

# **9/11 in British and Pakistani press: a comparative study with regards to myths and realities of hegemony and propaganda**

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## ***Abstract***

*The study is a comparative analysis of 9/11 coverage in British and Pakistan press. Employing content analysis – both qualitative and quantitative – the empirical findings reveal how Pakistani and British press relied on the same sources of information but their overall outlook was different. The Pakistani press though consumed information from primary definers – the powers-that-be across the world, particularly US officials' war statements – yet the emphasis of its coverage was anti-war in stark contrast to the British press' outlook that was pro-war. These findings put into question the hegemony and propaganda models. The research cites localisation of news under the local belief system among possible reasons for this disparity in outlook of the coverage by the two countries' press despite their reliance on the same sources.*

**Key words:** *9/11, British press, Pakistani press, hegemony, propaganda, primary definers, sources of news, localisation of news*

## **Introduction & Aims of Study**

Significant events in the history of mankind have been attracting social scientists to look at their different dimensions. And all ages have their share of significant happenings in one form or the other; mostly in the shape of violence, conflicts and wars. Similarly, our age got its most significant events since the World Wars when the United States of America came under terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. These events have changed the world dramatically, that nothing will be the same as the world enters into an age of terror (Chomsky, 2002).

Following September 11, 2001, the world entered a phase of fear where the drastic acts of 9/11 served only as a starting point. Fear and uncertainty travelled across the world, in the West and the East alike. The United States declared a 'war of terror' against the brand of terrorists that it held responsible for the dastardly acts.

US President George W. Bush's address to the joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001 is one of the most striking discourses that followed the actual event, as it set course for future actions by the United States. ".....Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom," said President Bush. "Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution..... America has no truer friend than Great Britain. Once again, we are joined together in a great cause. .... The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda..... Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there...."

Other U.S. officials have also been vocal on the subject of terrorism, and in fact, been effectively trying to put their point across that terrorism is a global phenomenon needing unprecedented tackling. It is this unending nature of the hunt (for terrorists) that the U.S. administration still finds itself engaged in increasing military activity and its advocacy the world over despite the change of guard at the White House (election of new president), though the focus of military activity may have swayed from one region to the other (troops withdrawal from Iraq and build-up in Afghanistan under the new president). In keeping with the advocacy for worldwide collaboration, Vice President Dick Cheney in his address at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) policy conference on March 7, 2006 emphasised the need for a united global action in addition to throwing light on the nature of the enemy and scope of the conflict even after quite a lapse of time since 9/11. "Israel, and the United States, and all civilized nations will win the war on terror. To prevail in this fight, we must understand the nature of the enemy. As America experienced on September 11, 2001, the terrorist enemy is brutal and heartless. This enemy wears no uniform, has no regard for the rules of warfare, and is unconstrained by any standard of decency or morality. The terrorists want to end all American and Western influence in the Middle East. Their goal in that region is to seize control of a country, so they have a base from which to launch attacks and wage war against governments that do not meet their demands ultimately to establish a totalitarian empire that encompasses a region from Spain, across North Africa, through the Middle East and South Asia, all the way around to Indonesia." (Phillips, 2006)

Though the anger, grief, and most of all fear, was shared commonly by all the world, the media in the West and the East seemed reflecting 9/11 terror attacks somewhat differently. While the Western media exhibited clarity in portraying who the bombers were and what were their purported ideologies, a larger part of media in the Muslim world was mired in conspiracy theories, though the coverage might still be similar in many respects. The aim of this study is to look at how the coverage by British media, specifically its newspapers, was essentially different

from or similar to that of the newspapers in Pakistan, a Muslim country which immediately after the terror attacks sided with the U.S. government in its hunt for terrorists. The comparative study of Pakistani newspapers becomes all the more important looking at the fact that Pakistan is a neighbouring country of Afghanistan which was invaded by the allied forces as an aftermath of the 9/11 attacks to hunt the pockets of 'radical Islamist terrorists' as declared in President Bush's address to the joint session of Congress. The study intends to bridge the knowledge gap by looking at the press coverage of the event in the two countries.

Many studies have been devoted to research exclusively into the Western press coverage of 9/11, but a comparative study with the press of Pakistan, a frontline Muslim state in the war on terror, is one of its kind. Guided by hegemony and propaganda frameworks, the study intends to probe how objectively the press of both countries covered 9/11. It is worthwhile researching how exclusive was the coverage by the Pakistani press which mostly relies on news from Western news agencies even for local happenings and follow-ups.

'Journalists do strive to report news objectively, but in an effort to quickly comprehend and organise news material in a systematic and efficient manner, they tend to engage in a process of framing. In the process of constructing frames, journalists simplify, highlight, and make more salient certain aspects of reality, while obscuring others (Luther and Miller, 2005: 78-9).

The research also intends to look at whether the press in question employed stereotyping which affects the public perception about a certain community. This aspect will specifically be analysed with respect to the British press to put to test the general perception in the East that Western societies tend to stereotype Arabs, and for that matter Muslims. In simpler words, text is treated in such a way that the public (readers) unnoticeably tend to have a predisposition towards members of a certain community or ethnic group/origin. 'We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception' (Lippmann: 1922: 90).

As the 9/11 attacks entailed far-reaching consequences for not just the United States, the research aims to analyse monopolising of information, if at all, by certain echelons of power. The study seeks to record the frequency of official viewpoint (or for that matter the suppression of alternative views) in line with the hegemony and propaganda frameworks. Certain revelations on the communication front such as the May 2003 BBC report that the British government had 'sexed up its dossier of information about then Iraqi president Saddam Hussain's development of and

capacity to deploy weapons of mass destruction' warrant a critical look at the tendencies in the press to rely on official sources on crucial subjects such as security and wars (Curran & Gurevitch, 2005). Britain carried out a major inquiry headed by Lord Hutton, but it was 'interpreted by much of the public as a whitewash (in protest, the London Independent published the first page of their paper a blank white the day after the inquiry report was made public) (Ryan: 2005).

The researcher had been working with mainstream English newspapers of his country (Pakistan) in different editorial capacities. His last editorial assignment was senior copy editor responsible for vetting scripts and footage at DawnNews, the first-ever English TV channel of Pakistan. Furthermore, being a working journalist, the researcher has an understanding of the editorial treatment that is often overlooked by an untrained eye while analysing copious printed text. Being familiar with the trends in the Pakistani press, the researcher seeks to draw on his experience to make an effective comparison with the British press on this subject of far-reaching interest (as elaborated above). The researcher also has to his credit newspaper articles on varied subjects, including terrorism and its repercussions on the lives of the ordinary citizenry.

The researcher puts forth three hypotheses and one research question in the light of the theoretical frameworks (details to follow) guiding his research project.

H-1-British press conveniently utilised information from 'primary definers'\* in the United States. In this connection, information from news agencies and official sources, including unnamed/anonymous sources referred to as intelligence sources, reports, etc., was relied upon heavily.

H-2- Pakistani press too utilised information from news agencies and primary definers in almost equal intensity.

H-3-Most of the news appearing in the British and the Pakistani newspapers stereotyped Arabs or Muslims following the 9/11 attacks. A certain strain of words such as Muslim fundamentalists and Islamists, etc. that may be seen as portraying a community as a monolithic group dominated much of what appeared in post-9/11 press in both the countries.

**Q**-Did newspapers of both the countries served as mere carriers of messages by 'primary definers' without clear opposition to the Western governments' or their officials' propagation of war views?

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*\*-primary definers: official, institutional sources who initially define events and issues being used, elaborated and framed by the media (Cottle, 1993: 155-7).*

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The research draws on the earlier studies done under hegemony and propaganda frameworks which state that public issues are defined in the mass media and for public consumption overwhelmingly by representatives for powerful institutions, agencies and interests in society and that alternative voices opposing a conflict or confrontation are much less likely to gain a platform in the mainstream media.

In studying media and its control, Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman's propaganda model holds immense importance. 'Within a month of 9/11, Afghanistan was under attack. Those who accept elementary moral standards have some work to do to show that the United States and Britain were justified in bombing Afghans to compel them to turn over people suspected of criminal atrocities, the official reason cited when the bombings began' (Chomsky, 2003).

The propaganda framework can best be comprehended in the context of global power wielded by dominant international players, of which the U.S. is undoubtedly the most prominent since the cold war era. The propaganda framework has been employed by social scientists to bring home the point that powerful states manipulate information to serve their interests. In other words, actions or plans of certain states, which should otherwise draw retribution, are conveniently overlooked by the media and certain issues are stirred to serve the vested interests of the echelons of power. 'The United States is hailed as the leader of the self-anointed "enlightened states" that are entitled to resort to force where they believe it to be just, discarding "the restrictive old rules" and obeying contemporary notions of justice that they fashion.' (Chomsky, 2000)

Critique such as Fahrenheit 9/11, the 2004 award-winning documentary by filmmaker Michael Moore, is amongst the host of critical material on 9/11 and the war on terror. Critics have even gone to the extent of suggesting that there were elements within the U.S. administrative and financial set-up who perhaps knew of the impending terrorist attacks. The lack of investigation into the historic cash

transactions at the World Trade Centre prior to the attacks has also been thrown into question. ‘.....U.S. regulatory entities have been slow to follow through with reports about the complex financial transactions that occurred just prior to and following the attacks. ....Research could shed light on such questions as who was behind them—and who benefited—and could help lay to rest the rumors that have been festering.’ (Hogue, 2008)

Under the hegemony framework, Ericson and his associates have studied representation of crime, law and justice in broadcast and print news. They carried out a detailed study of knowledge providers and news sources to analyse the number of sources used or represented in news items and the types of sources – government sources, private sources, unspecified sources mentioned as “analysts”, “reports”, “observers”, “intelligence sources”, “authorities”, “experts”. They also looked at the context in which these sources appeared, for example interviews, meetings, press releases, drama, actual event, etc. In addition to that, they looked at the types of knowledge provided by these sources, further categorising the type of knowledge into primary or factual category, asking “What happened?”; secondary or explanatory category, asking “Why did it happen?”; tertiary or descriptive category, asking “What was it like to be involved in what happened; evaluative or moral category, asking “Was what happened good or bad?”; and recommendations category asking “What should be done about what happened?” (Ericson et al., 1991: 204). Similarly, Cottle in his study of news coverage in regional television looks at how certain ‘voices’ of ‘primary definers’ or government officials projected in the media ‘with a minimum of direct reference to outside voices, viewpoints and visuals’ (Cottle, 1993: 155-7).

Guided by the hegemony framework, Solomon (1996) undertook a comparative study of Cuban coverage in American and Mexican press. Analysing the New York Times and La Reforma from August 15 to September 1994, he found that the NY Times over-represented American officials while the responses of Castro’s regimes were underplayed. Also, the NY Times portrayed Cuba as an enemy of the United States. Similarly, Rusciano (2002) undertook a comparative study of 10 international newspapers, including NY Times, the International Herald Tribune, The Times, Arab News and Israeli Ha’aretz Daily. In his findings, he wrote that ‘an international consensus on terrorism had, until at least October 31, 2001, eluded nations for two reasons. A clear definition of terrorism must precede its condemnation; and such a definition has not been reached’.

On the same pattern, Li and Izard (2003) studied the coverage of 9/11 by eight U.S. newspapers -- The New York Times, The Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Denver Post, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the

Houston Chronicle and the Atlanta Journal and Constitution -- and five television networks -- ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN and FOX News. They examined how newspapers and television networks differed in their framing of the event, how they used sources and how they dealt with the expected media functions in a crisis situation of unprecedented magnitude.

Analyzing the content of media necessitates considering filtering of information which is part and parcel of news business. In other words, studying media content can best be understood in the context of framing and agenda-setting. News value is considered to be the asset of every journalist, but hardly any water-tight definition of it has ever been made. Some social scientists may say it is the sense of journalists (specifically editors) which they apply at the time of selection and gradation of news in terms of their importance. But some others may question what does this sense stems from. Is it implicit demand of the workplace, knowledge of the market or mere personal background of individual journalists? (Said, 1979 and Curran & Gurevitch, 2005). Journalists 'have to fit new situations into old definitions. It is in their power to place people and events into the existing categories of hero, villain, good and bad, and thus to invest their stories with the authority of mythological truth' (Bird & Dardenne, 1988: 82). Since they have to meet deadlines, they make these judgments quickly by 'inevitably resorting to existing frameworks'.

In line with the propaganda and framing concept, Weston (2003) analysed representation of Arab Americans in the American press in the pre- and post-9/11 period. The content analysis mainly focused on whether Arab Americans were stereotyped in the period under research. 'What themes, frameworks and images dominated coverage? And to what extent did the newspaper stories put Arab Americans and their communities in context by using background on their ethnic origins, religious practices and cultures? Contrary to the general anti-Arab sentiment high in the post-9/11 period that saw increasing number of attacks on anyone who appeared as an Arab, or a Muslim, the findings of the study reveal that the press not only avoided stereotypes but also incited sympathy for the Arab Americans, portraying them as double victims -- 'they suffered as did everyone at the horror of the attacks; some lost loved ones. But at the same time they were being harassed, intimidated and discriminated against--even murdered--for events over which they had no control'. Weston's study is a qualitative analysis of the text instead of mere counting of facts or recording certain themes' frequencies.

Similarly, Kellner (2007) analysed speeches by then U.S. President George W. Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney and other top officials in the period following the 9/11 terror attacks in relation to the media's coverage of pro-war rhetoric. He noted 'corporate television and radio in the United States allowed right-wing militarist zealots to vent and

circulate the most aggressive, fanatic, and extremist views, creating a consensus around the need for immediate military action and all-out war'. Though his analysis is not formally backed by measured data on programmes and accommodation of different sources or ratio of alternative views, he took into account different frames used by the media to promote the war fever such as "War on America," "Attack on America," "America under Attack." while pointing out lack of alternative views. Keeping a track of media frames, Kellner notes a shift in media frames from fear-inducing to action-provoking. 'Media frames,' according to him, 'shifted from "America Strikes Back" and "America's New War"--even before any military action was undertaken, as though the media frames were to conjure the military response that eventually followed.'

Employing content analysis, Nord and Strömbäck (2003) studied how the Swedish media coverage of the terror attacks against the United States and the U.S. attacks in Afghanistan differed. Their findings were contrary to the general perception that the Swedish media depicts America in favourable light. They also found that the coverage of the two events differed, presenting their own theory in the end that may be called the theory of media preparedness. According to them, the Swedish media was prepared to deal with the coverage of the U.S. attack in Afghanistan, and this preparedness, to them, did affect the media's reliance on anonymous sources compared to the terror attacks against the United States. Among other things, their study suggested 'the Swedish media relied more on the American media and news bureaus as sources but without explicitly telling the readers and the viewers the extent to which this was happening'.

Ruigrok and Atteveldt (2007) studied how U.S., British and Dutch newspapers framed global and local terrorist attacks. Employing automated content analysis, they looked at different aspects of coverage following 9/11 in the United States, Madrid bombing and the 7/7 carnage in London. Their analysis mainly studied if newspapers paid more attention to local events or global events, or whether they gave a local perspective to global events and vice versa. They recorded whether the newspapers supported government statements which exhort the readers to unite against a common enemy. Amongst other findings, they noted that Muslim and Arabs were portrayed negatively following the terrorist attacks and that Muslims were connected with terrorism more strongly after a local event. Furthermore, they discovered that the news coverage increased clearly in the press in question after a local event under the classic news value of geographical proximity.

The above studies have one similarity that they dealt with press coverage of events and issues, and in that employed content analysis as a method. But no study whatsoever

comparatively examined British and Pakistani press coverage of 9/11 to show how press from a dominantly Muslim country (Pakistan) and a multi-cultural country (Britain) may or may not have relied on similar sources. This study becomes unique given that earlier studies have not specifically looked at how far alternative voices were accommodated, and whether the tilt of the overall coverage was pro-war or anti-war in the press of the two countries.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In view of the nature of the hypotheses and the research questions, the methodology employed in the research is content analysis. One of the classical definitions of content analysis is ‘a systematic analysis of communication content’. It has also been defined as ‘a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication’ (Bernard, 1952: 18).

However, the critics of content analysis have fairly objected to the word ‘objectivity’ in Bernard’s definition it primarily being a quantitative method of analysing media content. This is why the later definitions of content analysis omit the word objectivity.

‘Content analysis, of course, could never be objective in a value-free sense of the word: it does not analyse everything there is to analyse in a text – no method could, nor would there be any purpose in trying (Hansen et al, 1998: 95).

Another very common problem with content analysis is defining categories which need to be measured in the analysis of media content. ‘It is almost impossible to establish watertight definitions of categories, and the principle applies that the more precise the category, the less interesting/valuable is its measurement. You can recognise which people on the broadcast are female, but it is much harder to decide whether they are active or powerful, and it is often these kinds of judgements that are sought (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005: 184)

‘Content analysis starts with delineating certain dimensions or aspects of text for analysis, and in doing so, he or she is of course also making a choice – subjective, albeit generally informed by the theoretical framework and ideas which circumscribes his or her research – and indicating that the dimensions chosen for analysis are the important or significant aspects to look at’ (Hansen *et al.* 1998: 95).

Despite content analysis being a quantitative method of research, it doesn’t necessarily confine itself to counting of certain trends or words in a text. In most studies, like this one, content analysis is applied to deconstruct text, reconstruct it and then interpret it.

‘Measuring a phenomenon (even if that can be done accurately), is not the same thing as explaining it, content analysis results do not tell how the content came to be that way (that can only be answered out of an intellectual framework), or what the content means -- that can only be answered out of a theory of communication (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005: 184-85)

For the purpose of methodological rigour, the researcher has applied quantitative method followed by the interpretation of text qualitatively. This technique has been used to provide the possibility of combining the advantages of the two approaches and of reducing their weaknesses, not just as a compromise between the two extremes. This combination offers considerable possibilities for better understanding of the research problem.

The origin of content analysis as a method of research can be traced back to the eighteenth century – the Swedish study of ninety hymns of unknown authorship being one of the earliest as cited by Krippendorf (1980). It was not until the World War-I that content analysis was employed for more systematic propaganda analysis. The research programmes of Harold Lasswell and his associates between the World Wars used content analysis rigorously. Their contribution to devising content analysis as a systematic and widely accepted methodology is undeniable. In 1935, Lasswell set forth in *World Politics and Personal Insecurity* the main intellectual ingredients of a continuing world attention survey based on quantitative content analysis. “Not bombs nor bread,” according to Lasswell, as quoted by Janowitz (1968-1969: 646-653), “but words, pictures, songs, parades, and many similar devices are the typical devices of making propaganda. Propaganda relies on symbols to attain its ends: the manipulation of collective attitudes.”

With the maturity of content analysis as a method by the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it started to be used most often with other research methods of inquiry such as surveys, experiments, participant observation, qualitative and ethnographic audience research and types of data. In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, George Gerbner’s cultural indicators programme integrated content analysis into a larger framework of analysis articulating media roles in the cultivation of public consciousness. Originally outlined in 1969, this programme proposed the use of content analysis for the systematic monitoring of trends and developments in the symbolic environment of American television (Gerbner, 1995). We live in a world erected by the stories we hear and see and tell. It is a world of incredible riches of imagery and words, conjuring up the unseen through art, creating towering works of imagination and fact through science, poetry, song, tales, reports, and laws -- the true magic of human life. Through that magic we live in a world much wider than

the threats and gratifications of the immediate physical environment, which is the world of other species. Stories socialize us into roles of gender, age, class, vocation and life-style, and offer models of conformity or targets for rebellion. They weave the seamless web of the cultural environment that cultivates most of what we think, what we do, and how we conduct our affairs (Gerbner, 1998: 116-131).

Gerbner and his associates namely Gross, Morgan and Singorielli combined content analysis with more qualitative techniques such as opinion surveys, audience analysis, etc. to study from 1980 to 1994 how TV entertainment programming influences public beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviours. Under this broad category fall agenda-setting studies which attempt to establish how far the issues which dominate the media agenda come to dominate and influence what the public 'thinks about' or regard as the main important issues of the day (Rogers and Dearing, 1988: 555-94).

Content analysis has also become an important arsenal 'in the armoury of study of international media flows, carried out within wider media debates and concerns about a New World Information and Communication Order and about cultural imperialism, development communication, globalization, and transnational information and image flows (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1984).

## **SAMPLING**

In line with the systematic structure of content analysis and the concessions of the methodology that allows sampling of the text, the researcher drew a representative sample of the mainstream (national, English language) newspapers of both the countries to address the hypotheses and the research questions.

While sampling British newspapers, the researcher took into account the perceived stances and outlook of individual newspapers. The Times and the Guardian (London editions) were included in the study for the purpose of balance and representation of both side's views. The Times is considered to be a leading newspaper in Britain, slightly left-of-centre, while the Guardian is seen to be right-of-centre, usually depicting a soft corner for Labour, though no newspaper may like to be seen as partial. 'It (Guardian) has always maintained a middle-class liberal editorial position' (Brierley, 2002: 95)

For Pakistani newspapers, there wasn't much range of English newspapers to choose from. Pakistan had three mainstream English newspapers in 2001, two of which were included in the study. The English newspapers of Pakistan are considered relatively more responsible due to their serious outlook in contrast to the

Urdu press that usually spices up stories near to sensationalism, more or less the way the tabloid press does in Britain. The researcher included the Lahore editions of The News and Dawn.

The News is one of the most influential newspapers of Pakistan owned by the largest publishing group of the country, the Jang Group of Publications.

The same group runs Geo, the largest satellite TV network of the country that was temporarily taken off the air by the then President Pervez Musharraf during his standoff with Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. The News prides itself on being a progressive newspaper, right of centre, without particularly supporting any party or faction.

The second sampled paper is Dawn which was founded by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. Dawn has its peculiar readership which includes bureaucracy and older generation. It is observation of the researcher predicated on daily comparisons of all newspapers as a journalist that Dawn maintains more international outlook on occasions. While most newspapers exclusively focus on a couple of local issues, happenings or statements on any one day, Dawn may well, for instance, be highlighting a remotest story about French troops in as far as Darfur. Yet the paper is perceived to be somewhat less progressive, or slightly left-of-centre.

The researcher selected seven editions of each of these newspapers from September 12 to September 18 (one full week following the 9/11 attacks) since a limited time span allows comparing different aspects of the coverage in a more effective way in line with the aims and objectives of the study. For the Pakistani newspaper, the researcher acquired the hard copies of The News and Dawn since the papers didn't have online database of the 2001 editions. But as the saying goes 'there's many a slip twixt cup and lip', neither did most libraries in Pakistan catalogue newspaper files apart from a few academic libraries such as the Punjab University Lahore's Central Library where access is limited to students and staff. Being neither of them, the researcher listed different public libraries where the text could possibly be found. Out of the listed, the Punjab Public Library, The Mall, Lahore, was the only one to have archived the required files, but there too one willy-nilly had to grease some rough palms to seek backdoor permission to photocopy the newspapers.

The news content of the two British newspapers – The Times and the Guardian was acquired through Nexis search using the key words "terror\* and attack\*". The

truncation symbol asterisk \* was used to gain maximum stories since the search technique allows tracing words with several different endings, for example, in this case, terrorists, terrorism, terrorised and attacked, attacking, etc.

In all the newspapers, all news and features and articles which directly related to the events of 9/11 and their aftermath were identified and included for analysis as one unit (story). Qualitative content analysis was applied to identify the units (stories) to be included in the analysis.

### **ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES**

Defining analytical categories or aspects of text to be analysed is intellectually most strenuous part of any content analysis. Most of the analytical categories set at the start of the study could be subject to altering once data analysis gets underway – once the general feel of the text has been gathered. As the principle goes, for the data to speak for itself a researcher must know what he looks to record in the text because most often than not researchers end up recording data (analytical categories) which don't have any bearing or relevance to the aims of the study (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005). The researcher particularly guarded against this pitfall and set the following analytical categories to measure in the text.

**1-Source of delivery** – whether a related news story (unit) was contributed by agencies or was it own story of the paper i.e. a byline story by reporter/correspondent/stinger, etc.

**2-Types of sources** – since the study set out to measure the representation of 'primary definers' (officials) and their ratio to alternative voices, the researcher split the sources into fifteen types. For the purpose of clarity, source here is defined as any individual or organization whose views, opinion or statement is included in a story directly or indirectly. The different types of sources recorded in the text are: i- US sources – President, Vice-President, any organization or functionary which speaks for the state or propagates the policy of the state; ii- Afghan sources – any official of the Taliban regime or the alleged main culprit Osama bin Laden; iii-E.U. sources – officials from member states of the European Union or the governing body of the organisation; iv-British sources – officials of the British government; v-Pakistani sources – officials of the Pakistani government; vi-U.N. sources – dignitaries of the United Nations; vii-M.E. sources – officials from governments in the Middle East region; viii-Private/Independent sources – private experts or members of political groups or parties from any region; ix-Chinese sources – officials of the Chinese government since China, being an emerging global power, has a major interest in the South Asian region where Afghanistan, the hotbed of

terrorists as declared by the United States, is located; x-Russian sources (the Chinese logic applies here too); xi-Muslim scholars – any member of any independent organisation from any part of the world which speaks for the Muslim community; xii-Anonymous sources -- unspecified/intelligence sources (the underlying logic in measuring these sources is that certain stories in the media, especially stories relating to defence and security, are based on arguably controversial information from unnamed sources against the ideals of journalism); xiii- U.S. citizens or eyewitnesses; xiv-Citizens of other countries; and xv- other media – stories based on information borrowed information from other newspapers or TV channels.

**3-Orientation of stories** – the overall stance or value dimension of the stories was recorded as pro-war, anti-war and neutral (pure descriptive).

The researcher applied qualitative analysis of the text to characterise stories. Any story which explicitly contained information in favour of the United States going to war against Afghanistan or accommodated war rhetoric was classified as pro-war. The stories which underlined restraint were grouped as anti-war. The stories which fit neither of the criteria were grouped as descriptive/neutral.

**4-Discriptive characterisation\*** was also measured. In other words, the researcher, after immersing himself in the text, picked out the range of lexical choice opted in the newspapers.

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- *\*words that contain judgements about the acts or perpetrators within their denotative and connotative meanings (Picard and Adams, 1991)*

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The analysis of data reveals that the British newspapers published 328 stories relating to the 9/11 event – The Guardian 47 and The Times 281; while the Pakistani newspapers carried 238 stories on the issue – Dawn 108 and The News 108 (table1). The level of 9/11 coverage is in sync. with the very basic canon of journalism – Big Event, Big Coverage.

**Table 1:** Total number of 9/11-related stories taken by British and Pakistani press

Guardian	47
The Times	281
Total	328
Dawn	108
The News	130
Total	238

**Hypothesis 1** that the British press conveniently utilised information from news agencies, “primary definers”/official sources, including unnamed/anonymous sources, was only partly supported.

In the most striking finding of the study, all the stories taken by the British press were own (staff) stories (see table 2). This completely rejected the first part of the hypothesis that related to accommodation of information from news agencies. The possible explanation for the complete absence of news agencies could be the financial resources available to the British papers which allow appointing correspondents/reporters in all parts of the world. Further explanation may be found in the international news flow debate.

**Table 2:** Source of delivery (rounded percentage)

	<b>Guardian (n=47)</b>	<b>The Times (n=281)</b>	<b>Dawn (n=108)</b>	<b>The News (n=130)</b>
Independent/own stories	100	100	72	66
Wire services/news agencies	0	0	27	33
Mixed/Disguised	0	0	0	0

However, **the second part** of Hypothesis 1 that relates to coverage of primary definers/official sources was fully supported. The results show that the British press used American and British sources more frequently. The third most frequently used category was of anonymous sources (see table 3).

**Table 3:** Types of sources used in newspapers of both countries (rounded percentage)

	<b>Guardian (n=93)</b>	<b>The Times (n=340)</b>	<b>Dawn (n=154)</b>	<b>The News (n=210)</b>
U.S. sources	15	29	25	21
Afghan sources	0	1	5	5
E.U. sources	2	7	2	2
British sources	23	12	2	2
Pakistani sources	2	1	21	23
M.E. sources	11	6	4	4
Private sources/Ind.	5	6	6	6
Experts				
Anonymous sources	19	8	19	18
Scholars from	2	9	4	5
Muslim states				
U.S.	4	14	1	4
citizens/eyewitnesses				
Citizens of other	9	4	0	1
states				
U.N.	0	1	2	3
Other media	3	3	9	6

As for **Hypothesis 2** that the Pakistani press too utilised information from news agencies and primary definers in almost equal intensity, the findings of the study support the hypothesis more strongly, but not fully. While the British press completely excluded news agencies, the Pakistani press in contrast did accommodate stories from news agencies. Out of the total 238 stories run by the Pakistani papers, 32% stories were from news agencies. Dawn accommodated total

30 stories from news agencies while The News took 44 items from news agencies at a percentage of 27 and 33 respectively (see table 2).

None the less, **the second part** of Hypothesis 2 that relates to coverage of primary definers/official sources was fully supported (as was the case with Hypothesis 1). The results show that the British press used American and British sources more frequently. The third more commonly used sources were anonymous sources (see table 3).

The study of reliance on news agencies and official sources (primary definers) is predicated on cultural imperialism debate which at some points overlaps, if not completely synchronises with, propaganda and hegemony models. 'The information facilities and the flow that circulate, locally and internationally, are, with few and generally trifling exceptions, responsive to, if not at the disposal of, the power centres in the dominant national states' (Schiller and Nordenstreng: 1979: 12). Critics of the prevalent flow of information – from the West to the East and the North to the South – point to the reliance of the third world media on western news agencies even for the happenings that take place locally. In other words, the media in the third world accommodates stories from international news agencies about incidents or issues that could otherwise easily be covered by sending a local reporter (Mohammadi, 1997: 67-89; and Musa, 1999: 117-146).

Up to this point, keeping in view the findings of this study, it can be validated that the Pakistani press did rely on stories of news agencies to a considerable extent whereas the British press completely did without them. However, there is a similarity between the coverage by the two countries' press – both heavily relied on information from officials in the United States and the United Kingdom (generally perceived as propagating war views). In the light of these findings, one may be led (or mislead) to believe that since the primary definers dominated the coverage, the overall tilt of the coverage in the press of both the countries would be pro-war. A definite answer to it could be found in the answer to the research question (on the following pages).

**Hypothesis 3** that most of the news appearing in the British and the Pakistani newspapers stereotyped Arabs or Muslims following the 9/11 attacks and that a certain strain of words such as Muslim fundamentalists and Islamists, etc. dominated much of what appeared in post-9/11 press in both the countries, was rejected. The range of lexical choice recorded in the data was though quite extensive (table 4), yet the repetition of this descriptive characterisation was scarce. The highest frequency was of *Islamic militants*, but that too was used only 11 times in The Times (3.9% of the overall coverage by the paper) and four times in the

Guardian (8.5 % of the coverage by the paper). The second most frequent adjectives were *extremist Muslims* and *Muslim fundamentalists* which were used 5 times each in The Times (1.77%), and twice in The News (2.3% of the overall coverage by the paper). Dawn was conspicuous by its abstention from using any such descriptive characterisation. However, there was a contrast between the coverage by British and Pakistani press, with the latter limiting descriptive characterisation to a bare minimal, which too can be easily blamed on ‘negligent’ editing.

Table 4: Descriptive characterization: range of lexical choice (percentage)

	<b>Guardian (n=47)</b>	<b>The Times (n=281)</b>	<b>Dawn (n=108)</b>	<b>The News (n=130)</b>
Islamic militants	8.5	3.9	0	0
Islamic zealots	0	0.7	0	0
Extremist Muslims	0	1.7	0	0
Muslim fundamentalists	0	1.7	0	0
Islamic fundamentalists	6.3	3.5	0	1.5
Islamic radicals	0	1	0	0
Islamic extremists	4.2	1.4	0	0
Totalitarian Islamic terror	0	0.3	0	0
Islamic totalitarianism	0	0.3	0	0
Islamic terrorists	2.1	1	0	0
Islamist terror	4.2	1	0	0
Extreme Islamic fundamentalism	4.2	1.4	0	0

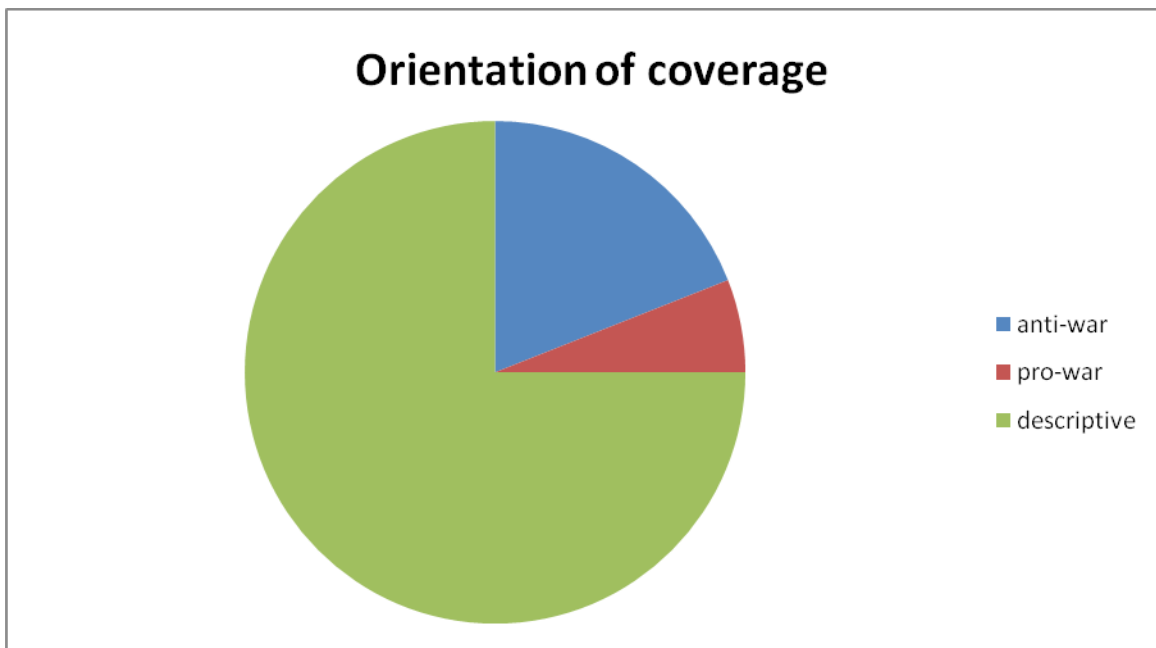
Islam being the single dominant religion of the majority in Pakistan could be cited as a possible explanation for the Pakistani press virtually avoiding stereotype characterisation. Traditionally, Pakistani journalists and writers opt to avoid controversial terms or stories which may incite or hurt religious feelings of the readers. This rather becomes a norm in turbulent times involving religious groups and their statements or activities. On the subjects of defence, militancy and terrorism, the editors ought to pay a close attention to

the content of the stories. The above findings underline the difference, through slight, of the treatment given to the text of the stories by the two countries' press. Perhaps for this very reason news value and news sense cannot be fairly claimed to be objective in the true sense of the word. As discussed by Schudson (2005), it is elusive to have a universal definition of news since there may be as many definitions as there are approaches to the sociology of news. While the Pakistani press appeared to have avoided descriptive characterisation in its coverage, its low frequency in the British press does not in any way permit conclusion that all Muslims were bundled as one whole, with Muslims being depicted as synonymous to terrorists or militants. The sporadic appearance of this lexical choice in the British press cannot be seen as inciting the feelings of hatred against the Muslims in any way.

The findings relating to Hypothesis 3 of this study have a similarity with Weston's (2003) study of Arab Americans' representation in the American press in the pre- and post-9/11 period. As Weston's analysis found that the American press resisted the general anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment and indulged in rather sympathetic reporting for the community, the findings of this study for Hypothesis 3 set aside the common misperception in the Muslim world that the British press essentially stereotypes Muslims invariably and portrays Islam and Muslims as synonymous with terrorists and militants. The nominal appearance of stereotypical characterisation could be the result of the extreme rush of stories which is usual with all major events or it may be because of the comparative lack of conscious effort on the part of the British newsroom to eliminate these from the coverage at the editing stage. (This aspect of the findings opens a great opportunity for future researchers to do participant observation to closely study the process of news-making in the British newsrooms.)

In addition to addressing the three hypotheses, the findings of the study also provide answers to the research question that relates to tracing the balance of view in the coverage by the press of both the countries. The **question if newspapers of both the countries served as mere carriers of messages by 'primary definers' without clear opposition to the Western governments' or their officials' propagation of war views**, was effectively addressed by measuring the representation of official sources in the coverage along with qualitatively analysing the tilt of the stories as pro-war, anti-war, or pure descriptive (neutral). The British newspapers relied heavily on American and British official sources in their stories. In the 47 related stories taken by the Guardian, total 93 sources were used. British official sources dominated the coverage with 23% followed by American sources (15% ) and anonymous sources (19%). The ratio of M.E. sources was quite low (11%) while the representation of Scholars from Muslim Countries was mere 2% (see table 3). Despite heavy reliance on 'primary definers', the tilt of the overall

coverage was anti-war as recorded separately. Only 6.8% of the stories were pro-war while 19 % of the coverage was anti-war (see Chart-I). Here the point to note is that despite heavy reliance on primary definers, the Guardian presented anti-war outlook. This casts doubts on any linear or simplistic linkage between representation of primary definers and the media agenda (discourse to follow further data analysis).



**Chart-I:** The Guardian: Overall orientation of coverage (rounded percentage where n=47: pro-war=6%; anti-war= 19%; and descriptive/neutral=75%)

Qualitatively analysing Guardian’s coverage, the paper presented strongest anti-war coverage. Its coverage challenged the war views by officials in the United States and the United Kingdom in strongest terms. Responding to American officials drawing parallels between Pearl Harbour and the 9/11 in order to elucidate people’s backing for a proportionate military response, Woollacott urged restraint on page 22 on September 14:

A better reference would be the Cuban missile crisis..... Some among the senior military wanted to pulverise the missile sites, invade Cuba, or even ready America for a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. That ultimate possibility, which happened 40 years ago, should remind us that, terrible though it was, Tuesday's attack does not represent anything like that threat to humanity.

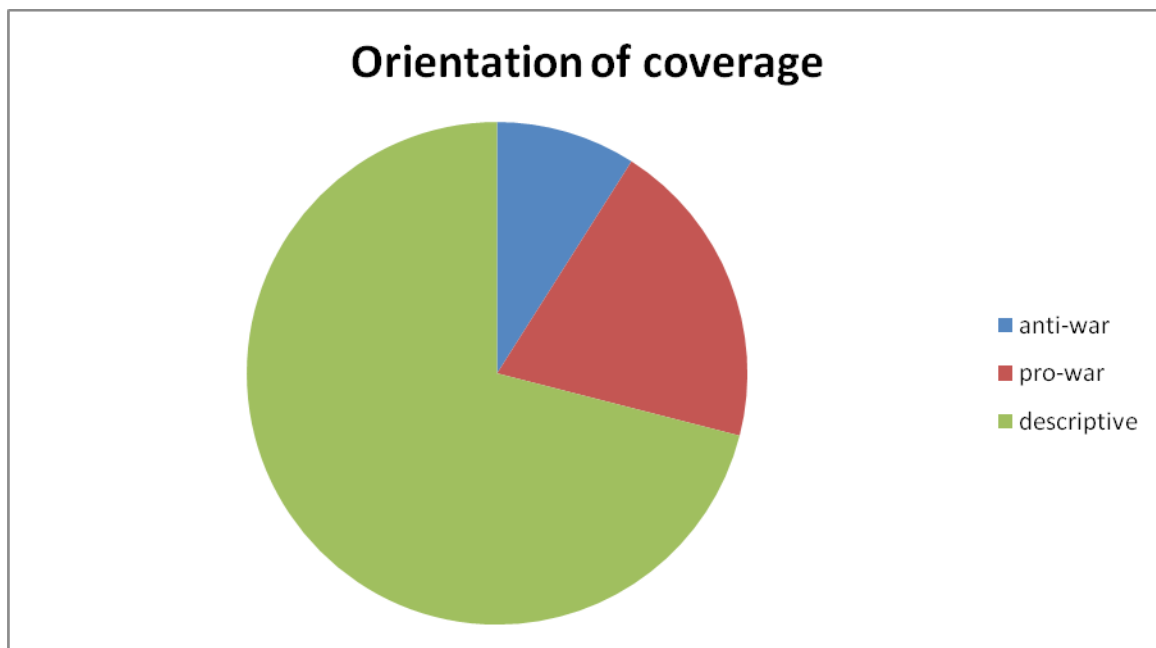
In presenting anti-war coverage, the Guardian opposed misguided use of force against the unseen enemy. The paper went a step further to warn on page 19, September 17:

There can be no dispute that the world would be better off without terrorism. Of course it would be and effective force is indisputably one of the ways of ensuring that goal. But it is entirely sensible to call on governments of nations that are victims of terrorism also to follow policies that do not simply recreate the problem. Britain eventually learned that lesson during its imperial past (in its American colonies, among other places), and the US needs to face it too. Martyrs are recruiting officers for both sides. That is why the situation in the Middle East matters in the current equation, even though it may have had no direct bearing on the decision to launch last week's atrocities. In any event, by what law should present-day Americans and friends of America stay silent about decisions that could condemn future generations to the sort of fate so many suffered last Tuesday?

While the American and British officials were blaming the 9/11 attacks on Osama bin Laden even before collecting implicating evidence against him, the Guardian accused the two governments of exploiting the disaster in New York to strengthen the defence industry. Monbiot wrote on page 17 on September 18:

Bin Laden's presumed guilt appears to rest on the supposition that he is the sort of man who would have done it. But his culpability is irrelevant: his usefulness to western governments lies in his power to terrify. When billions of pounds of military spending are at stake, rogue states and terrorist warlords become assets precisely because they are liabilities. By using Bin Laden as an excuse for demanding new military spending, weapons manufacturers in America and Britain have enhanced his iconic status among the disgruntled. His influence, in other words, has been nurtured by the very industry which claims to possess the means of stamping him out.

Similarly, in the 281 stories taken by The Times, total 340 sources were used. American official sources dominated the coverage with 30% followed by British official sources (14%). The representation of Scholars from Muslim Countries was mere 9% (see table 3). The tilt of the overall coverage was pro-war as recorded separately. As many as 20% of the stories were pro-war while 9% of the coverage was anti-war (see Chart-II).



**Chart-II:** The Times: Overall orientation of coverage (rounded percentage n=281: pro-war=20%; anti-war= 9%; and descriptive/neutral=71%)

The Times pro-war coverage was proportionate to the representation of “primary definers” in the paper. In other words, it was in line with the propaganda and hegemony model which states that “primary definers” dominate the media coverage and in that relay their views. Qualitatively analysing, the paper didn’t present substantiate anti-war views even in the 9% of anti-war stories that it carried. However, its pro-war content contained strong rhetoric in favour of America going to war and fighting it after successfully forging a grand international alliance. For instance, The Times wrote on September 12 in a feature headlined ‘Terror for all’:

This carnage has shown that there can be no retreat that does not add to danger. This attack was, as Tony Blair says, not against America alone but part of a battle between terrorism and the entire free world which can be met only by standing shoulder to shoulder. Mikhail Gorbachev famously said that in ending the Cold War he was doing something terrible to the West, depriving it of its enemy. The enemy today is Moscow's, Western Europe's, America's and the law-loving world's. Against this monstrosity, the grandest of coalitions must be forged if evil is not to prevail.

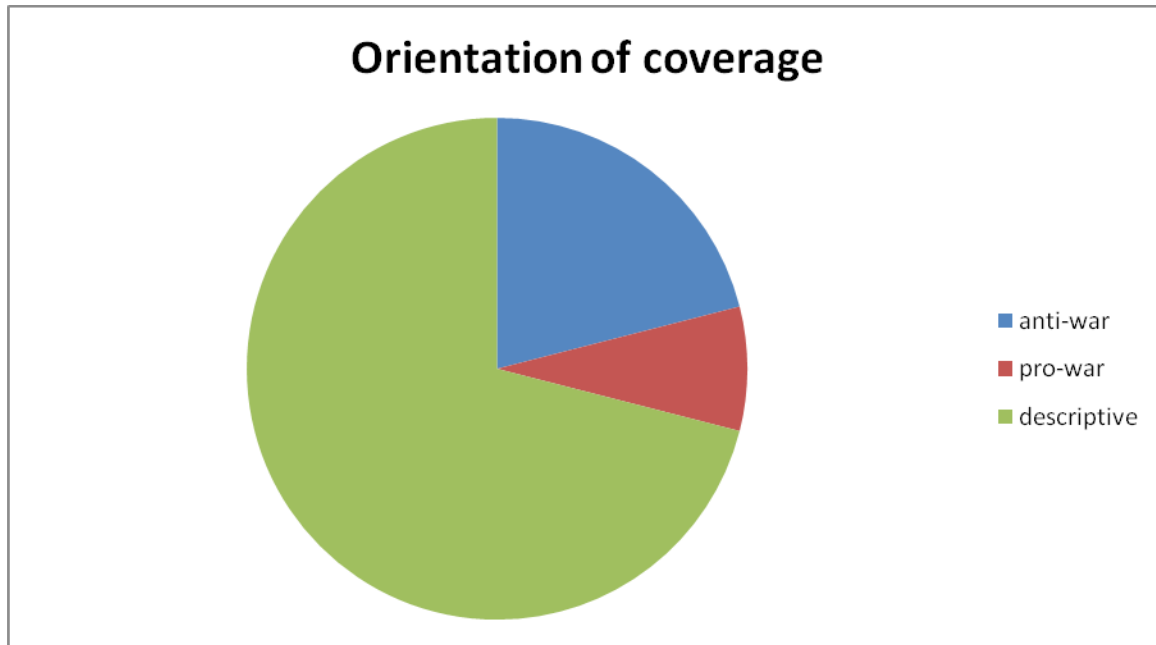
The Times didn't confine to mere support for America going to war against the unseen enemy, it clearly urged a united action against most Muslim states in accordance with the theory of the clash of civilisations. A story by Gove on September 13 read:

Tackling this threat at its root will require resolute action against those states that sponsor, facilitate and organise Islamist terror: Syria, Sudan, Iran and, above all, Iraq. Action against Iraq is, if not the most urgent, certainly the most important step the free world can take to safeguard its security. ....There is already formidable evidence linking Saddam's regime to bin Laden's organisation. And there is already proof that Saddam has been subordinating all other goals to the creation of weaponry with which he can hold the world, and not just four aircraft, permanently hostage.

Amongst its pro-war coverage was an article by Ehud Barak, the former Israeli prime minister, who declared the attack on America an attack on the whole democratic world from the very first line. The article was full of binary discourse to construct an 'evil other' and to stress the goodness of the United States and its allies. Barak opened his article on September 13 with a conclusion:

Terrorism has declared war on the free world and the free world must unite to fight back. This is the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the horror of Tuesday's attack. Just as the enlightened world mobilised in the past to combat challenges to its core values, so must such an international coalition be built today. Let there be no illusions. This attack is an attack on everything that Western civilisation holds dear - freedom, the rule of law, the sanctity of human life. ....Countries like Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and North Korea have a proven track-record of sponsoring terrorism, while no one needs reminding of the carnage wrought by the terrorist thugs of Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and even Yassir Arafat's own PLO. The lines of battle are clearly drawn.

The study reveals that the Pakistan press too utilised information from official sources heavily. In the 108 stories taken by Dawn, total 154 sources were used. American official sources dominated the coverage with 25% followed by Pakistani sources (21% ) and anonymous sources (19%). The ratio of M.E. sources was low (4%) while the representation of Scholars from Muslim Countries was also 4% (see table 3). Despite heavy reliance on 'primary definers', the tilt of Dawn's coverage was anti-war as recorded separately. Only 8% of the stories were pro-war while 21 % of the coverage was anti-war (see Chart-III).



**Chart-III:** Dawn: Overall orientation of coverage (rounded percentage n=108: pro-war=8%; anti-war= 21%; and descriptive/neutral=71%)

As with other newspapers, Dawn’s content was also analysed qualitatively to measure its orientation as pro-war or anti-war. The paper presented strong anti-war coverage as could be seen by the nature of its content. In one of the articles on the opinion pages, Jafri wrote on September 13:

The suicidal attacks may be over but not the danger that lurks in the raw human response to this situation. This is not the time to fall for “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”. .....Make no mistake, all of us (the so-called civilised and the others) are now sitting on a planet that is a volcano of distress and discontent. Let the people of the United States of America not get shocked out of wisdom. It is they who are now on trial. None else.

Similarly, an article by Gutman, an American professor in English, carried on September 15 foretold that the tough time lied ahead for the United States policy makers, while expressing hope that reason will prevail over anger:

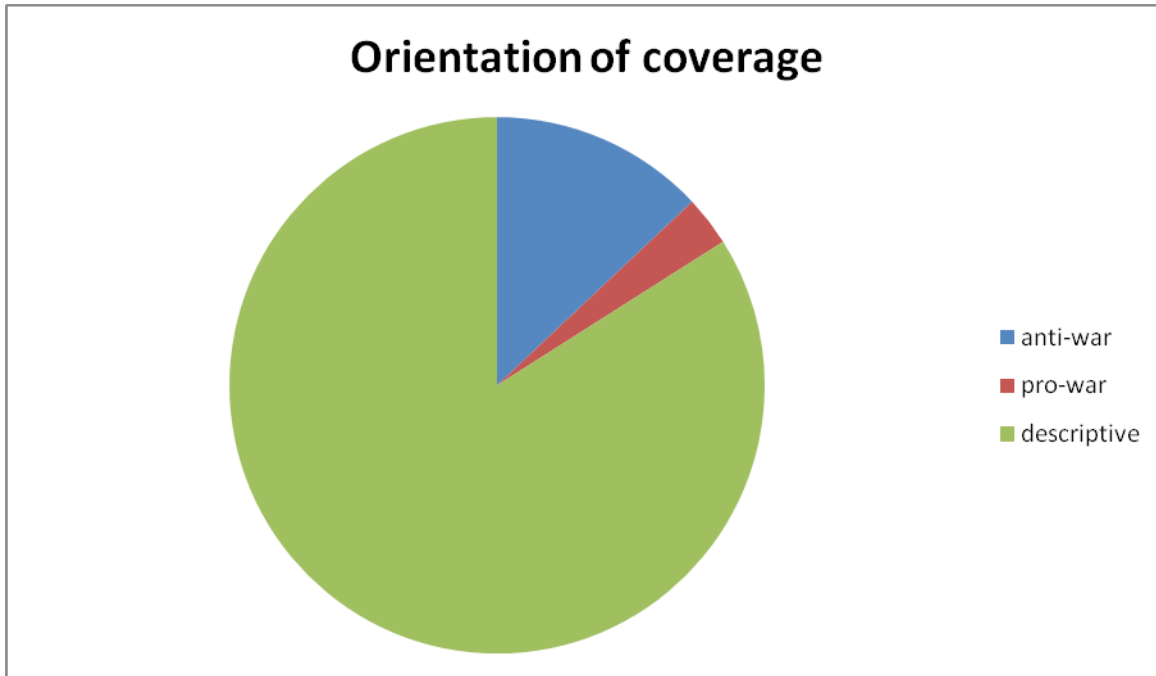
Reason tells us that it is wrong to blame a whole people or group for the actions of a small number of ideologically crazed individuals who happen to share one of the makers identity with that larger group.....The days ahead will test the United States in many ways. Out of widespread feelings of shock, confusion, anger and sorrow will come major decisions in foreign policy, a review of civil liberties, a test of the nation’s commitment to diversity. Our hope – the hope of the great, huge majority

of Americans -- is that we will emerge from this tragic period changed, but not diminished.

In its anti-war coverage, Dawn took a strong exception to the hate attacks against Arab or Muslim lookalikes in the United States following the 9/11 attacks and urged restraint. It particularly appealed to the United States media to play a positive role to pacify the situation, which in turn may help evolve a more pragmatic response to the tragedy. On September 18, the paper's editorial titled 'Rhetorical overkill' read:

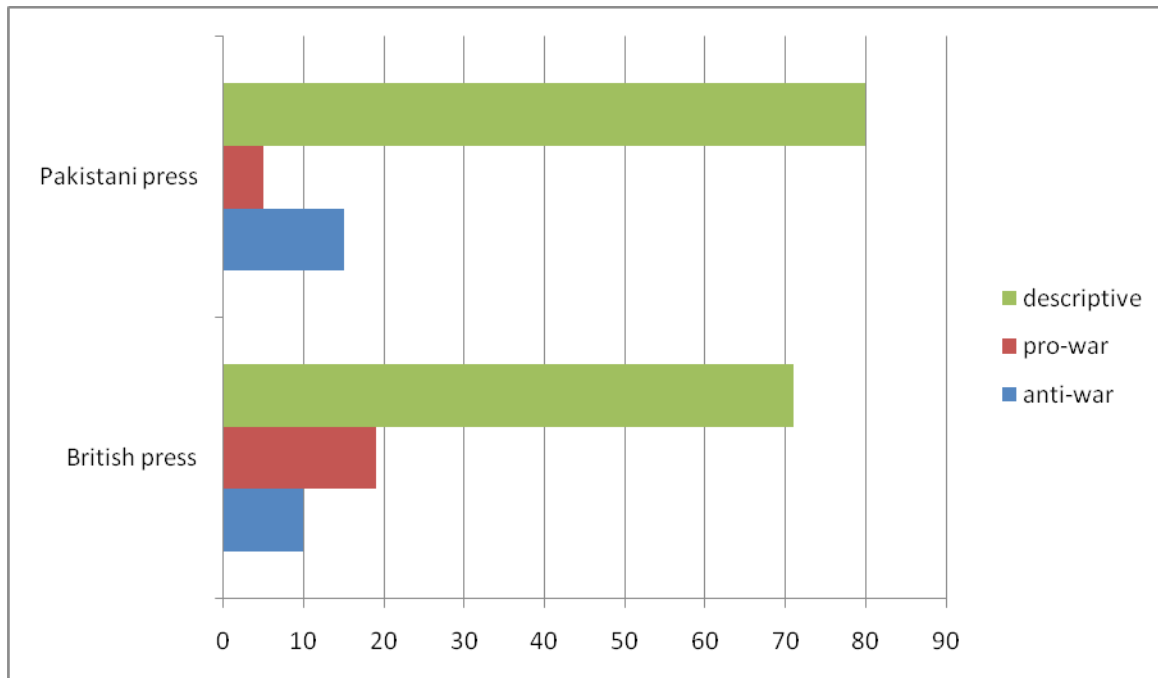
In these tense times it is the responsibility of the US media and other moulders of public opinion to be extra careful about making sweeping generalisations about a diverse and dynamic people. To depict Islam and its followers as inherently fanatical is not just deeply offensive to the vast majority of moderate and hard-working American Muslims but also bolsters the prejudices of bigots spoiling for a fight.

Dawn and The News coverage had a striking resemblance in terms of their almost equal ratio of reliance on the same categories of sources. In the 130 stories taken by The News, total 210 sources were used. American official sources dominated the coverage with 21% followed by Pakistani sources (23% ) and anonymous sources (18%). The ratio of M.E. sources was low (4%) while the representation of Scholars from Muslim Countries was 5% (see table 3). As with Dawn, the tilt of the overall coverage was anti-war despite The News' heavy reliance on 'primary definers'. Only 3% of the stories were pro-war while 13 % of the coverage was anti-war (see Chart-IV).



**Chart-IV:** The News: Overall orientation of coverage (rounded percentage n=130: pro-war=3%; anti-war= 13%; and descriptive/neutral=84%)

Notwithstanding the anti-war orientation of the Guardian, the British press' overall orientation (coverage by Guardian and The Times put together) was more pro-war than the coverage by the Pakistani press (coverage by Dawn and The News put together). Out of the total 328 stories taken by the British papers, 58 stories were pro-war (18%) while 34 stories were anti-war (10%). In contrast, of the 238 stories taken in the Pakistani press, only 12 stories were pro-war (5%) while 38 stories were anti-war (16%)—see Chart-V.



**Chart-V:** Coverage orientation comparison of overall British and Pakistani press (rounded percentage where n=328 for British press; n=238 for Pakistani press)

### Conclusion

Measuring representation of primary definers in the press of both the countries, the study shows that official sources were relied upon heavily and alternative voices such as of Muslim scholars and independent experts were marginalised. But at the same time, the study points out that there cannot be any simplistic or linear connection between the representation of primary definers and the outlook of the coverage.

Despite the British and Pakistani press utilising information from the same sources in almost equal intensity, the outlook (or tilt) of the coverage was noticeably different. The British press' coverage was pro-war in line with the propaganda and hegemony framework, i.e. primary definers influence the coverage according to their vested interests, whereas the Pakistani press' coverage was anti-war despite its reliance on the same sources, underlining the weaknesses of the hegemony and propaganda models.

This revelation of the study suggests that primary definers alone cannot determine the outlook of the coverage; other factors such as political/theological views of journalists as well as newsroom settings may also be taken into consideration. Journalists may be seen

as working in the light of the social norms they learn through their interaction within a society. They tend to uphold those norms in their working and process all information accordingly. In other words, editorial treatment to information from the same sources could produce stories with altogether different effect.

It is a norm in Pakistani journalism that nothing that conflicts the common religious sentiment is permitted publication out of fear of agitation or attacks on the newspaper offices itself as has happened in the case of Frontier Post, a newspaper from the North West Frontier Province. Following the publication of a letter ‘Why Muslims Hate Jews’ in January 2001, the offices of the newspaper came under an arson attack by activists of religious parties despite an unconditional apology from the paper the very next day. The editor of the paper and some staff members were put behind bars on charges of blasphemy. They were later released on being found innocent but not until they had spent good four years in prison. In short, a special care is taken while dealing with issues relating to religion, religious beliefs and religious groupings. For this reason, further studies may look at these aspects of the coverage through participant observation including individual interviews with the content-producers to get a more definite answer to the question ‘Why was the outlook of the Pakistani press anti-war despite its reliance on the same sources?’

The findings of the study also lead to question why the press of both the countries preferred official sources over private/independent sources in the first place. A possible explanation could be the pressure of deadlines that makes it virtually impossible for journalists to look for alternative sources, though they may be available after any crucial happening, as well as the inclination of journalists to regard non-official sources as lower in the hierarchy of credibility (Hall et al: 1978). But most often than not, the cost of these convenient facts (acquired from officials) is overlooked. Even the awareness of the consequences of this practice fades away while covering catastrophes, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks were no less catastrophic in effect.

The study shows that the Pakistani press relied on stories from news agencies to a considerable extent. As sources of information tend to have an effect for the content of the media (Manning 2001), further studies can look at this particular aspect in detail, analysing how and in what way the Pakistani press’ reliance on Western news agencies influences its coverage. Or for that matter, whether this representation of news agencies loses its propagandist bearing after the editorial treatment that is given to all news items.

Furthermore, the study puts to rest the general misperception about the British press that it portrays Muslims in bad light. The data reveals that the British press did not

stereotype Arabs or Muslims following the 9/11 attacks. The range of descriptive characterisation such as Muslim fundamentalists and Islamists, etc. was though quite extensive, it was scarcely repetitive to allow an unfavourable conclusion about the coverage.

As for the question of acting as mere carriers of (propaganda) messages, the study shows that anti-war views were expressed quite vehemently by the press of both countries. Though the overall coverage of the British press was pro-war, the Guardian stood out prominently against war views like the Pakistani papers, further highlighting the shortcomings of the propaganda and hegemony models. As in the words of Manning (2001: 40) ‘...conspiracies may occur but the interest of the powerful are expressed through a variety of complex relationships and that their dominance is rarely fully guaranteed’.

To sum up, the study highlights the weaknesses of the propaganda and hegemony models that seek to draw a rather oversimplistic connection between sources of news and the content of the media. The study shows that the press of both the countries maintained a different stance despite reliance on the same sources. In this regard, it points to other factors such as sociology of news and journalism practices in newsrooms that can be seen to have a bearing on the coverage. In addition to citing possible explanations for different trends in the press coverage of 9/11, the study points out the areas for further research.

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