

Peace or War Journalism: Coverage of Pakistani National Press on Balochistan issue during Musharraf Regime

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Abstract

Balochistan, geographically one of the largest province of Pakistan, with rich resources of petroleum, gold natural gas reserves and other minerals, has faced unrest from Baloch separatist movement since the inception of Pakistan. Present study analyses news patterns of two leading newspapers, Dawn and Jang, in peace and violence frames during in the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf from 1999 till 2008. It tries to explore how the print media framed the issue during the selected time period when the Chief Executive of the country enjoyed complete political and military powers. It employs quantitative research method, based on Johan Galtung's theory on Peace Journalism (PJ). The findings of the study show that Balochistan conflict is mostly framed in violence frames than peace frames.

Key Words: *Balochs, Balochistan, Peace Journalism.*

Introduction

In October 1999, General Pervez Musharraf ousted Nawaz Sharif and assumed the control of the government in a military coup in Pakistan. He declared himself as chief executive and controlled all administrative spheres of power in the country. He abrogated the constitution of the country, dismissing all constituent assemblies and established governor rule in all the four provinces including

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Balochistan. In a formal arrangement, former Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court Justice Amir-ul-Milk Mengal (Retd.) was appointed as the governor of Balochistan. A top level accountability body NAB (National Accountability Bureau) was instituted where most of guidance was taken from the military elites rather than political contemporaries. To inform the public at large, press gave vast coverage to the military took over as the public was mostly relying on the media in Pakistan.

The national press overall filled in their spaces dealing Balochs, the natives of the province as well as the province Balochistan. The portrayal was mostly concerned with the Balochistan's inexhaustible rich resources and the working of the military administration versus the earlier Balochistan governments' exercises in Balochistan to misuse these natural assets.

Present study focusses on the news about Balochistan as well as the news stories reported from other parts of the Pakistan about Balochistan from October, 1999 till June 2001, when Musharraf was the chief executive of the country. It aims to add to the repository of peace journalism theory through the portrayal of the situation where the people of a province in a country considered themselves aggrieved for several reasons and to observe the peaceful attempts made by the selected press, when Musharraf installed his own provincial government in the province Balochistan. Whether the development processes were taken on board, including natural resources, tales of corruption of politicians, inhumane chieftains towards their kin sans folks etc.?

Two leading dailies of Pakistan, Dawn and Jang, in the selected

period, are studied as the two are equally competitive newspapers in the viewpoint of Pakistani readers. Leaders and policy makers like to read Dawn newspaper. The common people at large obtain information about the situation in Balochistan through the reports and coverage of issues in Jang as they can better understand the national language daily regarding such a matter of extreme national interests.

Literature Review

Peace war journalism

Peace is so valuable in the media contents that the researchers also introduced various terms instead of calling the famous peace journalism theory simply such as, "Conciliatory Media" and few other authors called it as "placatory media (El-Nawaway & Powers, 2012). On the other hand the systematic underreport and over report certain types of events are a persisting problem in reporting a conflict (Kasim, 2011).

To definition and understanding of peace journalism, Shinar (2003) argues that the "media's professional standards, which thrive on drama, sensationalism and emotions, are more compatible with war than with peace". To his notion, "war provides visuals and images of action which is associated with heroism and conflict, focuses on the emotional rather than on the rational, and satisfies news-value demands: the present, the unusual, the dramatic, simplicity, action, personalization, and results" (ibid).

Chow-White and McMahon (2011) used "Peace Journalism theory with Critical Race Theory" with reference to the extensive

and lengthy cold conflicts, particularly in the depiction of race and racism in the media. The researchers were also of the opinion that “peace journalism theory must be operationalized to incorporate the insight of both agenda-setting and framing theory” and further the approach will “integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods” (ibid, p. 991). The researchers El-Nawaway & Powers (2012) have exacerbated the need of finding out the embedded structural factors in the news media such as, national, global, religious and racial traits through peace journalism theory and said that they should be addressed in the news media in reconciliation process. They were also of the opinion that news portrayal of such factors would play vital role in resolving conflicts (ibid). Shaw (2012) used Peace Journalism theory and Critical Discourse Analysis planning at the crossroads of “intercultural communication”, “peace journalism” and “human right journalism” and “how they are utilized to counteract clashes and human rights violations, and how the stereotypical images and clichés representing Muslims after 7/7, 2005 London attacks highlighted to the extent of human rights violations”.

In journalism practices during a conflict, Wolfsfeld (1997) argues that “a peace process is complicated whereas journalists demand simplicity’, and a ‘peace process takes time to unfold and develop whereas journalists demand immediate results’ and most of the time a ‘peace process is marked by dull, tedious negotiations whereas journalists require drama’.”

Howard (2002) agreed that “if media would make an effort to provide equal recognition to all social and political groups,

particularly the ones that have often been underrepresented and marginalized, they can contribute to the peaceful integration of these groups into the overall structure of the civil society". He further argued that "with this recognition emerges a journalism that is sensitized to conflict resolution techniques, and seeks to maximize understanding of the underlying causes and possible solutions" (p. 9).

In applying peace journalism approaches to conflict, the peace journalist sets techniques to the body of news story where the causes and possible solutions to the conflict become straightforward and self-evident. According to Galtung, other peace journalism techniques involve writing opinions i.e. columns, editorials and the selection of letters to editors to urge reconciliation, compromises and focusing on shared conviction rather than on retribution, striking back, and contrasts.

World is largely mediated where the public and private sector media created their own realities according to their own whims where tensions are dichotomize, dramatize and demonize (Tehrani, 2002). They promote a distinctive wall clearly distinctive 'them' and 'us'. Hence pluralism of contents at all levels is needed.

Theoretical framework

Galtung's (1986) classification of peace journalism and war journalism was actually expanded by McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) and proposed 17 peace journalism-based practices for news coverage of war. In the book, Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) defined

peace journalism as when “editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and about how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (p. 5). To them, war reporting is often based on sensationalism because it is done to increase circulations and to gain ratings. This approach uses military triumph list language. Its focus is on action so it is action orientated and its narrative is superficial with little context, background or historical perspective. Peace journalism focus is on the cultural and structural causes of violence, and does not follow simple dichotomy (ibid).

3.1-Conceptualization of PJ theory

Table 1: *War Journalism vs. Peace journalism (Galtung, 1998)*

| War and/or Violence Journalism | Peace and/or Conflict Journalism |
|--|--|
| <p>1: War and/or violence oriented We-them journalism; Propaganda; they are seen as the problem; Dehumanization of others</p> <p><u>Reactive</u>: only violence is worth reporting; only consider the visible effects of violence (Dead, wounded and material damage)</p> | <p>1: Peace and/or conflict oriented All parties are interviewed; capacity for empathy and understanding; conflict/war seen as the problem. Focus on creative conflict solutions; humanization of all sides</p> <p><u>Proactive</u>: Prevention of violence /war; consider the invisible effects of violence (structural and cultural damage)</p> |
| <p>2: Propaganda oriented Exposes the untruths of the others; Supports our cover-up attempts/lies</p> | <p>2: Truth oriented Exposes untruths of all sides; Discloses all cover-up attempts.</p> |
| <p>3: Elite oriented Focuses on our suffering; names their wrong doers; stresses that only elites can make peace</p> | <p>3: People oriented Focuses on all suffering; suffering of women, old people, children, gives the voiceless a</p> |

| | |
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| | voice; names all wrong doers; stresses peace tendencies in the population. |
| 4: Victory oriented Treaties & institutions are important; a controlled society. After the war is over, turns to the next source of conflict; goes back when the old one breaks again | 4: Solution oriented Structure & culture are important; a peaceful society. Reports about the post war phase; conflict solution, reconstruction, reconciliation. |

The table suggests the transformation of the violence oriented journalism into a peace oriented journalism through media practices (Kempf 2003, p. 7).

Methodology

The study employed quantitative content analysis of the news taken from October, 1999 to June 20, 2001. The period is of significance as he was the chief executive of Pakistan as well as the military chief. For this purpose, all news was taken which had any reference to Balochistan. Two leading national dailies, Dawn and Jang have been taken. The genre of the news content included news stories, opinions, editorial, editorial notes and letters to the editor. Each day, a complete newspaper was studied i.e. front/back, inner/business/sports and supplement pages.

Direction of the news content and operationalization

The conceptualization and coding scheme keeping in view the PJ theory assumptions are as follows:

Operational definitions of the main four peace and war frames

The direction of the news content is divided into following three categories i.e.

Violence

- *Violence oriented*

Here, the following seven main frames have been used for coding violence journalism news content.

- When emphasizes the earlier government's political leaders in the custody of NAB/indicted by the courts.
- When emphasizes the earlier administration's government officers "involvement" in corruption cases not including their point of view about the cases.
- Reports where the establishment just proclaimed to make progress for the people and did nothing on ground and simply boasting.
- Coverage of news where previous regimes governments & the actions done by them are acknowledged as the reason of all sins.
- When the news of bomb blasts or terrorists' activities in the area without stressing and without follow up.
- When stressing the nationalist Baloch leaders without giving their side of the story about the main issue.
- When highlighting the proposed development projects without giving further follow ups regarding that very official plan that whether the plan has been implemented on ground or constraint to the plaque only; war journalism oriented as it is the sign of propaganda from the government side.

2. Peace oriented

Peace oriented news are, when the news stories contain the voices

of all sides, and here when they give representation to both sides and so on.

3. *Neutral*

All news stories considered to be neutral if they do not fall in any of the above violence/peace oriented content categories.

Table 2: *Violence and peace discourses through news contents published in the two dailies*

| Violence and Peace Discourses | News stories |
|--|--|
| Violence Oriented Journalism Discourses | |
| Violence oriented | “Accountability process was initiated in Balochistan with the handing over of a former food minister and a contractor to the NAB”, <i>Dawn</i> , Apr 1, 2000. |
| Propaganda oriented | “The Governor (Balochistan) said his government will provide ‘more’ incentives to the industrialists”, <i>Dawn</i> , May 30, 2000. |
| Elite oriented | “Provincial revenue up by 14 percent... provincial finance secretary attributed to this achievement to prudent financial management and austerity measures which the provincial government relentlessly applied under the difficult situation”, <i>Dawn</i> ; June9, 2000. |
| Victory oriented | “The chief executive said that in my opinion the tax survey is being carried out in absolutely right way and it will definitely be |

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| | <p>conducted...He did not care about strikes as Pakistan more dear to him.... He said the people had now realize the importance and significance of the government's steps.... He said the police system is also being improved which will lead to elimination of dishonesty and corruption from this department.....He said the army had important role in these steps being taken by the government and we are proud of it. Even if we experience some discomforts during these efforts there is no need to worry...He said he was proud of the army contingents posted in Balochistan as they were looking after 43 percent of Pakistan. He said that in Nushki water had been provided to the people to through <u>lying</u> of 62km of pipeline which has been done for the first time in past 53 years", <i>Dawn</i>, July 21, 2000.</p> |
| Peace Oriented Journalism Discourses | |
| <p>Conflict orient</p> | <p>"The Balochistan government has constituted the peace committee to maintain the law and order in the province, added by provincial minister for finance, planning and development, would work with public to create peace and brotherhood in the region", <i>Dawn</i>, March1, 2001.</p> <p>"Punjab increases flour quota for NWFP and</p> |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| | Balochistan. ... food department Punjab has increased flour quota to overcome the deficiency of flour in NWFP and Balochistan”, <i>Jang</i> , Dec18, 1999. |
| Truth oriented | “Balochistan is rich in gas copper”, <i>Dawn</i> , May 11, 2000, p 4. |
| People oriented | “Participants of a national seminar were unanimous in their arguments that all the past governments committed injustices with Balochistan and did nothing for this backward province”, <i>Dawn</i> , May 29, 2000. |
| Solution oriented | “Balochistan peace committee formed. The Balochistan government has constituted the peace committee to maintain the law and order in the province, added by provincial minister for finance, planning and development, would work with public to create peace and brotherhood in the region”, <i>Dawn</i> , March 1, 2001. |

Coding scheme

This study replaced the word war with violence in the lines presented by Galtung (1998). The reason behind is that there is actually a persistent violent situation in the province of Balochistan and Galtung himself offered the replacement of war as violence for such types of media contents and the portrayal of such situations.

Four major discourses of violence and four discourses of peace are given in the peace journalism model. The story was coded keeping in view the number of discourses each story contains. If a story contains more peace discourses than violence it was considered as peace oriented and if the violence discourses exceeded the peace discourses it was considered as violence oriented. The neutral had two dimensions; if the story had no discourses of peace journalism at all it was considered as neutral, as well as if the news story had equal number of violence/peace discourses it was also considered as neutral.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The section deals with following research questions and hypotheses;

Q1: Did the genres of news stories were practice more peace oriented journalism than violence oriented journalism in the selected Pakistani national press?

Q2: Did the news providing sources practice more peace or violence oriented journalism in selected Pakistani national press?

H1: Balochistan conflict was given more violence oriented coverage than peace oriented coverage during the selected time regime and press.

Results and Finding

Following are the findings

Table 3: Relationship among genres and violence/peace discourse

| P-W-Orientation | GENRES | | | | | | | | Total % |
|-----------------|--------|------|-----|-----|----|----|----------|---|---------|
| | News | C/N* | C/J | L/E | EN | Ed | D/Q/C/Ur | I | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

Tarique, Lubna **Peace/War Journalism: Coverage of Pakistani Press**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|------------------|----------------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|---|----------------------------|
| | | | | | | | | du | | |
| VJ 1 | Ja ng | 121 | 1 | | | 3 | | | | 125 |
| | D a w n | 133 | 0 | | | 0 | | | | 133 |
| | Total | 254 | 1 | | | 3 | | | | 258 |
| V J2 | Ja ng | 53 | | | 1 | 3 | | 1 | | 58 |
| | D a w n | 56 | | | 1 | 0 | | 1 | | 58 |
| | Total | 109 | | | 2 | 3 | | 2 | | 116 |
| V J3 | Ja ng | 39 | | | | 1 | | | | 40 |
| | D a w n | 20 | | | | 0 | | | | 20 |
| | Total | 59 | | | | 1 | | | | 60 |
| V J4 | Ja ng | 8 | | | 1 | | 0 | | | 9 |
| | D a w n | 96 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 98 |
| | Total | 104 | | | 2 | | 1 | | | 107 |
| | | 526/5 1.7 | 1/1 | 0 | 4/4 | 7/7 | 1/. 1 | 2/2 | 0 | (541) 53.1 |
| PJ 1 | Ja ng | 53 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | | | 58 |
| | D a w n | 37 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 40 |
| | Total | 90 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | | 98 |
| PJ 2 | Ja ng | 28 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | | 0 | | 31 |
| | D a w n | 47 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | | 1 | | 53 |
| | Total | 75 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | | 1 | | 84 |
| PJ | Ja | 44 | | 1 | 0 | 3 | | 0 | 1 | 49 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------|------|------|------------|------|----------|----------|--------------|
| 3 | ng | | | | | | | | | |
| | D a w n | 105 | | 0 | 2 | 0 | | 1 | 0 | 108 |
| | Total | 149 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 157 |
| PJ 4 | Ja ng | 17 | | | 0 | 1 | | 0 | | 18 |
| | D a w n | 26 | | | 2 | 0 | | 1 | | 29 |
| | Total | 43 | | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | 47 |
| | | 357/3 5.1 | 2/.2 | 3/.3 | 8/.8 | 11/1 .1 | 1/.1 | 3/. 3 | 1/ .1 | (386)/38 |
| N e u t r a l | Ja ng | 68 | | | 0 | 2 | 1 | | | 71 |
| | D a w n | 19 | | | 1 | 0 | 0 | | | 20 |
| | Total | 87 | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 91/9 |

***C/N:** Column/Non-Journalist; **C/J:** Column/Journalist; **L/E:** Letters/Editors; **EN:** Editorial Notes; **Ed:** Editorial **D/Q/C Urdu:** Dateline **Qta** Color Pages; **Urdu I:** Interviews

Among all genres hard news stories remained violent throughout the selected period. Column by non-journalist remained peaceful whereas column by journalists were also peaceful. Letter to editor was another entity among all genres which were given peaceful portrayal. In editorial notes a mixed sort of violence and peace orientation can be observed but the overall stance was violence oriented. Editorial, another important genre was given equal representation in violence and peace oriented content. Almost equal representation of peace and violence can be seen in date line but overall in the stance was peace oriented. Interviews were remained peaceful.

Q2: Which of the news providing sources practiced either of each peace or violence oriented Journalism in selected Pakistani national press?

Table 4: Relationships between news sources and violence/peace oriented discourses.

| | | News Sources | | | | | | Total |
|--|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | | w/o source | Monitoring Desk_Press Release | News Agencies | Reporter | Special Corres/Special Report | By line | |
| | VJ1 | 0 | 4 | 34 | 180 | 13 | 38 | 269 |
| | VJ2 | 1 | 5 | 17 | 70 | 14 | 33 | 130 |
| | VJ3 | 0 | 6 | 16 | 32 | 2 | 14 | 60 |
| | VJ4 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 77 | 1 | 7 | 101 |
| | TOTAL | 1/(0.02) | 24/(2.3) | 83/(8) | 359/(35) | 30/(3) | 92/(9) | 560/(55) |
| | PJ1 | 0 | 5 | 23 | 51 | 3 | 9 | 91 |
| | PJ2 | 0 | 5 | 15 | 53 | 2 | 6 | 81 |
| | PJ3 | 0 | 9 | 25 | 108 | 3 | 11 | 156 |
| | PJ4 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 28 | 1 | 7 | 47 |
| | TOTAL | 0/(0) | 25/(2.4) | 68/(6.6) | 240/(23.6) | 9/(0.8) | 33/(3.24) | 375/(36.8) |
| | Neutral | 0/(0) | 9/(.9) | 30/(2.9) | 39/(3.8) | 1/(0.09) | 4/(0.03) | 83/(8.2) |
| | Total/% | 1/(0.09) | 49/(4.5) | 181/(16.7) | 638/(63.3) | 40/(3.7) | 129/(11) | 1018/(100) |

Source news stories remained violence oriented, press releases came directly to the monitoring desk and were almost equal in numbers in both violence and peace related content, news agency filed stories a bit more violence oriented than peace related content. Reporters of the selected press filed highly violence oriented stories. Special correspondent also gave violence oriented stories. By-line stories were also highly violence oriented and almost triple the number than the same source under peace oriented content.

H1. Balochistan conflict was given more violence oriented coverage then peace oriented coverage during the selected time regime and press

| Violence | | Peace % | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | % | | |
| VJ1 | 104 | PJ1 | 53 |
| VJ2 | 59 | PJ2 | 163 |
| VJ3 | 113 | PJ3 | 89 |
| VJ4 | 247 | PJ4 | 102 |
| Total | 523/51.38% | Total | 407/39% |

During the selected period of time Balochistan conflict was given more violence oriented coverage than peace oriented. In the respective violence and peace frames a variant picture is seen, maximum coverage in violence frames was given to VJ4 which is victory oriented frame. Minimum representation was given to VJ2 which is propaganda oriented frame. In all peace frames PJ2 was given more coverage among all the four frames. Least coverage was given to peace oriented frames.

Conclusion

This article develops an analysis on the Balochistan issue during Gen Pervez Musharraf regime as Chief Executive of Pakistan selecting the purposive sample of 1018 news stories and opinion pieces from two leading newspapers.

Among genres, hard news stories were more violence oriented than peace oriented frames. The editorial notes were more peaceful in almost double in proportion of the discourse of same genre. No opinion peace was observed written by the journalist in main stream national press despite the fact that incidences related to Balochistan insurgences were routine of the day and violence oriented. If such opinions would have been given space the military operation could be avoided. Editorial notes related to the issue were more in numbers than all other genres except hard news. Newspapers didn't find this conflict as an important one, and only one peace oriented editorial was written on the matter. Although Jang published more peace oriented editorial notes during the selected time but overall newspapers contribution towards peace was like drop in oceans.

In relationship of the news sources in peace violence discourses, the stories filed by the reporter and byline are more violence oriented. Both peace and violence discourses were same. But among violence discourses, whatsoever the numbers they are, the major proportion of violence oriented discourses are given by the reporters and byline stories.

Among all violence oriented frames victory orientation was

given maximum coverage. The reason might be that the institutions and law enforcement agencies were given more importance. The newspapers somehow were sided with the government stance, and promoted an image of a controlled society less focusing on solution, reconstruction and reconciliation efforts. Elite and propaganda oriented contents were given almost equal coverage, which shows that newspapers considered that law enforcement agencies are the sole proprietors of peace. In all peace frames, truth oriented content was given more coverage though these were lesser than to the victory oriented content of violence frames.

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