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The Economics of Race and Blame: News Frame Analysis of Cross-Border Economic Consequences by Indian and Pakistani Media

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Abstract: India and Pakistan share a border that enables them for an economic collaboration to minimize their mutual conflicts which are there since their partition. This study aims at identifying those economic obstacles which hinder their mutual economic cooperation. It further examines the framing trends through which media from both countries showcase each other's economic issues in certain ways. News headlines and lead paragraphs from two English dailies each from India and Pakistan, were analyzed. "Economic consequences" frame was identified among the selected data of 4086 news stories. The findings revealed that both countries blame about unstable bilateral trades, loss in import and exports deals, underdeveloped national and international businesses and economic deficits on each other. CPEC, political instability and terrorism were framed as major blaming claims by each side. The study further recommends professional news coverage with productive framing of issues than biased and based on certain framing.

Key Words: Economics, Framing, India, Pakistan

Introduction

The language plays a significant role in depicting, portraying and covering specific issues in a newspaper (Evans, 2010; Brantner, Lobinger, & Wetzstein, 2011). It had a serious impact on salience of news, public opinion and foreign policies on each side towards their government, or the perceived opponent. Though all the countries in the world emphasize on their foreign policies, national agendas and patriotism among their publics for their integrity through news framing (King, Schmeer, & White, 2017), it has always been a serious issue in reporting of cross border news between India and Pakistan. Medias of India and Pakistan have been very dynamic and vibrant means for building very powerful national images of their countries and the ideology of patriotism in the minds of their

nations (Hussain, 2015). Their medias have showcased their issues, actions and philosophies in diverse ways that not just help in shaping the ideologies (Zelizer, & Allan, 2011) and propagating war and peace and national integrity of the two nations (Kamalipour, & Snow, 2004), but also in preserving the interests of the governing regimes (Simon, & Xenos, 2000) under the umbrella of nationalism and patriotism (Curtis, 1998).

The study examines the framing of economic issues; economic news involves trade, economic warfare, national economy, in *Times of India* and *The Hindu* from India and *Dawn* and *The Nation* from Pakistan, considering that news framing not only affects the images of India and Pakistan in the

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eyes of the international community, it also affects emotions of their immediate publics.

Media organizations in India and Pakistan are deeply influenced by the predominant anti-Pakistan and anti-India motifs, perceptions or national ideologies (Lee, & Maslog, 2005). The two countries use their media to determine the public opinions and agendas of their governments that keep their enmity alive in the name of political and national interests.

India and Pakistan use their media to formulate national identities of their people as per policies. Horga (2007) says media formulate national identity and help their public differentiate images of other nations. He hinted at the European model of media that serves as a mean of unity for their public as well as a tool that differentiates their culture from other cultures and countries. In the absence of people to people communication, media puts forth national interests which may not essentially depict the popular opinion. The national interest is often tied to the idea of protecting national borders from the perceived enemy. Timothy, D. J., & Tosun, C. (2003) highlighted the materialistic value of borders and the hindrance once faces for crossing the line of control to enter into another territory. Its examples can be seen in the cases of the USA and Canada even though they share the same cultures. Their borders create feelings of division between their publics and for the officials they denote the identity of a person having the same culture person as an outsider whose case shall be processed with different laws.

Public opinions about India and Pakistan and their people help their governments and publics in identifying and determining the quality of relationship between the two countries. Public opinions affect the relationship of any two countries with each other. Kim and Prideaux (2006) studied the opinion of South Korean people about North Korean tourism and its role in building the images of the two countries for each other at a time when these two neighboring countries were maintaining adversative stances about each other. They found that the factor of tourism provided an opportunity for molding the opinion of the public and political policies

of rival countries. Tourism furthered the relationship between the people of South and North Korea, as they already shared many cultural, social, ethnic and linguistic similarities. This scenario is quite similar to the one between India and Pakistan which have shared their livelihood for centuries until the mid-twentieth century. The two countries still experience similarities in their customs, traditions, cultures, and lifestyles which makes it hard to distinguish between the people and their activities at many places in the two countries. This fact cannot be altered even if their one or another government or a person or a group wants to emphasize their superiority over the other. S. Li investigated the element of superiority between the Australian and Chinese people and found that, owing to media reports and the word of mouth about people's "Chinese experience," the majority of Australians believed that the Australian culture was superior to the Chinese culture though they had not been to China and hardly knew anything about the Chinese social, cultural and historical background (2015).

Research Objective

- To examine the framing trends in cross-border news of economic issues in Indian and Pakistani English dailies.

Research Question

- What framing trends do the Indian and Pakistani print media apply for cross-border news of economic issues?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is formulated on a deductive approach to test framing theory and study research gaps in the existing literature

- Both India and Pakistan's English dailies blame their economic consequences on each other.

Economic issues of India

During Modi's regime from 2016 to 2019, the GDP declined from 8.8% to 5% with a margin of 3.19 percent. Although India is among the

fastest developing economies, there are issues of lower per capita income which is five times lower than China. The unequal dissemination of wealth has increased the ratio of poverty in India. Though agriculture is the backbone of its economy, it depends too much on the industry that has minimized the output to a very low level of productivity per person. It is unable to fulfill the basic needs of its increasing population through setting up food, health, educational, and clothing industries. Its import liabilities and foreign debts are piling up.

Over population is causing a blow to the Indian economy, showing lesser jobs and more unemployment or under-employment, and a gradual increase in the Capital Formation Rate. The disparity between the poor and rich is a major drawback for the Indian economy where more people are surviving below the line of poverty than in any other state in the world ([Joumard et al., 2020](#)). Wages are low and per capita income small as compared to other economies despite booming technological advancements; it is so because of the scarcity of skilled and expert people. Economic crisis pertains to a lack of clean water, sanitation facilities and climate changes. Despite poor economic conditions, India's a trade and business treaties with its neighboring countries, especially Pakistan are of significant value, which has a positive impact on their relationship. Yet, big international projects like China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Financial Action Task Force (FATF) have created a clash of interest between the two countries.

Economic issues of Pakistan

Asian Development Bank (2015) reported that over 24 per cent of Pakistanis are living beneath the line of poverty. They are deprived of basic health and education provisions. International Monetary Funds (IMF) ranked Pakistan as the third most water-scarce country in 2014 with the prediction of absolute water shortage by 2025. The quality of life deprives of basic necessities of food, education, health and housing despite the fact that political parties have been using the slogans such as *roti, kaprra aur Makan* (food, clothing, and shelter) for coming to power from the times of Bhutto to Imran Khan. The

UNICEF (2016) reports 22.8 million kids do not apply to schools in Pakistan which is country-wise the second-highest number in the world. China Pakistan Economic Corridor is the biggest economic deal in the recent decade by Pakistani government to initiate a trade corridor which will connect Asia with the remainder of the globe. India, on the other hand, has serious reservations regarding the CPEC project as it undermines its regional economic position against both Pakistan and China. Whereas, Pakistan has the opportunity to build not just its economic infrastructure but to attain multiple eco-political benefits out of this mega-deal.

Indian Media and its approach towards Pakistan

In India, with excessive business participation in the media industry, the amount of influence is dominating the media organizations. Whereas, businessmen are dependent on governmental policies which, in a way, influence and mobilize media ([Baru, 2009](#)). Indian media business has reached a level where a large number of population is directly or indirectly attached to it ([Kohli-Khandekar, 2008](#)). It caters to the needs of not just the financial sector but also leaves an impact on the approach of a larger population towards all major and minor issues at national and international levels. Media organizations, under the dominance of big businesses and political collaborations ([Mohan, 2009](#)), design content which keep them run well and get popularity in public at the same time. Thus, it is not only the pressure of the government that they have to endure, but also the public demand, which is immensely large and diversified. Media, at times, proves to be the main motivator of the foreign policy-making by depicting a popular idea and demonstrating it is a vital need or move to be taken by the government ([Joshi, 2015](#)).

Due to interconnectivity with the foreign policies of different governments, Indian media has always been critical to Pakistan, reflecting that India has never had good terms with Pakistan since 1947. It always described Pakistan as a hostile enemy and a troublemaking country ([Joseph, 2006](#)). Pakistan's relationship with China is covered

as the biggest threat in English newspapers of India ([Akbar & Adnan, 2018](#)) and China Pakistan Economic Corridor, particularly is considered as a reason of upcoming rift between the two countries. Indian media projects the CPEC as a strategic blow to their national integrity in South Asia and has tried to showcase it internationally as a violation of Indian sovereignty.

Selected Newspapers of India

James Painter and Teresa Ashe (2012) state that *The Hindu* has left-leaning political tendency while *Times of India* is more centrist or right-leaning newspaper. *The Hindu* has vivid policies about its leftist ideologies as compare to *Times of India* which presents a nationalist view in its reporting and selecting news. It favours the ruling government and tends to frame news in coherence with the government's policies.

Pakistani media and its approach towards India

Pakistan and India have numerous never-ending issues such as water dispute for which Pakistan put forward to United Nations (UN) several times and ran campaigns in media to highlight India's intentions to release water and flood areas of Pakistan without any intimation ([Gupta, 2010](#)). He related it to many incidents of miscommunication and misinformation due to the media's traditional reporting that resulted in people's wrong perception about the other country.

Selected Newspapers of Pakistan

Dawn is considered anti-establishment newspaper with more liberal and progressive ideology. It has liberal, centrist and progressive policy and it is famous for its unbiased and neutral reporting. *Dawn* has, multiple times, initiated and reiterated the need for people-to-people connection in Indo-Pak and has advocated the peace process between the two countries. While *The Nation* is a centrist right wing newspaper which has more inclination towards two-nation theory and dominant anti-India stance ([Ali, 2010](#)). It is one of the largest and most

quoted English newspaper of Pakistan. Due to *Nawa-i-Waqt* Group's deep affiliation with the joint history of India and Pakistan and its support for the two nation theory, *The Nation* has comparatively more patriotic and anti-India stance in news reporting than other newspapers of Pakistan.

Literature Review

There have been efforts of media diplomacy, sports diplomacy ([Shahid, 2015](#)), intermingling of films stars and showbiz industry collaborations, literary festivals across the borders with intellectuals from both sides sharing their ideas and experiences with hopes of friendship and peace. Yet, the element of enmity always prevails even in the news of peace and friendship. Media channels started media diplomacy to bring two countries together through talk shows during sports to discuss common issues. Unfortunately, it had to stop due to political rifts between the two countries and did not let a communication bridge to develop strong ties between the two. [Chattarji \(2009\)](#) denoted towards India and Pakistan's antagonistic approach of presenting each other's intentions in a maligned way through which they could attain their governmental propitiation, pursuance of public's popular beliefs and keeping the element of sensationalism alive. [Hafeez, E. \(2015\)](#) studied the function of media role in shaping the relationship of two rivals and concluded that media has the capacity to mold directions of people's perception and policies of countries but the old enmity is so deep-rooted that sometimes, media persons have to be nationalistic in presenting news. Hafeez further added that media from both sides take care of the public's interest and popular ideology during their discussions and debate in different media programs. Thus, it becomes hard for them to be neutral, even if media practitioner would prefer to do true reporting of the event, he or she has to keep in mind the national interest and media organization's stake.

Many a times, when both sides intend to initiate professional steps to pursue a positive or constructive change in the approach of

both the countries towards each other, they have to face multiple challenges. As in the case of 'Aman ki Asha' campaign to normalize the relationships between the two was practiced for a while and had to shut down due to diplomatic confrontations and Line of Control violations, and it ended up blaming and complaining from either side ([Behuria, 2010](#)).

News frames have an impact on human emotions through dissimilar interpretations of media messages and the perception of reality by different audiences. [Kim and Cameron \(2011\)](#) conducted an experimental study on news frames pertaining to the emotions of anger, sadness, relief and punishment. They found that the respondents gave different responses during when they were exposed to various news frames. They processed, understood and interpreted diversified news frames according to individual perceptions and aptitudes. They were annoyed when they were exposed to crisis news containing an element of danger. They found that the news organization framed news about various situations aiming at relief, reward, sympathy or misery that impacted the respondents accordingly. Thus, they proved that the way an individual perceived a situation had a great impact on the retentive frames in his/her mind.

The Indian and Pakistani newspapers foresaw similar risk and opportunity factors in regards to news about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). [Irshad \(2015\)](#) stated the CPEC a development prospect for not just both the countries but also for the whole region. He found that the China and Pakistan selected some international political parameters for making the neighbors contribute their resources for a common goal, aiming at regional development. They decided to use their respective strategic powers for economic viability and to level barriers in other countries by engaging media, academia, intelligentsia and governments. However, India saw more risks than opportunity for the Indians in the CPEC project thus opposed ([Irshad, 2015](#)).

Methodology

This researcher undertook the quantitative approach through content analysis to study relevant news frame news related to economy in English newspapers of Pakistan and India. The content analysis method helped in scrutinizing the textual form of collected data in a systematic scientific way. [Murthy \(2001\)](#) defines content analysis as an elaborate, inclusive and vivid methodology to understand and evaluate the data. [Nicholson & Howard \(2003\)](#) consider the method of content analysis as one of the most applied and conclusive technique in mass communication research. Therefore, this research analyzed news stories from the front pages, back pages and international pages of two Indian English newspapers: *Times of India* and *The Hindu*, and two Pakistani English newspapers: *Dawn* and *The Nation*.

Economic consequences frame from [Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg \(2000\)](#) research, has been adapted and applied in Indian and Pakistani economic scenario, to identify the element of blaming on each other through certain news framing.

Economic consequences frame: An economic consequence frame is a frame which denotes the consequences of economic damage to some individual, group, organization or a country. Both India and Pakistan frame business treaties, trade deals and CPEC and import and export news from either side as an economic threat for each other. The audience is presented with a side of a story as if a certain financial-economic activity is proceeded by the other country, it will have destructive results for the native governments and their public. Such framing blames all on the economic steps taken by the other country as if they are the reason behind all the financial deterioration in their country.

Sample: 4085 news stories pertaining to headlines and lead paragraphs were taken as a purposive sample from June 1st, 2014, to May 31st, 2018. The researcher considered the complete data published during the dates as the sample for this research to minimize the possibility of biasness or error. It further helped in studying sequential background

and follow-up news of every relevant story throughout the selected timeframe of the research.

The researcher used "Minitab 17" software for data analysis and further conducted two-sample proportion tests according to the association and significance of the variables.

Table 1. Analysis of overall coverage of Economic news in selected English dailies of India and Pakistan

News Category	Times of India	The Hindu	Dawn	The Nation	Total
Economic	1072	1096	942	976	4086

Table 1 shows the overall coverage economic news coverage in selected newspapers for the purposed time period. It denotes that Indian

newspapers gave slightly more coverage to the issues than Pakistani newspapers.

Table 2. Issues of sub-categories of Economic category

Sub-categories	Issues	Times of India	The Hindu	Dawn	The Nation	Total
Trade	Business treaties	89	99	79	61	328
		27.13	30.18	24.09	18.60	100.00
	National Trade worldwide	109	147	117	127	500
		21.80%	29.40%	23.40%	25.40%	100.00%
Economic disputes	Indo-Pak Trade	104	143	124	113	484
		21.49%	29.55%	25.62%	23.35%	100.00%
	Import & export issues	178	109	107	97	491
National economic situation	CPEC	176	209	201	244	830
		21.20%	25.18%	24.22%	29.40%	100.00%
	Free trade area	103	93	63	60	319
		32.29%	29.15%	19.75%	18.81%	100.00%
National economic situation	Unemployment	87	76	59	45	267
		32.58%	28.46%	22.10%	16.85%	100.00%
	Inflation	81	98	84	90	353
22.95%		27.76%	23.80%	25.50%	100.00%	
National economic situation	Economic deficits	145	122	108	139	514
		28.21%	23.74%	21.01%	27.04%	100.00%

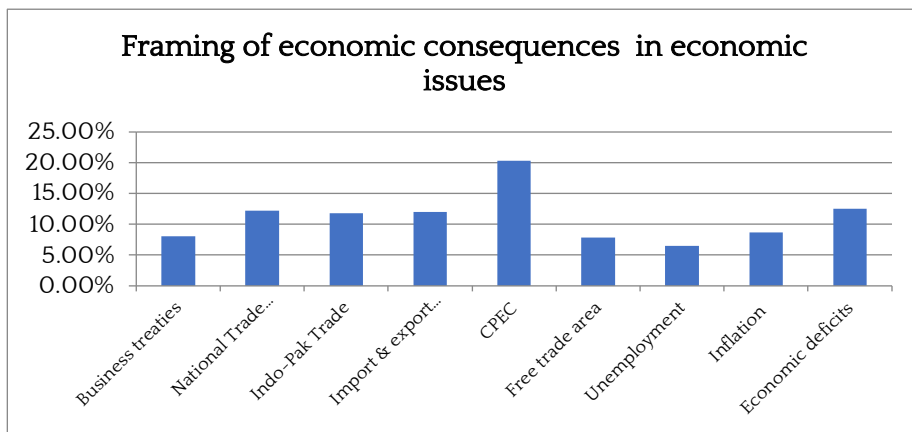
Table 2 shows that the news stories related to national trade worldwide", Indo-Pak trade, import & export, CPEC and economic deficits, were presented with economic consequences frames and were given higher coverage than other economic issues. *Times of India* gave more economic consequences framing to "National Trade Worldwide" news,

The Nation to the "CPEC" issue and *Times of India* to "Economic Deficits", as opposed to other papers in their respective news sub-categories' issues.

H: Both India and Pakistan's English dailies blame their economic consequences on each other.

Table 3.

Category	Sub-Categories	Issues	Times of India	The Hindu	Dawn	The Nation	Total	Total of sub-category	Total of category
Economic	Trade	Business treaties	89	99	79	61	328 (8.02%)	1312	4086
		National Trade worldwide	109	147	117	127	500 (12.24%)		
		Indo-Pak Trade	104	143	124	113	484 (11.85%)		
		Import & export issues	178	109	107	97	491 (12.02%)		
	Economic disputes	CPEC	176	209	201	244	830 (20.31%)	1640	
		Free trade area	103	93	63	60	319 (7.81%)		
		Unemployment	87	76	59	45	267 (6.53%)		
	National economy	Inflation	81	98	84	90	353 (8.64%)	1134	
		Economic deficits	145	122	108	139	514 (12.58%)		



Graph

Test and CI for Two Proportions

Variable/Issue	News Coverage	N	Sample P
CPEC (highest)	830	4086	0.203133
Unemployment (lowest)	267	4086	0.065345

Difference = p (1) - p (2)
 Estimate for difference: 0.137788
 95% CI for difference: (0.123310, 0.152265)
 Test for difference = 0 (vs ≠ 0): z = 18.65 p-Value = 0.000
 Fisher's exact test: p-Value = 0.000

Statistical Analysis

The statistical test application indicated that news related to CPEC, national trade worldwide, economic deficits, trade, and import & issues were given higher coverage of blaming on each other than other economic issues.

Discussion and conclusion

In the case of Pakistan and India, there is no promising exchange of social, economic and political collaborations rather miscommunication between the two countries through their media. Keeping these dominant scenarios in mind, the researcher analyzed the content of economic news published in English dailies in either side in different news categories, and sub-categories using relevant and dominant news frame; *economic consequences*.

News examples pertaining 'Economic Consequences Frame'

Times of India

"CPEC not only threatens India, it may also trigger Pakistan's collapse" (8th May, 2017).

The Hindu

"China caught in a corridor of uncertainty" (21st September 2016)

"By tying up the Uri attack with concern for CPEC, Beijing has shown that its views on terror are shaped by its interests."

Dawn

"Where does Pakistan stand as India chases digital dreams?" (1st October 2015).

The Nation

"Hindu extremism will hamper Indian Economy: NYT" (5th November 2015).

The only news on the front page of *The Nation* on 25th September 2016 narrated: in headline, "Modi Challenges Pakistan for a 'war on poverty'" and "India won't forget Uri attack" and "will isolate Pakistan in the world" in the subheadline. *The Nation*, in a news story on 26th September 2016 about Modi, stated in a headline, "Modi's vilification campaign slammed" and in lead paragraph: "India

patronizing terror in Pakistan and wants to divert world attention from IHK". *Times of India*, on 25th September 2016, stated "Modi's diatribe against Pak gives ammo to cadres" and further stated that "India will not leave any stone unturned in isolating the neighbor". *Times of India* on 26th September 2016 narrated that "PM (Modi) showed mirror to people of Pakistan: BJP" while *The Hindu* on the same date presented the same news as "Modi talks tough to Sharif, reaches out to Pak. People", and on 26th September 2016, "India can go to war with Pakistan". *Dawn*, 25th September 2016, stated it as "Modi interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs", and on 27th September 2016, it presented the news story as "India unwilling to resolve Kashmir dispute". These examples against the context of long-lasting enmity show how both the selected Indian and Pakistani dailies frame incidents of terrorism by accusing each other and presenting with war frames.

The dailies from both sides framed issues of Indo-Pak trade, business treaties between India and Pakistan and trade worldwide by directly and indirectly associating them with some hidden agendas of the enemy country. Indian newspapers framed the CPEC project most negatively in its headlines, subheadings, and news among other Economic news due to its economic prospective for Pakistan and threat to its own economy internationally. It was presented through 'economic consequences frame' as both sides defended and objected to the project due to its strong impact on their internal economies during the selected time period. It was covered by Indian media as Pakistan initiated CPEC with the intention to isolate India or to destroy Indian economic platforms. Whereas Pakistani media projected CPEC as their victory and, at times, blaming India for not letting it be a smooth project.

The researcher noted that the dailies from each side relied on their respective prospects and versions of facts and realities while presenting different cross border news. They did it in a way that the audience can be provoked to think if the neighbor country is behind the conflicts, business disputes, economic deficits, trade loss worldwide, failures of mega business plans and all the internal and external problems.

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