
Pakistani Media as an Agent of Conflict or Conflict Resolution: A Case of Lal Masjid in Urdu and English Dailies

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This study through content analysis explores the way two popular Urdu and English dailies in Pakistan framed the conflict of 'Lal Masjid' in their columns and editorials. The researcher applies Galtung's (Galtung, 2002) characteristics of peace and conflict journalism to see whether there was any difference in the coverage in the two languages' dailies. The findings show that the dailies framed the issue more in the war journalism framework than in the peace journalism framework. There was a significant difference in the Urdu and English dailies coverage of the event. English dailies cultivated prejudices and insisted on 'binary oppositions' and framed the religious element in the conflict as 'evil other' and the government as 'elite us', whereas, Urdu dailies gave very low coverage to the issue in their editorials and columns.

Introduction

Media is considered to have a tremendous responsibility in today's society as it is supposed to have strong bearing on development, democracy and dialogue. Furthermore, as our today's world is marked with high number of conflicts, the role of the media to report conflicts has become more crucial and

demands high ethical and professional standards. It is argued that media can play a role in conflict situations either as a perpetrator of a conflict or as an agent for peace. Media play this role on how it frames the issue and how it plays its agenda –setting role. Unfortunately, there are number of reports that state that media have functioned in an inciting and inflammatory manner adding more fuel to the conflict and war (Howard, 2009). The biases and prejudices of journalists while interpreting a conflict event is established by many researchers (Entman, 1993). It is because of this reason that the debate is now more on ‘what should be’ rather than on ‘what is’. The stress is on the social responsible role of the media and the proactive role it can play in resolving conflicts (Aslam, 2010). However, despite the critical, growing importance of the media to conflict resolution and reconciliation, scholars and practitioners have not yet adequately addressed the media’s role in these areas (Aslam, 2011; Giloba, 2009; Lee & Maslog, 2005; Shinar, 2009b; Terzis, 2008; Wolfsfeld, 2004).

This study explores the way editorials and columns of the two Urdu and two English dailies of Pakistan framed the conflict known as ‘Operation Silence’ popularly known as ‘Lal Masjid operation’. The researcher applies Galtung’s table, setting out the characteristics of peace and conflict journalism.

In July 2007, Pakistan witnessed a conflict where the government of Pakistan, led by General Musharaf, came in direct conflict with the administration of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) and the adjacent Jamia Hafsa Maderssah (a religious school of women), in Islamabad, which were ‘supposedly’ operated by Islamic militants led by two brothers who supported the imposition of Sharia (Islamic religious law) and also challenged the authorities in Islamabad for perpetuating immorality in city. The conflict between the two continued for 18 months prior to military operation in July 2007. The madrassah was finally besieged from July 3 to July 11, while negotiations were being attempted; Pakistan Army’s special service group attacked the building and

caused more than 150 deaths including women and children. This entire episode known as '*Operation Silence*' was under constant watch of the media. It's a different affair when two ethnic or religious parties are involved in a conflict and state is taking sides. In the present case the state itself was one party an actor which had to play a role in diffusing a tension.

This paper examines whether editorials and columns analyzed the process that lead to the conflict of Lal masjid, which includes its causes, outcomes and impact on human life. It attempts to explore whether the newspapers', in the '*Operation Silence*' functioned as facilitators of informed debates between the two and encouraged the resolution of disputes by democratic means? Did they view the conflicts in terms of defeat or victory for either side? Was there any difference in the English and Urdu dailies? Did they act as vehicle for the religious and political cohesion? Or it accelerated the conflict by dichotomizing the government as 'good' and the Lal masjid's administrators as 'bad'?

Literature Review

Media plays a pivotal role in not just providing information to people about global issues but also in forming their opinion about the issues. It just not mirrors events but also selects information and plays a role of a gatekeeper. Through selection of certain words, repetition and use of certain cultural symbols, it heavily leaves an impression on people's perception (Entman1993). In this context some researchers argue that in conflicts, media plays a significant role in igniting tensions in people and also impacts the way governments responds to crisis. Journalists, scholars, media professionals and audience have expressed concerns that the present day media has a basic issue in its coverage on war and conflicts. Today journalism is oriented towards violence, propaganda, elite interests and is victory oriented(Maslog, 2005). Journalists highlight the conflicts, for the simple reason that it sells. Conflicts are being sold and the victims manipulated to bring in profits (Aslam, 2010). The ethnic and other conflicts are fanned

with the process of 'othering'. Media through this process propagates that 'others' as dangerous and threat to the society and the only way of escaping this threat is to eliminate them completely (Terzis, 2008). Prejudices are cultivated by insisting on 'binary oppositions' reporting the 'other' as 'evil' and 'us' as 'good', and 'other' as 'irrational' and 'us' as 'rational'. These binary oppositions are mainstreamed in the media through reporting and hence become an integral part of all forms of discourses made for the 'other'. Furthermore, journalists often start depending on government sources and hence become the perpetrators of conflict and rapprochement, toeing government line (Ozguness & Terzis, 2000). Media really does not make its own agenda but simply starts toeing the official line by relying on official sources (Birand, 2004). What is required of the journalists is that instead of relying on official sources, they need to be more critical of the official sources and their opinions about the 'others', or more importantly they should act proactively and report the 'other' in peace framework (Gilboa, 2000; Hanitzsch, 2004).

Findings of other scholars identify how the media is by default inclined towards mode that heightens tension, conflict and violence (Wolfsfeld, 2004). Maslog and Lee (2005) while examining four main Asian regional conflicts involving India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Philippines, using the Gultang's classification of war and peace journalism concludes that Indian and Pakistani covering Kashmir issue had strongest war journalism frames (Lee & Maslog, 2005). The coverage in the case of India-Pakistan over the Kashmir issue in the American press is also in the war journalism frames (Siraj, 2008). So is the case in the Irish media where the conflict frames are more dominant than the conciliation frames (Fawcett, 2002). Media prefers to use war frames even when they are covering peace negotiations (Shinar, 2004). The intense media competition has led journalists to report provocatively and create sensational headlines. McGoldrick and Lynch (2006) findings in the case of Indonesian

press show that due to no broadcasting bill, weak press laws and lack of training of journalists has led to the publishing of such stories which have inflammatory effect in some of Indonesia's conflict stricken provinces (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2006).

Fahmy & Neumann in 2012 state, that in the Gaza war 2008-2009 leading western newswires photo selections in terms of war versus peace journalism, also had an impact in shaping public opinion and perception of news events. In the relationship between proximity to a conflict and the tendency to use peace journalism rather than war journalism modes of reporting, it was found out that local newspaper use more peace journalism frames and present a less pessimistic and negative view compare to distant newspaper (Lacasse & Forster, 2012).

Furthermore, media is also accused of either escalating violent conflicts in societies or is blamed for indifference by remaining completely silent about the conflicts. What is required is not just an assessment of the role of media during the conflict but also at the possibility of reconstructing the media in such a way that it contributes to conflict resolution. Very little research has been done to see the reporting in peaceful transition after the conflicts. Findings show that reporting cannot adequately deal with many of the major issues involved in conflict transformation (Rolston, 2007). So if we assume that media have the power to influence the policy responses to conflict, media are very selective and disproportionate in covering conflicts (Hawkins, 2011).

However, there are studies which reflect that media have not been completely working in the war frames. In the study by Shinar (2009a) on Lebanon War press coverage in Canada and Israel findings demonstrate that though newspapers tendency is towards 'war journalism', but newspapers did not completely disregard peace journalism. The study also concludes that there are opportunities to advance peace journalism and professional practices (Shinar, 2009b). In content analysis of news items on

youth conflict, Fong (2009) argues that in the Chinese newspapers in Malaysia, though the dominant frame used in the coverage was of war journalism, the dominant frame used in the coverage of the subsequent apology was shared equally by war journalism and neutral frame. At the same time, it is also argued that there are certain discursive difficulties faced by the journalists while covering news on conflicts even though they are strong advocates of peace journalism. There are certain rhetorical and narrative structures that shape and constrain the way in which newspapers reports are filed (Fawcett, 2002).

Theoretical framework

The study works within the framework given by Galtung (1986, 1998) who viewed peace journalism and war journalism as two competing frames in the coverage of a conflict. He classified the peace journalism in four broad categories which are: peace/conflict, truth, people, and solutions. And he classified war journalism, as the one which is oriented towards war/violence, propaganda, elites, and victory. He insists that the journalists should first understand the conflict's historical and cultural roots, and then give voice to all parties (not only two opposing sides), create empathy and understanding (Galtung, 2002). Peace journalism is to avoid playing up of conflict by grouping the parties as two opposing sides ('them vs. us')

In conflict reporting, what is required is to consider the context and identify a range of stakeholders beyond the apparent engaged in the confrontation. To practice peace journalism is to understand the distinction between the stated demands and the underlying objectives behind those demands; it is working for creative and non-violent solutions and ways to go beyond the conflict. The principle should be to interpret conflict in a cooperative (win-win) way, not in a competitive (win-lose) way (Kempf, 2007). Journalists should employ a cooperative and collaborative approach to conflict. When a conflict is presented as two parties' dispute for the same goal like territory, control or

victory, there is very little room to move forward. However, if the conflict is understood in more complex manner constructive deals are possible where parties can yield to one another with more flexibility (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2006). This requires consistent, careful and conscientious efforts and eventually it will create a situation where causes and solutions of problems will become more transparent.

Another way to promote peace journalism is to take a preventive advocacy stance—for example, editorials and columns urging reconciliation and focusing on common ground rather than on vengeance, retaliation, and differences—and emphasizing the invisible effects of violence (e.g., emotional trauma and damage to social structure).

Peace journalism raises awareness of conflict beyond the direct physical violence, typical of war journalism coverage. It tries to understand the underlying structural and cultural violence. The relevance of peace journalism lies in its contribution to the effective presentation of pressing global issues. Through its democratic orientation, peace journalism is expected to enhance public awareness and encourage a change in attitudes and behaviors related to the understanding of global, regional and local governance in all corners of the world.

Experience leads us to think that the adoption of peace journalism can help delineate the potential global impact of conflicts; call public attention and opinion to such threats; indicate and hopefully satisfy demands for more balanced coverage; and stimulate alternative interpretations and critical reflection (Shinar, 2009a). It is considered to be in a position to contribute in making media discourse on conflicts more transparent and balanced. Peace journalism teachings will prevent journalists from falling into traditional propaganda tropes in which reporters often fall into (Kempf, 2007). Tehranian considers it to be a system of global media ethics (Tehranian, 2002). It has also been suggested

that Galtung's theory on peace journalism can be a useful platform for teaching conflict and war reporting (Ottosen, 2010).

Though Peace journalism is considered to be a special form of journalism, to play its role in peaceful settlements of conflicts, Hanitzsch argues that peace journalism is a very naive approach to conflict resolution for it assumes that media has a very powerful causal and linear effect. He propounds that task of journalism is to provide social co-orientation but it is not its task to actively engage in peaceful settlements, it is the task of politics or the military. So he argues that media can play a role in peaceful settlements but its potential influence is limited (Hanitzsch, 2007).

However, Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2011) suggest that the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can serve as supplement to peace journalism model. The combination of CDA with Peace Journalism will help in contextualizing the study in the historical framework and will open the analysis to text which includes not only written form but also visual images. The strict Galtung's model can be further elaborated by using Fairclough (Fairclough, 1992) (Fairclough, 2013) and Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 1995) approaches to CDA. Furthermore, Galtung's model built on a simple dichotomy of 'us' and 'them', assists in identifying the biases in the text for the parties involved in the conflict (Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2011; Ottosen, 2010).

Research questions

- RQ1.** Did the newspapers editorials and columns frame the Lal Masjid conflict more in the Peace journalism frames or were they more tilted towards War journalism frames?

- RQ2.** Was there a difference between the English and the Urdu dailies in their stance on the '*Operation silence*' against Lal Masjid?

Methodology

This study through content analysis and critical discourse analysis explores the way the two Urdu and two English dailies of Pakistan framed the conflict known as 'Operation Silence' in their editorials and columns. The researcher applies Galtung's table setting out the characteristics of peace and conflict journalism. This study considers all the editorials and columns of the *Dawn*, *News Jang* and *Nawe Waqt* through a time period from July 1st to 31st, 2007.

Rationale for comparing Urdu and English dailies

Urdu and English languages are the two official and most influential languages in Pakistan. Both are not indigenous to the country and have political and emotive appeals. However, in the current socio-economic scenario in Pakistan, English is considered to be the language of the elite. English speakers are just not at the helm of affairs in Pakistan but also in the policy making cadre. It is generally understood that the socio-economic progress depends on learning of English language. Many of the English speakers are considered to be westernized and inclined towards liberalism or socialism; and Urdu speakers are considered to be more religiously inclined and socio-politically conservative (Abbas, 2007; Ahmed, 2012; Shoeb, 2008).

Due to language divisions in Pakistan, it is said that media is also divided into two ideological lines (Shoeb, 2008). Before independence Urdu language was considered to be the language of the Muslims (R.Upadhyay, 2003) and the legacy still continues especially in Urdu press which is considered to be more interested in the issues of Muslim world as well as cultural and religious identity of Muslims. Urdu press is considered to be right of center or conservative (Ahmed, 2012; Shoeb, 2008; Syed, 2008). This could be because there has been a continuous policy of the government to use Urdu language as a tool for national identity to unify the country. However, English papers are considered to be

left of center, and liberal in their opinions and are widely read by the policy makers and more educated in the society.

Rationale for selecting editorials and columns

It is argued that editorials and columns can urge reconciliation and focus on common ground rather than on vengeance, retaliation, and differences—and emphasize the invisible effects of violence (e.g., emotional trauma and damage to social structure). Editorials and columns can avoid the playing up of conflict as an arena where participants are grouped starkly into two opposing sides (“them vs. us”). They can present the more fundamental interests or real needs of those parties in conflict rather than just reiterating the positions or demands as expressed by parties in a conflict. They can present the fundamental needs of the parties in conflict, which often go unstated in the news, and accurately portray the factors contributing to the conflict. However, Ottosen, argues that enemy images are projected more in editorials and columns compare to news reports (Ottosen, 1995).

Editorials and columns are studied in two phases, resolution and reconciliation. They are studied in the context of the distinctions made by Galtung as negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace refers to absence of violence and positive peace refers to building of new relations and steps to ensure no future conflicts (Gilboa, 2009). First phase deals with before the *Operation Silence*, which includes how negotiations were viewed by the newspapers. This period is from July, 1-11. Second phase is after the *Operation Silence* July, 12-31 which includes the operation, the after thoughts of the ‘*Operation Silence*’ what measures are suggested to prevent such conflicts in future.

After preliminary examination of data, this study modified Galtung’s coding categories (1998) into five coding categories before the ‘*Operation Silence*’ as shown in Table 1 and three coding categories after ‘*Operation Silence*’ as shown in Table 2. In the light of the coding categories, the researcher trained two coders to

place the editorials and columns either in the peace or in the war journalism category. An inter-rater reliability analysis using the Kappa statistic was performed to determine consistency among raters. The inter-rater reliability for the raters was found to be Kappa= 0.766 with $p < 0.001$, which was statically significant.

Table 1
Before the '*Operation Silence*' categories for War and Peace Journalism

	Categories	Coding categories for frames
War journalism	Elite oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on government leaders and elites as actors and sources of information • Insisted on attack and get it over • Ignored the presence of female students • Insisted on establishing the writ of the government
Peace journalism	People oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on the students of Lal masjid as actors and sources of information • Insisted on negotiations • Highlighted the presence of female students • Insisted on the responsibility of the government • Talked about loss of lives
War journalism	Difference-oriented	Statements on areas of differences between the administrators of Lal masjid and the government, that lead to worsening of conflict
Peace journalism	Reports the areas of agreement	Reports on areas of commonalities that might lead to a solution to the conflict
War journalism	Focuses on here and now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context of the conflict is ignored including the consequences of the conflict. It only reports of what is happening and who are the parties involved. • Lal Masjid administration blamed for failure in negotiation and government should take an action against them • Does not mention the pain and the

		trauma that might be caused if the conflict takes a violent turn
Peace journalism	Reports causes and consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks of the reasons of the conflict, • factors responsible for the conflict and • the violent consequences of it
War journalism	Dichotomizes the good and bad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lal masjid administrators are evil, and • are responsible for the conflict
Peace journalism	Avoids labeling of good guys and bad guys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not hold the Lal masjid administrators and the students as bad guys and • Does not hold them responsible for the conflict
War journalism	Partisan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bias towards government • Government point of view justified
Peace journalism	Non-partisan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutral and not taking side of either side

Table 2
After the 'Operation Silence' categories for War and Peace Journalism

	Categories	Coding categories for frames
War journalism	Biased towards one side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only spoke of the casualties of the army • Blamed the Lal masjid administrators for the operation • Lal masjid administrators blamed for failure in negotiations
Peace journalism	Neutral not taking sides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights violations from both sides • Operation should have been avoided at any cost • Government blamed for failure in negotiation; • both blamed for failure in negotiations;
War journalism	Zero sum orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the government did was justified • The victory of the government and defeat of extremist point of view
Peace journalism	Win win orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The alternative to the conflict and solution-oriented
War journalism	Stop talking about peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lal masjid responsible for growing militancy by taking extreme actions

	treaty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No need to talk to negotiate with 'religious extremists' • Only government point of view is projected
Peace journalism	Stays on and reports aftermath of war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government responsible for growing militancy by taking extreme actions • both responsible for growing militancy and extremism • both responsible and need to negotiate to prevent extremism and terrorism • lal masjid point of view projected • both lal masjid administrators and government point of view projected • Talks about reconstruction, rehabilitation

Findings and Discussion

Findings in Table 3 show that the newspapers framed the conflict in the war frames more than peace frames. Before the operation silence (July1-11) out of 18 most of the editorials 15(83.3%) were on war frames and only three editorials were on peace journalism frames. More or less is the same position with the editorials after the operation silence (July 12-31). Out of 19 editorials 15 (78%) editorials were on war journalism frames and only 4 (21%) were on peace journalism. The position of columns is slightly different though they were more on war frames but the difference between war and peace journalism frames was not as great as it was in editorials. Out of 22 columns before 'operation silence', 14 (63%) were on war journalism frames and 8 (36%) were on peace journalism frames. Whereas, after the 'operation silence' more or less equal number of columns were written on war (56.5%) and peace (43%) journalism frames in all the dailies. These finding indicate that the editorial policies of the newspaper were more towards war journalism than towards peace journalism.

Table 3
A comparison of editorials and columns framed in War and Peace Journalism in Operation Silence

Operation silence		War journalism	Peace journalism	Total
July 1-11	editorials	15(83.3%)	3 (16.6%)	18
	columns	14 (63.6%)	8(36.3%)	22
	Total	29 (72.5%)	11 (27.5%)	40
July 12-31				
	Editorial	15 (78%)	4(21%)	19
	columns	26 (56.5%)	20(43.7%)	46
	Total	41(63%)	24(36.9%)	65

N=105

Table 4
Comparative Language-wise editorials and columns in War and Peace Journalism frames before and after Operation Silence

Language	Operation silence			
Urdu	July 1-11	War journalism	Peace journalism	Total
	editorials	6 (66.6%)	3(33.3%)	9
	columns	2(50%)	2(50%)	4
	July 12-31			
	Editorials	4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)	6
	columns	0	10 (100%)	10
English	July 1-11			
	Editorials	9(100%)	0	9
	Columns	12(66.6%)	6 (33.3%)	18
	July 12-31			
	Editorials	11(84.6%)	2 (15.3%)	13
	Columns	26 (72.2%)	10(27.7%)	36

N=105

In a comparison between Urdu and English newspapers, findings show that in all out of 29 editorials and columns in Urdu dailies 12 were on war journalism frames and 17 were on peace journalism. However, situation was quite different in English dailies out of 76 editorials and columns 58 were on war journalism and 18 were on peace journalism. These findings show that there was a significant difference between Urdu and English dailies. Furthermore findings in Table 3 show that both Urdu and English dailies before the 'Operation silence' strongly opinionated the issue. In the first 11 days of July, 9 editorials and 12 columns were published in English dailies. Out of the 9 editorials English dailies framed the issue more on war frames than Urdu newspapers i.e. in English dailies all the editorials were framed in War Journalism whereas in Urdu dailies (66.6%) editorials were framed in war journalism.

Situation was more or less the same with the columns. Urdu newspaper though only had 4 columns about the conflict before the Operation silence, it had both war and peace journalism frames equally in the columns of the dailies. However, English dailies had more war journalism frames in its columns compare to peace journalism. Out of 18 columns written before "operation silence" 12 (66.6%) were framed in peace journalism and only 2 (15.3%) columns were in the frame of peace journalism.

However after 'Operation Silence', in a comparison between Urdu and English dailies it was found out that English dailies in their editorials gave least coverage to peace journalism. Out of 13 editorials on the Operation Silence 11 (84.6%) editorials were in the war journalism frames and only 2 (15.3%) framed the issue in peace journalism framework. In Urdu dailies after the operation out of 6 editorials 2(3%) were on in the framework of peace journalism and 4(66%) in the war journalism framework. An interesting finding is that there was no columns in Urdu dailies on war journalism and all the 10 columns in Urdu dailies were in the peace journalism framework. However, in English dailies though

the number of columns was much more than Urdu dailies, most of them 72.6% (26) were in the war journalism framework and out of 36 only 10 (27.7%) columns were in the peace journalism framework.

Table 5
Comparative newspaper-wise editorials and columns framed in War and Peace Journalism

News papers	War Journalism	Peace Journalism	Total
Dawn			
Editorials	10(100%)	0	10
Columns	16 (84.2%)	3 (16.6%)	19
News			
Editorials	10 (83.3%)	2 (16.6%)	12
Columns	22(64.7%)	12 (35.2%)	34
Jang			
Editorials	9 (50%)	9 (50%)	18
Columns	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	10
NaweWaqat			
Editorials	1(25%)	3 (75%)	4
Columns	0	5(100%)	5

English daily Dawn, did not have a single editorial in the peace journalism framework (Table 5). And even in its columns out of 19 only three were in peace journalism framework the rest 16 (84.2%) were in war journalism frames. More or less the same situation was in the daily News for it also had 10 (83.3%) editorials out of 12 in the war journalism frames. Even in columns out of 34 columns 22 (64.7%) were on war journalism frames and only 12 (35.2%) were on peace journalism frames.

Whereas, there was a significant difference in the editorials and columns, on 'operation silence' of the two Urdu dailies; in Nawe Waqat out of 4 editorials only one was on war journalism frames and out of five columns none was on war journalism frames. In the Urdu daily, Jang out of 18 editorials 9 each were on

war and peace journalism framework; an out of 10 columns eight were on peace journalism framework. However what is of interest is that there was very little coverage on the conflict in the Urdu dailies as compare to English dailies. So even if the editorials and columns on peace journalism were more than English dailies the significant low coverage is indicative of the low importance given to the conflict by the Urdu dailies newspapers.

Findings show that English dailies were very candid about their stance on the 'operation silence'. The newspapers did not offer any room for negotiations between the two parties in conflict. They were very categorical that the government must not offer any peace talks to the administrators of the Lal Masjid. It was very elite oriented for it mostly focused on the government stance and insisted that government should go for the attack since the other party is 'misguided clerics'. While discussing the conflict the 'othering' phenomena was most apparent. The Lal Masjid administrators were labeled as 'axis of all evil', they were referred as 'guilty of blackmail, murder, vandalism, trespass and kidnapping(Editorial, July, 8, 2007) They were blamed for the conflict and all their actions were considered as 'crimes' which should 'not go unpunished'. They were considered to be the ones who had 'become too big for their boots' and were responsible for 'imposing medieval morality' and hence should not be spared. The editorials decontextualised the whole conflict and only highlighted the reaction of the Lal Masjid administrators but never mentioned how they came to that point where they were making such demands which were a reminder of 'medieval morality' (Ali, 2007; "Sill hesitant?," 2007) The bias against the Lal Masjid administrators were so apparent that despite knowing that women and children are trapped inside the Maderssah 'the action' against the Masjid was considered to be 'the only way' and the clerics should not be allowed to hide behind 'human shield'. No action was termed as 'letting anarchy loose upon citizens', and the use of force was considered to be an effective way of handling the 'militant clerics' and any other course was considered to be a

'dangerous course(Editorial, July 17,2007) The delay in the operation against the clerics was considered to be 'inexplicable' and delay was considered to be launching of 'brainwashed students' other 'seminaries in the other parts of the country' where government does not have any say(Sattar, July 7, 2007). The delay in the operation was considered to be an act of 'banana republic' who would allow the 'gang and its bosses to go scot free- ignoring their crimes'. And so if government attacks, it will in the 'interest of the people' (Mazari, 2007b). A deal between the two was not seen as a win-win situation but as a deal which would have 'compromised Pakistan's credibility internationally'. Any concession to the 'fanatics' was considered as something which would amount to defying 'the state writ', when the governments decides not to 'strike a deal with militants the government has sent a strong and clear message to extremists..' that government has shown that it is 'sincere' in 'fighting the menace of terrorism' (Mazari, 2007b). "There is no room for complacency, and the government must relentlessly pursue terrorists and criminals masquerading as 'soldiers of Islam'(Editorial, July 11, 2007).

After the 'operation silence' very few alternative voices in the peace framework were witnessed which advocated negotiations 'intelligently and deliberately'. Two excerpts from the English dailies are quoted as good examples of peace journalism.

...I firmly believe that negotiated solutions are better than violent ones. But negotiation does not mean capitulation. Indeed, capitulation is as much a failure of negotiation as violence. The purpose of negotiation, for the government, should be to convince Maulana Ghazi and his colleagues that surrender is the only real option before them. The government needs to apply negotiation as a tool much more intelligently and deliberately. For example, the managers of this operation seem not to have been in direct negotiation with those inside the Lal Masjid compound. Negotiation is happening, but it is happening through the issuance

of ultimatums and deadlines that keep slipping and are no longer believable...(Najam, 2007).

After the 'operation silence' some very scanty voices about how 'deliberately' the elite class 'demonized' the Maderssah and failed to look into the 'socio-political realities created by its own ruthless self-aggrandizement' ("Dark shadow of Lal Masjid," 16.7.2007). Death estimated from a range of 100 to 1300 boys and girls was considered to be a 'tragedy of incalculable proportions'("Democracy and the Military," 2007). Another good example of peace journalism was in this column:

There are two ways of dealing with militants. One is the American way — swift military response, no dialogue, massive injections of economic assistance for short-term results, but a huge collateral damage and more long-term instability that prolongs the conflict instead of subsiding it. The other is the non-American way — remaining vigilant but patient, understanding the core issues and tackling them one by one, talking to the extremists with the aim of winning hearts and minds and preserving the law, democracy and human rights. The latter approach is less visible but more enduring. We need not follow the American way in dealing with problems that reside inside Pakistan (Sharfuddin, 2007).

Urdu dailies though hardly gave any coverage on the issue before and after 'Operation Silence', but compare to English dailies they framed the 'Operation Silence' more in the peace journalism frames than war journalism frames. Before the 'Operation silence' the coverage was more or less equal in the two competing frames however, after the Operation Silence, the coverage on war journalism was less than peace journalism, particularly, in columns. They addressed the alternatives the government could have employed and how these kinds of conflicts could be avoided in the future. Interestingly, their stance on the Lal masjid issue was that the demands of the administrators were

justified but the method employed by the masjid administrators was wrong and that is why the military operation had become inevitable. The demands were justified on the ground that that 'since immorality had increased in the capital city', the government needed to do something to stop it. After the conflict the blame on the government for not taking out a peaceful solution of the conflict was quite apparent in their columns. The government was blamed for not taking into consideration the lives of the young students in the Masjid and for such a 'bloody' operation. At the same time, Urdu columns' stance on the killing of 'innocent female students' also pointed towards the ruthlessness of the Army and the government by saying that 'female innocent students did not leave the premises for they could never imagine that their own government or their army could ever try to kill them'(Masood, 2007).

Whereas, English dailies still insisted that 'operation silence' was justified and such 'fanatics' should be handled in the manner they were done. What is of particular interest is that the editorials of the English dailies were framed more on the war frames compare to columns. The editorials of the newspapers reflect the policy of the newspapers. In the present case Dawn was most biased in its editorials on the Lal Masjid operation. So much so that before the operation none of the English dailies framed the conflict in the peace framework, instead they advocated that the force must be used and as soon as possible, for negotiations will only worsen the situation and empower the 'misguided clerics'. The entire conflict was never discussed in its context to understand how the issue took such an ugly turn. Even after the 'operation silence' most of the editorials were in the war journalism framework. Though columns were also in the same framework but a little difference was observed in their columns.

The agenda of the English dailies as compared to Urdu dailies on the conflict was quite different. English dailies had taken a very clear elite stance whereas, the Urdu dailies stance was somewhere

in the middle. In English dailies, Lal Masjid administrators were portrayed as the 'usurpers of rights', 'unreasonable', 'irrational', 'stubborn', 'violent', 'supported by the external forces', 'cradle of terrorists', 'promoters of terrorism and shelter haven of terrorists', 'brain washed students', 'patronized by the secret agencies links with conservative elements of the society army'.

The editorial policies of the English dailies especially of daily Dawn was on settling the conflict with force and government was repeatedly blamed for not using army against the Lal Masjid. The presupposition and proposition was that the religious clerics were not worth talking to, for they were 'misguided', 'extremist' and 'militants'. And if they are left 'escort free', the wave of extremism will take the entire country in its fold.

Another interesting observation was the criticism of the print media on the electronic media in the entire episode. Electronic media was criticized for overplaying the Maulana Ghazi and for making him 'enjoy his publicity'. Their stance was that why should 'a lawbreaker be allowed to monopolize the mini-screen?'- where viewers deserve some respite ("While the innocent suffer," 2007). They found it very distressing to see 'how the Lal Masjid leadership had continuous and free access to the media which was used skillfully in efforts to give some level of rationality to the extremist agenda'(Mazari, 2007a). The peace negotiations through the media were considered to be the worst possible way of resolving the conflict. Maulana Ghazi was considered to be negotiating with public opinion rather than with government authorities.

Conclusion

Findings show that the Pakistani newspapers did not function as a facilitator of informed debates between the administrators of Lal Masjid and the government. Though there were scanty coverage in the peace journalism most of the editorials and columns did not encourage the resolution of disputes by

democratic means. Rather, they acted as a vehicle of the government to resolve the dispute through force. They failed to play their role in the religious and political cohesion and as a watch dog of government. The newspapers did not act as advocate respecting pluralistic values. In fact they reinforced the power of vested interests and exacerbated the inequalities by excluding critical or marginalized voices of the students and the administrators of Lal Masjid, hence promoting conflict and religious and political divisiveness. The point of view of women and children was never taken into account; on the contrary they were dismissed as being 'brain washed'. The demands of the Lal masjid administration and students went unstated. The issues, perceptions and discourses about the Lal Masjid were mostly negatively framed. The army action sanctioned by the government was universally condoned by the English dailies. Discourses of fear and conflict dominated the coverage in the newspapers. The print media failed to accurately portray the factors contributing to the conflict it only reiterated the positions or demands as expressed by the parties. The chain of events that led the Lal Masjid administrators to resort to such extreme steps was never mentioned. The bloody 'operation silence' was justified for government was first considered to be very tolerant when it showed complete restrained, however, later on it was 'forced to take such an action' as the administrators were held responsible to 'challenge the writ of the government', which they should not be 'allowed at any cost'. The dailies held the 'obstinate' attitude of the Lal Masjid's khatibs (clerics), responsible for the killing of young male and female students in the 'Maderssah'.

Even after the conflict the dailies did not examine the context and the reasons of the conflict. They did not suggest any measures which should be taken to prevent such a violent conflict which led to hundreds of young male and female students killing.

In comparison, English dailies portrayed the conflict more in war journalism frames than Urdu dailies. Urdu dailies gave little

coverage to the conflict in comparison to English dailies, they took a safe stance. Before the conflict they restrained from taking any clear cut stance on the conflict. The difference in the Urdu and English dailies is also a reflection of how Pakistani society is divided into the dichotomy of the 'elite' and the 'people' stance. The English dailies were a reflection of the elite class in the society which usually view religious leanings as 'irrational and extremist' whereas, Urdu dailies reflected the 'people's stance' and were more cautious about making any statement that could hurt religious sentiments of any particular group. In the present conflict situation English dailies 'superior Us' discourses were for the secular dispositions, and religious dispositions were viewed as 'evil others'. These findings support the contention that language divisions in Pakistan (Abbas, 2007; Ahmed, 2012; Syed, 2008) are also reflected in the way a conflict is given coverage in the Urdu and English dailies.

In the light of the above findings researcher would not say that there was any linear relationship between the way the English dailies gave coverage to the conflict and the decision of the government to take an army action against the Lal Masjid, but would propose that the coverage in the English dailies had an influence on the policy makers to take such an extreme action ignoring presence of young boys and girls in the Mosque and the Maderssah school and paving the opinion of this class that the 'operation silence' was justified.

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