

# Searching Peace through War: The Presentation of Pakistan Govt Talks with Tehrik Taliban Pakistan in National Press

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**Abstract.** After over two decades of violence, loss of thousands of civilians, displacement of tens of thousands of people, and damages to key infrastructure in Pakistan by Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the central government decided to talk with them in 2014. These peace talks were vital, as their failure could inevitably lead to a longer war. This study is about the coverage given by the Pakistani national press on these peace talks and the military operation followed by it. It is evaluated how much print media have played their role either in initiating peace or instigating war. With this intention, Johan Galtung's theory of Peace Journalism was applied. Analyzing the contents of four elite national English and Urdu dailies the study concluded that the mainstream press portrayed the peace talks with a considerable difference throughout peace talks, which had undermined the government approach of bringing peace. War-oriented coverage of the operation tells that whatever would be the situation media would sensationalize it. Within the news stories, mixed expressions were seen towards both peace and war but the overall coverage remained war-oriented.

**Keywords:** peace talks; Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP); violence; peace journalism (PJ); war journalism (WJ); military operation/Zarb e Azab.

## Taikos paieškos karo metu: Pakistano vyriausybės derybų su *Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan* nušvietimas nacionalinėje spaudoje

**Santrauka.** Po daugiau nei du dešimtmečius trukusio smurto, tūkstančių civilių netekties, dešimčių tūkstančių žmonių persikėlimo į kitas vietas ir žalos, kurią padarė *Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) pagrindinei Pakistano infrastruktūrai, 2014 m. centrinė vyriausybė nusprendė su jais pradėti derybas. Šios taikos derybos buvo labai svarbios, nes joms nepasisekus neišvengiamai galėjo kilti dar ilgesnis karas. Šiame tyrime analizuojama, kaip šios taikos derybos ir po jų vykdoma karinė operacija buvo nušviečiamos Pakistano nacionalinėje žiniasklaidoje. Aiškinamasi, kokį vaidmenį suvaidino žiniasklaida: ar inicijuojant taiką, ar kurstant karą. Šiuo tikslu buvo pritaikyta Johano Galtungo taikos žurnalistikos teorija. Išanalizavus keturių elitinių nacionalinių dienraščių anglų ir urdu kalbomis turinį, tyrime daroma išvada, kad pagrindinė spauda taikos derybas vaizdavo labai skirtingai, o tai pakenkė vyriausybės požiūriui siekiant taikos. Į karą orientuotas operacijos nušvietimas

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spauodoje leidžia suprasti, kad ir kokia būtų situacija, žiniasklaida vis tiek ją pateiktų sensacingai. Naujienu straipsniuose buvo pastebimi prieštaringi pasisakymai tiek apie taiką, tiek apie karą, tačiau bendras situacijos nušvietimas išliko orientuotas į karą.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** taikos derybos; Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP); smurtas; taikos žurnalistika (PJ); karo žurnalistika (WJ); karinė operacija / Zarb e Azab.

## Introduction

Conflicts need mediation, and in larger conflicts, the media, due to its underlying power, play imperative role in disputes as a third-party mediator. News certainly play a role in conflicts (Hackett, 2007) and it largely depends on the perception and portrayal of an issue by the gatekeepers that may change the dimensions of the whole problem. Studies support the role of media in the escalation of the conflict (Lee, 2010; Maslog & Lee, 2005; Galtung, 2000), but literature is limited to few examples on media's role in peace promotion (Bratic, 2015). Media give priority to war and violence and give huge coverage; however, peace news are scarce (Wolfsfeld, 2004). Studies show that media prefers and sensationalize war than peace (Wolfsfeld, 2004) in most of the cases, e.g., the Ireland peace process, in which media proved to be a promoter of conflict than a facilitator of peace. Spencer (2004), referring to the northern peace process, said "television news operates more effectively for the promotion of conflict rather than peace". Similarly, in the case of the Vietnam War, Herman & Chomsky (1988) blamed US media for restricting information that was not favourable to the US government and controlling the voices of the anti-war movements and the people of Vietnam, leaving the impression that Vietnam, not the US, was the provoker of war. Therefore, if the media has the power to escalate conflicts, it has the power to de-escalate as well (Bratic, 2006). Media can influence positively in the peace process with long-lasting effects (Becker, 2004). There are examples where media played their role as a peacebuilder, media heavily supported the "Good Friday Agreement" Campaign between Great Britain and Ireland (Bratic, 2007).

Focus on war journalism causes an increase in conflict, while PJ helps to decrease it (Galtung, 1998).

Talks and dialogues are the first steps towards a peaceful resolution of conflicts, the most difficult breakthrough in any larger dispute is bringing people to a discussion table under one roof; as Byman (2006) said, the circumstances for favourable talks are not always welcoming since the beginning of talks with a terrorist group may strengthen them more. The success of peace talks not only brings peace but also prevents from loss of human lives, infrastructure, and financial resources. Media have a major role to play as a conflict resolver, in an ideal situation, media work as a bridge between the government, the negotiating party, and the public. As Davison said, (1974) "Media provide for a two-way flow of influence; from the negotiators to the public, and from the public to the negotiator". So, the way the press portrays a situation is likely to affect the outcomes.

Since 9/11 the Taliban problem has been receiving enormous coverage in the Pakistani press, especially during 2014 when the government of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif decided to bring TTP to the discussion table and give a chance to a peaceful resolution

of the long-lasting violence. This study is about the presentation of peace/war journalism in the coverage of the peace process with TTP and the military operation against TTP in leading English and Urdu dailies of Pakistan. The peace process was the result of violence ensued by the TTP, and when it was decided by the Nawaz regime, the media gave huge coverage. The purpose is to analyse how newspapers presented two opposite aspects of the same conflict through PJ.

## **Historical background of the conflict**

In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and the Afghan people were supported and funded by the United States, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia (Bew et al., 2013, p. 10). The US, allied with Pakistan, heavily funded the Madrassas (religious education seminaries) in Afghanistan (Shaheen & Tarique, 2021) to fight against the Soviet forces. From 1979 to 1992 the US spent at least 3 billion dollars on Afghan Mujahidin (Parenti, 2001; Singh, 2007) for equipping them to fight against Soviet forces. In 2001, the US declared war against terror, therefore “heroes of US and Arab nations who sponsored the Afghan jihad (holy war) against the Soviet Union were suddenly declared as villains, enemies, and terrorists” (Byman, 2006). Once again Pakistan decided to help the US and provided support to the US government and NATO forces in Afghanistan. This gave rise to terrorists’ activities against Pakistan. Since then, the Taliban have played havoc with the peace of the country taking the lives of thousands of people and damaging the social fabric of Pakistani society. In this scenario, the political government decided to resolve the Taliban issue with dialogues and brought TTP to the discussion table in January 2014. Talks were proceeding when Taliban killed 23 army men, and consequently suspended a few times but started again, and finally failed due to the Taliban’s attack on Karachi airport. Resultantly, Pakistan’s military launched operation Zarb e Azab (sword of the Holy Prophet PBUH) in North Waziristan (Pakistani area bordering Afghanistan) with full political support on 15 June 2014. As opposed to what was assumed that Zarb e Azab would control the furious activities of the TTP (Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan), the heinous acts of violence in history were witnessed during and after the military operation of Zarb e Azab including bombing and shooting in Army Public School (APS), which killed 144 students and teachers (*Dawn*, December 14, 2015). Zarb e Azab caused the dislocation of more than a million local people and loss of Rs190 billion, “still the terrorist threat to Pakistan is far from defeated” (Basit, 2016). The recent developments in Afghanistan have given rise to TTP terrorists activities within Pakistan, causing the loss of lives of military and civil persons. So, the situation after eight and half years of military operation is still quite unpredictable.

## ***Peace Journalism / Theoretical framework***

Peace journalism (PJ) is a way to look at the other side of the story, to report, and to focus on the angles, which can prevent conflict and promote peace, “WJ and PJ are two different ways of reporting the same set of events” (Lynch and Galtung, 2010, p. 52). As of the journalism itself as a “service provider” in the lines of Luhmann’s “theory of social

justice” (2000) and “the reality of Mass Media” (1995), whose function is to provide social co-orientation, “PJ is defined as a special mode of socially responsible journalism which contributes to peace” (Hanitzsch 2004, p. 483). Research after the civil war & the peace treaty of 1992 in El Salvador shows that the media positively promoted the democratization process and provided platform for dialogues that made it peace possible (Nuikka, 1999). German media reports after the WWII show that media positively portrayed the cooperation between Germany and France and followed responsible media ethics (Jaeger 2002b in Kempf, 2003).

Researchers believe that PJ can play a significant role in peacebuilding in war-torn societies, in chronic conflicts whether they are political, religious, or racial, in societies where there is no war but violence exists (Galtung, 1996; Galtung & Lynch, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick 2005) and PJ can also be used as a pre-emptive measure where there are chances of conflicts and violence. Shinar (2007) stated, “Peace journalism is a normative model of responsible and conscientious media coverage of conflict, that aims at contributing to peace-making, peacekeeping, and changing the attitudes of media owners, advertisers, professionals, and audiences towards war and peace” (p. 2). Researchers agree that it is responsible journalism as it provides an opportunity to the journalists to contribute to the well-being of the society and cover the event in a way “that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflict” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). As Galtung (1997, 1998) suggested, PJ stresses that journalists should practice peace plans, they should try to highlight points that can help bring peace, work for the de-escalation of conflicts, and rehabilitation of societies.

Studies have examined the dominance of WJ in different conflicts; Lee and Maslog (2005) studied the press coverage of five countries in four different conflicts and found that overall WJ frames were more dominant than PJ frames. Siraj (2008) examined Pakistan & India conflict in two US newspapers and found that WJ stories were greater in number than PJ stories.

Talks and dialogues are the initial steps of resolving an issue, and especially when the issue involves violence. The role mass media play in the success of peace talks, making public opinion in favor of the positive solution and resolving conflicts is less observed. Howard et al. (2003) called media a “double-edged sword”, as it sometimes works for peaceful resolution of the conflict and most of the time works against the peace (Des Forges, 1999; Price and Thompson, 2002).

Media, considering their broader range of powers, can influence the peace process, as Hawkins noticed that “Media agendas do influence a broad range of policy initiatives and lack of media coverage contributes to lack of policy” (2002, p. 225). “Media can perform positively when peace is really on political agenda” (Kempf 2003, p. 9). Radio Douentza in Mali, which was serving a very small community of mostly farmers, took the peace initiative through their service. There was an ongoing conflict between two groups of the community and every year a large number of people were being killed in clashes. The radio took three initiatives to possibly reduce the violence, like positive public service messages and quick information regarding incidents, so the authority could intervene & give voice to the farmers so they can discuss their issues. The Dayton Peace Agreement

ended the three-year civil war between Serbians, Croatians, and Bosnians in 1995, which took the lives of thousands of people. In this process of peace-building, the radio was the main media heavily used by all three sides for peace-building (Batic, 2008). PJ can resolve national conflicts as well; a study on the Balochistan conflict (Tarique, 2017) reveals that press uses war frames than peace frames in their converge of the issue and suggested that if more peace frame could be used the situation would be different.

Today's media have more opportunities to intervene into the conflicts, but how they intervene is most of the time questionable; however, it is certain that they escalate conflicts (Junné, 2013, para. 2). They do so by giving a biased coverage, ignoring the actual facts, and knowingly or unknowingly favouring one side of the conflict. Media in Sierra Leone incited the war by giving biased coverage of the incidents that were in favour of the insurgents rather than the government (Bau, 2010). Foreign media also covered the war in Sierra Leone in a way that was also not unbiased, giving a picture of Africa as a "no hope zone" (ibid, p. 20).

Coverage of operation Zarb e Azab in Pakistani newspapers was analyzed by Hussain & Munawar (2017), who concluded that the operation was "inclined more towards WJ framing than PJ framing in their coverage of the Taliban conflict" (p. 38). A comparison of English and Urdu press concluded that Urdu newspapers were more war-oriented than the English newspapers of the country (ibid). The newspapers "supported the official version on the conflict and operation but also marginalized and undermined alternative voices calling for a peaceful resolution of this years-long conflict" (Hussain & Munawar 2017, p. 38). Quite contrary to that, another study, which considered only one-month coverage of the selected issue, suggested the negative role of media during the initial days of operation, criticizing that print media framing of the operation was not supportive, as they showed their dissatisfaction over the launch of the operation. They focused more on the civil-military divide and the problems caused by the operation of Zarb e Azab (Khan & Akhtar, 2016). They argued that "coverage of Operation Zarb-e-Azb is biased and thus challenging the state's policy on counter-terrorism. It is far from being neutral and acts irresponsibly mocking the ethics of journalism" (Khan & Akhtar, 2016).

A study analysed AP and Xinhua's coverage and observed that they were also critical of Pakistan's role in combating terrorism before the start of operation, but a considerable shift was seen in the image of Pakistan as a "victim" after operation Zarb-e-Azab started (Yousaf, 2015). The coverage of three Pakistani newspapers was analysed by Subhani & Sultan (2015), who concluded that "the newspapers were mostly against the peace talks and government and media were not on the same page on the issue of peace talks" with the Taliban before Zarb-e-Azab (p. 47). "Picture of Pakistan army was given negative coverage in selected press before operation Zarb-e-Azb and after the beginning of operation Zarb-e-Azb, both daily papers positively portrayed Pakistan army" (Ali & Wazir, 2016). Considerable difference was found in the framing of the Pakistan army in American Newspapers before and during Arab-e-Azab (ibid). In another study, the researchers analyzed tweets (16411) and retweets during August and Sep 2014 and proposed that social media users were mainly in favour of operation Zarb e Azab and believed that only the military can crush terrorism and the only way to combat terrorism is war (Lashari & Wil, 2016).

Peace journalism is an effort to initiate peace through media platforms. Galtung's (1997) peace and war indicators have been considered as two contrasting ways of covering of events during conflicts. Galtung defined media's role either as an instigator of war or initiator of peace. His proposed model of PJ provides a guideline to journalists to focus more on responsible journalism than a sensational side of converge. PJ is more of a conscious effort than a traditional way to cover the conflicts, so it could be helpful in peaceful resolution. Peace journalists must have strong knowledge of the conflict before reporting on it.

## Methodology

Quantitative content analysis to measure the peace/war indicator has been used in the coverage of four newspapers from English & Urdu languages. *N* is 1229 during one year, the unit of analysis is the hard news published on the front pages of the newspapers.

Peace talks from January 1, 2014, to June 15, 2014, and Military operation from June 16, 2014, to December 31, 2014. The reason for taking an equal period is to justify the period for two different phases of same conflict. To see how the press covered peace process and how it covered operation against TTP.

The following research questions have been suggested on the overall war and peace time period in the selected press. The purpose is to understand whether the press promoted peace or war through its presentation of the events and to analyse the difference of coverage given to the issue in different times and in different language newspapers.

**RQ1.** Which type of coverage; either peace or war is given by the selected press during each of two selected periods?

**RQ2.** Is there any difference of war and peace journalism among English and Urdu Newspapers during the selected time?

**RQ3.** Does the coverage of the selected press differ in the war and peace coverage of TTP talks and Operation Zarb e Azab?

The data of "*Dawn*" & "*Jang*" were collected manually from the library archive since *Dawn* and *Jang*'s online versions are not in the form of a complete page, which makes it difficult to analyze the size & placement of the story at the front page. Images of the whole page were taken and then were shifted to the computer for analysis. The data from *The Nation*<sup>1</sup> and *Express*<sup>2</sup> was collected from the online version of newspapers websites and

The pilot study of the content indicated that not all of the thirty-four indicators introduced by Johan Galtung's (1986) classification of war and peace journalism are existent in the coverage, so only twelve of war and twelve of peace indicators were selected from Galtung (1986) classification.

Hard news from the front pages of four newspapers were selected for analysis, considering they include the following words: Taliban, TTP Talks, government and Taliban, US Drone attacks, internally displaced people (IDPs) of North Waziristan, Army's role,

<sup>1</sup> <https://nation.com.pk/E-Paper>;

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.express.com.pk/epaper>.

operation Zarb-e-Azab, Political parties' stance over talks/Zarb-e-Azab, Bomb blasts, US stance about Taliban.

Table 1: Galtung's war and peace journalism explanation table

War/Escalation - Indicators	Peace/ De-escalation - Indicators
1. Discussing problems only 2. Discussing peace doing war 3. Controlled society 4. Making war secret/propaganda 5. Us and them 6. Only they are wrong (blaming) 7. Name of their wrongdoers 8. Their lies our truths 9. We are strong/they are a weak 10. Discussing only surface losses 11. Elite coverage 12. Discussing conflict only	1. Discussing their solution also 2. Current issues are more important 3. Discussing causes of the conflict 4. Peaceful society 5. Making war transparent (telling the truth) 6. Equality 7. Both are accountable 8. Names of both sides' wrongdoers 9. Both sides lies and both sides truths 10. Both are equal (both should be considered) 11. Elite and poor coverage (coverage of sufferers, IDP's, their problems) 12. Discussing conflict resolution

Table 2: Selected Newspaper presentation in terms of WJ & PJ

War/Escalation – indicators	Definitions and examples	Peace/ De-escalation – indicators	Definitions and examples
1. Discussing problems Only	1. “Taliban ko khatam kar dain dehshat gardi khatam ho jaiy gi” [Peace wouldn't be a reality till to the existence of Talibans] (January 21, 2014, <i>Express</i> ).	1. Discussing their solution also	1. “Expressing reservations over the proposed military operations, Maulana Fazl said the use of force was not a solution to the problem. The prevailing situation could be controlled only through a national security policy” (January 27, 2014, <i>Dawn</i> ).
2. Discussing peace doing war (when media uses the third party to say it)	2. “Opposition wants army action against Taliban” ( <i>Dawn</i> , January 21, 2014). “After killing thousands of members of various state organs, as well as others the violent Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has decided to extend its war by declaring the country's media as a party to the conflict” (January 23, 2014, <i>Dawn</i> ). (The period when peace talks were in progress).	2. Discussing causes of the conflict	2. “The committees representing the government and the Taliban agreed on Saturday to extend the ceasefire and take measures to speed up the dialogue process” (March 30, 2014, <i>Dawn</i> ).

War/Escalation – indicators	Definitions and examples	Peace/ De-escalation – indicators	Definitions and examples
3. Controlled society	3. “No room in law for talks with terrorists” (February 02, 2014, <i>Dawn</i> )	3. Peaceful society	3. “Amaan sirf Taliban say muzakraat say he ho sakta ha” [Peace and talks are interdependent entities] ( <i>Jang</i> , January 18, 2014)
4. Making war secret	4. “Government weighing options on Taliban issue” (February 24, 2014, <i>Dawn</i> )	4. Making conflict transparent	4. “TTP claims responsibility for the attack” (February 14, 2014, <i>The Nation</i> ).
5. Us and them	5. “Surrender or perish; no relaxation to militants this time” (June 16, 2018, <i>The Nation</i> ) “8 soldiers 20 militants die in clash” (November 2, 2014, <i>The Nation</i> )	5. Equality	5. “Member of government peace committee told the media that it would be difficult to continue peace dialogue as both government and Taliban are not agreeing on a ceasefire” (May 22, 2014, <i>The Nation</i> )
6. Only they are wrong (blaming/when airstrikes and drones were killing Taliban’s also)	6. Humaray dushman islam ki arth main chup kar karwaian kar rahay hain” [Our enemies are attacking us in the garb of forces in the name of Islam] (March 25, 2018, <i>Jang</i> )	6. Both are accountable	6. “Shumali Waziristan say 13000 kabailion ki nakal-makani. Koi imdad nahi mili na kahin rahnay dia ja raha ha” [13000 tribesmen are displaced from the N Waziristan. These IDPs are made homeless without giving shelters to live on] (January 26, 2014, <i>Jang</i> )
7. Name of their wrongdoer	7. “Fazlullah mobilizes bombers” (May 19, 2014, <i>The Nation</i> )	7. Names of both sides’ wrongdoers	7. “No ceasefire is possible unless intelligence agencies stopped killing and dumping bodies of their fighters” (Nation February 20, 2014).
8. Their lies our truths	8. “Talks injustice to terror victims; forces undertook Fata* airstrike in self-defense” (February 21, 2018, <i>Dawn</i> ).	8. Both sides lie’s and both sides truths	8. “TTP offers security to negotiators” (February 3, 2014. <i>The Nation</i> )
9. We are strong	9. “Terror to be eliminated: COAS” (June 12, 2014, <i>The Nation</i> )	9. Both are equal	9. “Taliban say muza-karat ki rah main rukawat, Drone ya khudkush haam-lay” [Drones attacks and suicide attacks are reason of peace talks] (January 10, 2014, <i>Express</i> )

\* Federally administrated areas

War/Escalation – indicators	Definitions and examples	Peace/ De-escalation – indicators	Definitions and examples
10. Discussing surface losses only	10. Taliban say muzakarat par itfaq karnay wali tamam jamatian pechay hat gain, hum ikalay rah gay (January 16, 2014, <i>Express</i> )	10. Discussing after-effects	10. Taliban say Muzakarat darust simt may aagay bhar rahay han, kom ko kushkhabri dain gay [Dialogues with the Taliban are becoming successful and the nation would see the era of peace soon] (March 3, 2014, <i>Jang</i> )
11. Elite coverage	11. “TTP talks can’t progress amid needless rhetoric; Nisar” (May 3, 2014, the <i>Nation</i> )	11. Elite and sufferers’ coverage	11. Operation Zarb e Azab ko do Haftay ho gaye hain aur panch lac IDPs hijrat kar cukay hain [Half a million IDPs are displaced in the two weeks from the start of Operation Zarb e Azab] (June 27, 2014 <i>Jang</i> )
12. Discussing conflict only	12. “Taliban split on ceasefire extension” April 3, 2014, (the <i>Nation</i> )	12. Discussing conflict resolution	12. Aaman kay leay Taliban say Muzakarat karnay hon gay [peace talks are necessary to bring peace] (January 12, 2014, <i>Express</i> )

For an in-depth analysis at the second level, each news story has been divided into four parts i.e.,

1. Lead (Lead and sub-leads)
2. Introduction
3. Important details in the body of the text
4. Less important details in the body of the text

The analysis of the story into four main parts will help to establish which part of the story to be used as peace- or war-oriented. Stories were analyzed keeping in view and twelve peace & twelve war indicators based on Galtung’s (1986) taxonomy of peace war indicators (Table .1). Each news story was analyzed for its tone at four given levels, the score of 01 was recorded if the first part (lead or sub-lead) falls into the peace or war category; hence, if all the four parts of the story were peace-oriented, the score of peace orientation was recorded. Similarly, if overall the story consists of more peace frames, it was recorded as peace-oriented, and if there were more war indicators, it was classified as war-oriented, and if both were equal, it was considered neutral (Maslog & Lee, 2005).

## Findings and Analysis

Table 3: Frequency of news stories in Four Newspapers

Newspapers	Frequency	Percent %
<i>Dawn</i>	251	20.4
<i>The Nation</i>	180	14.6
<i>Jang</i>	328	26.7
<i>Express</i>	470	38.2
Total	1229	99.9

During one year  $N$  was 1229, among them the highest news stories on the issue were produced by *Express* (470) followed by *Jang* (328), *Dawn* (251), and *The Nation* (180).

**RQ 1.** Which type of coverage; either peace or war is given by the selected press during each of two selected periods?

Table 4.a: Frequency distribution of WJ-PJ indicators among newspapers

Newspaper	Indicators			N%
	WJ%	PJ%	Neutral%	
<i>Dawn</i>	181(72.1)	58(23.1)	12(4.7)	251(100)
<i>The Nation</i>	119(66.1)	43(23.8)	18(10.0)	180(100)
<i>Jang</i>	151(46.0)	159(48.4)	18(5.4)	328(100)
<i>Express</i>	214(45.5)	229(48.7)	27(5.7)	470(100)
Total	665(54.1)	489(39.7)	75(6.1)	1229(100)

$\chi^2 = 33.227, p < 0.001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .164, p < 0.001$ . Among 1229 news stories 665 (54.1%) were framed as WJ, while 489 (39.8) were framed as PJ and 75 (6.1) were neutral.

Although WJ indicators were the strongest in the overall coverage of newspapers, the highest percentage of WJ indicators were seen in the coverage *Dawn*, with nearly 72% of the news being war-oriented, followed by *The Nation* (66.1%), *Jang* (46%), and *Express* (45.5%). In terms of the structure of the news, overall WJ were more dominant than PJ or neutral coverage.

Table 3.b: Distribution of War and Peace journalism among news structure

	Lead%	Intro%	Imp Details%	Less imp details%
WJ	591(48.1)	623(50.7)	592(48.2)	582(47.4)
PJ	496(40%)	498(40.5)	513(41.7)	512(41.7)
Neutral	142(11.6%)	108(8.8)	124(10.1)	135(11%)
Total	1229	100%	100%	100%

Lead  $\chi^2 = 1515.6, p < .0001$ ; Cramer's  $V = 0.785, p < .0001$ :

Intro  $\chi^2 = 1571.0, p < .0001$ ; Cramer's  $V = 0.799, p < .0001$ :

Important Details  $\chi^2 = 1566.7, p < .0001$ ; Cramer's  $V = 0.798, p < .0001$ :

Less important details  $\chi^2 = 1517.6, p < .0001$ ; Cramer's  $V = 0.786, p < .0001$ .

There was a significant difference in terms of WJ/PJ reporting of different portions of the news. WJ was more dominant in all the portion of news than PJ and neutral. The "Intro" section of the news stories was more war-oriented (50.7%) than the other three parts of the story.

Table 3.c: Frequency of WJ and PJ Indicators in newspapers

War/Escalation -	Frequen- cy%	Peace/ De-escalation -	Frequen- cy%
1. Discussing problems Only	332(9.7)	1. Discussing their solution also	151(7.1)
2. Discussing peace doing war	261(7.6)	2. Discussing what is happening/ why is it happening	178 (8.4)
3. Controlled society	177(5.1)	3. Peaceful society	308(14.6)
4. Making war secret/propagan- da	305(8.9)	4. Making war transparent (telling the truth)	416(19.8)
5. Us and them	270(7.9)	5. Equality	97(4.6)
6. Only they are wrong	384(11.2)	6. Both are accountable	94(4.4)
7. Name of their wrongdoers	794(25.8)	7. Names of both sides' wrongdoers	273(13)
8. Their lies our truths	221(6.4)	8. Both sides lies and both sides truths	150(7.1)
9. We are strong/they are week	209(6.1)	9. Both are equal (both should be considered)	120(5.7)
10. Discussing the only surface loss	103(3%)	10. Discussing after-effects (finan- cial, human losses)	107(5.1)
11. Elite coverage	98(2.9)	11. Elite and poor coverage (Cover- age of sufferers, IDP's, prob- lems)	103(4.9)
12. Discussing conflict only	171(5%)	12. Discussing conflict resolution	101(4.8)
Total	3413(100)		2098(100) Total 5511

The total count of WJ indicators was 3413. The most salient indicators were the names of their wrongdoers (25.8%), only they are wrong (11.2), and discussing problems only (9.7). The reason could be that the media usually create a divide between the two parties involved in the conflict by taking the side of one party and putting blame on the other side. The total number of PJ indicators was 2098, with most commonly used indicators being making war transparent (19.8), peaceful society (14.6), and discussing what is happening (8.4).

**RQ2.** Is there any difference between war and peace journalism indicators among English and Urdu Newspapers?

### ***Difference of war and peace journalism among newspapers***

$$\chi^2 = 80.308, p < 0.001; \text{Cramer's } V = 0.181, p < 0.001$$

Overall, there was a significant relationship between war and peace coverage and English and Urdu language newspapers. English language newspapers presented more war journalism stories than Urdu press. The frequency of WJ in English newspapers was 300/431(69.6) and in Urdu, newspapers was 365/798 (45.7). This finding supports the notion that English language newspapers have more war-oriented coverage than Urdu language newspapers.

**RQ3.** Does the coverage of the selected press differ in the framing of TTP talks and Operation Zarb e Azab?

### ***The difference in the coverage of peace talks and Operation Zarb e Azab***

Table 5: Difference in coverage patterns amongst two events

Indicators	Peace Talks%	Zarbe e Azab %	N%
War	410(61.6)	255(38.3)	665(100)
Peace	377(77.0)	112(22.9)	489(100)
Neutral	57(76.0)	18(24.0)	75(100)
Total	844(68.7)	385(31.3)	1229(100)

T-test, Peace talks (M= 1.58, SD =0.61), and Operation Zarb e Azab (M=1.38, MD=0.57) conditions;  $t(1229) = 5.319, p = .001$ . Overall, the coverage of peace talks was significantly higher than operation Zarbe e Azab, while WJ coverage was higher (61.6) than operation Zarbe e Azab (38.3). But also, peace talks got more peace-oriented coverage (77.0) than operation Zarbe e Azab (22.9), whereas the number of neutral news (75) during the whole year, peace talks (76.0) followed by military operation (24.0).

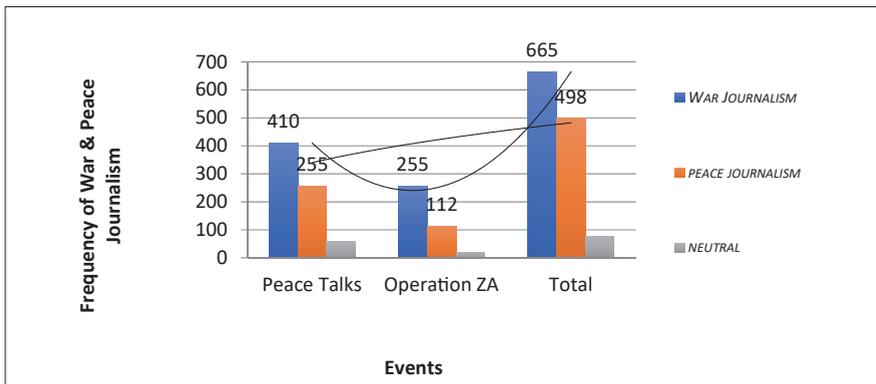


Figure 1: Difference of coverage in Peace Talks and Zarb e Azab

The coverage patterns differ in terms of two aspects: frequency distribution of War and PJ and distribution of news stories between two different events.

## Conclusion

This study has a unique aspect as it covers the two opposite periods (peace talks and military operation) of the same event (Taliban conflict). The findings regarding the first research question suggest that the overall coverage of all newspapers was war-dominated in both periods. The newspapers applied more war journalism indicators. The findings support the notion that media hesitate in reporting peace and remain war-oriented in conflicts. Lee and Maslog (2005) examined the press coverage of five countries in four different conflicts and found that overall war journalism frames were more dominant than peace journalism frames; Lee (2010) observed again that “more intense conflicts are associated with a higher use of war journalism frames” (p. 364). Another important finding is that the press gave huge coverage to Taliban talks, but when the operation started its coverage declined. The reason might be that the press overall was not supportive of the peace process and were criticizing the government’s initiative, so when the government changed its stance towards war the newspapers’ claim was fulfilled.

The English press was more war-oriented than the Urdu press. The results of the second research question support Lee’s (2010) suggestions that there is a significant difference between war and peace framing of the news stories in the English language & vernacular language news stories – English language news stories are more likely to be war-oriented than the local language stories. Rehman (2014) concluded that English newspapers present more war journalism stories than Urdu language newspapers in a military operation against Lal Masjid. The present study suggested that *Dawn*’s coverage was more tilted towards war than *The Nation*. The traditional print media, e.g., *Dawn* still holds a significant readership and is popular in Pakistan. Having a readership of 1.38 million, it has a vast impact on Pakistani people. Also, it is read by the elite people, politicians and policy-makers, the foundation had generally demonstrated more prominent strength and resistance to its feedback (Tarique, 2017). On the other hand, *The Nation* is the most cited Pakistani newspaper since its emergence in the national mediascape in 1986. With overall 400,000 circulations across the country, its base rely upon the national ideology of Pakistan, and the same is the case here, when during peace talks, its coverage remains less war oriented. *The Nation* also remained favourable to military operation in lines with the govt’s stance and gave war-oriented coverage during that period. The Urdu newspapers *Jang* and *Express* were tilted more towards the peace journalism narrative than war journalism, but the stories given by *Jang* were highly war-oriented and most of the time were given on the front page as banner lead. The reason possibly is that these both are national language newspapers and are read by common and rural people and have less influence on decision-making. All newspapers tagged different names to other parties like in the case of *Dawn*, most of the time when it reported about the TTP, its tag was the “outlawed Taliban”. The same is the case with other three newspapers: whenever they report about peace talks or operation Zarb e Azab, they used such tags for the Taliban. Peace talks with the TTP got more coverage than Operation Zarb e Azab and the press highlighted the news about violence which the Taliban were creating, but reports about ongoing operations by the military, drone attacks, and suffering of people affected by the military operation were overlooked by newspapers.

Considering the third research, the newspapers gave war-oriented coverage to both the events. These results correspond to a previous study by Shinar (2013) that newspapers would remain war-oriented whether they cover peace talks or an ongoing conflict. Subhani (2015) suggested that the Pakistani press played a negative role in peace talks with TTP by favouring war instead of peace. Pakistani newspapers' narrative was more supportive of the government's stance in the case of a military operation, while in the case of peace talks the attitude was opposite. So, the notion that media most of the time goes with the official stance does not fit here.

This study proposed that peace journalism has now become imperative for two main reasons: the escalation in conflicts and the emerging role of media. Scholars have argued that journalists should start practicing peace journalism (Galtung, 1996; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005), since PJ enhances the quality of news coverage as a third party in a conflict, the facilitator of communication, mediator, or the arbitrator between two rival sides.

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