

## Journal of Peace, Development and Communication



Volume 08, Issue 02, April-June 2024  
 pISSN: 2663-7898, eISSN: 2663-7901  
 Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V08-I02-30>  
 Homepage: <https://pdfpk.net/pdf/>  
 Email: [se.jpdc@pdfpk.net](mailto:se.jpdc@pdfpk.net)

<b>Article:</b>	<b>(De) Escalatory Framing Analysis of Photographs of Terrorist Organisation in the Press of Pakistan</b>
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<b>Published:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Publisher Information:</b>	Journal of Peace, Development and Communication (JPDC)
<b>To Cite this Article:</b>	Ahmad, R. W., Khan, R. A., & Iqbal, Z. (2024). (De) Escalatory Framing Analysis of Photographs of Terrorist Organisation in the Press of Pakistan. <i>Journal of Peace, Development and Communication</i> , 08(02), 401–419. <a href="https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V08-I02-130">https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V08-I02-130</a>
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### **ABSTRACT**

This research focuses on analysing the representation of the Taliban conflict in four popular Pakistani dailies: Nawa-i-Waqat, Express, The News, and Dawn during three different regimes of Pakistan's government from 2004 to 2015. The research is concerned with the analysis of escalatory and de-escalatory images to examine the patterns of media reports on the events at different phases of the conflict. The observation confirms that with references to intensity of the war, there is more conflicts reflected in photographs identified. High tension symbolic pictures of the conflict accompanied with violent images were most commonly used, stressing the role of media in presenting the conflict merely as the act of violence. Positive peace messaging or what I refer to here as de-escalatory photos, largely encompassing effort to denote phases of war, were noted frequently during the containment and agreement phases though tremendously reduced during phases of escalation. This implies a change of editorial policies and possibly a change of tack in how media handles the reporting of conflict. There are also observations regarding newspaper's preference – Express prefers more of strong escalatory photos while Dawn is moderate. Indeed, it was possible to observe only miniscule shifts in the application of the general principles of peace journalism that are supposed to offer a more balanced perspective of the conflict. It therefore supports the notion the media plays an important role in informing the public on conflict. The type of images the media specialising in the conflict with the Taliban used in its outputs shifted with time and primarily focused on escalation because of the changes in the editors' concerns and audience interests.

**Keywords:** Photographs, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, (De) Escalation, Peace Journalism, Conflict

## **Introduction**

A study of war images and media, "War and media: Constancy and convulsion," implies that communication academics are interested in how conflict is represented in the media for various purposes. They generally attract much public attention and might impact public opinion since they are linked with fierce conflict and questions of life and death. Second, they emphasize the programmed professional standards and procedures to presenting highly heated information as a dangerous relic of contemporary news coverage. The outcomes of wartime reporting and image creation put theories of fairness and moderation, dependence on government "sources" and "press releases," avail to acts of ultimatum, collaboration with issues, standards in cinematography and recordings to the test. Thirdly, they unavoidably reflect cultural viewpoints and perpetuate cultural representational traditions (Mercier, 2005).

Another study on war images and media implies that such viewpoints commonly use ethnic identity and nationalistic mythology to portray disputes, underlining significant historical concerns with transnational and transnational linkages, regional development, and racial bigotry. The essence of government/press relationships, the contribution of political agreement and dissension in guiding media viewpoints, the sorting and resolving of pictures as documentary records, and the social formation of pictures as cultural icons, narrative provokes, and indicators of public memory are all things that can be learned from the nature of "war reporting" and "perception making" (Griffin, 2010).

Politicians and political goals make conscious efforts to combat, funnel, confine, or defer image production and transmission because it is generally believed that publication and televised pictures of war can influence public minds (images) and behaviors, conceivably strengthening or weakening public backing for war policy. These initiatives strive to create a cosmos of fine photography that is regarded as official information, as well as to promote and facilitate the circulation of favored sorts of pictures and conceal specific imagery from the public spotlight. The pictures that are most commonly recreated become the landmarks of well-established and wellknown historical scenery. They serve as triggers for a mythical underpinning structure that channels and instantiates specific accounts of a war's history and guides our interactions with successive and associated pictures (Adams, 2008).

As another scholar (Caruthers, 2008) explains, photographic pictures' substance and significance are not the results of accidental or dishonest capturing. Photographs of warfare and conflict do not merely arise for the people to evaluate arbitrarily, nor do they merely represent photographers' subjective experiences and interactions with actual combat occurrences. Public opinion and solidarity are never left to chance in a high-stakes endeavor like war. Every conflict inevitably involves rival propaganda, and no picture is immune to such tricks. An investigation of the circumstances in which a picture of conflict is created and the administrative processes through which it is circulated, chosen for publication, and replicated among media formats, must be included in any comprehensive analysis of the picture (Caruthers, 2008).

There does appear to be an intrinsic appeal to images of warfare and conflict. The prominence of modern army conflict video games as well as the importance attached to army conflict headlines image and video, the propagation and sale of numerous war visual books, the longevity of the battle film genre, and the achievement of cable television channels dedicated entirely to army films all attest to the general public's obsession with representations

of armed conflict. There is absolutely no question that this is related to reality that warfare photographs provide intensely thrilling and intrusive glances into theaters of carnage that are unfamiliar to most spectators' daily reality (Taylor, 1998).

Instances of captivity involving empirical study on visual media, whether largely qualitative or quantitative in design, provide encouraging indicators that the communication and emotional aspects of media pictures are now receiving persistent recognition and attention. The quantity of media content and framing research that place the visual aspects of reportage as their primary emphasis for study have increased significantly over the past five years, especially from researchers focusing on U.S. television and the previous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Along with critical theory and research explicitly focused on "televisuality" and providing information about war or violence (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2007), two major strategies in recent times can be approximately categorized as "visual framing assessment" (Parry 2010) and "visual rhetoric" (Hariman and Lucaites 2007).

A number of the research methods used by writers undertaking experimental studies of transmitted pictures and sounds throughout war and conflict draw to varied concentration on multimodal analytical methods and terms, 'reading' the picture for both literal denotations and potential (symbolic) meanings (Rampley, 2005). The focus of visual rhetoricians' study is not aesthetic considerations but rather "how the practices of visual culture are interwoven with processes of social power and ideology," which they define as the "strategic character of both visual communication and representation." According to the study's author, the repetitiveness of some forms of war imagery makes it interesting since "images utilized effectively in the people's arena represent not just views, emotions, and ideals of their producers, but also those of society as a whole. In her study of British and French media photojournalism from the Spanish Civil War,

Caroline Brothers express a common despair feeling. Brothers assert that the "abundance of pictorial records as window frames into the imagination of a particular era" comes from her exploration of "pictures of conflict not so much for what they portray as for how they were used, how their definitions were constructed" (Rampley, 2005).

### **Different Phases of conflict**

Mitchell, 2005 has described the stages of conflict such as pre-negotiation, negotiations, post agreements but he also explained that setting aside the factors that initiate conflicts, a central question for conflict analysts revolves around understanding the dynamics within the conflict system. Specifically, how can we effectively describe the escalation or de-escalation of a conflict? What characterizes a change that either amplifies or diminishes the intensity of a conflict? Furthermore, what elements contribute to the continuation of a conflict? He described the three major dynamics of violent conflict, "Escalation" as a Basic Dynamic", "Intensifying Dynamics" and "Diminishing Conflict Intensity". Bircan, Brück, and Vothknecht (2017) explained in their report different phases of war that no-war, pre-war, at war, early post war and late post war. So different scholars have divided the conflict into different phases which provide the background to explore the different phases of the TTP conflict according to circumstances available.

## **Background of the different Phases**

Information is the power and perspective that can shape public discourse. This way, you can change your views by consuming the media. Media emerge as powerful tool to inform the mass. In history evidences can be tracked that media use as tool to propagate the agendas of state during wars. Media and conflict has strong association with each other. Media can play a role in escalating the conflict which is demonstrated the potential of media to play negative role. Possible approaches and efforts to prevent the conflict from escalating further are at the forefront of peace journalism. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan is emerged as terrorist force in 2004 which is known as TTP.

TTP has done many deadly attacks in Pakistan. During this conflict over seventy thousand has given their lives. Different phases in this conflict occurred and state policy towards the conflicts go through different shifts so media, state and conflict has relationship during the running conflict. In this study Media, conflict and state policy towards the conflict has been analyzed.

## **The Conflict of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Different Phases**

Taliban conflict in Pakistan is long standing issue after the involvement of Pakistan in US war on terror since 2000. The TTP has its root in Pakistan onward from 2002 and made itself powerful combat terrorist organization over the period of time (H. Abbas, 2008; Z. Abbas, 2004). The tablian conflict has gone through many different phases. We have divided the phases into three different phases according to situation of conflict in different time periods. These phase are containment phase, agreement phase and intense war & victory phase.

### **1.1.1 Containment Phase (2004 to 2005)**

The roots of the TTP as an organization can be traced back to 2002 when the Pakistani army launched the operation to first extricate foreign militants and Afghans and Arab and Central Asian fighters started moving from Afghanistan to the neighboring tribal regions of Pakistan (Bajoria & Masters, 2010). Thus, as it has been described above, several tribal groups, which would form the TTP in 2004, were ready to quickly and efficiently settle in FATA and to attack militarily at the same time, while negotiating with Islamabad at the same time (Rana & Areas, 2008). No general military action against them was planned for 2004-2005, and the policy of containing them was decided to follow.

### **1.1.2 Agreement Phase (2006-2008)**

This phase is the continuation of the containment policy, because the State decided to give a chance for peace. From 2006 to 2009, many rounds of negotiations and agreements occurred. In 2006, the government got to witness the effective execution of the Kurram Agency peace agreement on irrigation water distribution (Report, 2006). The second was the Sararogha Peace Agreement, which was reached in February 2005 with Baitullah Mehsud, Nek's successor, which temporarily brought some stability to the situation in South Waziristan (Vira & Cordesman, 2011). The third and last cease-fire that should be imitated is the September 2006 Miranshah Peace Agreement between the terrorists and the administration in the neighbouring province of North Waziristan. The cease-of-operations followed the peace talks that began on February 7, 2008, after the TTP extended an olive branch to Musharraf (Al-Jazeera, 2008; BBC, 2008).

### **Intense War & Victory Phase (2009 to 2015)**

The foreign militants have been eliminated completely in Bajaur, a sensitive geographical region part of Afghanistan on 1st March, 2009 by the Pakistan Army as stated by Z. A Khan in his publication of 2012. Many Pakistanis witnessed militants beating a 17-year-old girl in Swat who was accused of having an affair according to video footage that was shown on news channels in March 2009 (A. Khan, Javed 2013). Armies in Bajaur district were subdued since organizational force was applied when there was clear violation of ceasefire. Black Thunder Storm, a strategic and operation airborne attack by the United Pakistan Armed Forces took place on 26 April 2009 aimed to capture Buner, Lower Dir, Swat and Shangla districts and to endeavor for the clearance of these areas from TTP. The operations conducted by joint military, naval and air force were quite well managed and facilitated (Sayah, 2009). After a spectacular triumph and rehabilitation of the entire Swat Valley, it was reported that on 16 June 2009, Pakistan military started concentration of major armed forces opposite South Waziristan's southern/ eastern periphery (Waraich, 2009). On June 17, 2009, the army demanded a fivefold increase in the current operation against TTP in the Swat Valley, and the fighting then moved to the hilly area near Mehsud's encampment. Baitullah Mehsud, the TTP leader, was killed by a drone assault in August 2009. After being detained, Chief Spokesman Maulvi Umar later revealed this (Mohmand, 2009). Hakimullah Mehsud rose to occupy the position (Bergen & Tiedemann, 2010).

Frontier Corps has been successful in capturing and stopping the terrorist powerbase town of Damadola in Bajaur since February 6, 2010 (Ali, 2010). The operation was initiated by the Pakistan armed forces on 23rd of March 2010 to cleanse the Orakzai Agency of terrorists (Dressler, 2011). Military officials have also stated that there are plans for an operation in North Waziristan sometime in the near future. The previous week, Pakistan's military said it had eliminated some 150 militants in the area. The definitive goal was stated to have all tribal areas cleared by June 2010 regarding development initiatives. On the 3rd of June Pakistan official stated that the government has recorded victory over Orakzai and Kurram militants (Joshua, 2010).

According to Garamone (2011), adding that the natural calamities and operations against any terrorism organizations has stretched Pakistani military forces to the limit by 2011, one third of the army got positioning in field for combat, another third along the Indian frontier, while the remaining was moving ready for operational deployment. On the 1st of May 2011, in a secret operation in Abbottabad, the mastermind of the al-Qaeda organization, Osama bin Laden, was assassinated at his residence in his compound by US Navy SEALs. Out of media the TTP affiliated groups pledged to avenge Osama's death on Pakistan army. Pakistan northwest is frequently hit with bombings from insurgents and in 2012, attacks killed thousands of people. The minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Bashir Ahmed Bilour, and eight other individuals were killed by the Pakistani Taliban on December 22, 2012, when they carried out a suicide bomber operation (K. Hussain, 2013). When Tehrik-e-Taliban / Lashkar-e-Islam and Ansar ul-Islam (government-aligned militants) clashed in the Tirah Valley of Khyber Agency, Pakistan, in January 2013, 80 militant and civilian remains were buried. Due to this, the Pakistan Army launched "Operation Rah-e-Shahadat" in order to drive out extremists and terrorists from the vital region and restore order in time for the May election (A. Khan, Javed 2013).

The Pakistan Army launched a concerted military operation on April 5, 2013, under the codename Operation Rah-e-Shahadat. The PAF and the Navy provided supporting roles by providing air assistance. In the Tirah Valley of the Khyber Agency, the armies and special operations forces units, reinforced by the Frontier Corps, are clearing TTP and LeI terrorists with the assistance of the Local Peace Committee (Aman Lashkar) (Orakzai, 2019). Following an attack on a military checkpoint in the city on December 18, 2013, the operation began in the Mir Ali region of North Waziristan on December 19. Helicopters, artillery, and gunships are among the main pieces of equipment used in the operation (Reuters, 2013).

In March 2014, factions within Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan began asserting control over the organisation. Early in April 2014, under the new leadership of Maulana Fazlullah, supporters of the TTP's deceased commander Hakimullah Mehsud engaged in combat in the Shaktoi region of South Waziristan and later in the same region. Following the June 8, 2014, IMU attack on Jinnah Airport, Pakistan launched Operation Zarb-e-Azb on June 15, 2014, targeting militant groups in North Waziristan, including the Haqqani network, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Al-Qaeda, Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Pakistan's Minister of Defence, Khawaja Asif, referred to 2015 as a "year of victory" due to the decrease in violence and the military operation (Editorial, 2015).

### **Literature Review**

Images are considered more attractive than text, because they require less cognitive effort and time to understand their general meaning (Kenney, 2010; Kosslyn & Pylyshyn, 1994). Visual framing, as similar to textual framing, was described as a process that 'involves the selective prioritization of certain images to perpetuate a particular understanding of consciously or subconsciously conducted events' (Huang & Fahmy, 2013). Research performed over the past decade have helped to portray conflict visually. Due to the realistic nature of the images, the framing that occurs through images is less common and potentially more effective in transmitting precise interpretations of news events than framing that occurs through print and/or written and spoken news reporting broadcast journalism (Fahmy & Neumann, 2012).

Griffin (2010) writes that visual images of war have been used since the early 20th century to give authority to conflict reporting. He argues that magazine representations of the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s caused unprecedented demands for visual reporting at the front line. The media produce various images of war from various cultural and political viewpoints has led scholars to claim the role of photographs in portraying and framing news events.

### **Media and Peace Journalism Approach**

It's been observed that war and media got nexus since ancient times to till now but in modern times, it has become almost beyond the boundaries of possible for powerful states to win wars without appending the information super highways that have entrap the globe (Bratić, 2006; Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2010). Media has played key role in both world wars, throughout cold war and the subjugation of African and Asian countries (Knightley, 2004). By studying the literature which showed that professional journalism has clear inclination towards the violence and war. The scholars of peace studies discussed that certain values which determine the news to chip in the conflict escalation. As Wolfsfeld (2001) said that news media have 'vested interest in conflicts'. In recent years, media analysts and academics have urged

journalists to favour peace journalism over war journalism in an attempt to foster a culture of peace (S. Hussain, 2016). Johan Galtung (1969), one of the main proponents of peace journalism as a plan for journalists covering war zones, saw peace journalism and war journalism as two competitive frameworks to cover a conflict. Galtung and Ruge first formulated the idea of international news and conflict reporting in 1965, without explicitly coining the term. Peace journalism has since developed as an alternative to countering mainstream war reporting, leading to this ground-breaking journalistic definition of peace journalism in the 1970s (Galtung, 1986).

No doubt that this is the furthest thing from reality, the progression of media and communication from print to still images to cinema are sometimes portrayed as occurring "without human interference" (Lippmann, 1922), with around-the-clock news sources, available connectivity via cellphones, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, and other platforms, it is almost unthinkable for an incident to go unnoticed and undocumented. However, the documentation of facts, truths, reality, events, and happenings cannot be disseminated without any record. Hence, media such as written documentation and images is one of the most used mediums to circulate information, as expressed by (Foceville, 2013) in his article "Imagery in the 21st Century."

Image is a crucial tool for humans to collect, interpret, and communicate information since it serves as the visual foundation for how they see the world and accurately portray natural landscapes. The tagline of Instagram, the largest image-based digital media network and the most widely used method of visual interaction in modern culture, is "Capture and experience the world's great moments." More than 1 billion people used Instagram globally in 2020, and more than 500 million photographs were published daily (Omnicores, 2021).

Images posted or updated on Instagram, Facebook, and other digital media platforms invariably hold digital "genes," showing that various modern optical technologies and the digital application of visual information have advanced significantly. Images are now the primary form of communication in people's daily routines. It is now impossible to ignore the new visual proposal known as "image social." A network application called social media has all interaction, genuineness, immediacy, and a range of communication methods. (Falavarjani et al., 2021). It has the qualities of timeliness, independence, adherence, and togetherness and provides an excellent environment for involvement and engagement. Images are increasingly the primary means of exchanging information on social media since they have a greater capacity for information transmission and communication across linguistic boundaries (Falavarjani et al., 2021). More academics focus on using photos in social media environments and user behavior.

By pointing out the inherent unwillingness of the average individual to use critical thinking, Lippmann, 1922 offers a pessimistic view of the typical democratic citizen in his findings in *Public Opinion*. The ability of people to interact meaningfully with problems that impact their everyday lives is criticized by (Lippmann, 1922) because they rely on "the pictures in their heads" or utilize symbols as shortcuts to sophisticated mental processes. The news media may help to promote involvement by giving trustworthy public signals to support the process of perception development. The perception built and developed by media is an image (Barbero, 2003)



The concepts of stereotypes and images in people's minds (Lippmann, 1922) outline the constraints of public interaction. He meant that the typical citizen, who cannot get firsthand knowledge of all the world's plurality, constructs or enhances notions about objects, individuals, and places in light of their knowledge of their actions, encounters, and experiences. The citizen creates a "pseudoenvironment," which is a portrayal rather than a mirror of fact, instead of taking part in natural settings. While this is a singular or constrained narrative for individuals and events, it serves as the person's reality for handling complicated challenges. As a consequence, there is a dependence on stereotypes and preconceptions that creates a triangle-shaped interaction between residents, where there is the accurate "picture of activity," how individuals perceive that scene, and then how one reacts to the incident depending on how they have pictured it to be (Gaitano, Lopez-Escobar, & Algarra, 2022).

What is an image's importance? Scholars from different nations and academic fields have studied the response to this question. Thus, it is only logical to suppose that the reports given will have a range of emphasis. As defined by (Boorstin, 1961) in his seminal book *The Image*, an image is "not only a symbol, a shape, a tagline, or a readily recalled visual" in the realm of communications and media. It is a well-produced personality profile of a person, group, business, thing, or function (Campbell et al., 2006). In branding, it is critical to keep an eye on, assess, and successfully implement the opinion of a country's present picture (Anholt, 2009) (Dinnie, 2010), focusing on the use of perception management. Strategic management is essential in reputation and risk communication because, as stated by (Aula & Mantere 2009), a firm's image is a precious asset that has to be managed effectively.

This paper looks into the crisis in "Eastern Ukraine" that is "framed" visually on digital media. The researchers use context investigating to look at how the war was portrayed and perceived in "pro-Ukrainian" and "pro-Russian" online groups at the height of the conflict in the summer of 2014. They do this using a vast optical data collection from the significant social networking site *Vkontakte*. The results show that "pro-Ukrainian" and "pro-Russian" internet groups frame the war differently. While the latter saw the conflict as an all-out war against the "Russian" people of "Eastern Ukraine," the former preferred to see it as a restricted military operation against local militants. According to the report, framing the battle on digital media encouraged the spread of opposing viewpoints and resulted in different expectations for how the Donbas war would play out in Russia and Ukraine. Overall, our findings imply that the use of digital media for "visual framing" of the conflict in the Donbas fostered the development of various and frequently antagonistic viewpoints on the conflict in "Eastern Ukraine" between internet users who supported Ukraine and Russia. Pro-Russian users perceived the crisis in Eastern Ukraine as an all-out war started by a revolutionary government of Ukraine, in contrast to pro-Ukrainian users who saw it as a restricted military operation against local militants. As a result of the spread of such conflicting views, many perspectives on the essence of the conflict and varying predictions for how the Donbas war would turn out have emerged (Makhortykh & Sydorova, 2017).

### **Perspectives of Peace Journalism**

Howard (2003) stated that "conflict-sensitive journalism" is one that is delicate to dispute by combining conflict analysis approaches with peace journalism. The primary research is that effective reporting can help reduce conflict by informing citizens and making them more educated and potentially safer by covering initiatives to encourage conflict

minimization. The journalist, sensitive to conflicts, will assess the situation and inform the public while outlining potential dispute resolutions. In contrast to peace journalism, conflict-sensitive reporting emphasizes conflict analysis while still aiming to record in a way that promotes dispute resolution.

By establishing the mainstream news standards and focusing on the issue of developing peace journalism where government and commercial media monopolies predominate in a global context, Tehranian (2002) examined peace journalism in the context of global conflict (Ibid. p.58). Most media ethics are professionally practiced at the individual level. However, Tehranian (2002) claimed that media ethics must be practiced at all institutional, national, and international levels in today's globalized society. Due to this, there needs to be an ethical standard for international media, and its content should be diverse to throw back the complexity and diversity of the universe. (Ibid. p.58). Influential media outlets dominate most of the stories, ultimately resulting in a hegemony of opinion; "peace journalism" and "media ethics" cannot flourish in such a setting (Ibid). This led Tehranian (2002) to conclude that nationally good journalism is a precondition for peace journalism (Ibid., 58) and that the voiceless must be given a platform for peace journalism to flourish globally (Ibid. p.79).

### **Perspective of Photograph in Peace Journalism**

"Peace journalism" is used in the media to prefer peace over war. For centuries, different scholars have been working on peace journalism so that they can encourage peace on social grounds. Johan Galtung was the first to explain to journalists the difference between "peace journalism" and "war journalism" regarding coverage of conflict. He divided these concepts into two different competing wireframes. In 1965, Galtung and Ruge first used this international news and conflict coverage concept. Peace journalism emerged as a surrogate and normative response to conventional War (Galtung, 1986, 1998, 1998) (Fahmy, 2012).

As explained before, "most of the literature on peace journalism, with a few exceptions, remains qualitative and normative" (e.g., Galtung, 2004; Galtung, Jacobsen, & Brand-Jacobsen, 2002; Hanitzsch, 2004, 2007; Hanitzsch, Loeffelholz, & Mustamu, 2005; Lynch, 2007, 2008; Lynch & Galtung, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). However, the research offers recommendations and a list of the essential standards for "peace journalism" (Galtung, 1986, 1998b, 1998c; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Lynch, 2007, 2008; Lynch & Galtung, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). According to Galtung (1986), "peace journalism" is superior to "war journalism" because it promotes peace and gives coverage to non-extremist and dynamic action." In simple words, the peace journalism notion emphasizes a more thorough and accurate way of presenting events by drawing on the principles of conflict analysis and change (Lynch, 2000). The objective is to advance the notion of peace and to present a more realistic account of all the sides to the fight while avoiding one-sided war reporting. (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005) (Fahmy, 2012).

Now, if we relate the use of photographs in peace journalism, it explores a new pathway. Let us consider two different types of visual imaging. One is the image of human suffering and death of people, while the other is the image of the resolution, harmony, treatment, and redevelopment. (Rodriguez, 2011). The distinction leads to the visual aspect of covering news events for forming a "peace journalism frame" versus a "war journalism frame" (Fahmy, 2012). The "peace journalism frame" boosts the sense of encouraging harmony, and the war journalism frame promotes the atmosphere of cruelty and brutality. As these factors affect

people's lives in a conflict environment, photographs in peace journalism strive to shed light on the structural and cultural impact of violence. Instead of viewing disputes as a straightforward duality, it seeks to portray them as including multiple parties and multiple goals (Fahmy, 2012).

### **Research Questions**

- RQ1: How did the visual reporting of the Taliban conflict by selected press outlets change across different phases of the conflict?
- RQ2: To what extent and in what ways do escalatory and de-escalatory photographs appear in selected press coverage?
- RQ3: How did the shift in government alter the editorial framing of Photographs within selected newspapers?

### **Methodology**

This study has employed content analysis of the visual images appearing in English and Urdu newspapers of Pakistan on war on terror. The unit of analysis will be an image or photo, a graphic illustration. Even the captions of the images were considered in the identification of themes and framing of the images. Selected model of coding was used by the past researcher in the visuals analysis of conflicts in war versus peace journalism (Fahmy & Neumann 2012).

### **Sample**

Every picture concerning the war on terror in English and Urdu Dailes which include Daily Dawn, The News, Daily Nawa-i-Waqt and Express from March 16, 2004 to June 14, 2015 when Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said this year “Year of Victory”. Some of the older data of few years was not available online on the websites of newspapers and the published photographs were also not available in online databases like lexisnexis. Thus, in the light of that problem, coding was carried out with the help of the newspapers archival available at the National Library of Pakistan, Islamabad. Variables are identified with the help of Johan Galtung model of Peace journalism and works of Hussain, Shahzad, and Ahmad (2023) of escalatory and de-escalatory framework and Fahmy and Neumann (2012) on Visual Communication.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is framing theory and content analysis will be used as method. Framing theory leads to identify the key frames used during coverage of war times. Many researchers have used a framing framework to clarify how Media produces news events. The core principle of framing applies to the actions of the mass media in choosing, highlighting and presenting some, but not all, details accessible to the public. The practice creates a framework for information inclusion and exclusion (Stone, Singletary, & Richmond, 1999). On the basis of these theoretical foundations, media investigator analyzed how the media uses frames to magnify specific dimensions of the events or individuals they cover. (Entman, 1993).

### **Conceptual and Operation Definitions**

#### **Strong Escalatory**

The photographs of military and Taliban in state of war such as battlefield photograph of military personal aiming gun and same is the case with Taliban, photographs of calling for force such as speech of leadership to join the organization.

**Strong De-escalatory**

The photographs in which peace depicted such as meeting for dialogue purpose and photographs of the signing agreement

**Weak Escalatory**

When mourning people, dehumanization and war protest shown in the pictures, these photographs will be considered in this category.

**Weak De-escalatory**

The photographs of restoring the grace of people such as open shops, people doing shopping etc, demonstrations and protests that are supposed to call for peace

**Results and Findings**

		Phase of Conflict			Total
		Containment Phase (2004-2005)	Agreement Phase (2006-2008)	Intense War & Victory Phase (2009-2015)	
Year of Publication	2004	40	0	0	40
	2005	52	0	0	52
	2006	0	64	0	64
	2007	0	46	0	46
	2008	0	52	0	52
	2009	0	0	67	67
	2010	0	0	74	74
	2011	0	0	63	63
	2012	0	0	77	77
	2013	0	0	76	76
	2014	0	0	90	90
2015	0	0	82	82	
Total		92	162	529	783

$X^2=1566.000^a$ ,  $p<0.000$

The table shows the distribution of the de-escalatory photos in four Pakistani newspapers, Nawa-i-Waqat, Express, The News and Dawn, for three different governments from 2004-2015. Looking at the period of Pervez Musharraf between 2004 to 2008, the focus on de-escalatory photos was quite high with a sum of 189 photos published in all newspapers. Nawa-i-Waqat had as its lead story 50 strong de-escalatory images and 1 weak, and Express had 31 strong and 8 weak. The News hired 38 strong and 16 weak photos and Dawn posted 34 strong and 11 weak photos. Nevertheless, the de-escalatory imagery usage was rather limited during the PPP government in the period 2009-2013 and totaled only 53 photos. The usage of Nawa-i-Waqat fell to 17 strong and 2 weak photos while Express uploaded 5 strong and 2 weak photos only. The News and Dawn employed 7 and 6 strong de-escalatory pictures, respectively and 8 and 4 weak de-escalatory pictures respectively. Pakistan Muslim league N government (2013 - 2015) also followed the same pattern, releasing only 12 de-escalatory photos in total.

Nawa-i-Waqat and Express both published 2 strong de-escalatory photos while The News published 2 strong and 3 weak photos. Such photos that can be considered as de-escalatory were not posted by Dawn during this period. This decrease in the use of de-escalatory photos, and especially strong ones, implies that there may have been a shift in the editorial concentration concerning the depiction of peace endeavors and conflict transformation during these three government regimes. The Chi-square test comparison results are as follows:  $X^2 = 1566.000^a$ ,  $p < 0.000$ , hinting at a relationship between the year of publication and the phase of conflict, meaning that the intensity and the type of conflict affected the number of articles published.

### Inferences:

- The results show a strong positive relationship between the stages of conflict and the number of Photographs posted. The first containment phase had moderate attention, then it increased during the agreement phase, and got the highest attention during the intensive war and victory phase.
- Lack of photographs within the agreement as well as the periods of furious war and victory during the containment (2004-2005) and the opposite shows the uniqueness of each phase of the conflict and the media attention on it.
- The number of photographs in the intense war & victory phase may be higher because there is high public interest, the media is covering the events closely, or the media houses may have decided to focus on war-related news.

This detailed study is beneficial in understanding the nature of conflict phases and media coverage as the news reporting process shifts according to the developments on the ground.

**Table 2** Year of Publication, Newspapers and Escalatory Photo

Escalatory Photo		Newspaper	Count				
			Nawa-i-Waqat	Express	The News	Dawn	Total
Strong Escalatory	Year of Publication	2004	3	0	2	1	6
		2005	1	1	2	1	5
		2006	3	2	0	2	7
		2007	0	2	0	2	4
		2008	4	2	0	1	7
		2009	11	6	12	8	37
		2010	13	9	9	7	38
		2011	10	5	10	9	34
		2012	17	10	8	13	48
		2013	9	13	13	11	46
		2014	19	11	17	15	62
2015	9	13	16	16	54		
Total		99	74	89	86	348	
Weak Escalatory	Year of Publication	2004	2	2	2	1	7
		2005	4	2	3	0	9
		2006	2	3	2	0	7

		2007	0	1	2	3	6
		2008	2	2	1	2	7
		2009	5	7	5	3	20
		2010	8	3	4	2	17
		2011	7	0	5	5	17
		2012	7	4	4	3	18
		2013	4	6	7	3	20
		2014	6	6	6	5	23
		2015	6	3	5	6	20
	Total		53	39	46	33	171
Total	Year Publication of	2004	5	2	4	2	13
		2005	5	3	5	1	14
		2006	5	5	2	2	14
		2007	0	3	2	5	10
		2008	6	4	1	3	14
		2009	16	13	17	11	57
		2010	21	12	13	9	55
		2011	17	5	15	14	51
		2012	24	14	12	16	66
		2013	13	19	20	14	66
		2014	25	17	23	20	85
		2015	15	16	21	22	74
Total		152	113	135	119	519	

Table 01 summarises the frequency of escalatory photos that appeared in four major Pakistani dailies which include Nawa-i-Waqat, Express, The News and Dawn from year 2004 to 2015, which may portray the picture of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) or similar conflicts in the Pakistani media. The most frequent type of images that can be characterized as strong escalatory, probably showing violence, conflict, or destruction, was published by Nawa-i-Waqat with the number of 19 photos in 2014. This, however, reduces considerably after the year 2010 to as low as 12 in 2015. The News also had a positive association with the dependent variable, with 17 strong escalatory photos in 2014 but later declining in the following years. However, Express and Dawn used strong escalatory photos with moderate frequency from 2 to 13 in Express and 1 to 16 in Dawn during the analysis period. Weak escalatory photos, possibly less explicit than strong ones, were employed even less frequently by all the newspapers. Nawa-i-Waqat only began to adopt them from 2008 with the number of supplements rising to 8 in 2010 and then dropping to only one in 2015. The News exhibition was the most erratic with a range of 0-7 weak escalatory photos per year. Express and Dawn therefore adopted the use of headers with 1 or 2 photo(s) being used in some years and none in other years. Finally, the sum of the strong and the weak escalatory photos reached the highest value in 2014, amounting to 85 photos. This could be interpreted as a possible increase in visually documenting the conflict or events connected to the conflict in that year. Nevertheless, the total number in question was fluctuating and depended on the year and newspaper. Nawa-i-Waqat was the first newspaper that effectively used powerful escalatory pictures but The News

overtook Nawa-i-Waqat in the use of total escalatory pictures in subsequent years. These findings show that there is no simple pattern of factors that determine the visual portrayal of the TTP or other similar conflicts in Pakistani newspapers. The weakness of escalatory photos in Nawa-i-Waqat and The News and the irregularity of their usage in all publications indicate possible changes in the editorial policies. This could be as a result of transformation in the approach that is used in reporting the conflict, alteration of perception on the conflict, or perhaps an attempt to create a specific perception of the conflict through the use of different images. This paper aims at identifying the patterns of media in framing and shaping discourse of major sociopolitical issues hence providing insights of media's role.

The analysis reveals several key trends:

**1. Increase in Coverage Over Time:** It is evident from the figure 4 that there has been a general rise in the photographs about the TTP especially from the year 2008. This could be due to the enhancement of the activities of the group in Pakistan during that particular period.

**2. Variation in Photo Usage:** Newspapers also have variations in the use of photos with regard to TTP related photos. Express is observed to have the greatest use of photographs with strong escalatory aspects, while Dawn has fewer strong escalatory photos but a spread across all the categories.

**3. Strong Escalatory Photos Predominate:** Looking at all newspapers combined and all years summed, the results for photos are stronger in terms of escalatory photos than non-escalatory or none. This may point towards the fact that the media tends to focus on the aspect of violence and war with the TTP.

**4. Nawa-i-Waqat's Unique Pattern:** This is where "Nawa-i-Waqat" is distinguishable from the rest of the newspapers, particularly the earlier years, for its relatively limited application of strong escalatory photos. This could mean that it has different editorial policies or target audience than the other newspapers.

#### **Conclusion:**

The analysis of the selected Pakistani newspapers Nawa-i-Waqat, Express, The News, and Dawn shows that there are certain tendencies of media coverage of the Taliban conflict depending on the specific phase of the conflict. Based on the study of the frequencies of the escalatory and de-escalatory events between 2004 and 2015, some changes in the focus of editorial content and the interest of the public can be outlined.

It is observed that the level of the conflict has a positive correlation with the level of photographs shared. In the containment phase of the campaign (2004-2005), 92 de-escalatory photos were published, which is moderate coverage. This rose further in the agreement phase that covered the period from 2006 to 2008 with 162 photos and rose to the highest in the period of intense war and victory in 2009-2015 with 529 photos. The increase in the level of coverage of conflicts corresponds to the increase in the level of public interest and media attention to this kind of events, which in its turn points to the media as reflecting and influencing public opinion depending on the intensity of conflicts.

Thus, the analysis shows that the usage of de-escalatory imagery varies across different government regimes. The year 2004-2008 marked by General Pervez Musharraf's rule saw a higher number, 189 to be precise, of de-escalatory photos. This period recorded Nawa-i-Waqat and The News as the most prominent newspapers in the dissemination of peaceful images. But the successive PPP government (2009-2013) saw a sharp decline to fifty three photos which

may be due to change in the policy of the newspaper or altered interest among the public. The PML-N government that was in power from 2013 to 2015 also followed the same trend with only 12 de-escalatory photos published. This trend implies that policy changes and decisions of the government as well as editorial decisions determine media coverage of conflicts, meaning that the portrayal of peace and conflict transformation initiatives is not constant.

The four newspapers also displayed different tendencies when it comes to the application of escalatory and de-escalatory images. For instance, the Nawa-i-Waqat newspaper was using many strong escalatory images before 2010 and was comparatively less frequent afterwards. The News, for instance, kept on using relatively high levels of strong escalatory photos until the year 2014. Express and Dawn had a moderate and rather stable frequency of using strong and weak escalatory photos in their publications. This is because the two newspapers have different editorial policies and audiences that they target and, therefore, conflict is presented visually differently.

### **Trends in Escalatory Photo Usage**

The major tendency is to identify the domination of the strong escalation photos, especially during the periods of the high level of the conflict. For example, the frequency of the strong escalatory images peaked in 2014 across all newspapers as the conflict reached its peak and the media focused on the violent aspects of the conflict. This trend might suggest that the media pays more attention to the sensational and visually striking events to draw the public's attention and demonstrate the intensity of the conflict.

This is clear from the patterns in Nawa-i-Waqat especially the minimal usage of strong escalatory photos in the early years as compared to other newspapers. The sporadic use of weak escalatory photos in all publications suggests changes in the editorial policies, which might be due to altered views about the conflict or specific efforts to control public opinion.

### **Implications and Future Research**

This extensive research presents a clear understanding of the media's functions in constructing and influencing the public opinion on significant sociopolitical issues. The changes in the usage of escalatory and de-escalatory images depict the shifting trend in conflict coverage and the role of political decisions and audience interest. The trend could be analyzed in detail in the future, and the rationale for the editors' decisions and their effect on public opinion and policies could be investigated.

Knowing these patterns is essential in order to analyze the overall media approaches used and their effects on conflict transformation and peace building. Thus, this study highlights the need to engage in close scrutiny of the media content as a way of comprehending the manner in which conflict discourses are packaged and delivered to audiences.



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