Mapping Journalists' Perspectives on Peace Journalism in Pakistan: Evaluating News Media War and Peace Potential

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Abstract: *Journalism is entrusted with delivering high-quality information, not just for the truth but perhaps more significantly for peace. This research examines the role media plays in promoting peace, as shown by the personal experiences of media professionals. Research demonstrates that the media seems to have a vital role in encouraging positive peace by (1) educating viewers about the government's current plans and (2) promoting shows/programs that encourage positive peace, which connects citizens with their government. These rising themes demonstrate the usefulness of government media, via peace journalism, in promoting the public's interest in peacebuilding. Peace can be instilled in the press and maintained if the government and media stay committed. The findings demonstrate that journalists are highly proactive and seek to utilise their positions to influence and engage the public. In this manner, journalists have a close relationship to the function of public organisers.*

Key Words: Peace Journalism, Journalists' Roles, Public Mobilizer, Pakistan

Introduction

Peace journalism has garnered increased attention in recent decades, yet this interest does not necessarily translate to less polarised conflict coverage or more peaceful cultures worldwide. Although these realities cannot be attributed to peace journalism alone, such disconnects encourage a deeper definition of peace journalism and its intellectual growth. Conflicts and natural catastrophes have grown so common in Pakistan that they have nearly become second nature to those living there (Yousaf et al., 2021). Violence has become a part of our everyday lives due to the unparalleled frequency and volume we are exposed to news of conflict and war. Individuals' views on violence and conflict have changed dramatically due to this prolonged exposure (Aleem, Khan, Rafique, et al., 2021).

Inexplicably, we do not feel frightened by its immediate existence but rather accept it as a real construct that occurs regularly. In our minds, fighting is the only source of building and preserving peace because of the terminology and language used by the media and news outlets reporting on it (Aleem, Khan, & Jamroze, 2021). Nevertheless, the logic of cruel murder, slaughter, devastation, decaying lives, and devastated cities permeates every precinct of war, conflict, and violence. These heinously awful images of war and turmoil are staged, so the general public is compelled to accept them as "right" against their better judgment (Juergensmeyer, 2020). Since peace scholar Johan Galtung (1986) initially described the concept of peace journalism, it has become a significant way of thinking about conflict journalism. Constructively reporting conflicts by illuminating everything, visible and

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otherwise, components that might assist in conflict resolution is considered a corrective method (Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2015). People said that war journalism, which was the opposite of it, was skewed because it was propaganda- and elite-oriented (Ersoy & Miller, 2020). In addition to Galtunic, many other scholars have studied war and peace journalism and developed new approaches to reporting on conflicts ethically (Shinar, 2017).

The peace journalism framework, on the other hand, has been criticised for being normative and advocative (Ciftcioglu & Shaw, 2021), is built on naive epistemological assumptions, and it completely disregards the demands that the profession of journalism places on speech (Ersoy & Miller, 2020). Furthermore, it is hard to execute because of the inherent tension between the demands of journalism and the process of peacemaking (Youngblood, 2016). Many of the conceptual and practical challenges raised by sceptics have been addressed and explained by proponents of peace journalism, but there is no universal consensus (Elega et al., 2022; Rodny-Gumede, 2016) on the possibility that it may serve as an alternative tactic to reporting about conflicts. The war and peace journalism paradigms that were formed have had a huge influence on the majority of the content that is now available in peace journalism Galtung, (1986) and the actor-event models developed by Tenenboim-Weinblatt and Baden (2018). Ultimately, the study's major purpose is to point out a few problems in the previously described models and build a framework for classifying the potential for peace journalism in Pakistani situations to exacerbate or de-escalate conflict (Hussain, 2020; A. Khan, 2019) a nation where fatal battles were the norm, and the people where peace-loving media is most needed. Accordingly, the author will draw from research on Pakistan's distinct journalism culture and other conflict communication-related fields.

Before offering a comprehensive critique of the peace journalism study, it is necessary to quickly explore Pakistan's state of journalism to understand better how to report on the selected conflicts. The fundamental objective of this research is to investigate the part that the media plays in

multiple reforms aimed at achieving and maintaining peace around the country. Peace journalism arose as a field connected to peace studies in the 1990s, although it is mostly neglected, particularly in the context of Pakistan. Our desire to learn more about the media and peace has led us to pursue a career in peace journalism.

Journalism in Pakistan

Pakistan was meant to be a progressive democratic state, but the military junta's direct and indirect rule over the country for decades has turned it into a security state (Hussain, 2020). Along with other democratic entities, the media has become one of the most significant victims of this evolution. The government has assassinated, maimed, intimidated, and kidnapped hundreds of journalists over the last few decades (Kalfeli et al., 2022). Others in Pakistan, including media scholars, associate growth in the television industry with an optimistic view that the country's powerful military is becoming more open to changing strategic realities (Hussain, 2020). On the other hand, detractors maintain that the explosion in the number of channels has not led to a wider range of programming on war, national security, international relations, and the expanding part that the military plays in political and economic matters (Elega et al., 2022). The military has delineated no-go zones for media, and no one is permitted to deviate from these rules and regulations (A. Khan, 2019). Based on previous research into the conflicts under consideration in this study, it has been determined that the military does not let the media criticise its involvement in conflicts with India, the Taliban, and Baluchistan (A. Khan, 2019). During these four battles, the Pakistani military is the most significant stakeholder, and the news media are compelled to regurgitate the information provided by the communication department of the Pakistani army because they have no other option (Doll, 2022). On the other hand, since the military is not directly involved in the ethnic struggle in Karachi or the sectarian strife in the city, journalists have a greater degree of freedom in reporting on these conflicts.

Peace Journalism

Over the past several decades, peace journalism has established itself as a significant intellectual alternative to war journalism. It has developed a deficient investigation of war-related news in the mass media, thus problematical branding it as "war journalism," which is likely to supply unaware support for societal violence through the typical application of journalistic standards (Ersoy & Miller, 2020). It has garnered the interest of many academics and researchers. As a result, a huge quantity of scholarly material can be found in books, research papers, theses, and instructional materials (Youngblood, 2016). Keeping in mind the distinctive purpose of the investigation, an evaluation of the war-and-peace journalism paradigm by Rodny-Gumede, (2016) and the actor-event model by Baden and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2018b). After that, a more contextualised framework of international conflict or de-escalation in the Pakistani setting is constructed. The authors have effectively addressed several questions raised in the relevant literature about its theory and practice.

Peace Journalism: Journalistic Interpretation and Concept of Roles

In several nations over the previous few decades, there has been a shift toward adopting a style of journalism that is more interpretive (A. Khan, 2019; Youngblood, 2016). On the other hand, as Lee (2020) pointed out, the meaning of this word, which includes both practical and theoretical notions, is still the subject of much controversy (Khan et al., 2021). As a point of departure, most studies have shown agree that interpretive journalism goes beyond the straightforward facts and descriptive aspects that are typical of journalism. This type of journalism is characterised by a topic chosen by journalists or editors that drives news coverage. Even Tenenboim-Weinblatt and Baden (2018) contend that journalists should choose a subject before relaying the facts. When interpreting the significance of news events, interpretive journalism is all about looking at what is going on rather than just reporting on the facts (Vreese, 2014). Rather than adhering to the hard news paradigm, interpretative journalism challenges the concept of objectivity.

When the journalist takes an active position in a narrative, it gives him or her greater influence over the tale and alters his or her connection with a source since the journalistic function is not considered merely reporting what has been stated but also offering context and historical context importance (Hopmann et al., 2015). As a result of the journalist's focus on "why," they assume more responsibility for the story's substance and deliver a more comprehensive picture. To a large extent, the news is based on the journalist's perception of the events. The point made by (Kalfeli et al. (2020) are that journalists are being asked to do too much through interpretive journalism by being expected to monitor politicians' motivations and agendas constantly.

Leave aside the potential normative ramifications of interpretive journalism. Critics of interpretative journalism contend that It's also time for the media to offer a more unedited view of what sources have to say in reaction to this transparency stance (Doll, 2022; Yontucu et al., 2022). Moreover, they challenge the purpose of journalists, arguing that they are worthless and prone to competitive realities; therefore, they are not held accountable for their actions in many circumstances. It has also been suggested that unbiased reporting is difficult since a journalist is already prone to subjectivity when choosing subjects, interviewees, and narratives to include in their reporting (Auwal & Ersoy, 2022). Moreover, Ha et al. (2020), there is a pressing demand for contextualised and analytical information. One of the primary reasons for its creation was the inability of newspapers to keep up with the rapid speed of television and, eventually, the internet.

Journalists are encouraged to take a more active role in promoting peace through "peace journalism." Peace journalism has a strong foundation in interpretive practices (Ersoy & Dambo, 2021). Journalists who practice this kind of journalism investigate the origins and settings of disputes and strive to represent all parties, not just the elites. In addition, the

book focuses on innovative solutions to conflict and the debunking of falsehoods (Lee, 2020). Contrarily, war journalism is preoccupied with bloodshed, power structures, and the issue of who will emerge victorious, while peace media seeks to give a more nuanced picture of any conflict (Lee, 2010). Peace journalism is seen as the desired method of resolving a dispute, although it may be difficult to implement in certain situations. If you want to make a story more interesting, you may use mainstream journalism's habit of highlighting the voices of the elite and conflicts amongst them. According to Peace Journalism experts, 'the dynamics of news creation' are not considered (Kalfeli et al., 2020). In addition, there is a basic dilemma about how journalists are seen in wartime circumstances. There are no conflicts in the world that journalists can solve (Neumann & Fahmy, 2016). Journalists cannot solve the issues that occur in their own culture, as he points out, since they are a product of the community they serve (Prager & Hameleers, 2021).

Journalism for Peace and Conflict Resolution

Peace journalism was proposed by Gouse et al. (2019) as an alternative paradigm to war journalism. The four pillars of peace journalism are conflict resolution, human rights, truth, and practical solutions. Propaganda, partiality, and partisanship were all charges levelled against war journalists. Journalists and media outlets who follow a peace journalism model discuss where the conflict comes from in their news reports (Demarest & Langer, 2021). They also stress the experiences of normal citizens, moving beyond the viewpoints of the two "warring" factions. Stories in the media seek to generate sentiments of empathy and compassion, and at the most interventionist end of the spectrum, they propose possible remedies to the disagreement (Rodny-Gumede, 2016). When it comes to reporting, it's preferable to rely on those who aren't necessarily in the upper echelons. More than just one side of the issue should be covered by the media. Journalists must use exact terminology when describing events and topics in the news.

In a similar vein, Lee's (2020) Constructive Journalism" paradigm depends on the press's corporate responsibility notion that the media should be concerned with the public welfare. It identifies peace journalism, "solutions journalism," and "restorative story" journalism as parts of the "Constructive Journalism" paradigm (Ciftcioglu & Shaw, 2021). Good journalism can help in nation-building (Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2015). As long as conflict-sensitive journalism stresses the media's beneficial role in maintaining peace, inaccurate or unduly critical coverage of government or politics may damage public perceptions of the peace movement (Ersoy & Miller, 2020). News of peace or development in the political arena is not noteworthy to journalists since they are educated to value: drama, immediacy, simplicity, and ethnocentrism (Elega et al., 2022).

Methodology

Data Collection

Thirteen structured interviews were conducted, with the majority taking place online using the Google Meet and Zoom platforms. Contact with the respondents was made via both a purposeful and a snowball sampling strategy (Marshall, 1996). To be more specific, this technique meant searching for journalists with a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints in order to get a varied spectrum of points of view. Participating in the hunt are journalists of varying ages and levels of professional experience who work for a variety of media channels, including television, radio, newspapers, and projects based on the internet. It was possible to achieve variety in personal and professional encounters with conflict due to this approach. The search for authors of articles in newspapers that supported or opposed peace talks in Pakistan, as well as networks of family and friends, was done specifically to find these people. Following that, several folks provided more contact information. Investigators used semi-structured interview questions. The questions lacked a clear context for the most part. This strategy was utilised to enable individuals to express themselves and promote conversation (Crabtree, 1999).

A theoretically guided approach ensured that the interviews were as efficient and successful as possible (Malterud et al., 2016). This strategy enabled us to generate interview settings that were reasonably comparable by repeating the same questions to journalists. The open and explorative interview questions, however, were modified where the respondent had already discussed a subject before the relevant question was asked or when a follow-up seemed beneficial before the relevant question was asked again (Malterud et al., 2016). During the interview, the questions got increasingly precise. The idea for using this method was first to gain a sense of which topics were regarded as significant by the journalists and then to acquire a more comprehensive image of their opinions in general. The more specific questions that came next were meant to keep people from making wrong assumptions based on what had already been said and help them understand the journalists' point of view better (Crabtree, 1999). The respondents were then asked to publicly pick one or more pre-created role models to see whether the results were coherent with the journalists' viewpoint. This procedure can be considered member validation.

Data Analysis

All of the data was recorded, thoroughly transcribed, and structured using the NVivo software program, which proved to be a valuable tool in gaining an organised, detailed understanding of the data and developing a framework of codes. The elements of the acquired data were given codes based on the results of a thematic analysis, as explained by Braun and Clarke (2021). It gives a framework for detecting and evaluating patterns, often called themes, throughout a collection of data items. Moreover, Braun and Clarke (2021), using the following terminology, define the theme analysis method: In other words, we scoured each interview for reoccurring themes, compiled a codebook, and used it to decode the words to hunt for patterns in the data. According to the concepts of grounded theory, the theory was created in this way. The theory was then generated from real facts (Malterud et al., 2016). While going through the data, codes were created, grouped together and then decreased in size more and more. The findings section contains a description of the most prevalent variables. The open codes, in particular, were arranged around distinct role ideas as the core features of the regulations. A continual comparison of dimensions and their indicators led to the refining and evolution of codes into more extensive themes. The journalists were analysed across role perspectives on numerous different levels. Along with the aspects of problems and opportunities, researchers also structured topics within role conceptions around these dimensions. Finally, views on these topics and related role conceptions were compared to theory and assessed in light of the study's major concerns.

Results

Except for journalist number two, all of the journalists questioned for this research had a fairly active sense of their roles. Even two journalists agreed that the media had a significant role in influencing public discussion, although they emphasised the significance of maintaining a professional distance from the situation. The ability to create and change is huge power in our hands, and we must use it wisely. All journalists were united in their rejection of the standard of impartiality. They said that their personal experiences would be represented in their work – although to various degrees, as seen in the debate below. Only Journalist two, who believed in the potential of impartial reporting, stood apart from the rest of the group once again.

Discussion

In this research, we looked at reporters' perspectives on the approach to war and peace journalism that they had. Except for a few small outliers, we found general support for the core results of their research, which was that journalistic attitudes were diffused throughout the activities within the war and peace journalism approach (Ersoy & Dambo, 2021). When reporting on a war, journalists are inclined to focus on the apparent components of the conflict, such as accidents and fatalities. However, they also consider

reporting invisible components crucial, such as socio-cultural and psychological factors. Correspondingly, journalists feel that integrating the perspectives of regular people is necessary, but they also believe that devoting adequate attention to the viewpoints of elite sources is essential. Furthermore, journalists are likely to study a spectrum of reporting tactics that, by concentrating on differences and framing a conflict in terms of winning as the only alternative, might bring hostile parties closer together while paradoxically deepening them.

There is a pressing need for fresh academic projects in Pakistan, given its role in the war on terror and its history of violence. As a result, tertiary education in journalism should include a mandatory course in journalists' safety and peace journalism education; academics should be aware of the term "contextual journalist safety education"; students should be taught conflict and war reporting ethics; internships are mandatory; quality research should be done in this field, and international collaboration should be encouraged (Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018b). Finally, these measures will strengthen the role of academia in addressing the issue of journalists' safety by training well-aware journalism professionals in peacebuilding who can report on conflict honestly and ethically while simultaneously protecting themselves from any known hazards." There are various concerns about journalists' freedom of expression in Pakistan, highlighted in this article. Freedom of expression is a basic human right that should not be misused or compromised. Theoretically, it supports the critical pragmatic approach, which maintains that journalists must actively interact with institutions to carry out their statutory tasks (Kalfeli et al., 2022; Yontucu et al., 2022). They have substantial theoretical and practical ramifications for peace journalism, explained further below. Theoretically, it supports the critical pragmatic approach, which maintains that journalists must actively interact with institutions to carry out their statutory tasks. Even though the structure sometimes overshadows it, the journalistic agency is still vital today. By navigating into unfamiliar territory to confront the authorities,

journalists have great power. At the same time, they are realistic enough not to cross red lines set by the ruling class.

Additionally, the research proposes that some of the techniques of war journalism may be incorporated to make peace journalism more consistent with the principles of professional journalism when it comes to implementing peace journalism. For example, even if a journalist adheres to the peace journalism method, it is difficult for him or her to refrain from reporting on fatalities and infrastructural damage. In the same way, when there is a violent confrontation, people normally turn to the elites and authorities to deal with the problem. In this instance, it does not seem possible to exclude elite voices from public conversation. However, this comes at a price: because of their dominance in the creation of news, the elites typically dominate the discourse. In order to combat government propaganda, journalists may be taught how to ask excellent critical questions in the field (Elega et al., 2022; Hussain, 2020).

Similarly, they may use war journalism tactics to achieve the fundamental aims of peace journalism without deviating much from those goals. This research has made a major contribution to war and peace journalism. To understand conflict, the journalistic values of revealing the human-interest elements include emphasising socio-cultural and psychological issues, which are not limited to peace journalism (Youngblood, 2016). In the big picture of peace journalism, reportage that focuses on individuals is crucial. Still, it is not on par with other measures such as proactive reporting, a multi-perspective approach, and appealing for peace by underlining the similarities among warring parties. The propagandistic tendencies of three of the favourite war journalism indicators, including publicising the perspectives of political and military leaders, applying a dichotomous style, and stressing inequities between fighting sides, could intensify confrontations. (Ersoy & Miller, 2020). However, Shinar (2017) demonstrates that the standards of proper professional journalism have significantly departed from active war reportage. As a result of the constraints placed on journalists

by strong elites, an ethnocentric viewpoint is often forced on them (Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018a). Because they preferred certain markers in both war and peace coverage, we noticed that the journalists tended to agree with these findings. Ultimately, Kalfeli et al. (2020) believed that active war journalism was more important than passive peace journalism, which tipped the scales in favour of the war journalism method in the final analysis.

We also looked at the link between journalistic experience and people's opinions of the importance of peace journalism. According to the findings, the two groups of journalists did not make considerably different in terms of their coverage of war and peace in their respective nations, which challenges the optimism claimed by peace journalism specialists that increasing expertise in the area would motivate journalists to join peace journalism activities (Neumann & Fahmy, 2016; Prager & Hameleers, 2021). For example, (Youngblood, 2016) claimed that experienced journalists develop influential agency gradually in the news organisation and that extended time spent in the war field helps them better appreciate the difficult nature of a conflict scenario, allowing them to generate more peace journalism as a result of their experiences (Doll, 2022; Kalfeli et al., 2022).

One significant argument is that journalists, as members of a society, are infused with the same socio-psychological inclinations as the rest of the community. When there is a dispute, professional obligations are eclipsed by the social duty of being patriotic citizens. As a consequence, the journalistic community acts more or less consistently (Elega et al., 2022). Finally, researchers noticed that while there were no notable differences among journalists in the three nations relating to war and peace media activities, journalists in Pakistan were more predisposed toward war journalism practises in a few critical areas. For example, they indicated a considerably higher preference for elite-oriented and dichotomous approaches than other groups. Being a former colony of the British, Pakistan adopted the British heritage of impartial media. According to peace journalism professionals, objectivity leads to war journalism because of the penchant for fake balance, elite sources, and event-based reporting (Hussain, 2020; Lee, 2020).

Conclusion

The media is a potent weapon for community reform and peacekeeping. The media is designated in whatever shape or outfit. The objective of the media is the cornerstone of a peaceful society since it promotes the government's interest in the welfare of the general public. We cannot always ignore the importance of the media (whether government or private) in our lives. However, the communication objective of the media must be clearly defined and aligned with its idealistic commitment to peace via journalism. Peace Journalism has a defined definition, but it still has to be implemented in the communication network or media, whether government-owned or privately-owned, to be effective. Effective ways of bridging the gap between government and citizens are provided by peace journalism. As a result, communication is still the most crucial medium for the government to educate the public about its best interests and clear up any political pledges' concerns throughout the election period. There are many types of peace, but the most important approach to achieving a nation's ideal of peace is incorporating them into media practices and producing relevant programs that promote the culture of peace and involve its people. Other research has shown conclusively that peace and development are inseparable. As a result, the practice of peace journalism professionally may impact the relevancy of the media to its members and the larger community. Making the media a peacebuilding edifice is not just a pipe dream; it is a reality that can be achieved if everyone works together to construct it in this manner. It is a process that involves everyone in the community.

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