's not only the visible effects of violence that comes under the purview of this theory but the invisible diaspora it creates around and affects the human personality on accounts of socio-psychological underpinnings stands conspicuous to peace studies along with the contextual and historical dimensions by reducing centrifugal tendencies and highlighting the areas of common interest sprouting avenues of collaboration to end at win-win situation to all. Although John Galtung propounded his theory of peace journalism in 1960s but its wider embracement by the scholars and researchers cropped up in the aftermath of Iraq war of early 1990s. The media coverage of the time surfaced vivid nexus between war elites and media coverage and it voiced among the intellectual circles the need for professional and responsible media entities. This gave vent to holding of series of scholastic gatherings world over initiated by Taplow Court England in 1993. Down the line till date we have exuberant treasure of studies on peace journalism that provide impetus to further exploration on cogent footings.

A well-known description of peace journalism put forward by the two disciples of Galtung narrates as "Peace journalism is when editors and reporters make choices - of what stories to report, and how to report them - which create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). Kempf (2012) fixes the onus of peace promoting journalism on the shoulders of those media personnel who are well attuned to the spectrum of responsibility that owe much to prevalence of peace through panoramic portrayal of fact and factuality spread across the political, social and economic factors.

The supporters of peace aver about media role in projecting exhaustive description of conflict events that unfurl the chances of reduction in conflict situations say Lynch (2008) and Shinar (2007). In the opinion of Johan Galtung (2005) the journalism that speaks of peace, human and solutions is called peace journalism. World Bank annual report (2009) utter high of media's valuable role in wars and conflicts. It is no denying the fact that in conflict ridden lands the role of media becomes conspicuous fulfilling the responsibilities of coming up to hopes and desires, strengthening state institutions, projecting national character and cultivating emblems of vigilant society.

### **Case Studies**

In many a conflict situations the researchers have applied the theory of peace journalism to reckon the role of media in conflict situations. In accomplishment of this study the flagship researches have been included to quintessential understanding of scenario. Shinar (2006) identifies national ideology and political pressure on journalists as bulwarks to possibilities of peace reporting on national conflicts through the observation of Canadian and Israeli coverage of Lebanon war. Ross and Tehranian (2002) projected through their research studies the existence or non-existence of peace journalism in US press reporting on Palestinian Israeli conflict in which they found the skewness of coverage in favor of conflict owing to visible elite influence.

Mandelziz and Peleg (2017) concluded that elites influence grows exponentially during the war time coverage as in case of second Lebanon war in which press succumbs to the safeties of power elites. Ozohu-Suleiman and Ishak,(2015)studied leading Southeast Asian newspapers on Israeli Palestinian conflict on the dimensions of war peace aspect which divulged the media role as blasting the situation than subduing as against the local media de-escalatory role in international conflicts.

Relevant with this literature, this study investigates the reporting of Balochistan conflict in the daily Dawn with the following questions:

R.Q.1: What is the dominant perspective in daily Dawn while reporting on the Balochistan conflict?

R.Q.2: How the eventual framing of war and peace journalism is distributed in the reporting of Balochistan conflict in daily Dawn?

R.Q.3: What are the key indicators of war and peace journalism as produced by the newspaper (Dawn) while reporting on the national insurgency?

### **Research Method**

#### **Content analysis**

Approach to explore the presence or absence of peace in the media texts shows the literature on conflict studies through the technique of content analysis (Entman, 2004; Lynch, 2008; Siraj and Hussain, 2012). The study is spread over the duration of five year from January 2013 till December 2017. The data was collected through the LexisNexis by entering the keywords Balochistan and insurgency. This resulted in a large amount of data. All the news stories were first sifted for the relevant content and then through systematic sampling technique by selecting every third story, a total number of 272 stories were finalized from daily

Dawn. All the news stories relating to Baloch insurgency were mainly reported under four topics. These included violence, security measures, political confrontations and civil society narrations.

For the data collection process, the war and peace journalism model was operationalized. The four war journalism categories included are visible effects, propaganda, elite oriented and difference oriented coverage. The four peace journalism categories are invisible effects, truth-oriented, people oriented and solution oriented coverage. These eight categories were operationalized and data collected. The neutral category was deleted due to infrequency of news stories. Two coders were trained in the coding scheme. To ensure inter-coder reliability, the author of this study coded 10 percent of the data and checked against the two coders. More than 80 percent coding agreement was achieved.

**RQ1: What is the dominant perspective in daily Dawn while reporting on the Balochistan Conflict?**

Table 1: War and peace distribution in daily Dawn

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>War journalism</b>	<b>Peace journalism</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Chi-square P values</b>
Dawn	212 (80)	60 (20)	272 (100)	P value: .01

As shown in the above table, daily Dawn mainly adopts war journalism approach. As many as 80 percent stories were reported in the war journalism category as compared to 20 percent stories in the peace journalism category. The significant p value (.01) suggests that the difference is significant. This finding challenges work of Hussain and Haseeb (2015) who found more peace journalism in the Pakistani media while reporting on the conflict in Balochistan. These two researchers applied the four-category initial scheme of war and peace journalism and hence took for granted a number of sub-variables. Since in this study, the researcher applied a more detailed model of war and peace journalism where most of the nuances of conflict journalism were captured due to the holistic approach, the overall coverage is better explained. A more general explanation could be that few years ago, there was a political movement that called for resolving the issues of Baloch people. Such voices have now been curtailed and hence more elite perspectives are dominating the press coverage.

**R.Q.2: How the eventual framing of war and peace journalism is distributed in the reporting of Balochistan conflict in daily Dawn?**

*Table 2: Topic wise distribution of war and peace journalism in Pakistan*

<b>Topics</b>	<b>WJ</b>	<b>PJ</b>
Violence	93(44)	4(7)
Security measures	79(37)	11(18)
Political confrontations	23(11)	12(20)
Civil society narrations	17(8)	33(55)
Total	212 (100)	60(100)

As shown in the above table, daily Dawn mainly reported the Balochistan conflict in war approach. While bomb attacks, killings, kidnaping and military perspectives are conveyed in war journalism pattern, the perspectives of civil society contained mainly peace journalism attributes.

R.Q.3: What are the key indicators of war and peace journalism as produced by Dawn newspaper while reporting on Baloch insurgency?

As shown in the table on previous page, the reporting in daily Dawn on the Balochistan conflict was mainly war journalism oriented. In the war approach three salient categories are: visible effects (19 percent), elite oriented (24 percent) and here and now centered (41percent). The daily Dawn mainly relied on the perspective of military sources and reported the deaths and injuries and the immediate causes of incidents. This is very much in line with the work of (Hussain and Lynch, 2018) who found that Pakistani media did not provide detailed reporting on conflicts and commit to statement-journalism. The emphasis on the elites and event based reporting suggests that daily Dawn does not professionally and constructively report on this conflict. Likewise, the salient

<b>War Journalism Indicators</b>		<b>Peace Journalism Indicators</b>	
Differences oriented	23 (4)	Solution oriented	17 (6)
<b>Visible effects</b>	<b>102 (19)</b>	Invisible effects	24 (12)
<b>Elite oriented</b>	<b>132 (24)</b>	People oriented	19 (10)
<b>Here and now centered</b>	<b>96 (41)</b>	Causes and effects	08 (4)
Dichotomous	16 (3)	<b>Avoid of good/bad guy</b>	<b>37 (19)</b>
Two-party oriented	89 (16)	Multi-party oriented	15 (8)
Partisan	18 (3)	<b>Non-partisan</b>	<b>41 (21)</b>
Zero-sum-oriented	26 (5)	<b>Win-win orientation</b>	<b>34 (17)</b>
Demonizing language	48 (9)	Avoid demonizing language	13 (6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>550(100)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>197 (100)</b>

indicators of peace journalism highlighted by the daily Dawn are: avoidance of dichotomies (19 percent), non-partisan (21 percent) and win-win orientation (17 percent). Though these indicators are not very prominent as compared to the war

journalism category, the categories do suggest that daily Dawn does active peace journalism while reporting on this conflict (Lee, 2006; Lynch, 2013; Hussain and Lynch, 2018). On the other hand, the indicators of war journalism as identified in this study are weak and passive attributes and hence it can be argued that the war journalism done by the daily is the result of common journalistic practices (Hussain, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

As shown in the finding section, daily Dawn mainly adopts war journalism approach while reporting on the Balochistan conflict. A number of researchers have found war journalism prevalence edged over peace journalism in the South Asian region (Lee and Maslog, 2005; Lee, Maslog, & Kim, 2006; Iqbal and Hussain, 2018; Siraj, 2008). The press openly sided with the government and security forces against the insurgents to report on these conflicts. These findings support the scholarship on war-media nexus than media follows national elites and national policies during wars and conflicts (Webel&Galtung, 2007; Ottosen, 2008; Iqbal and Hussain, 2018).

Similarly as indicated in the Findings section, the reporting of violent events likes bombing, attacks on security forces produced more war journalism. Interestingly, the news reports on the violent events resulted in negligible amount of peace journalism as compared to the dominance of peace journalism approach in the news reports on peace events. These findings are quite consistent with the existing literature where researchers have found violent events in line with elitist perspective that leads to further escalation (Youngblood, 2017). The others upheld the same by fixing the value of timeliness as most important on the way to coverage of available news sources leaving the other stakeholders apart (Lynch, 2014). Contrarily, the pundits of peace journalism favor the prevalence of peace approach and look for inclusion of direct or indirect stakeholders to the conflict so that their perspective be visible in the mainstream reporting (Wolsfeld, 1997). The civil society narratives in shape of peace events that add to peace journalism lookouts happen infrequently hence often miss the war-inclined-media reporting (Lynch, 2014; Kempf and Theil, 2012).

The episodic events of violence, security measures, political confrontations projected war journalism milieu while the civil society narrations upheld the peace journalism approach.

As far as the distribution of war and peace journalism indicators is concerned, the reporting in daily Dawn was mainly war journalism oriented. Three salient categories in this regard were: visible effects, elite oriented and here and now centered. The newspaper mainly relied on the perspective of military sources



and reported deaths, injuries and the immediate causes of incidents. Hussain and Lynch (2018) through their research findings established that media in Pakistan lack detailed covering of events with pluralistic approach but subservient to statement-journalism. The study reveals like-manner coverage of Dawn on Baloch insurgency.

Observably, the coverage of peace indicators are not much vivid when compared with war journalism indicators, nonetheless the inclusion of peace journalism attributes in the daily Dawn speak of active peace journalism while covering this conflict (Lee, 2006); Lynch, 2013; Hussain and Lynch, 2018). Meanwhile, the coverage of war indicators are feeble and passive that help establish the argument that war journalism manifested by the daily is the consequence of practice in generic (Hussain 2015).

As discussed in the methodology part, the coverage relating to Baloch insurgency mainly comes from the four eventual spheres—violence, security perspectives, political confrontations and civil society narratives. War and peace indicators for these four topics were also identified. News stories relating to violence were mainly characterized by visible effects and elite oriented versions. When violent events occur, media usually focus on what happened, how many killed and injured—all apparent manifestations. Similarly, the coverage of security related stories mainly resulted in visible effects and elite oriented attributes of war journalism. Likewise, news stories relating to the political confrontations were mainly characterized by visible effects, elite oriented coverage attributes and the peace journalism approach that are characterized by invisible effects. Finally, in the stories relating to civil society narrations, the two prominent war journalism attributes were visible effects and elite orientation while the two leading peace journalism attributes were invisible effects plus causes and effects. This distribution shows that coverage of the Balochistan conflict mainly revolves around visible effects, elite oriented and demonizing language in the war journalism approach. On the other hand, in the peace journalism approach, the prominent attributes are invisible effects, causes and effects and win-win orientation of the coverage. These findings are supported by a number of studies in which researchers found that war coverage is usually concentrated among certain themes and usually the attributes remain the same (Siraj and Hussain, 2012; Hussain, 2017).

## References

- Agha, S., & Hussain, S. (2017). Reporting Taliban Conflict: Analysis of Pakistani Journalists' Attitude Towards National Security. *NDU Journal*, 8(2), 166-178.
- Allan, S., & Zelizer, B. (Eds.). (2004). *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Bläsi, B. (2004). Peace journalism and the news production process. *Conflict & Communication*, 18(3), 32-44.
- Bratic, V., & Ross, S. D. (2008). Bosnia's Open Broadcast Network: A Brief but Illustrative foray into Peace Journalism Practice. *Global Media Journal*, 7(13), 1-15.
- Carruthers S (2011) *The Media at War*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chouliaraki, L. (2013). The humanity of war: Iconic photojournalism of the battlefield, 1914– 2012. *Visual Communication*, 12(3), 315-340.
- Entman, R. M. (2004). *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Galtung, J. (1998). After Violence: 3R, Reconstruction, Reconciliation, Resolution. *Coping With Visible and Invisible Effects of War and Violence*. Princeton, NJ: TRANSCEND.
- Galtung, J. (2006). Peace journalism as an ethical challenge. *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition*, 1(2), 1-5.
- Galtung, J., & Ruge, M. H. (1965). The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the international conflicts in Norwegian press. *Journal of peace research*, 2(1), 64-90.
- Goretti, L. N. (2007). Peace journalism applied: an assessment of media coverage of the conflict in Northern Uganda. *Conflict and Communication Online*, 6(2), 22-37.
- Hanitzsch, T. (2004). Journalists as peacekeeping force? Peace journalism and mass communication theory. *Journalism Studies*, 5(4), 483-495.
- Hanitzsch, T. (2007). Deconstructing journalism culture: Toward a universal theory. *Communication theory*, 17(4), 367-385.
- Harrison, S. S., (1981). *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baloch Nationalism and Soviet Temptation*, New York and Washington: Carnegie Endowment.
- Hemer, O. (2005). *Media and Glocal Change. Rethinking communication for development*. ClacsoBooks/NORDICOM.
- Hussain, S. (2015). Balochistan: Reaping the benefits of peace journalism. *Conflict & Communication*, 14(2), 83-96.

- Hussain, S. (2015). Critical Academic Junctures between Political communication and Peace journalism in Pakistan. *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition, 10*(2), 109-123.
- Hussain, S. (2017). Analyzing the war–media nexus in the conflict-ridden, semi-democratic milieu of Pakistan. *Media, War & Conflict, 10*(3), 273-292.
- Hussain, S., & Lynch, J. (2018). Identifying peace-oriented media strategies for deadly conflicts. *Journal of Information Development, 12*(3), 334-347.
- Hussain, S., & Munawar, A. (2017). Analysis of Pakistan Print Media Narrative on the War on Terror. *International Journal of Crisis Communication, 1*(1), 38-47.
- Iqbal, M. Z., & Hussain, S. (2017). Reporting Sectarian Incidents: Examining the escalatory and de-escalatory discourses in the Pakistan News Media. *Journal of Political Studies, 24*(2), 120-131.
- Iqbal, M. Z., & Hussain, S. (2018). Indo-Pak wars (1948, 1965, 1971, 1999): Projecting the Nationalistic Narrative. *Journal of Political Studies, 25*(1), 89-112.
- Kempf, W., & Thiel, S. (2012). On the interaction between media frames and individual frames of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *Conflict & Communication, 11*(2), 86-98.
- Lee, S. T., & Maslog, C. C. (2005). War or peace journalism? Asian newspaper coverage of conflicts. *Journal of Communication, 55*(2), 311-329.
- Lee, S. T., Maslog, C. C., & Kim, H. S. (2006). Asian conflicts and the Iraq war: A comparative framing analysis. *International Communication Gazette, 68*(5-6), 499-518.
- Lynch, J. (2008). *Debates in peace journalism*. Sydney University Press.
- Lynch, J. (2013). Is peace journalism feasible? Pointers for research and media development. *Ethical Space, 10*(2/3), 15-24.
- Lynch, J. (2014). *Peace journalism*. Sydney: Hawthorn Press.
- Mandelzisz, L., & Peleg, S. (2017). War journalism as media manipulation: Seesawing between the Second Lebanon war and the Iranian nuclear threat. *Peace Journalism in Times of War, 13*(2), 79-89.
- Nohrstedt, S. A., & Ottosen, R. (2008). War Journalism in the Threat Society: Peace journalism as a strategy for challenging the mediated culture of fear?. *Conflict & Communication, 7*(2), 12-23.
- Ozohu-Suleiman, Y., & Ishak, S. A. (2015). Local Media in Global Conflict: Southeast Asian Newspapers and the Politics of Peace in Israel/Palestine. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence, 8*(2), 284-295.
- Ottosen, R. (2008). Targeting the audience: video games as war propaganda in

- entertainment and news. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), 14-41.
- Rahman, B. H. (2012). Framing of Pakistani Muslim Women in International media: Muslim feminist's Perspective. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(1), 106-113.
- Ross, S. D. (2006). (De) Constructing Conflict: A Focused Review of War and Peace Journalism. *Conflict & Communication*, 5(2), 14-26.
- Shinar, D. (2007). Epilogue: Peace Journalism-The State of the Art. *Conflict & Communication*, 6(1), 23-34.
- Siraj, S. A., & Hussain, S. (2012). War media galore in Pakistan: A perspective on Taliban conflict. *Global Media Journal: Pakistan Edition*, 5(1), 37-49.
- Ross, S. D., & Tehranian, M. (2009). *Peace journalism in times of war*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Webel, C., & Galtung, J. (Eds.).(2007). *Handbook of peace and conflict studies*.Routledge.
- Wolsfeld, G. (1997). Media and politic conflict. *News from the Middle East, Londres, Cambridge University*.
- Tehrani, M. (2002). Peace journalism: Negotiating global media ethics. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 7(2), 58-83.
- Youngblood, S. (2017).Kenyan Media Test Peace Journalism Principles.*Peace Review*, 29(4), 440-442.