



Media Framing of Pakistan-United States Relations in Pakistani and American Elite Opinion Journalism: A Comparative Analysis Pre and Post PTI Government

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Submission: July 05, 2026 Revised: July 20, 2026 Accepted: August 03, 2026 Available Online: August 17, 2026 Keywords: Pak-US relations; media framing; the elite newspapers; opinion journalism; Pakistan; United States; government of PTI; foreign-policy discourse. Corresponding author: Muhammad Mubashir Ikram Email: capcaninternational@gmail.com	The paper discusses the manner in which the elite newspapers in Pakistan and America illuminated the relationship between Pakistan and the United States between the era of the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and the recent era. It is based solely on the study data, study methodology and study findings and does not include any new empirical findings to the study data. The analysis is based on the expanded opinion-ecosystem corpus of 154 retrieved candidate records that includes 98 strong-include units as the primary corpus of analysis. The chosen sources included Dawn, The News International in Pakistan and The New York Times and The Washington Post in the United States. The authors employed quantitative and qualitative content analysis, which was based on inductive frame development with the assistance of frequencies, cross-tabulations and chi-square testing. The study has determined that there are five main frame families; geopolitics/great-power alignment, security/counterterrorism and Afghanistan, sovereignty/anti-interventionism, economy/trade/IMF, and democracy/governance/rule of law. This article previews the cross-national comparison. Pakistani news outlets stressed national interest, autonomy, mistrust, sovereignty and pragmatic involvement. The U.S. press element, which is predominant in the working corpus by The Washington Post, introduced Pakistan in the light of security, Afghanistan, democratic norms, press freedom and press strategic orientation. The greatest frame in total was geopolitics with 40 out of 98 units rated strong or 40.8. The frames that each had were security (24 units), sovereignty (24 units), economy/IMF (12 units). democracy/rule of law had smaller analytically relevant frames (12 units). The outlet-by-frame test was not statistically significant on conventional level, $\chi^2(12) = 19.21$, $p = .084$ but Cramer $V = .26$ showed that it carried a practical difference of moderate magnitude. This paper concludes that there was no mere agreement versus disagreement regarding the view of Pak lead elites and their American counterparts regarding the Pak-US relations, but a construct of the relationship by each press system by each national position. The study constraint that valence was not yet coded and, hence, sentiments conclusions cannot be reported is maintained also in the analysis.

Introduction

The relations between Pakistan and United States have hardly been described as a bilateral relationship. The relationship has traversed Cold War alignment, the Soviet-Afghan war, sanctions, the post 9/11 War on Terror, controversy over drone-strikes, the Abbottabad operation, the Salala incident, Afghanistan peace diplomacy, U.S.-China rivalry and the Pakistan politics after 2022 political transition. This article is based on the study that these diplomatic changes took a meaning in the public with the help of media frames. The elite

newspapers did not present that Pakistan and United States collaborated, disagreed or recalibrated. Their opinion pages chose a specific dimension of the relationship, put them in themes, and priority some of them over others. The current paper will concentrate on the cross-national aspect of the latter process, be it the comparison between the Pakistani and the American elite newspapers as a part of the study corpus.

Of particular importance is the period that the study covers. Nationalist foreign-policy talk and untroubled security collaboration were united in the PTI government of Imran Khan, August 2018 to April 2022. The government tried to be involved with the us regarding the peace process in Afghanistan, yet it also focused on ensuring non-alignment and strategic independence, and denying bases when the U.S annexed Afghanistan. Following the no-confidence vote of April 2022 and the post-PTI transition, Pak-US relations has entered another contentious phase. The stories of sovereignty, U.S. interference accusations, economic crisis, IMF negotiations, democratic legitimacy and diplomatic reset efforts were brought to the fore. These political situations gave a solid foundation to the study of the representation of the same relationship within the institutional and national lens of the opinion of the Pakistani and American elites.

The most important question of this paper is not that the newspapers in a particular country were positive and mostly negative in the other country. Even the study notes the risk of such a simplification since valence was not coded in the working file. Rather, it is in how the newspapers framed the relationship in a thematic manner as addressed in this paper. The difference is important since the frame is not the same as sentiment. The frame of sovereignty might be critical, defensive, pragmatic or ambivalent. Engagement may manifest as dependency, necessity or opportunity in an economy/IMF frame. A security frame can denote Pakistan as helpful, dangerous, indispensable or limited. The paper adheres to the methodological discipline of the study by maintaining the distinction and does not make unfounded sentiment claims.

The article makes three contributions. To start with, it will provide the comparative outlet findings of the study in the form of a research-paper. Second, it explicates how the Pakistani and American newspapers came together concerning geopolitics and diverged their position. Third, it demonstrates how the opinion ecosystem - editorials, columns, opinion articles and op-eds - has a more productive place to work on professionally in terms of the analysis of elite discourse on foreign-policy than official unsigned editorials. The paper thus reflects on elite opinion journalism as an interpretive space where the foreign-policy meaning is worked out as opposed to being the mere mirror image of diplomatic developments.

Literature Review

The study contextualizes the research in the framing theory, political communication and international relations. Comprehending how media choose select and organize realities has been explained by Framing theory. This formulation by Entman (1993) is central since it establishes functions of framing to include defining the problem, causal interpretation, moral judgement and treatment recommendation. These functions are particularly crucial in foreign-policy discourse. An event occurring between two (i.e., by having a partner or depending on something) can be considered an example of bilateral event, as it can be a sign of partnership; it may be strategic need or democratic anxiety depending on the interpretive framework in which it appears. Scheufele (1999) also views framing as a media effect theory that influences the way individuals frame the issue of the mass media, whereas Pan and Kosicki (1993) emphasize framing as a discursive and a textual practice.

The literature study conducted within the study also highlights the point that the elite newspapers have a very specific influence in the process of international perception-building. Opinion pages may serve as institutional assertions of editorial opinion, elite commentaries, and as occasional surrogations of public diplomacy. The study uses an agenda-setting and foreign policy literature such as the argument of agenda-setting by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and subsequent studies on media representations at the international relations. Elite newspapers are important since they are consumed (read) by the educated masses, policy makers, opinion formers and other media houses. The way that they frame foreign relations can thus affect domestic discourse and transnational understanding.

Pak-US media coverage studies have been prone to coverage of crises of national security, drone attacks, the War on Terror, the killing of Osama bin Laden, and U.S. aid. As an example, Saleem and Mian (2014) explored the Pakistani press presentation of U.S. policy towards South Asia and revealed that Pakistani newspapers vary in how they present U.S. policy, such as the drone attacks, USAID and Afghanistan. The other studies mentioned in the study such as that of Khan and Safder, Shabir and colleagues, Riaz, and Yousaf reveal that security, instability, strategic utility or mistrust of U.S. and Pakistani media has been placed on Pakistan many times. This existing literature creates a context where Pak-US relationships are not often regarded as the routine of the diplomatic process.

Meanwhile, the study presents a gap. Previous research frequently primal isolates a nation, a crisis, an administration or a policy matter. They also tend to give more precedence to news reporting or official editorials. The current study broadens the parameters as it compares the Pakistani or American perspectives of opinion journals of the elite in the two political times: the PTI government and the post-PTI transition. A five-frame typology is also formulated upon the study corpus and not the insistence of a predetermined generic frame scheme on its own. What comes out is a more contextualized understanding of the relation between Pakistan and the United States according to the perceptions they had in geopolitics, security and sovereignty, economy and democracy.

The literature also indicates that there is national standpoint issues. The foreign intervention, national dignity and strategic dependence are usually put into the background of the Pakistani media discourse. American media rhetoric can assess Pakistan based on security cooperation, terrorism, Afghanistan, democratic governance, nuclear issues, and nuclear alignment options. These leanings are not actually editorial preferences. They are representative of various historical memories and policy stances. To Pakistan, the United States is a great ally, whose intervention is linked to aid, coerciveness, military coordination, and sovereign insecurity. In the case of the United States, Pakistan can be considered as understood through regional security, Afghanistan, nuclear risk, China and governance. This contrast of position is the conceptual framework of the comparative analysis presented in this paper.

Theoretical Framework

The article utilizes framing theory as propagated in the study. Framing is regarded as the process with the help of which media choose this or that element of the perceived reality and reveal it as more important in a piece of communication. This study embraces the notion of framing more as a theory of media discourse rather than a psychological perspective. Elite opinion writings are thus treated as structured readings that specify the Pak-US relationship, determine the causes of diplomatic strife or coordination, enact a decision on norms, and give a prescriptive strategy.

The study also connects the framing theory to comparative media studies. The bilateral relationship can be the same depending on the difference in national, institutional as well as political environment in which newspapers are run. Pakistani sources are contextualized in a situation where the U.S relations are historically based on the sovereignty issues, military reliance and Afghanistan, China and domestic legitimacy. The U.S. outlets exist within a framework in which the Pakistani state is frequently measured against the interests of the U.S. foreign-policy, counterterrorism, democratic traditions and regional policy. The framework predicts convergence and divergence, then; convergence in the sense that all the outlets are reacting to the same general relationship, and divergence in the sense that they are perceiving it through different frames of different nations.

The five frame families are the principal categories of analysis of the article. Geopolitics/great-power alignment involves those frames that define Pak-US relations in the framework of China, CPEC, India, Russia, global shifts and strategic balancing. Security/counterterrorism and Afghanistan means Afghanistan peace, terrorism, withdrawal of the U.S., bases and regional stability. Autonomy, dignity, mistrust, alleged interference and non-alignment are all referred to as sovereignty/anti-interventionism. Economy/trade/IMF means aid, trade, investment, and economic stabilization and IMF-related vulnerability. Democracy/governance/rule of law is related to elections, rights, press freedom, legitimacy and democratic credibility. Such categories were inductively generated based on the study corpus, and applied to categorize the quantitative and qualitative results.

Frame salience and valence are also differentiated in this theoretical framework. Frame salience is whether a frame is visible and how strong it is in the corpus. Valence deals with how a text would judge the relationship either in a positive, negative or neutral way. In the working file of the study, valence was set as To code, and, therefore, this article does not show the sentiment percentages or the statement of the overall positivity or negativity. It, instead, speaks of thematic framing, outlet standpoint and frame distribution meaning. It is crucial since it will keep the integrity of results safe and the paper will not transform the frame categories into inexplicable attitudes.

Methodology

The article uses the study methodology: qualitative and quantitative content analysis of texts (opinions of elites in newspapers). Dawn and The News International publications of the Pakistani and The New York Times and The Washington Post of the United States were selected. These sources have been chosen as the study considers them to be elite and policy-relevant English-language newspapers that have a role in discussing state and foreign policies. Dawn is an old policy-focused English Pakistani daily that is heavily read by the elite. The News International is considered to be a national-circumference Pakistani paper with high political applicability. The New York Times and The Washington Post are discussed as one of the big U.S. elite media, whose opinion pages have an impact on the discussion of foreign-policy.

This is over a period of time (August 2018 to February 2024). To compare the two periods, the study separates this period into two, the PTI period of August 2018-April 2022 and the post-PTI period of April 2022-February 2024, which includes the subsequent PDM/Shehbaz Sharif government and caretaker transition. This division is at the center on the fact that the study is focused upon media framing at and after the time of the PTI government.

The individual opinion-ecosystem item is the unit of analysis of the extended working corpus. The study presentation and Chapter 4 descriptions indicate that such genres as Editorial/Opinion, Column, Opinion and Op-Ed were included. The corpus is thus not restricted to the unsigned formal editorials but the study does acknowledge the need methodologically to determine the difference between institutional editorials and signed commentary in further refinement. This article has retained the broadened opinion-ecosystem strategy since it was applied in the Teaming Chapter 4 working analysis.

More retrieved candidate records involved 154 records present in the working corpus. Of these, 98 were included - strong and used as the primary analytic corpus; 55 included as Screen - medium and kept to check sensitivity or robustness; and 1 was discarded. The empirical foundation of the results presented here are the 98 strong units. The frequencies of the strong corpus were in the following: The News, 42 units; Dawn, 31 units; The Washington Post, 23 units; and The New York Times, 2 units. The study clearly discusses the very small New York Times count as an archive-retrieval constraint instead of a solid indicator of editorial attention.

Coding was done by outlet, period, year, article type and primary frame. Frame typology: this was an inductive approach: the typology appeared based on article titles, types, outlet metadata, initial coding notes and screening decisions, and was reconciled against the project codebook. The quantitative approach involved frequencies, percentages, cross-table and chi-square. The article preserves the study's reported statistical results: period by primary frame, chi-square(4, N = 98) = 30.30, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .56; outlet by primary frame, chi-square(12, N = 98) = 19.21, $p = .084$, Cramer's V = .26; and outlet by period, chi-square(3, N = 98) = 8.76, $p = .033$, Cramer's V = .30.

Essential evidentiary warnings are also taken into account in the methodology. The study documents that the verification level of all the records was not the same: some were official complete text, some official page index records, some metadata/snippet records and two cross-verifications. The valence field was labeled to code to the full candidate and strong corpora. In accordance with this, positive, negative or neutral tone distributions are not reported in this paper. It does not, too, include invented quotations, and has headline-level exemplars merely when they were used as analytical examples in the study.

Table 1. Corpus distribution by outlet and screening status

Outlet	Strong	Medium	All retrieved	Strong share
Dawn	31	15	47	66.0%
The News	42	15	57	73.7%
The Washington Post	23	22	45	51.1%
The New York Times	2	3	5	40.0%

Findings

The first discovery is with regard to corpus distributions. The Pakistani newspapers provided more coverage in the strong corpus as compared to the U.S outlets. The News furnished 42 units out of 98 strong or 42.9 percent and Dawn furnished 31 or 31.6 percent units. Washington Post added 23 units or 23.5 per cent. The New York Times did its part by contributing 2 units, or 2.0 percent. This allocation implies that the best outlet based findings may be drawn on The News, Dawn and The Washington Post. The New York Times is listed in the data set, yet it is handled with care by the study, since the number of outlets is too low to make any strong generalization.

The second conclusion is regarding general frame salience. Geopolitics/great-power alignment The biggest frame family in the strong corpus, with 40 units, or 40.8 percent. Security/counterterrorism and Afghanistan and sovereignty/anti-interventionism each seemed 24 times or 24.5 times, respectively. Economy/trade/IMF was mentioned in 7 units, or 7.1 percent. Democracy/governance/rule of law came out in 3 questions (or 3.1 percent). This distribution depicts that Pak-US relations would most frequently be viewed in the broader strategic environment as opposed to bilateral diplomacy of a narrow scope.

The third discovery is on the patterns of outlets per frame. In the strong corpus, Dawn registered 17 units, geopolitics, 9 units, sovereignty, 3 units, security, 2 units, economy and no unit, democracy. According to this tendency, Dawn opinion discourse tended to put the Pak-US relation in the framework of regional power orientation in such aspects as China, CPEC, India, Kashmir and foreign-policy autonomy. The News reported 16 geopolitics units, 11 sovereignty units, 10 security units, 4 economy unit and one democracy unit. This created a wider dissemination among the key Pakistani frames and echoed strategic and domestic-political interests. The Washington post was found to have 5 geopolitic units, 11 security units, 4 sovereignty units, 1 economy unit and 2 democracy units. The fact that its biggest frame was security/counterterrorism and Afghanistan is also in line with the U.S. press propensity in the study to judge Pakistan through the prism of Afghanistan, regional stability, counterterrorism and governance norms. The New York Times had 2 units on geopolitics and none in the two other types of the frames, however, the trend cannot be used to draw strong conclusions about Time per se due to a limited number.

The outlet-by- frame chi-squared test failed to produce a statistically significant result at the .05 level: chi-square (12, N = 98) = 19.21, $p = .084$. Nevertheless, the Cramer V of 0.26 reported could show a moderate practical difference. Outlet differences are thus taken into account in the study. It does not project any statistically significant outlet derived by frame relationship but this acknowledges significant descriptive differences. Pakistani outlets had a greater representation in sovereignty and economy/reset discourse whereas The Washington Post had a great representation in security and governance related framing.

The fourth finding is related to article category. The strong corpus did not consist of a single form of opinion text. The editorial/Opinion items had its fair share of 49 units or 50.0 percent. The columns took 45 units, or 45.9 percent. There were 2 units or 2.0 percent in

opinion category as well as the Op-Ed category. This is significant because the corpus shows an opinion ecosystem as opposed to institutional only editorials. This is seen in the study as helpful methodologically since it represents a more encompassing discourse on elite but it is also seen as having article-type heterogeneity as a strength that can be improved on going forward.

The fifth result touches on convergence among press systems. Geopolitics as the largest frame was used the most that occurred in all four outlets. It implies that the opinion of both Pakistanis and Americans in their elite became aware that Pak-US relations were inherent in wider strategic frameworks. The association was not viewed as bilateral give-and-take between Islamabad and Washington. It was associated with China, CPEC, India, Kashmir, Russia, American withdrawal in Afghanistan and world power changes. The importance of this convergence is that it indicates that there was a structural comprehension of the relationship between the two press systems despite them highlighting various implications.

The sixth result relates to national standpoint divergence. The Pakistani newspapers were more inclined to put the relationship in the framework of autonomy, sovereignty, national interest, and pragmatic engagement. The study notes that sovereignty/anti-interventionism is a key Pakistani issue, particularly with regards to the Absolutely not position of Imran Khan, the no-bases discussion, and the allegations of foreign intervention in the post 2022 governmental elections. Economy/IMF frame was also mentioned by the News and Dawn in the period of the post-PTI, relating the diplomatic reset to the financial vulnerability and stabilization. The Washington press as the corpus used was not as focused on security, Afghanistan, counterterrorism, press freedom and democrat credibility as American opinion discourse is.

The seventh result is the constraints of the tone analysis. This study had positive, negative and neutral categories of coding conceptually, whereas the corpus file attached identified valence as To code. Thus, there is no empirical form of the valence distribution. Such an important finding alone is important since it demonstrates methodological transparency. What one can easily say and cannot substantiate is that the Pakistani newspapers were negative and the U.S. newspapers were critical or that economy frames were positive and sovereignty frames negative. At this point the study does not lend credence to such allegations. The conclusion that is defensible is concerning frames and standpoint, rather than percentages of sentiment.

Table 2. Primary frame distribution by newspaper

Primary frame	Dawn	The News	W. Post	NYT	Total
Geopolitics/great-power alignment	17	16	5	2	40
Security/counterterrorism & Afghanistan	3	10	11	0	24
Sovereignty/anti-interventionism	9	11	4	0	24
Economy/trade/IMF	2	4	1	0	7
Democracy/governance/rule of law	0	1	2	0	3

Table 3. Statistical tests reported in the study

Test	chi-square	df	p	Cramer's V	Interpretation
Period x primary frame	30.30	4	< .001	0.56	Strong frame shift
Outlet x primary frame	19.21	12	.084	0.26	Moderate outlet difference
Outlet x period	8.76	3	.033	0.30	Distribution differs by period

Discussion

The comparative results demonstrate that the Pak-US relations were characterized by the geopolitical awareness shared and country-specific priorities. The broad common frame was given by geopolitics. The relationship was seen by all the four newspapers though there were uneven outlets of distribution though it was a component of broader strategic change. This is indicative of the fact that the relations of Pakistan with the United States would not be discussed outside of China, India, Afghanistan, Russia and evolving global order. The eminence of geopolitics validates the study argument that the relations between the Pak and US cannot be said to be contained on their own; they are entrenched in the influences of the great-power alignment.

Simultaneously, the Pakistani outlets viewed this strategic environment in terms of the autonomy and national interest. The focus of Dawn on geopolitics and sovereignty implicates a tendency of editorial rationale that locates the decisions of Pakistan to a regional balancing and independence in foreign-policy. The News was more widely distributed geopolitically, sovereign, security and economic, thus being of special significance in grasping the opinion ecosystem. The frame of post-PTI economy/reset, which is evident in The News and Dawn demonstrates that there was no opinion among Pakistani elite only about anti-Americanism or sovereignty. It was also aware of the pressures of reality brought about by economic crisis, IMF negotiations, and the necessity of diplomatic repair.

The American press element worked the opposite way. The prevalence of the security and governance-related frames in the Washington Post reveals that Pakistan has frequently been understood in terms of U.S. policy interests: Afghanistan, counterterrorism, stability in

the region, media freedom and democracy. This does not necessarily cause the U.S. press to be hostile. The study further contends that U.S. opinion discourse places Pakistan in the U.S. strategic and normative expectations. Where Pakistani outlets frequently query how Pakistan may maintain a state of independence and functional usefulness, American outlets, ask how Pakistan impacts on regional security, democratic zeal and U.S. policy ambitions.

This difference contributes to the explanation of the fact that the same event can evoke different frames. The intervention of the U.S in Afghanistan by Imran Khan, the subsequent withdrawal of the U.S, the no-base argument, the cipher story, the U.S congress interest on the Pakistani elections, and the IMF-based stabilization can all be viewed in different perspectives. Pakistani sources can preempt sovereignty, dignity and internal validity. American outlets can preempt counterterrorism, administration, rights or tactical faithfulness. The readings are both based on the identical event, but they have a different definition of the problem.

The results also support the effectiveness of the opinion-ecosystem approach. The reason why formal editorials matter is that they may reflect the stance of an institution, whereas columns, and op-eds are also a type of elite debate on foreign-policy. This wider talk is embodied by the increased corpus of the study. But, the text-like blend must be taken with care. A column may be signed or unsigned, an editorial may not be. The categories can be classified in a more systematic way in the future version of the research, yet the current method has its justified in the process of recognizing repetition of frames throughout the discourse of opinion of the elite.

The non-significant outlet-by-frame mild effect is significant too. The test value of .084 does not allow making a forceful assertion of statistically significant outlet differences at the traditional .05 level. However, the differences in the description and the V by Cramer of .26 indicate that outlet standpoint is significant. The pattern might be explained by a more imbalanced corpus, particularly in case more New York Times retrieval is added. A cautious formulation has thus been employed in the study: outlet differences are evident and have practical interest, but are not supported by the existing working corpus as to overconfident inferential assertions.

Lastly, the missing valence coding alters the interpretation of the results. Lack of valence data does not undermine the frame analysis; it eliminates the potential to make some other sort of claim. Interpretive frames that were applied to the paper can be said to be sovereignty, security, economy, democracy and geopolitics. It cannot comment on the count of positive, negative or neutral items with regards to the United States or the bilateral relationship. This difference must be carried to whatever publication in future since confounding frame with sentiment would translate to less methodological integrity of the study.

Corpus Transparency and Comparative Validity

One of the strongest points of the study is that it documents the condition of the corpus and does not pass it off as a finished census. This is important to relational research in that the difference in outlets is easy to exaggerate in instances where the retrieval condition is not even. The strong corpus consists of 98 items, however, they are not equally represented in all newspapers. The News and Dawn collectively represent 73 strong units whereas The Washington Post represent 23 and The New York Times represent 2. Such a haphazard comparative paper may take such dispersion as a sign that Pakistani newspapers were much more concerned about Pak-US relations than U.S. newspapers. That conclusion is not allowed in the study. It considers the New York Times count as a constraint on retrieval and advises a broader-skilled archive searching before concluding affirmations about to the Times.

The impact of this transparency to the interpretation of the outlet-by-frame test is as well. The p value of the chi-square of outlet by primary frame is .084. It is close enough to indicate outlet differences might be significant but with a moderate Cramer V of .26, but not the traditional .05. The most plausible explanation is thus conservative: the working data indicate evident descriptive variations between outlets, and the correlate of those variations with the qualitative interpretation of national standpoint, though the existing corpus does not permit a firm statistical assertion that every outlet has a radically different distribution of frames. Such language is significant as it guard against exaggerating the paper with evidence.

The table of verification-level is also critical. There were 60 strong records, 2 strong records were official full text/index, 17 strong records were official indexed pages, 17 strong records were official metadata/snippet records and two records were secondarily confirmed. This variety of records can help the study map corpus structure and define the likely types of frames but direct quotation and ultimate valence coding demands verification of full-text. To be published, this would entail that exemplary headlines like Absolutely not, Countering a narrative, A reset in ties?, Does Pakistan really need Uncle Sam? are useful as analytical tools to indicate where a full-body-text extract can be found but they should never be regarded as substitutes unless the entire article has been confirmed as a true one.

Validity is as well impacted by the decision to involve the entire opinion ecosystem. The opinion dynamic is broader than institution editorials. They comprise unsigned editorials, signed columns, opinion pieces and op-eds. This wider view is useful in that the Pak-US relations can be frequently discussed by editorial boards, former diplomats, security analysts, and policy commentators and political writers. Using the corpus of formal editorials might lose most of the elite interpretive field. The method also, however, should be well labeled. A signed column does not have the same institutional weight as a newspaper editorial. The article thus views the corpus as the opinion of the elite, but not a pure editorial-board corpus.

Such transparency choices ensure that such decisions enhance the analysis instead of weakening it. They demonstrate that the study manipulates numbers. It acknowledges that corpus building is identified with an empirical argument. The comparative assertions of the study are best where the strongest evidence is found, the overarch of geopolitics, the significance of security and sovereignty, the focus of the Pakistani on autonomy and pragmatism, the U.S. press focus on security and governance, and the necessity of caution on The New York Times and valence. By clarifying these boundaries, the paper is true to the study and does not give unjustified findings.

Contribution to Framing Research

The paper has three contributions to the frame interviewing research. First, it demonstrates how an inductive frame typology is able to describe the foreign-policy discourse more accurately than generic ones. Some general frames like conflict, responsibility and human interest still hold, but the connections between the Pak and US during and after PTI needed new more specific types: geopolitics/great-power alignment, security/counterterrorism and Afghanistan, sovereignty/anti-interventionism, economy/trade/IMF, and democracy/governance/rule of law. These categories represent the real discursive pressures in the corpus hence maintaining the local meaning of the relationship.

Second, the paper will show that cross-national media comparison cannot be limited to opposing ones. It is not that the Pakistani or American outlets just made conflicting scripts. The frame of geopolitics was similar in that both press systems realized that the relationship was entrenched in broader power relations. The difference between them was in position and focus. The content of Pakistani outlets was written in an environment of independence, suspicion, monetary limitation and necessity of harmonious interaction. U.S. publications covered the problem through the prism of a security anticipation, the Afghan policy and governance principles and strategic reasoning. The reason why the framing theory is helpful lies in the fact that it is able to see these alternative choices and focuses without giving either of the two a full-scale truth with the other being a bias.

Third, the research explicates the connection between political transition and media frames. The PTI and post-PTI phases did not merely yield different amounts of coverage; they triggered different interpretive vocabularies. This aids a dynamic conceptualization of framing. Frames are not axiomatic aspects of newspapers. They are a result of the interplay involving editorial routine, national position, great events, and political applications of foreign relations. Pak-US case, the same bilateral relationship turned out to be a battleground in regards to Afghanistan, China, sovereignty, IMF reliance and democracy. The contribution of study is to structure those debates in terms of a grounded empirically traceable frame structure.

Answers to the Research Questions

The working corpus allows answering the study research questions up to the boundaries of the available corpus. In RQ1, the evidence indicates that coverage was more common during PTI period compared to the post-PTI period. The robust corpus has 67 units of PTI-period and 31 post-PTI. The height was reached in 2021 with 36 strong units created annually in Afghanistan withdrawal, Taliban return, Biden administration reassessment and the no-bases debate. The finding is not only numerical. It demonstrates that Pak-US affairs grew salient in situations when they had to brush up against significant diplomatic and security milestones.

Under RQ2 the thematic patterns varied based on outlet and based on national standpoint. Dawn and The News focused more on the Pakistan strategic autonomy, sovereignty, popular mistrust, balancing of the region and pragmatic behavior. Dominating the U.S side of the working corpus, the Washington post highlighted Afghanistan, counter terrorism, freedom of press, democracy and role of Pakistan in U.S regional strategy. The New York Times can not be deciphered with a solid ground on basis of it adding two robust records. As such, the correct answer of the RQ2 is comparative with some reservations: the statistics indicate that there are significant descriptive changes between the more represented outlets, but not a complete, four-newspaper apothegm.

In the case of RQ3, the response to the question is that Pakistani and U.S. elite newspapers differed in their recognition of the strategic nature of Pak-US relations less than in their description of the strategic nature. Geopolitics was a significant frame to both systems of press. But it is the cost of dependence and necessity of dignity that Pakistani outlets saw strategic importance, and the U.S. opinion discourse saw strategic importance, in terms of security utility, norms of governance and implications locally. The study then substantiates a more subtle comparative answer: it was not merely that the newspapers differed about the facts to report, but rather that they chose to emphasize various facets of the same relationship and to various national agendas.

These answers also demonstrate the reason why the study does not consider formal causal hypotheses. The corpus does not posit a causal hypostudy where newspaper nationality is an automatic determinant in a frame. It reveals regular relationships and interpretational disparities with a circumscribed set of texts. This is in line with the mixed qualitative and quantitative design of the study. The distribution of frames is determined by frequencies and cross-tabulations and the qualitative interpretation is the reason that the distributions are important to national interest, domestic politics and foreign-policy discourse.

Interpretive Boundaries of the Comparative Evidence

The comparative evidence is best when the paper regards the outlet tables, period tables and qualitative exemplars as mutually reinforcing, as opposed to interchangeable. The table of outlets displays the location of the powerful units: the News and Dawn are situated on the Pakistani side, The Washington Post on the U.S. side, and The New York Times is too sparsely represented to interpret on its part. The frame table provides the information about the most frequent choices of the organizing idea of the article. The explanations of why a frame was important in a specific national context, then proceeds with the qualitative labels and sample articles. A different work is done in each layer. When the outlet counts are taken in isolation, then the research would turn into an uncooked measure of newspaper attention. Assuming that the frame counts alone sufficed, the historical value of Afghanistan, China, sovereignty and IMF dependence of the study could be lost. In case of exclusively using qualitative examples, the study could exaggerate the significance of particularly vivid articles.

The same limit is the same with statistical interpretation. The period-by-frame relationship is robust, significant, but the primary comparative test in this paper, outlet by primary frame is not significant at the .05 level. The conclusion concerned is thus overlaid. The study may claim that there are cross-national descriptive differences that are apparent, as well as theoretically relevant. It can also state that the corpus of work does not yet warrant a hard and fast statement that each newspaper has a statistically different frame profile. This is no flaw in the argument; it is merely a precaution against working with a developing corpus like it were a complete, final, balanced sample.

The parallel evidence would thus confirm the rigorous research-paper assertion: newspapers in Pakistan and the United States at the elite level had the same bilateral relationship couched by the same geopolitical interests, but served by the different national interests. That assertion is more limited than an assertion about the sentiment, editorial prejudice or popular opinion, though it is more buttressed by the study facts. It also provides a solid direction to be followed in future studies: to expand the archive search, to enhance representation of the New York Times, to finish the process of valence coding, to present reliability and subsequently test whether the descriptive patterns of outlets are observed in a larger proven corpus.

Implications

The results apply to media scholars, policy makers and news companies. To researchers, the study illustrates the importance of the cross-country comparison, over time, of opinion journalism in the elites. It teaches the significance of transparently reporting corpus limitations, too. The New York Times scanty number, the unbalanced distribution of outlets, the disparate verification levels and the valence field half-baked are not trifling would determine the limit of what can be supported with the data.

To Pakistani policymakers, the results indicate that Pak-US reset messaging need not explain economic or diplomatic engagement but have to look at messaging about sovereignty and dignity. The opinion of Pakistani elite views the United States as based on a history of cooperation, dependence, pressure and mistrust. A compelling communal discourse should thus have an element of practical advantage as well as language that is mindful of sovereignty. It ought to articulate the reasons why there is need to engage and how the interests of Pakistan are safeguarded and how cooperation goes beyond the crisis management level.

The findings may influence the American policymakers that U.S.-related messaging focused on Pakistan can become a readily absorbable part of Pakistani sovereignty discourse. Remarks with regard to democracy, elections, nuclear security or safety cooperation, may be diplomatically legitimate but can also be reinterpreted back home as coercion or intrusion. It is just that the study suggests that we ought to exercise caution, context-sensitive public diplomacy, which is not driven, negatively, to heighten anti-interventionist frames.

In the case of newsrooms, the results indicate that crisis-framing tends to reduce the Pak-US relations. Important factors that should not cram out the discussion of what trade, education, climate cooperation, science, public health, and diaspora connection and institutional exchange are geopolitics and security. The tendency to only perceive the relationship as a war, aid, interference or strategic bargaining could be mitigated by a more encompassing opinion agenda.

Limitations

The study restrictions are maintained in this paper. First, the 98 unit strong corpus is not an artificially sized end census. Second, there is disproportionate representation by the outlets and The News, Dawn and The Washington Post are miles better represented than The New York Times. Third, the level of verification varies between records; strong records include records that are official full text and others are indexed pages, metadata/snippets or confirmations. Fourth, this valence is not coded and thus sentiment conclusions cannot be reported. Third, opinion pieces and op-eds as well as the editorials and columns comprise the opinion ecosystem and have varying institutional authority. Sixth, inter-coder reliability must be reported; this is to be done after coding the fine text and stabilizing the codebook. Such constraints do not nullify the frame results, but they must be interpreted carefully and transparently reported.

Conclusion

In this paper, the analysis of Pakistani and American elite newspapers revealed some common and divergent interpretative frameworks about the Pak-US relations. The common geopolitics was shared. Throughout the corpus, great-power alignment, China, CPEC, India, Russia, Afghanistan and global power changes were most frequently used to interpret Pak-US relations. National standpoint was the divergent structure. Pakistani newspapers highlighted the focus on autonomy, sovereignty, distrust, national interest, economic vulnerability, pragmatism, and pragmatic involvement. The press element in the U.S, particularly the Washington Post in the working corpus stressed on security, Afghanistan, counterterrorism, democratic norms and strategic orientation.

It is not concluded then that either system of the press was either pro-Pakistan or pro-U.S. or that they had been positive and the other negative. Such valence claims cannot be found at this stage by the study. The conclusion that can be defended is that every press system has rendered the Pak-US relations meaningful, based on various definitions of problems, and priorities. The opinion of the Pakistani elite questioned how Pakistan could save the face and strategic space to manoeuvre and still have the required engagement. The elite opinion in the U.S. questioned how the U.S. could tackle American security, governance and regional stability concerns regarding Pakistan.

The more general contribution is to demonstrate that elite opinion journalism is a key location to explain foreign-policy relations in periods of political change. Pak-US relations are not merely negotiated at the diplomatic offices, but also understood at the newspaper opinion pages where the issues of sovereignty, security, economy, democracy and geopolitics are put to common narrations. Those stories were volatile during and after the PTI government since the relationship itself was held to the unresolved questions of Afghanistan, China, domestic legitimacy, economic reliance and mistrust amongst the populace. The five-frame typology of the current study provides a more grounded approach to research that instability without formulating false results of sentiment.

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