

Discursive Reproduction of Ideology in the National Elite Press of Pakistan

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Abstract

Newspapers are important ideological sites to construct and articulate ideologies and their dissemination. This study attempts to unravel how the elite press in Pakistan discursively constructs the 'other' while reporting a regional conflict. It reveals that the press reproduces and reifies the ethnocentric and nationalistic sentiments in the news discourse by representing the 'us' and 'them' in highly ideological polarization. India is represented as an 'enemy other' in contrast to Pakistan which is represented as peaceful, rule-abiding and under consistent threat from an aggressive India. The distant actors namely the US, UN and international actors are also represented predominantly negatively. The findings are discussed in terms of ideology, national identity and nationalism.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), discourse, ideology, editorials, identity, Kashmir, India, Pakistan, newspapers

Introduction

News media are important actors of constructing the social world and shaping the understanding of the masses about the sociopolitical issues. As an arena of ideological sites, news media (re)produce and reinforce the dominant ideologies prevalent in the political and cultural contexts. News, then provides its audience with an interpretive frameworks of seeing the world and defining the reality (Poole, 2009). Once these frameworks of looking at the social and political world are established, they become part of the shared consciousness of the public through which people make sense of their world and themselves especially during the crisis or conflict involving two or more rival nations and think in a particular way about events and issues (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Despite the claims of media globalization and the end of nation states, the convergence of journalistic cultures, norms and practices globally, ethnocentrism and nationalistic feelings are still powerful and are deeply embedded in the journalistic discourses. Newspapers while reporting on events involving two or more countries filter them through the lenses of nationalistic or ideological frames (Lee, Pan, Chan & So, 2001). This ideologically-driven media representation of 'us' and 'them' is more salient during conflicts involving two or more nations and groups emphasizing on good of 'us' and the 'bad' of them (Chan, 2012; van Dijk, 2006, 2011; Pu & Hook, 2006).

As Lee, Pan, Chan & So (2001, p. 346) have argued:

The discursive binding of a national community shines at critical moments or around the special occasions that function as a reference point and furnish rich repertoire of cultural symbols. As public theatres, the media rank among the key institutional values for each national community to express its shared experiences and to disclose its underlying cultural and ideological premises.

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Ideological role of the media has remained an important field of inquiry for the scholars of the discourse analysis. Scholars of critical and cultural studies have noted that the news media have the power to discursively (re)construct the dominant ideologies and reproduce the dominant national identities in their discourses (van Dijk, 1998). Syed (2008) has revealed that despite a multicultural society, the media in Pakistan overwhelmingly emphasis on the Islamic identity and reinforce the dominant ideology and downplay the sub-cultures or minority identities. White (2006) has revealed that despite the claims of impartiality and objectivity the newspapers perform the ideological function of endorsing, perpetuating and make seem natural certain systems of values and beliefs using the linguistic strategies. Such ideological function of the news media can influence the perceptions, assumptions and beliefs of the citizenry about the social and political world and issues embedded in it. Given the aforementioned scholarship on discourse, ideology and identity, this study attempts to reveal how mainstream newspapers in Pakistan discursively construct 'them' and 'us' in their discourse while reporting a regional conflict involving India and Pakistan. It further aims to add to the extant scholarship on discourse and ideological representations of events and issues beyond the non-western media perspectives.

Context of the Study

This study attempts to unravel how the recent unrest in the Indian-Administered Kashmir (IHK) were reported in the mainstream media of Pakistan and how the various actors were represented in the editorial discourse of the elite press in Pakistan. On July 8, 2016, a young Kashmiri militant, Burhan Wani died during a clash between the protesters and the Indian security forces in Kashmir. His killing triggered massive protests across the Indian-administered Kashmir consequently killing many people in the region of Kashmir and developing a volatile situation at the border of India and Pakistan. Amid the political rhetoric between India and Pakistan pertinent to the recent conflict in Kashmir, a discursive war also started with war-mongering songs and TV talk shows. Soon the most conservative narratives of the Pakistani society captured the electronic media sphere with their ideologically driven narratives 'our' superiority over 'them' as 'we' are not afraid of death rather 'we' accept the 'martyrdom' as a highest achievement of life. This jingoistic media discourse over the Kashmir conflict was not limited to the mainstreaming media but soon shifted to social media space including the Twitter where the citizenry and diasporas of both India and Pakistan engaged in a virtual war in constructing a mediated image of 'us' and 'them' using the ideologically-laden lexicons and frames like 'freedom fighters' versus 'terrorists'. This study attempts to reveal how the national elite newspapers framed the conflict in the editorial discourse and whether or not the binary of 'us' and 'them' is embedded in the news discourse in Pakistan.

Corpus of the Study, editorials and newspaper

The text of the study consists of the editorials written on the recent conflicts in Kashmir and the subsequent tensions between India and Pakistan in a major elite daily of the largest media group in Pakistan. All editorials from July 10 to November 20, 2016 which were explicitly written on the recent unrest in Kashmir were selected from the print edition of the newspaper. Newspaper editorials that appeared in the print edition of the daily were read and selected if they were relevant to the current conflict in Kashmir. The reason for this time duration is the first editorial about the current unrest in Kashmir appeared on the 10th of July and till this study the last editorial appeared on November 25, 2016. In total 18 editorials appeared in *The News* dealing with the recent Kashmir conflict. *The News* is the largest English elite newspaper of the largest media group of Pakistan with the highest circulation and wide readership (Onyebadi, 2016) having a cross-section readership, independence and influential over the public issues (Siraj, 2010). Despite the ubiquity of TV and other news outlets of information technology, newspapers are arguably the most suitable outlets having more space to discuss and analyze in depth significant issues of nation and international significance done by any other news media (Lei, 2016) and are still stated to be primary sources of information for people about political crisis (Storie, Madden, & Liu, 2014). Only editorial discourse was made part of the analysis as the news on issues happening beyond the national boundaries are often taken from the international news agencies which may not reflect the stance of the national news media organizations. Editorials as news genres are important sites for the news organizations to articulate events and participate in the public debate (Le, 2003) and are pertinent outlets for the examination of the underlying ideological assumptions in a society (van Dijk, 1992 as cited in Izadi & Saghaye-Biria, 2007). Further, editorials are less tied to the journalistic norms of objectivity (Lee & Lin, 2006) and are argued to have a symbiotic relationship with news and opinions in framing issues and events (Mishra, 2008).

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

The framework for the current study is the socio-cognitive approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which takes a multidisciplinary approach to the analyses of media discourse (van Dijk, 1995a) in explicating the ideologies embedded in the news discourse. According to van Dijk (2006) ideologies are '*systems of ideas*' and '*belief systems*' of social groups. Hall (1986) defines ideology as "mental frameworks – the language, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the system of representations" (p.29) is used by various groups to organize the identity, norms, actions and values to make a sense of the social world and is expressed mainly through discourse in the form of news and language). Ideologies as systems of ideas shared by members of social groups influence the group identity and interpretation of the social and political situations and affect their discursive narratives expressed and reified in the media and other forms of representations including the national education systems and the curricula taught. Discourse is stated to be a preferential site for the implicit or explicit formulation and communication of ideological propositions by various actors in society (van Dijk, 2011). According to Fairclough (1995b, p.44) ideologies are naturalized in the text as '*common sense*', and one of the goals of critical discourse studies is to 'show how social structures determine the properties of the discourse and how the discourse in turn determines the social structure'. Other have noted that ideology refers to the beliefs systems held by individuals and collectives about the way the social world works, what is natural and common sense (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

These mental frames of individuals and collective are expressed in the form of discourse. Discourse is defined as language in use (Richardson, 2004) and is a form of social practice (Fairclough, 2003) or form of social action people do to or with each other (van Leeuwen, 1993) and acts discursively through which the social actors constitute objects of knowledge, situations and identities between various social groups discursively (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl & Liebhart, 2009). These discourses in the form of text and talk not only express emotions and feelings of the speakers but also are crucial in the construction and negotiation of in-group and out-group identities of various social groups in society (De Fina, 2011). For Foucault (1990) discourse refers to the production of knowledge mainly through language. This discursive production of knowledge is problematic in the sense that it legitimized certain narratives while restricting other meanings about the social world. The ideologically motivated discourses are argued to offer a powerful site for the ideological control of minds of the audience and can change the perception and attitudes towards the *others*-including people, events, issues and places (Teo, 2000). The overall guiding theoretical framework for this study is van Dijk's '*ideological square*' where the discourse is generally organized in a way that emphasis the *positive-self representation* and *negative –other representation* (see van Dijk, 2006, 2011).

The analytical framework employed is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is a multidisciplinary approach to reveal systematically the ideological contestation and polarization between '*us*' and '*them*' embedded in the media discourses. As a multidisciplinary approach CDA intends to unravel what structures, strategies and other properties of the text and talk or verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in these modes of reproduction of the power and ideology in society (van Dijk, 1993). Critical discourse analysis also aims to unmask what structures, strategies and other properties of the text and talk or verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in these modes of reproduction of the power and ideology in society (van Dijk, 1993). In a similar vein, Berglez and Olasusson (2011) have propounded that the CDA aims to uncover the implicit or taken-for granted values and assumptions embedded in the seemingly neutral and objective texts and directs the attention of the analysts to the themes given salience in the text and the choice of the words used to discursively construct the social realities. CDA also intends to explore the underlying assumptions expressed implicitly or explicitly about the various social groups in the discourse and offers a powerful method to study the structure and functions of '*underlying ideologies*' and their discursive production and reproduction systematically in the discourse at various levels (van, Dijk, 2006) to draw out the ideologies that might be buried in the mediated texts (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

This study attempts to contribute to the existing scholarship on media discourses on national identities and ideologies from a non-western media perspective using the theoretical framework propounded by van Dijk (2006) and critical discourses analysis as an analytical tool to explicate the inter-group and outer-group representation embed in the editorials of *The News* and the discursive representation of '*us*' versus '*them*' polarization.

In addition to study the ideological polarization of ‘us’ and ‘them’ the study also attempts to unearth using the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis, the naming choices, lexical choices, metaphorical choices, argumentative structure of the texts, the actors and their representations in the editorial discourse of daily *The News* as such selection suggests the ideological affiliation on the part of the speakers (Sykes, 1985; van Dijk, 2000) and creates a social relationships between the participants involved in the discourse (Fairclough, 1989). The choices of words used in the discourse in nominalization and characterization of social actors are of major focus for the critical discourse analyst in unmasking the positive self-representation and negative other-representation as integral to the ideological square (Richardson, 2004). Lexical choices become explicitly ideological when the speakers chose between such words as *terrorists* versus *freedom fighters*, *demonstrators* versus *deviants* and *invasion* versus *attack*. Analyzing the choices of words in the discourse analysis is important as “words convey the imprint of society and of value judgment in particular—they convey the connoted as well as denoted meanings” (Richardson, 2007, p. 47) and are argued to constitute particular representations of the social world, social identities and a certain version of the social reality reflecting the ideological orientations of the news media organizations (Li, 2009).

The Analysis

The overarching purpose of the study was to unmask the discursive construction of ‘them’ and ‘us’ using the theoretical framework of ‘ideological square’ propounded by van Dijk (2011, 2006) where the discourse producers or speakers emphasize the good of ‘us’ and de-emphasize the bad of ‘us’ and de-emphasize the good of ‘them’ and emphasize the bad of ‘them’. It also takes the social identity theory as theoretical lens that emphasizes the *positive-self presentation* and *negative other-presentation* (Oktar, 2001) in the news media discourse signaling the ideological construction of identities. The discourse producers in the news media use different linguistic strategies to emphasize the bad of ‘them’ and de-emphasize the good of ‘them’ when two opposite groups or nations are involved in ideologically based discourse. This analysis specifically focused on how India as actor in the conflict was presented discursively in the editorials of a major national daily in Pakistan during a political conflict involving the two rival countries namely India and Pakistan. Special attention was paid to how the editorials discursively construct the ‘other’ or *out-group* identities in the discourse as the ‘other’ could be more than one social out-groups or identities in the media discourses as the discourse producers categorize and de-categorize identities according to the needs and contexts in the discourse production (Chan, 2014). The critical reading of the editorial discourse reveals that as expected there are various actors represented in the editorial discourse while narrating the Kashmir conflict besides India and Pakistan namely, the global institutions, including the UN and the US which were also made part of the discourse with highly negative representation. The analysis that follows attempts to investigate how the assumptions of ‘ideological square’ are discursively embedded in the media discourses to represent a positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.

As the subsequent analysis would show that the dominant narratives in all the analyzed editorials was the ‘bad’ of ‘them’ and ‘good’ of ‘us’. Their bad actions were predominantly emphasized and ‘our’ bad actions were not reported, de-emphasized or mitigated. Using the discursive framing, ‘they’ were made responsible for the bad happenings in Kashmir and at the line of control between the two states. This ideological representation of ‘them’ is highly negative, evaluative, manipulative, judgmental and subjective in all the studied editorials. The actors/participants and identities are more than the two states—namely India and Pakistan. The newspaper in its editorials has included many other actors including the US, UN and the global community with predominantly negative portrayals. By mentioning the global players and actors, the newspaper has attempted to bring the discourse at the global level. The editorials frequently referred to the UN resolutions on Kashmir to legitimize the protests in Kashmir and Pakistan’s stance on Kashmir issue and the failure of the UN to get its own resolutions implemented. In one such editorials the newspaper stated that the “UN disregards the basic human rights of Kashmiris to keep India happy” (“*Kashmir and the UN*”, *Editorial, August 20, 2016*). Frequent references were made to the UN resolutions on Kashmir and its helplessness before a ‘powerful country’ India.

In most of the editorials the UN is represented negatively for its “inability to enforce its own resolutions” (“*The UN Challenge*”, *Editorial, September 20, 2016*) and the UN needs to recognize the ‘Indian crimes’ in the occupied Kashmir to “maintain any moral credibility” (“*Kashmir and the UN*”, *Editorial, August 20, 2016*). The US is predominantly represented as ‘unreliable’ and a friend of India who is either silent on Kashmir issue or takes the Indian side. The global community was often depicted as a silent spectator stating “India has support of the most world powers, who see only the lure of Indian markets and trade and are blind to the freedom struggle in Kashmir” (*The UN challenge, Editorial, Sep 20, 2016*).

Nothing is said or narrated about the India's alleged cross border terrorism from Pakistan about which India and the global community has always shown its concerns. What follows is a brief analysis of the actors and their discursive actions, discursive construction of in-group and out-group identities, lexicons/ selection of words and their meanings, responsibility for the conflict and policy recommendation to end the conflict of Kashmir.

Negative *other*-presentation

In all of the analyzed editorials India is presented in highly negative terms using the lexicons of 'aggressor', 'brutal', 'violator of international law', 'killer of civilian Kashmiris', 'murderous assault', 'blood thirsty', 'belligerent', 'hostile', 'violent', 'violator of human rights in Kashmir' and 'occupier of Kashmir' and 'colonizer'. These highly ideologically driven lexicons were used predominantly in all editorials to construct India vis-à-vis its actions in Kashmir and its attitude towards Pakistan in highly ideologically-laden terms as depicted in the excerpt:

"India's transgressions rise by the day-as part of India's continuing campaign to distract attention from its Kashmir occupation by stirring up tensions along the Line of Control. On Wednesday, the Indian troops fired on a bus and then the ambulance which came to rescue the victims. This is an open act of unforgivable violence against a neighboring country and against Kashmiris". (*Trouble on the LoC*, Editorial, Nov 25, 2016).

The semantic macrostructure in all the selected editorials presents the '*other*' highly negatively while Pakistan and its negative actions are not mentioned, mitigated or positively presented. Different naming choices to objects and actors by the discourse producers are a powerful ideological tool of representing the social world both at implicit and explicit levels. Nouns, adjectives and pronouns are used to assign linguistic qualities to actors involved in the discourse. Lexical choices become more ideologically prominent when words like 'us' and 'them', freedom fighters and terrorists are used in the news discourse. The choices of words used in nomination and characterization of social actors in the discourse is of particular significance from discourse analytic point of view as such choices of words have ideological functions of positive self representation and negative other-representation (Richardson, 2004) or emphasizing 'our good actions' and de-emphasizing 'our-bad actions' and vice versa for 'others' (van Dijk, 2000). As shown below:

India continues its murderous assault on the Kashmiri people as the rest of the world averts its gaze from the unfolding humanitarian crisis. (*Kashmir's wounded* Editorial, August 08, 2016).

In Occupied Kashmir, rape, looting and mass graves are common occurrences of everyday life. Kashmiris have no rights and their right to self-determination has been repeatedly blocked by India. ...under the Modi government such protests will only gain greater strength because of his ugly anti-Muslim rhetoric...it is the colonizers attitude that India has adopted towards Kashmiris that ensures both the continuation of the insurgency and the angry frustrations of Kashmiris. (*Atrocities in Kashmir*), Editorial, July 12, 2016).

The lexical choices of 'colonizers' and the 'ugly anti-Muslim' rhetoric are highly ideological and native while referring to the 'other' and its actions. These lexical choices reflect the ideological orientation of the discourse producers.

Representing Actor and Actions

As the analysis revealed that in the dominant discourse, the actions of the 'other' were presented highly negatively with consequences for the entire region and the 'our actions' were predominantly presented positive terms. As the exerts explicate:

The Indian government's aggressive stance presents a danger to millions of people in the region. Such irresponsibility is reprehensible to say the least...The Modi government has consistently failed to listen to sense. (*India's game of diversions*), Editorial, Sept 22, 2016).

The killing last week of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani by security forces –in yet another example of India's infamous 'catch and kill' policy in Kashmir –led to protests throughout the valley...all of them were killed by Indian security forces....they were protesting the brutal occupation of their land by the Indian Army...by now it should be obvious to all that the Indian

Army isn't reaching to militancy, but is instead the largest contributor to it. (*Atrocities in Kashmir, Editorial, July 12, 2016*).

In all the analyzed editorial discourse, India is presented in highly negative ways as an 'oppressor', 'irresponsible', 'insane' 'occupier', 'violators', 'killer' and having 'aggressive designs' for Kashmiris and Pakistan. Richardson (2007) has argued that "words convey the imprint of society and of value judgment in particular they convey the connoted as well as denoted meanings" (p. 47). From the intergroup and out-group identity categorizations, Kashmir has been delinked from the Indian identity and is put in separate identity. Thus narrative structure in the editorials is that Kashmir has no link with India and is rather an independent identity and the latter is an occupier of the former. The value driven- words and their meanings present the 'other' negatively. The intergroup actors and their actions were presented highly positively. As shown in the below excerpt:

Sartaj Aziz offered a way out by inviting India to open the lines of communication on Kashmir once again. It is unlikely that India will take this invitation up. Instead, it has insisted that the only thing it is willing to talk about is reclaiming the Pakistani-side of Kashmir. (*"Terms for talks", Editorial, August 19, 2016*).

The lexical choices also signal the ideological position the newspaper takes in the discourse. Using the word 'Mujahideen commander' for Burhan Wani who was killed by the police, the discourse justifies the demands of the actions of Kashmiris for their self-determination and independence from India. In one such editorial Burhan Wani was termed as "widely revered militant leader" (*"Indian Tricks", Editorial, September 20, 2016*). The editorial portrayed the Indian Minister in highly negative and used exaggerated language when referring to him using the lexical like 'ever the hawk' (*"Empty posturing", Editorial, August 16, 2016*), 'blood thirsty Modi' (*"Indian aggression", Editorial, Nov 16, 2016*). In contrast, 'our' leaders and their actions have been presented positively and have been praised.

Positive self-presentation

While presenting the *other* highly negatively for its actions in Kashmir and its attitude toward Pakistan; the latter is presented positively and less frequently mentioned often as compared to India throughout the discourse and often an intergroup identity has been formed between the newspaper and its country of origin using the pronoun 'we', 'us' and 'ours'. Pakistan has been predominantly presented as peaceful, good neighbor, civilized, abider of the international law and a country that is under a continuous risk from an 'aggressive' India. The following excerpts may depict how the 'us' is presented in the editorial discourses while referring to the negative and bad actions of the 'other'. As some of the following excerpts would depict:

The Pakistani state and government officials have condemned India and promised retaliation. Pakistan has to adopt such a posture to try and deter Indian from wantonly attacking civilians in the future. But this is one area where we have to do more. We need to forcefully point out at press conferences with international leaders that India is deliberately targeting civilians in both Pakistan and Kashmir and ask the world community how it can turn a blind eye to such aggression. (*"Trouble on the LoC", Editorial, Nov 25, 2016*)

This discursive strategy of juxtaposing the 'us' versus 'them' performs ideological functions of presenting the self positively and the other negatively. In all such narrative structures '*our*' negative actions like the alleged issue of cross border infiltration from Pakistani side is excluded and neither the Indian concerns towards Pakistan is included. This discursive framing is used to present '*us*' as peaceful, civilized and followers of the international law. As the excerpt below narates:

Pakistan's response, other than firing back, was to chair a meeting in Islamabad, urging the UN to take up the matter of India's regular violations of the LoC....For now Pakistan seems to be fighting its battle on its own. (*Indian aggression, Editorial, Nov 16, 2016*).

A cursory look at these discourse would reveal that the 'us' and 'our' actions have been narrated positively signaling that 'we' are peaceful. Pakistan fired in 'retaliation' and '*we*' are civilized and engaged in peaceful solution contrary to '*them*'. The Indian actions are depicted as 'killings' of civilians', 'aggression', 'violation' and 'deliberate targets of the civilians'. Such discursive strategies are used to present the '*other*' in a negative position and serve certain ideological functions of the media organizations (Yin, 2007).

The often use of the collective noun 'we', 'ours' and 'us' has ideological functions in the discourse production. In many editorials the collective noun 'we' has been used referring to the nation, newspaper and its readers who share the same thoughts on the topic like 'our ambassador', 'our athletes', 'talks with us' and 'our diplomats'. This deictic expression of 'we' presents a 'we-group' identity (Wodak et al. 2009). Contrary to the Indian actors/participants in the discourse, the actions of Pakistan and Pakistani actors in the discourse have been constructed with positive actions throughout the discourse doing 'good job' to bring peace to the region despite having no 'outside' help including the UN and international community and thus has to fight this war against 'them' by its [Pakistan] own. The editorials have de-emphasized or excluded 'our' bad actions in all the selected discourse. 'The Pakistani-side of Kashmir' is presented without using the phrase of 'Pakistan Held Kashmir' in contrast to the 'Indian Held Kashmir'. In two of the editorials the Kashmir on Pakistan side is presented as 'democratic state' with elections just held. On the other hand the Indian Occupied Kashmir is represented as 'victim', 'underdeveloped', 'occupied' and 'undemocratic'.

Scholars of discourse analysis have noted that the media language is a power tool of discursively representing the social and political world, group identities and social relations according to the ideological motivations taken by the media institutions and discourse producers in the construction of reality (Fairclough, 1995a) and media as ideological institutions play important role in reflecting, justifying and legitimizing the discourse of 'us' and 'them' by positive self-representation and negative out-group-representation (see Otkar, 2001). The lexicons and selection of words and images shape the news narratives about the issue and audiences' perceptions of events and the 'other' (Seib, 2005). Thus the newspaper in the editorials has discursively constructed India as an aggressor, violators of human rights and international law and an 'other' with evil intentions towards 'us'. The dominant narratives in all editorials narrate Pakistan and its actors as peaceful, rational and civilized one. The use of lexicons suggests the ideological position of the writers and speakers. Such consistent positive/negative presentation of groups as being responsible for positive and negative actions has ideological basis (van Dijk, 1983).

Representation of the distant 'other'

Narrating the conflict in Kashmir and the subsequent tense situation at the border between the two countries, the editorial discourse discussed the issue at the global level, thus bringing the global actors including the US, UN and the international community in the discourse for ideological reasons and presented these actors predominantly negatively. The United Nations is depicted as a failed organizations that could not fulfill its obligations vis-à-vis Kashmir conflict. The US is constructed as 'unreliable' and a friend of India 'lured' by the latter's market for the US capitalism. The US has been depicted as either taking 'sides' of India or is silent over the Kashmir issue and the former's aggressive attitude towards Pakistan. As some of the following excerpts may narrate:

It is also notable that Ban Ki-moon [the UN Gen.Sec] only asked for bilateral talks and did not acknowledged that the organization he heads has called for Kashmiris to have the right to self-determination through a referendum nearly 70 years ago the oversight was surely deliberate and a sign of how the UN disregards the basic human rights of Kashmiris to keep India happy. ("Kashmir and the UN", *Editorial, August 20, 2016*).

In one of the editorial discourses, the UN was termed as 'reluctant' to take actions against India vis-a-vis the latter's 'brutalities' in Kashmir because of 'its [UN] heavy pro-Indian bias' ("*Indian aggression*", *Editorial, Nov 16, 2016*) but despite its pro-Indian stance the editorial discourse depicts the UN as the 'only' organization to force India to come to dialogue with Pakistan over Kashmir. The editorial further narrates that Pakistan is fighting the Indian aggression 'alone' with some support from China, the rest of the world and its voice on Kashmir is 'muted'. However, what has been excluded and de-emphasized is the nature of the UN resolutions, as these very resolutions of UN on Kashmir are voluntary and mere recommendations thus not binding obligations one. One of the most important conditions for any UN resolution or referendum on Kashmir is the demilitarization of the military on both sides of Kashmir namely; the Indian and Pakistani sides of Kashmir which was excluded from the discourse. Thus the discursive framing of the issue includes some aspects of the reality and excludes much other information providing the reader with a twisted reality. The UN was mentioned 12 times in 18 editorials while referring to the Kashmir conflict and issue of recent firing at line of control between the two countries with a negative connotation signaling it as a failed organization whose legitimacy is questionable and must act "to maintain any moral credibility" (*Kashmir and the UN, Editorial, August 20, 2016*).

The overall representation of UN and the international community and global powers is highly negative who are either powerless before a powerful country like India or taking sides of India over Kashmir issue for their capitalistic desires to capture the Indian market and not for any legitimate reason. As the following excerpts tell:

The only lasting solution would be for the UN to finally that its own resolutions on Kashmir be implemented and a referendum held there. Until that Modi is going to find every distraction possible to avert the world's gaze from its occupation. (*"Indian aggression", Editorial, Nov 20, 2016*).

The ties between the US and Pakistan are dominantly framed as transactional in their nature lacking trust and reliability. As the newspaper tells in one of the selected editorials that 'regardless of who is in the White House, the one thing we can be sure of is that they will always asking Pakistan to 'do more'...the incoming Trump presidency will likely be no different'. (*"Dealing with Washington", November 21, 2016*).

This highly negative representation of the US is in consonant with the argument of Hassan (2014) who has noted that in the post-9/11, media discourses in Pakistan were predominantly anti-American and the ratings of TV channels were highly increased with the anti-US and anti- West media agenda.

Finally the headlines/ titles of the editorials are highly ideologically driven with negative connotation towards India such as "*Atrocities in Kashmir*" (July 12, 2016), "*Kashmir's wounded*" (August 08, 2016), "*Battered peace*" (August 28, 2018), "*India's renewed tirade*" (September, 26, 2016), "*India's lies on Kashmir*" (September 16, 2016), "*India's game of diversions*" (September 22, 2016), "*Indian tricks*" (September 16, 2016), "*Indian aggression*" (November 20, 2016), "*Indian Aggression*" (November 20, 2016). The titles of all these editorials direct the reader towards a particular framing and understanding of the issue. Scholars have argued that the headlines in the news discourse express the most important topic of the news item (van Dijk, 2011). The connotative and denotative meaning of the lexicons in the headlines of these editorials presents India negatively as an 'evil' actor. Using the ideologically driven lexicons and words, the newspapers editorials fulfill certain ideological function. Previous studies have also noted that in the news discourse structure, headlines have a critical role in the meaning creation and directing the readers toward a particular meaning or narrative and are argued to be signaling the ideological position of newspapers (Thetela, 2001) and constructing mental frames on particular issues drawing the attention of the reader toward some aspects of a communicative reality and excluding other aspects which might cause a biased and twisted understanding of issues. As van Dijk (2006) notes that the speakers and writers use the headlines to enhance the importance of events which otherwise may not be that important. These lexicons in the titles of news are effective to recall what has been read by the recipients of these messages and thus fulfill the ideological purposes of the writers or news media organizations. The choice of the lexicons constructs meanings and narratives about the social world and is stated to set the ideological boundaries (Fowler, 1991) and are considered to be significant for the positive presentation of 'us' and negative presentation of 'them' (van Dijk, 2006).

Discussion & Conclusion

Media narratives are powerful interpretive frameworks to discursively produce, reproduce and reify the ideologies, national identities and world views about our sociopolitical world. They (re)produce the sociocognitive characteristics of social groups and perform certain political, cultural and ideological functions in the context within which they are produced through discourse. Media in ideological states like Pakistan offer an interesting case point to explore how the press discursively constructs national identities and the polarization of 'us' versus 'them' in their discourses while reporting a conflict beyond the national borders. The analysis unraveled that the newspapers ideologically represent India and its actions predominantly negatively using the lexicons of 'aggressor', 'brutal', 'unreliable and inhumanly actor'; in contrast ; Pakistan and its actors are represented predominantly positively. The lexical choices while framing the 'other' are ideologically driven with an out-group identity, while using the pronouns of 'us', 'we' 'ours' the newspapers constructed an intergroup and collective identity blurring the boundaries of nation states, the media and its readers. Narrating the Kashmir unrest and the recent tense ties between India and Pakistan, the editorial writers have predominantly constructed India as an 'enemy other', while the global actors like the UN is constructed as either a failed global organization or partisan actor toward certain powerful countries including India. The US is represented as unreliable, and a friend of India lured by the capitalism the latter offers to the US. The editorial discourses predominantly framed the unrest in Kashmir as a legitimate movement against the 'brutal' occupation of India.

This study supports many of the previous studies on discourse, ideology and national identity (see van Dijk, 2006, 2011, Chan, 2012, Lee et al., 2001; Billig, 1995; Castells, 2010) that news media discursively produce the dominant narratives, ideology and national identity in their discourses and that ethnocentrism is not an exception but seems a norm in the national media discourse during the times of conflicts involving two or more actors. Despite the media globalization, the national media still narrate events using the nationalistic and ethnocentric frames and that the news media act as ideological actors in their discourse on conflict beyond the national borders. How do these highly negative constructions of ‘others’ in the media are shaping the receivers of these discourses could be an interesting future inquiry.

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