

**ANALYZING PEACE JOURNALISM THROUGH
SECURITIZATION PERSPECTIVE: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN**

PhD Dissertation



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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Ph.D. thesis entitled “Analyzing Peace Journalism through Securitization Perspective: evidence from Pakistan” was carried out by me for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Media and Communication Studies under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Muhammad Junaid Ghauri, Department of Media and Communication Studies, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. The interpretations are based on my reading and understanding of the original texts and are not published anywhere in the form of books, monographs, or articles. The other books, articles, and websites I have used are acknowledged in the respective places in the text. For the present thesis I am submitting to the University, no degree, diploma, or distinction has been conferred on me before, either in this or any other University. Place: Islamabad (Ms. Ruqiya Anwar) Date: January 3rd, 2025, Research Student

CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the research work described in the PhD dissertation is the author's original work. It has been carried out under my direct supervision. I have reviewed all its data, contents, and results reported in the manuscript and certify its correctness and authenticity.

I certify that the material included in the thesis has not been used partially or fully in any manuscript already submitted or is in the process of submission in partial or complete fulfillment of the award of any other degree from any other institution. I also certify that the thesis has been developed under my supervision according to the prescribed format. I, therefore, endorse its worth for the award of PhD degree following the prescribed procedure of the university.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

It is certified that this thesis titled “Analyzing Peace Journalism through Securitization Perspective: Evidence from Pakistan,” submitted by **Ms. Ruqiya Anwar** under registration # **22-FSS/Ph.DMC/F-18**, student of PhD Mass Communication, Department of Media and Communication Studies, IIUI. It is our Judgment that this thesis is of sufficient standard to warrant its acceptance by the International Islamic University Islamabad for the award of a Ph.D degree in Media and Mass Communication.

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the reporting of two conflicts in the Pakistani press, the PTM and PDM, and examines the interaction between conflict securitization and the escalation and de-escalation potential. Moreover, this dissertation presents a framework for classifying conflict journalism in Pakistan to evaluate its potential for escalation or de-escalation of the conflict. The data was collected by operationalizing the nine variables and further indicators of the proposed model (Highest Securitization, medium Securitization, lowest securitization, strong escalatory coverage, moderate escalatory coverage, weak escalatory, weak de-escalatory, moderate de-escalatory, and strong de-escalatory coverage. The study presents and empirically tests a new model for assessing conflict journalism, considering the varied levels of a conflict's intensity and its resulting escalatory or de-escalatory coverage. This study employs a post-positivist paradigm to evaluate the model. The study finds a positive association between the levels of securitization of conflict and the nature of reporting in escalatory terms by Applying content analysis. Additionally, the study finds variances in the presence of peace journalism. It indicates that a critical pragmatic approach to peace journalism is most suited to address challenges regarding its theory and practice. The study offers significant insights into the role of the media in conflict-ridden contexts and highlights the need for responsible and nuanced reporting. The study also highlights the importance of promoting peace journalism to contribute to conflict resolution and promote a culture of peace and tolerance in Pakistan.

Keywords: Peace journalism, conflict securitization, escalatory coverage, de-escalatory coverage, conflict journalism, Pakistan Tahafuz Movement, Pakistan Democratic Movement.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has experienced several conflicts in recent decades, with the media taking an active role, whether directly or indirectly, as a vital part of these communities. The Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) are specific instances of such conflicts with varying natures and intensities. The PTM movement began in 2018 to advocate for the rights and dignity of Pakistan's Pashtun ethnic group. On the other hand, the PDM is an alliance of opposition political parties established in 2020 to call for electoral reforms and the government's resignation (Awan, 2023).

In this dissertation, the researcher has contently analyzed the reporting of these two conflicts of different natures and intensities, which include PTM and PDM, to discuss the interaction between conflict securitization and war and peace potential in Pakistan. Securitization theory, proposed by scholars like Buzan and Waever, posits that issues become security challenges by framing them as existential threats necessitating extraordinary measures. This study analyzes the specific securitization moves implemented during the coverage of selected conflicts, identifying the key actors involved, the issues that were ultimately securitized, perspectives on threats, and the reasons behind these efforts, all within their respective contexts (Buzan et al., 1998; Burns, 2012). Moreover, this dissertation highlights how the securitization frame is invoked and contested, how it evolves, and the possible rewards that effective securitization may bring to political actors. Significantly, the critical point of this dissertation is that during times of violent conflict, media coverage frequently corresponds to

the directives of state and non-state policymakers (Hussain, 2019; Khan & Kaunert, 2023). This alignment can be found in various research studies (Hussain & Lynch, 2018; Hussain et al., 2019; Hussain, 2020), demonstrating how external forces create media narratives. The more conflict actors securitize, the more escalation occurs, whereas the less they securitize, the less it gets escalated.

While securitization depicts conflicts as existential threats requiring extreme measures, peace journalism provides an alternative approach that emphasizes journalists' responsibility to evaluate the impact of their reporting on conflict dynamics. Moreover, Peace journalism has gotten attention as an essential analytical paradigm for conflict reporting. Contextualizing events within larger social and political frameworks, peace journalism emphasizes journalists' responsibilities to explore how their reporting might impact conflict dynamics. Peace journalism advocates nonviolent alternatives and promotes dialogue among conflicting parties, contributing to conflict de-escalation. The main objective of peace journalism is to allow all parties involved in a conflict to express their viewpoint. It calls for journalism that is multi-perspectival, contextualized, and people-centered. Peace journalism employs all of journalism's tools to effectively inform the public about wars and promote peace and harmony (Hussain, 2017). As a result of decades of military direct and indirect rule, Pakistan changed from a progressive democratic democracy to a security state (Haqqani, 2005; Siddiqua, 2006). The media, along with other democratic institutions, has been one of the primary victims of this tendency (International Media Support Report, 2012).

Since the media are essential institutions that may help people understand each other better while also having the capacity to inflame tensions (Galtung, 2006), media coverage of conflict can be escalatory or de-escalatory. Research has discussed that sensationalized reporting and violent imagery can fuel conflict escalation by creating a sense of urgency and threat (Nacos, 2021). In contrast, media coverage that highlights the human cost of conflict and emphasizes the possibility of peaceful resolution can contribute to conflict de-escalation (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2020). Moreover, the research has revealed that media frames that emphasize the zero-sum nature of conflicts, in which one side must win and the other must lose, can contribute to escalation (Galtung, 2021). In contrast, frames that emphasize common ground and the potential for compromise can contribute to de-escalation (Lentini & Striano, 2021).

Despite the challenges in understanding the complex relationship between media and conflict escalation and de-escalation, recent research has highlighted the potential for media to play a positive role in promoting peaceful outcomes. For example, the theory of peace journalism highlights the importance of reporting on conflicts in a way that highlights nonviolent solutions and fosters dialogue between conflicting parties (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2020). The relationship between media and conflict escalation and de-escalation is complex and multifaceted. Relevant research in Pakistan revealed the escalatory and de-escalatory frames (Hussain & Lynch, 2018; Iqbal & Hussain, 2018) and internationally (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lynch, 2013). If the media acts as an instrument to escalate conflicts, it can also promote peace or de-escalate the conflict. Hence, this research study investigates the interplay between conflict securitization and Pakistan's media's potential for war and peace-making in the context of the Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and the Pakistan Democratic Movement

(PDM). It also attempts to fill the gap in the literature by analyzing the interaction between peace journalism and securitization in Pakistani media coverage of these conflicts.

For these reasons, two Pakistani newspapers, Dawn and The Nation, have been selected for a specified time for the chosen conflicts. The researcher also has presented and empirically tested a new detailed model for evaluating conflict journalism in terms of its escalatory and de-escalatory trends through the levels of securitization attributes to the selected conflicts. Before delving into these concerns in detail and to better understand the interaction between peace journalism and securitization, it is important to briefly discuss the significant components of the selected conflicts over time. Additionally, understanding the background of the Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) is critical as it sets the groundwork for analyzing the more significant implications of conflict securitization.

1.1 Background of Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM)

The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) is a social and political movement that emerged in northwest Pakistan in 2018 to emphasize the Pashtun community's grievances and demand their rights. Manzoor Pashteen, a Pashtun activist, founded the movement along with others disillusioned by their community's isolation and discrimination. The PTM focuses primarily on the Pashtun-dominated regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, where the Pashtun population has endured decades of violence, human rights violations, and military operations. The movement desires justice for the victims of such tragedies and mandates an end to extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, and discrimination against Pashtuns. According to a study by Hussain and Khan (2021), the PTM appeared in response to the long-standing grievances of the Pashtun community in Pakistan, which has faced

violence, discrimination, and marginalization in society. The authors observe that the movement's demands for accountability and justice have reverberated with many Pashtuns, who have long felt neglected and oppressed by the Pakistani government.

Following the murder of a young Pashtun shopkeeper identified as Naqeebullah Mehsud in a police encounter at the beginning of 2018, the PTM's activities saw a significant increase. The movement organized demonstrations and sit-ins nationwide to demand justice for Naqeebullah and other extrajudicial killing victims. Many Pashtuns, who have long felt neglected and marginalized by the Pakistani state, identified with the PTM's goals and nonviolent rallies. The government and military have reportedly resisted the PTM's calls for justice and accountability, branding the group as a tool of foreign powers and inciting anti-state sentiment (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2019).

The tribal people's anti-military movement in Pakistan's war-torn areas raises severe concerns regarding security (*The News*, 2019). PTM followers publicly questioned the Pakistan army's authority, criticizing them for collaborating with terrorists for strategic purposes, resulting in enormous displacement and destroyed their homes and properties (Pashteen, 2019). On the other hand, Pakistan's military accuses PTM followers of receiving foreign funding and acting against Pakistan's interests (BBC, 2019). The PTM issue has caused divisions throughout the country. Even though most Pakistanis agree with the military's assessment that this group is a coup against the government, the majority of tribal populations support it (Dawn, 2019; News, 2019). Following the murder of a young Pashtun shopkeeper identified as Naqeebullah Mehsud in a police encounter at the beginning of 2018, the PTM's activities saw a significant increase. The movement organized demonstrations and sit-ins nationwide to demand justice for Naqeebullah and other extrajudicial killing victims.

Many Pashtuns, who had long felt disregarded and marginalized by the Pakistani state, found common ground with the PTM's demands and took part in peaceful rallies. The movement utilized social media and other online communication methods to mobilize and organize its supporters, allowing it to reach a larger audience and amplify its message. One of the most critical demands of the PTM is the repeal of the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR). This colonial-era statute grants the government and military broad authority to detain and punish individuals without due process. The FCR validates and legitimizes the military's presence and operations in Pashtun-dominated regions, leading to numerous violations of Pashtuns' human rights. The PTM has demanded the replacement of the FCR with a system that respects the rule of law and protects the rights of all citizens. The PTM's demands for justice and accountability have also highlighted the issue of enforced disappearances, a widespread problem in Pakistan for decades. According to the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, over 6,000 individuals have gone missing in Pakistan since 2001, many of whom are from the Pashtun community. The PTM has demanded that the government and military take steps to address this issue and ensure those responsible for such crimes are held accountable.

Despite its challenges and opposition, the PTM has remained committed to its cause and has continued to mobilize and organize its supporters. The movement has also drawn attention to the issue of Pashtun identity and culture, which has often been suppressed and marginalized in Pakistan. The PTM's efforts to promote Pashtun culture and language have helped to create a sense of community and pride among Pashtuns and have challenged the dominant narratives that have characterized them as terrorists and militants.

1.1.1 Background of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)

Pakistan's opposition parties created the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) in September 2020. According to political observers, the alliance emerged due to the country's rising political tensions and the government's inability to solve the people's economic and social problems. The coalition of opposition parties consists of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), the People's Party of Pakistan (PPP), and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) (Ahmed, 2020). The PDM has held significant rallies in three major cities. At Gujranwala's Jinnah Stadium, PDM organized its first anti-government demonstration, which attracted between 50,000 and 60,000 people. PDM claimed that the military rigged the 2018 general election in Pakistan, which the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party won. The PML-N and the PPP, the two political parties that previously ruled Pakistan, were accused of corruption, according to the then-governing administration, which claimed that these cases were the driving force behind the movement.

The opposition parties accused the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of using state institutions to repress dissent and silence the opposition. The PDM has criticized the government's management of the economy, foreign policy, and human rights issues. Since its foundation, the PDM has organized a series of massive rallies and public gatherings across Pakistan that have attracted thousands of adherents (Khalid, 2021). The PDM also encountered internal divisions and disagreements regarding its strategies and objectives, particularly about its participation in the upcoming Senate elections and the possibility of boycotting the forthcoming general elections. Some political analysts are concerned that the PDM's strategy of mass mobilization may not be sufficient to bring about political change in Pakistan, given

the government's determination to remain in power and the difficulties in preserving a united front among opposition parties (Ashraf, 2020).

On September 20, 2020, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, chairman of the centre-left Pakistan People's Party, hosted an all-party meeting to forge a broad political alliance and plan to unseat Imran Khan. Imran Khan's harshest opponent, Fazal-ur-Rehman, read aloud the 26-point resolution the participants had accepted. The opposition, in unanimity, demands Imran Khan's immediate resignation. They intended to overthrow the government in January 2021 by staging a protracted march to the nation's capital (Kugelman, 2020). In addition to the difficulties of maintaining a united front and confronting government repression, the PDM has been criticized by some for its apparent lack of a political vision beyond pursuing the ouster of the current administration. Some critics have suggested that the PDM is more concerned with personal rivalries and party interests than a genuine devotion to democracy and social justice (Ali, 2021).

Despite this, the PDM has successfully mobilized huge crowds and brought attention to critical issues in Pakistan, such as the country's struggling economy, pervasive poverty and inequality, and human rights violations. The PDM's demand for free and fair elections has resonated with many disillusioned Pakistanis with the current political system, and the coalition has been successful in exerting pressure on the government to address some of these issues (Javed, 2021). Given Pakistan's history of military involvement, authoritarianism, and corruption, the PDM's struggle for democratic reform is crucial despite its challenges. The PDMs called for democratic accountability and human rights respect, which reflects the hopes of many Pakistanis, especially the country's young people, who are disillusioned with the present political system.

1.2 Profile of the Selected Newspapers

The following section describes the main attributes of the selected newspapers for this dissertation.

1.2.1 The Dawn

Dawn is Pakistan's longest-running and most popular English-language newspaper. Pakistan Herald Publications publishes the *Dawn* Group's most widely read newspaper. The organization owns the monthly journal Herald, the information technology publication Spider, and the marketing, advertising, and media publication Aurora, and was established as the Muslim League's official publication in Delhi, India, on October 26, 1941. Dawn's offices are located in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. The circulation of *Dawn* during the weekdays exceeds one million. Hameed Haroon heads the *Dawn* Corporation, while Zaffar Abbas is the paper's current editor. *Dawn* is widely considered the leading English-language publication in Pakistan. As a newspaper, *Dawn* is modern, elite, and liberal (Haseeb, 2019).

The *Dawn* has played a vital part in defining the country's political and social landscape by providing readers with high-quality journalism and a variety of perspectives on both national and global issues. In addition, the newspaper's dedication to journalistic excellence and its unwavering support for press freedom and democracy have made it a revered institution in Pakistan. The network's coverage of political events, social issues, and cultural developments has earned it a reputation as a prominent voice of reason and objectivity in the media landscape of the United States. The *Dawn* has a significant online presence in addition to its print version, a thorough news website, and a wide range of social media channels. Its dedication to

innovation and digital transformation has enabled it to remain relevant in a media world that is becoming faster and more dynamic.

Its coverage of global events reflects the *Dawn's* reputation as a prominent voice in Pakistan's media landscape. The newspaper has an extensive network of correspondents and reporters provide in-depth coverage of global events such as wars, natural disasters, and political shifts. Overall, the *Dawn's* status as a reliable news and information source in Pakistan is a tribute to its steadfast dedication to journalistic ethics and the welfare of the people. "The Dawn is more than just a newspaper - it is a symbol of hope, progress, and the power of free speech."(Dawn, 2017; Aamir, 2018; Al Jazeera, 2018; Irfan, 2018).

1.2.2 The Nation

The Nation, Pakistan's most widely read English-language daily newspaper, is recognized for its in-depth international news and events reporting. Since its inception in 1986, the newspaper has earned a reputation for journalistic excellence and impartial coverage, and it is widely recognized as one of the most influential publications in Pakistan, with a nationwide readership. Its coverage of political events, social issues, and economic developments is regarded as among the most trustworthy and precise in the nation. As a Nawa- i- waqt Group member, The Nation is a part of the nation's oldest newspaper. It started on August 14, 1940, when Hamid Nizami established Nawa - i- waqt and passed the Pakistan Resolution. International references to The Nation, a Pakistani newspaper, are standard. This is the outcome of the work of an editorial staff that is highly motivated and professionally skilled, supported by cutting-edge information technology, a vast network of correspondents both domestically and abroad, and a first-rate distribution and wire service network.

The newspaper has separate sections for city, national, sports, foreign, and business news, in addition to the significant news events on the outside pages. *The Nation* publishes various perspectives from contributors, including some of the most well-known people, who are recognized for their editorials and regarded as the nation's boldest and most influential. Its in-depth coverage of politics, sports, business, and the public sector has repeatedly prompted organizations and authorities to take appropriate action. *The Nation's* commitment to editorial independence and free expression is one of its greatest strengths. The newspaper has consistently supported these principles and has been an outspoken opponent of government censorship and press restrictions. Its unwavering dedication to journalistic integrity and objectivity has garnered it the respect of its readers and peers. Despite its reputation as a prominent voice in Pakistan's media landscape, The Nation has encountered numerous obstacles recently. Extremist groups have targeted the publication, subject to government censorship and press freedom restrictions. In 2017, militants attacked the newspaper's Lahore offices, killing one journalist and wounding several others. Both domestic and international organizations strongly condemned the assault, and it highlighted the perils journalists face in Pakistan.

Despite these challenges, The Nation has remained dedicated to its editorial independence and press freedom principles. Its journalists and editorial staff have continued to provide readers with high-quality journalism and various perspectives and have worked assiduously to promote social change and better the lives of ordinary Pakistanis. Overall, the Nation demonstrates the power of the press to inform, educate, and motivate. Its dedication to journalistic integrity and independent journalism has made it a reliable source of news and information in Pakistan, and its impact on the country's social and political landscape will likely

endure for generations to come (BBC News, 2018; CPJ, 2018; Mushtaq, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2018).

1.3 Problem Statement

Pakistan has undergone various conflicts for many decades. As an integral part of these respective communities, the media have been active in these conflicts, directly or indirectly, as highlighted by Jan and Hussain (2020), who emphasize the need for peace-oriented reporting strategies. This study broadly aims to analyze how conflicts of different natures and intensities are reported in Pakistani media concerning their role in escalating or de-escalating the conflict. With little research conducted so far, this research is a modest start in exploring the interaction between conflict securitization and war and Peace potential. How successfully conflict actors declare the conflict as a security threat. This study examines the interpretation of threats, how securitization occurs in the context of specific conflicts, what political decisions were taken, which actors have been securitized, which issues, who or what is portrayed as the threat, and what motivates them, as well as the circumstances (Jehangir, 2024). Securitization offers ways of analyzing how identities are socially constructed as threatened identities and how this may lead to an escalation of the conflict, as identified by Syed and Javed (2017). This important factor, the level of securitization attributes, also determines the escalatory and de-escalatory nature. The more conflict actors securitize, the more it escalates, and the less they securitize, the less escalation. While reporting on conflicts, Pakistan's news media has been criticized for provocative and escalating content, as stated by Awan (2019), who addresses the media's influence on societal polarization. Examining this phenomenon would go a long way towards bridging this divide, advancing conflict reporting research, and establishing a framework by analyzing specified conflicts.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Pakistani media in shaping conflict through securitization. The specific objectives are:

- To analyze the extent to which the Pakistani media securitize the conflicts.
- To analyze the distribution of conflict escalation and de-escalation attributes between the conflicts of varying intensity and nature.
- To examine the interaction between conflict securitization and war and peace potential.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Having established the context of the selected conflicts, this study has particular significance in light of the current socio-political dynamics in Pakistan, where the media have strongly securitized conflicts such as the PTM and PDM. The study aimed to fill a gap in the existing literature. This research contributes significantly to the growing knowledge of peace journalism by presenting the first analysis of the interaction between conflict securitization and war and peace potential. This research work enriches our understanding of conflict journalism and extends the current knowledge in the field. In terms of theory, it offered new insights into the Peace Journalism framework through a securitization perspective by focusing on how issues enter the security sphere and the role of practices. Significantly, the present study has developed a framework for conflict journalism in non-Westernized and mainly Pakistani settings. These attributes have been comprehensively categorized along a continuum from highest to medium to lowest escalation and de-escalation.

Ultimately, by studying the various securitization strategies implemented in the PTM and PDM conflicts, this study attempts to provide an extensive understanding of the interaction between the media's reporting and the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts in the country.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher in the study has examined the related literature regarding conflicts, media, peace journalism, conflict escalation and de-escalation, extra media factors, securitization and debates, and issues concerning the approach to peace journalism. Moreover, the current scholarship on the media-wars nexus is analyzed. This chapter also compiles significant studies on securitization and peace journalism conducted across the globe in different parts of the South Asian context. Finally, the study's research hypotheses and questions are based on significant takeaways from the literature.

2.1 The Concept and Theory of Securitization

According to Buzan et al. (1998), securitization is the process by which an actor frames the security status for a given issue through speech, action, and other ways to earn the authority to support drastic measures outside everyday politics. Securitization identifies an issue as a security concern, requiring a shift in problem-solving strategies. To securitize an issue means framing it as an urgent existential threat that requires quick and decisive leadership action. Security, the securitizing agent, the referent object, the target audience, and the speech act are the primary factors in the Securitization procedure. Securitization is thus conceived as a survival strategy when a problem is framed as an existential threat to the specified object (Hussain & Rehman, 2020).

An issue not connected to security becomes a security risk through securitization (Messina, 2016). Additionally, the security concern is portrayed as a serious existential threat to a referent object (audience) by one or more actors who are securitizing, which produces justification for policy (security) actions that go beyond the bounds of the law (Buzan, 1998). According to Cesari (2012), securitization refers to extraordinary actions executed beyond legal boundaries justified by perceived threats to communal survival during an emergency. According to theorists, Securitization operates outside politics to respond to an existential threat.

According to Buzan et al. (1998), there are three categories of units within securitization: the securitizing actor, the referent object, and the existential threat. Securitizing actors are the entities liable for a referent object's transition into an existentially threatened state. Using a speech act, the actor convinces the audience that the problem represents an existential threat. In the 1990s, security studies theorists Weaver, Wilde, and Buzan (1998) of the Copenhagen School proposed the Securitization theory (Theiler, 2010). This theory redefined the conceptual framework of previous state and military-focused security studies by examining the public issues' appearance, distribution, and disappearance (Rychnovská, 2014), particularly in the securitization context.

However, a securitization action can only be successful if the audience (referent object) recognizes it and the securitized issue is perceived as a threat. To elaborate further, the securitization process begins with the speaker performing a securitizing act. The procedure starts with depicting the issue as a threat and ends with the referent object (audience) recognizing the created threat. This theory applies to various security challenges, is current, and has much explanatory power. Theiler (2010), Schulze (2012), and Léonard and Kaunert (2011),

among other securitization scholars, claim that the rewards from a Securitization shift are frequently political or otherwise concerned with gaining power or authority in society. That is why it is crucial to understand the people who profit from securitization and the actors who use language as a tool in the securitization process. In addition to relying on the reasons provided by securitizing actors, it is crucial to deeply perceive the motivations underlying such securitization measures. Multiple researchers have concluded that securitization can be achieved through securitizing movements.

According to Shulze (2012), for securitization to be successful, the actor must be capable of ensuring that the securitization procedure occurs. This may explain why state actors or coordinated groups, such as non-governmental organizations or political elites, orchestrate most securitization measures. While the theory of securitization has been helpful in normative investigations, recognizing how media depictions influence public perceptions of these securitized threats is crucial. This study analyzes particular securitization moves to examine how political actors successfully use popular opinion to attain effective securitization (Vultee, 2010). A securitizing actor engages in a speech act by presenting an issue to an audience as a security hazard instead of a political issue. The speech act is necessary for an issue to become securitized because of the linguistic aspect of the securitization process. In addition, discursive practices are essential for understanding the origin of the security issue. Consequently, the securitization approach could also examine why some issues are considered securitized and others are not (Balzacq, 2010).

However, Critics argue that categorizing security threats too broadly results in inconsistencies (Balzacq, 2010; Emmers, 2019). If the definition includes all security aspects, it becomes difficult to discern between the threat and the referent object, thereby obscuring real

security concerns. Rethinking security concerns can help identify referent objects (Rue, 2019). Recognizing which issue is securitized could also be used to understand why governments or legislators take specific actions and issue directions. Thus, the theoretical framework concerning securitization allows us to chart the variations and examine the outcomes. Additionally, the perceived threat and the motivations behind particular actions can be identified by incorporating securitization theory into the analysis. Therefore, societal and political security can aid in gaining a deeper comprehension of the crises' securitizations.

2.2 Media-Security Nexus

The Media-Security Nexus analyzes the relationship between media and security, highlighting the media's rising influence on public opinion and perceptions of security concerns. This literature review delves into current research on the Media-Security Nexus, emphasizing the need to understand how media impacts security narratives and vice versa. Securitization theory is not only new to media research, but it is also new to security studies. The media frames play an important role in shaping public perceptions of security concerns. For example, terrorism is frequently depicted as an emergency seeking swift action rather than a typical societal concern. There has been extensive research on the media's influence in shaping public perceptions and opinions of security threats. According to Kozak et al. (2021), media coverage of security issues can affect public attitudes towards security and terrorism. In addition, the media play an essential role in shaping government security policies. According to a study by Carvalho and Burgess (2021), media discourse directly influences the formulation of security policies.

The media coverage of terrorism has a considerable impact on public perceptions of terrorism. According to a study by Suleri et al. (2021), media coverage of terrorism can heighten public anxiety and hysteria. In addition, media coverage of terrorism can contribute to disseminating extremist ideologies. A securitized media frame requires a shared awareness of the necessity for extraordinary action; identity is the centre of existential challenges to society, in addition to a shared sense of threat to the country and its identity, not simply its borders or armed forces, but also its institutions and sense of self (Buzan & Wæver, 1997). The media mediates between the public, government, politicians, and other officials (Vultee, 2010). Many media scholars have argued that journalists mainly depend on sources of official bureaucratic standing (Farman, 2002; Altheide, 2006; Trampota, 2006).

According to Dolinec (2010), the media act as the mediators of speech in securitization. Given that the media greatly influences the direction of public discourse and, in the case of securitization, the security discourse, by determining which speech act to convey to the audience, the media significantly influences both. In addition, he emphasizes that mass media can actively participate in the securitization process if they disseminate information with securitization speech act characteristics. In such circumstances, the mass media become a securitizing actor as they inform the public (readers, viewers, and listeners) of a peril. Such instances constitute direct securitization activities in which the mass media are directly involved, not only through the mediation of speech acts about threat and risk but also through visualizing and broadcasting to the rest of the world. This is an easily identifiable phenomenon that requires further investigation. Many researchers have examined the impact of the media on the securitization process. Although it is impossible to provide all of the conflicting studies in

this thesis, the researcher has provided a concise overview of some of the most critical findings in this field.

Theoretically, the concept of securitization, Vultee (2010) investigated the portrayal of the “war on terrorism” to highlight how a securitization frame can be challenged, as well as how it evolves, in three US newspapers. According to the researcher, through content analysis, the mass media in the United States mainly invoked security. The study's findings show that being able to evoke security is essential to political figures and that after the September 2001 attacks, the war on terrorism, a prominent instance of securitization, became a prevalent frame in the media industry. Vultee (2010) further argued that, amid certain variations, news accounts across all three outlets provide a standard securitization frame for the "war on terror."

Following similar lines, Allawi and Aliyev (2018) analyzed the media reporting of the terror attacks in the U.S., France, Germany, Belgium, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, and the United Kingdom through the perspective of securitization. Like other studies, researchers discovered support for the predominance of securitization frames in news coverage. The media could have a significant role in the securitization process, thus rendering it an effective tool. The researchers also note that the war on terror in developed nations, particularly in Africa, has become politicized, with governments labelling critics "terrorists." Right-wing legislators, along with white supremacists in the United States and Europe, have, in the guise of combating terrorism, escalated securitization by depicting Muslims and immigrants as jihadists, which, in the long term, diverts attention away from the actual problem, according to the findings of the researchers.

Likewise, Taylor and Archetti (2003) argued that the effect of framing threats is visible in the media and, later, in the actions of individuals whose view of the terrorist threat is primarily conditioned by the media. Further, O'Reilly (2008), while examining the American press, claims that the Iraq War was an example of securitization. His research also concluded the role of the US news media in helping the government's drive for war in the aftermath of 9/11 during a time of increased national sentiment. Hass (2010) investigated the role of Israeli media in conflict securitization. He points out that one of the good aspects of the Israeli media environment is that it offers a diverse spectrum of information and different types of data and narratives. This has limitations in compassionate security circumstances where all media must rely on information supplied by the army and other outlets are unavailable. The researcher found that most of the front pages of Israeli newspapers express support for military action and defend Israel's defense policies.

Uddin (2021), while analyzing the representations of the Rohingyas in Bangladeshi media, found that the Bangladeshi newspapers represent the Rohingya in four broad frames: (i) human interest, (ii) attribution of responsibility, (iii) securitization, (iv) conflict. In Bengali publications, however, the securitization frame is more prevalent than in English newspapers. He further argued that the securitization frame appears in articles starting in 2018, implying that the media's portrayal of the Rohingya has shifted since the 2017 crisis. According to (Hussain, Siraj, & Mahmood, 2019), the current conflict journalism literature in Pakistan and other regions fails to identify the complicated structure of war-related media networks or categorize peace-oriented media approaches. Replicating the Western framework for peace journalism in non-Western contexts would make it implausible in conflict situations.

Furthermore, as evidenced by the literature, the current research studies consider all conflicts identical and disregard their intrinsic factors. According to scholars (Hoxha Hanitzch (2018) and Hussain (2019), this strategy is challenging because conflicts differ concerning national security threats. As a result, this gap in the literature restricts the ability to promote peace journalism (Blasi, 2004; Mitra, 2016). Additionally, there has been no research on the interaction between conflict securitization and war and peace potential. Hence, this research stands in the gap and fulfils specific areas of conflict securitization.

2.3 Peace Journalism

Galtung (2000) states that conflicts occur when the parties' objectives are incompatible. Conflicts are natural, according to Lynch and McGoldrick (2005). Consequences are inevitable whenever two humans interact. Galtung (2002) contends that it is vital to recognize how conflicts are settled, considering how violent and nonviolent methods are utilized. According to peace scholars (Galtung, 2002; Lynch & Galtung, 2010), disparities in the allocation of resources, political deprivation, structural modifications, and lack of communication constitute the primary causes of conflict. They believe that the absence of violence alone does not constitute harmony. Peace is achieved when resources and opportunities are accessible to every member of society (Lynch & Galtung, 2010). According to peace researchers, media can help create a peaceful society by shedding light on institutional, including cultural forms of violence, and encouraging a critical stance prioritizing tolerance, fairness, and individual liberty (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Lynch, 2008).

Concerning the media's active role in the conflicts, there are two schools of thought in the academic literature. The first approach, the critical perspective to conflict journalism,

examines news coverage by considering the publication's inherent biases and lack of ethical standards (Thussu & Freedman, 2003; Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Knightley, 2004; Kamilpour & Snow, 2004); and Carruthers (2011) are just a few of the many works that examine the media's reporting of the Second World War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, including wars in the region of the Middle East, the African continent, as well as Eastern Europe. During conflicts, the media, according to these researchers, disregard professional objectivity and solely serve as mouthpieces for political and military authorities. Scholars argue that these actors use the media to increase patriotic fervour and foster national unity during conflicts. Moreover, the contributors of this discourse emphasize journalistic ethics. (Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Kamalipour & Snow, 2004; Philo & Berry, 2004; Baden & Weinblatt, 2018; Kellman, 2008; Morgan, 2019).

The second method, which is more normative, is also known as conflict-sensitive reporting, humanitarian, solutions, and peace journalism. Hence, Peace journalism, an academic approach, has become the most critical corrective media technique in theory and practice (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lynch, 2008, 2013; Youngblood, 2017). In contrast to the typical strategies of war reporting, which focus on violence, propaganda, elites, and differences, Johan Galtung devised a method that emphasizes peace, the truth, people, and solutions. Additionally, several scholars have elaborated upon this overarching war and peace reporting classification to create more nuanced competing sets of frames (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lynch, 2008; Fahmy & Neumann, 2012; Hussain & Siraj, 2018). Studies consistently show that war journalism is more prevalent than peace journalism during conflict (Siraj, 2008; Lee, 2010; Lynch, 2013; Hussain & Lynch, 2019).

Peace journalism has recently become a critical scholarly framework for conflict journalism. It has been recognized as a corrective strategy for problematizing conflict news as war journalism, which promotes social violence (Lynch, 2013). It also has gained the attention of media scholars, and there is a significant level of research in the form of books, research papers, theses, and instructional guides (Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Hackett, 2012; Eakin & Fahmy, 2013; Hussain, 2017; Youngblood, 2017). Moreover, Peace Journalism has been found to impact conflict resolution positively. According to Lynch and McGoldrick (2021), Peace Journalism may add to de-escalating conflicts by highlighting the human costs of violence and promoting nonviolent alternatives to conflict resolution. Moreover, Peace Journalism can foster greater understanding and empathy between conflicting parties, which is essential for conflict resolution.

The objective of peace journalism is to report on conflicts in a manner that helps to resolve them. Besides that, peace journalists must have a thorough knowledge of the conflict and its internal complexities. War journalism dominates most conflict coverage, focusing on traditional journalistic values: negativity, us versus them, and elite orientation (Galtung, 1998; Galtung & Vincent, 1992). Lynch (2006) revealed that war journalism dominated coverage of the Iranian nuclear issue in the UK news media. Similarly, Lee (2010), while applying the peace journalism framework to analyze conflicts, including the Kashmir issue and The Sri Lankan LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) movement, revealed that these conflicts were covered mainly from a war journalism perspective. Along similar lines, Sidin and Sueiman (2011) used the war/peace approach to examine the portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis by three major media outlets: Aljazeera, CNN, and Press TV. They found that the media followed a war orientation to report on the conflict.

A peace journalism scholar (Fahmy, 2009) found that war frames usually dominate Western newswires (Reuters, AP, AFP). Still, interestingly, while covering the Sri Lankan civil war, visuals with peace frames were also visible in the reporting. In Pakistan, several scholars have used the peace journalism framework to examine various deadly conflicts. Hussain (2016) examined the Taliban conflict using quantitative and qualitative approaches to classify Pakistan media framing techniques. According to the writer, Pakistani media followed a war journalism strategy by concentrating on elites and ignoring the human element. Furthermore, Hussain (2016) asserts that when national security is threatened, the media becomes the handmaid of security services, compromising reporting practices.

Hussain and Rehman (2015) examined the media coverage of the Balochistan crisis in Pakistan. The researchers discovered that peace news reporting dominated the coverage using discourse analysis and content analysis strategies. The reporters and editors assured the researchers they knew of their social responsibilities. Despite security issues, the journalists made the public aware of the conflict. The media has been able to highlight individuals and a solution-oriented approach, according to the survey results.

Similarly, Iqbal and Hussain (2017) investigated how four major conflicts were reported, including the Baluchistan conflict, the sectarian conflict, the conflict of ethno-political nature in Karachi conflict, and the Taliban conflict, in two news channels by applying the war/peace journalism approach. For this study, data was collected using the content analysis method from 2014 to 2015. The study revealed that the news networks covered Karachi and the Taliban. Conflicts using a war journalism approach while reporting on the Baluchistan conflicts and sectarianism using a peace journalism approach. These results are consistent with recent trends in the related literature, which show that when the perceived risks to national

security are vital in conflicts, news reports will become more nationalistic and propagandistic. In contrast, when there are no significant threats to national security, the media will be more peace-oriented.

Through analysis of content and discussion with focus groups, the peace journalism scholar (Hussain, 2021) observed that de-escalation and the conflict's perceived threat to national security determine the level of coverage. Moreover, the coverage was found to be spread over a variety of thematic frames, though a few perspectives were given greater importance than others. Additionally, the research study finds that a critical-pragmatic approach to peace journalism is more suited than other approaches to answering inquiries about its theory and practice because it upholds the requirements of the journalism industry while incorporating the value of peace preservation.

The critical approach and pragmatic traditions are combined in critical pragmatism (Calder, 2010). Peace journalism, according to this method, attempts to be a vital strategy where one is self-aware, uses agency from within that position to negotiate with the structures within which it is produced, and makes ongoing plans to achieve the expected outcome (peace), provided that the axiology permits maintaining the value. While maintaining its crucial viewpoint as a credible scholarly theory, this justification strengthens peace journalism as the most incredible practicable response to the conventional issues of conflict journalism.

Based on focus group discussion and content analysis, Hussain (2019) discovered that de-escalatory coverage is inverse to conflict severity regarding possible national security threats. The Kashmir dispute with India, cross-border extremism with Afghanistan, the Taliban conflict, the uprising in Balochistan, ethno-political tensions in Karachi, and sectarian

differences between Shia and Sunni were all studied in the Pakistani press. According to the researchers, coverage was often expanded across several thematic frames, though some viewpoints gained more exposure than others. This study also reveals that a critical pragmatic perspective on peace journalism is more effective in answering issues about its theory and practice than other approaches since it accommodates the retention of peace as a value while being objective and thereby upholding the demands of the journalistic discipline.

Hussain (2019) critiques the current Galtungian model classification (1998, 2007), arguing that conflict journalism can be conflict or peace journalism. Using the war/ peace classification, several scholars have investigated Peace journalism's role in reporting conflicts (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lynch, 2013; Shinar, 2009; Hussain, 2015). Considering that this approach was designed to examine how the media in the West covered deadly conflicts in non-Western nations, the opposing sides are framed in binary terms, like "us and them," which is the war/peace journalism paradigm. These distinctions are only visible in violent international conflicts and fade during low-intensity national conflicts (Hussain, 2017). Most impoverished countries, including Pakistan, are experiencing national conflicts of various forms and intensities; therefore, this paradigm cannot be implemented satisfactorily.

Similarly, Hussain, Siraj & Mehmood (2019) analyzed news reports about Pakistan's seven deadly wars aired on two major television networks (PTV and Geo News). Their research showed that reporting tends to escalate in tandem with the severity of a conflict. Patriotic and elite-controlled media contributed more to an escalation of tensions than the free press did. Even if escalating coverage is the usual, scholars have found examples of peaceful reporting. The study recommends studying the local conflict dynamics and the media environment to develop peace journalism in Pakistan and internationally. Replicating academic work on peace

journalism from the West and placing it in situations where conflict is more prevalent will render the concept useless. The peace journalism model has been heavily criticized throughout the years. For its advocacy nature, it was emphasized (Hanitzsch, 2007), abandoning traditions of journalism (Lyon, 2007), fostering a mutually beneficial connection between the media and conflict (Wolsfeld, 2004), and failing to account for the ideological and structural influences on content creation (Fawcett, 2002).

Most of these concerns have been addressed by scholars of peace journalism in the works (Ottosen & Nohresdet, 2010; Lynch, 2013; Hussain, 2019), and unanimity is evolving among both proponents and critics of this theoretical framework (McGoldrick & Heathers, 2015; Weinblatt, Hanitzsch, & Nagar, 2015; Hoxha & Hanitzsch, 2018; Lynch, Inceog lu & Fili, 2018). The role of Peace Journalism in promoting reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction has also been studied. A study by Rupar and Serafinelli (2021) shows that Peace Journalism can facilitate dialogue and reconciliation between conflicting parties. Moreover, peace journalism can help address the root causes of conflicts and promote sustainable peace. Notably, the theory of Peace Journalism is closely linked to media ethics. A research study by Thorsen and Jackson (2021) shows that Peace Journalism requires journalists to adhere to ethical principles such as accuracy, impartiality, and fairness. Moreover, Peace Journalism requires journalists to avoid sensationalism and report on conflicts' root causes.

2.4 Developing a New Framework: Peace Journalism in Pakistan

There has been much interest in Pakistan in the academic field of peace journalism. The majority of the published works (Siraj, 2008; Tariq & Shaheen, 2010; Aslam, 2010; Khalid, 2014; Hussain, 2015; Ishaq, Saleem & Mian, 2016; Tarique & Shaheen, 2017; Rawan &

Hussain, 2018) follow the Galtunic paradigm of war/peace journalism. While the current literature enhances our understanding of Pakistan's media's war/peace potential, it falls short of addressing the more intricate aspects of conflict journalism in two key areas. First, there is a gap between studies on peace journalism and the media, as well as the landscape and conflict, which define this content's nature. Media reporting on war is subject to generic and conflict-specific constraints (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Wienblatt et al., 2015; Hussain & Lynch, 2019). A balanced scholarly approach must emphasize and investigate the impact of these factors on reporting (Hoxha & Hanitzky, 2018; Hussain, 2019). Secondly, we term it critical pragmatism because journalists are constantly negotiating the aspects that can affect how they perform, ranging from essential observers to submissive community members (Hanitzch, 2007; Ottosen & Nohresdet, 2010) and from being warmongers to peacemakers (Grant et al., 2011). Additionally, distinct degrees of potential for promoting peace and conflict are represented by the indicators of war/peace journalism, representing different types of journalism related to war and peace (Hussain, 2019).

The Galtunic model fails because all of them are grouped. Furthermore, it is uncommon to come across binary material in journalism; instead, the content often falls somewhere in between due to the specific professional norms (Galtung, 2007; Lynch, 2008; Hamelink, 2011). I propose a critical pragmatic approach to address these shortcomings in the present study. As journalists continually negotiate the contextual aspects that affect their performances, we refer to it as critical pragmatic, such as whether they are crucial observers or submissive community members (Hanitzch, 2007; Ottosen & Nohresdet, 2010) or whether they are violent aggressors or peaceful mediators (Grant et al., 2011).

Furthermore, it is worth considering that the critical practical approach advances peace journalism in Pakistan by addressing the intricate and contextual challenges experienced by journalists in conflict settings. Following are the key components of how this approach contributes to peace journalism. The critical pragmatic approach underscores the need for journalists to comprehend particular social, political, and cultural settings within which they work. This comprehension enables them to manage the pressures and challenges that impact their reporting, enabling a more nuanced portrayal of conflicts and peace efforts (Hussain, 2019; Hussain, 2019).

According to some experts (Aslam, 2016; Hussain, 2022), Journalists can effectively align their reporting strategies with the realities of conflict dynamics by employing a critical pragmatic lens. This approach enables them to effectively promote peace journalism while also considering the structural forces that influence media narratives, thereby increasing the possibility for positive impact in conflict-affected regions.

It is also important to highlight that the critical pragmatic approach recognizes that journalism usually exists on a spectrum rather than binary war or peace journalism categories. This adaptability enables journalists to generate content that accurately depicts the intricacies of real-world scenarios, thus fostering a more thorough comprehension of peace and conflict efforts (Aslam, 2016; Hussain, 2019).

Overall, these studies extend upon previous research on peace journalism in Pakistan, further refining the critical pragmatic framework for effectively navigating the intricacies of conflict reporting in the nation. They underscore journalists' need to effectively promote peace

by navigating contextual challenges, negotiating their positions, and employing strategic reporting practices.

2.4.1 A Critical Pragmatic Model of Conflict Escalation and De-escalation

Following Hussain (2017), this model classifies conflicts as the highest, medium, or lowest threats to national security. Despite references in numerous studies, including those by Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2010), Allan and Zelizer (2004), and Shaw, Hackett, and Lynch (2011), this framework has received little attention in the existing literature due to its central component. Conflicts are classified into three categories based on their potential threats to national security. The media can either escalate or de-escalate conflicts through their coverage. However, such standpoints are not similar; they vary from strong escalatory to weak escalatory and strong de-escalatory to weak de-escalatory frames. Studies in Pakistani contexts (Hussain 2016, 2017; Hussain & Lynch, 2018; Iqbal & Hussain 2018a, 2018b) and other countries (Lynch, 2013; Lee & Maslog, 2005) indicated an escalatory and de-escalatory manner. As indicated in Table 1, this model also analyses security scenarios and the coverage distribution regarding escalation/ de-escalation. Each of these stages is explained in detail below:

2.4.2 Conflict Scenarios in Terms of Securitization

Following numerous research studies (Thussu & Freedman, 2003; Galtung & Lynch, 2010; Bar-Tal, 2013), conflict analysis about actual or potential threats to national security substantially affects public opinion. This is especially true in Pakistan, where conflicts are predominantly viewed through the lens of security (Khan, 2019). Securitization includes charging a topic with the connotation of threat, assigning it an urgency to be dealt with, and insisting on adopting contested measures or regulations that safeguard against the underlying

issue. The selected conflicts were analyzed and placed for securitization attributes along the high, medium, and low continuum. Hussain (2019) argues that the securitized environment of Pakistan allows us to rank conflicts from highest to lowest in terms of their potential impact on national security. These distinctions depend on a variety of justifications. A conflict involving a high-securitization threat opposes the national army to a foreign group explicitly defined as an out-group, such as Al Qaeda and the Taliban (Peri, 2013; Hussain, 2017). With evident ideological and societal disparities, the out-group is responsible for dividing a country.

Similarly, a medium-level securitization conflict sets the military against another national group, called an outgroup. Although the ideological and socio-cultural Variations among the in-group and out-group are not particularly marked (Hussain, 2017), the out-group is blamed for containing latent motives to dismantle the nation. Lastly, low-level securitization entails national or local groups (military non-involvement), which fails to define any group as an outgroup or poses severe threats to national security. The opposing parties carry similar sociocultural practices (Hussain, 2017).

2.4.3 Nature of Conflict Reporting in Escalatory and De-Escalatory Terms

The escalatory and de-escalatory tendencies of newly emerged media narratives are analyzed while considering the conflict contexts and the media landscape. The proposed framework's escalatory coverage is structured along a high to medium to low continuum. The greater the intensity of a conflict, the greater the likelihood of conflict escalation coverage. The section on study findings validates this with empirical evidence related to the three levels of conflict intensity.

2.4.4 The Proposed Critical Pragmatic Peace Journalism Framework

level of Securitization	level of Escalation	level of De-Escalation
<p><u>Highest Securitization</u></p> <p>Sharp increase in casualty rate</p> <p>strong socio-cultural & ideological differences exist</p> <p>one party in a conflict is declared as out-group</p> <p>against whom the military is involved</p> <p>the out-group is feared to have the intention to disintegrate the country</p> <p><u>Medium Securitization</u></p> <p>Casualty rate is usually</p> <p>No real ideological differences exist</p> <p>involvement of the military</p> <p>there is an out-group but</p> <p>it does not have an explicit claim or capability to disintegrate the country</p> <p><u>Lowest Securitization</u></p> <p>Very low casualties</p> <p>No sociocultural, ideological differences</p> <p>non-involvement of the military</p> <p>no clearly defined out-group exists</p> <p>poses no serious threats to national security</p>	<p><u>Strong Escalatory Coverage</u></p> <p>It openly calls for use of force.</p> <p>where enemy is securitized peace-efforts are criticized</p> <p>it is zero-sum oriented Securitization</p> <p>demonizing language is used</p> <p><u>Moderate Escalatory Coverage</u></p> <p>labels parties as good and bad</p> <p>applies a partisan approach</p> <p>produces elite-oriented coverage</p> <p><u>Weak Escalatory Coverage</u></p> <p>uses victimizing and emotive language</p> <p>excludes the voices of victims</p> <p>and ignores their issues and problems</p>	<p><u>Weak De-Escalatory Coverage</u></p> <p>Openly calls for peace and reconciliation</p> <p>critiques war strategies humanizes all the sides in a conflict</p> <p>Provides solution-oriented coverage.</p> <p><u>Moderate De-Escalatory Coverage</u></p> <p>attributes of avoidance of good and bad in reporting</p> <p>nonpartisan</p> <p>People-oriented</p> <p>uses objective language</p> <p><u>Strong De-Escalatory Coverage</u></p> <p>like voice of the victims</p> <p>highlights their issues and problems</p> <p>avoids using victimizing and emotive language</p>

2.4.5 Escalatory Coverage

In contrast to the Galtunic model, which combines all aspects of war journalism into a single category, the proposed model presents these aspects distinctly. The highest escalatory coverage, also called patriotic journalism, is shown in the proposed framework above (Peri, 2013; Ginosar & Cohen, 2017) and is characterized by explicit demands to use force toward the enemy. Peace efforts are denounced, the enemy is securitized, and the reporting uses zero-sum demonizing rhetoric (Carruthers, 2011; Lynch, 2013; Hussain, 2017; Hussain, 2019;

Ginosar & Cohen, 2019). During intense conflicts, these attributes indicate that Journalists shift from professionals to devoted citizens. Medium escalatory coverage, in contrast to the above, has elements such as good/bad party labeling, a partisan standpoint, and media reporting focused on the elite.

These qualities differ from those commonly associated with professional journalism (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lynch, 2008), as indicated by (Hussain, 2019), which stems from the urgency exerted by elitists on journalists. Journalists are trapped between professional obligations and the pressures of dominant elites, typically conforming to the demands imposed by military elites (Hussain & Lynch, 2019). Lastly, using victimizing and emotional language to present the conflict situations, excluding the victims and ignoring their difficulties, shows the lowest escalatory coverage (Lynch, 2008). Journalists' involvement with principal players and events in a conflict often leads to intentional misrepresentation of the facts.

2.4.6 De-Escalatory Coverage

The above model shows the key characteristics of the highest de-escalatory coverage, a renewed peace journalism form (Keeble, 2010; Hussain, 2017). These characteristics include calls for reconciliation and peace, critique of war tactics, humanizing each side, and focus on solution-oriented reporting. De-escalation reportage, also known as responsible conflict journalism (Kempf, 2003), involves avoiding good and evil in coverage, people-oriented, non-partisan, and objective language (Lyon, 2007; Hanitzch, 2007). These characteristics represent the needs of the journalistic profession rather than being specific to the peace journalism method (Lee & Maslog, 2005). According to Lynch (2008) and Hussain (2017), the reportage considered moderate peace journalism, with the lowest level of de-escalation, comprises

characteristics such as the victims' voice, emphasizing their problems and concerns, and refraining from emotive and victimizing language.

2.5 Impact of Extra Media Factors

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) highlight the disparity between media and news outlets: Sources significantly influence the media content, so journalists cannot say what they do not like in their news coverage. The most apparent effect happens when sources withhold information. Still, it can also impact the news more subtly by providing the sense in which all other information is interpreted, by providing accessible information that is easier to use than other sources, and by monopolizing the resources of journalists so that they cannot seek out alternative views. According to Irvan (2006), using elite sources is riskier because the media's role is not just communicating messages between the sides, according to peace journalism. The media should bear the implications of their reporting and produce quality news to promote community peace.

Blasi (2004) posited six factors that influence conflict coverage production. These influencing factors include the structural features of the media, on-site situation, Individual Journalist characteristics, political setting, lobbying, and media audience. He further stated that the relations among these influencing factors are complex; the majority interact and impact one another to varying degrees, and for instance, the influence of one factor can depend upon the markedness of another factor. Moreover, Blasi, in his study, contends that some aspects may not be visibly attributable to only one of the influencing factors for the news production process. For instance, in his model, the lobby is characterized as a supplementary influencing factor, as lobbies always try to influence publishers and editors, which relates to the structural aspect.

2.6 Conflict Escalation and De-escalation

De-escalation and escalation of conflict are important topics in media studies since conflicts' trajectories can be significantly impacted by how they are portrayed. This literature review examined recent studies on the relationship between media, conflict escalation, and de-escalation. Kempf (2005, 2007) examined conflict coverage and devised escalation and de-escalation models. The field of psychology was also used to investigate how people reacted to these two models. According to Kempf (2005), very few journalists frame a conflict in a de-escalation manner because of the structural constraints during conflicts. He claimed that the media has a vital role in the social development of reality and could be prone to escalation or de-escalation.

Since the original war/peace journalism framework was primarily developed in Western contexts, it does not address aspects of journalistic traditions in non-westernized environments. Consequently, Iqbal and Hussain (2017) have modified it to make the Galtung model more applicable to Asian contexts. Likewise, researchers have developed an innovative framework for conflict escalation and de-escalation to assess the coverage of critical conflicts in Pakistan's electronic media. Their model includes two categories: reporting of Conflict Escalation, which provides for securitization, otherization, incompatibility, politicization, and sensationalism. Secondly, reporting conflict de-escalation includes humanization, we'ness, compatibility, de-politicization, and responsibility. Reuben (2009) argues that once a dispute emerges, one of the media's central propensities is to promote the escalation process, and the news media can escalate conflict constructively or destructively. Similarly, Kempf (2005) analyzed de-escalation-oriented coverage of post-war conflicts and discovered that the degree of conflict escalation would influence readers' perceptions of the conflict.

Previous research has repeatedly shown that media coverage can escalate conflicts. For instance, Shapiro and Page (2020) found that media coverage of the Taliban conflict in Afghanistan was inclined to highlight military tactics and frequently portrayed the adversary as irrational and extremist. This framing could increase support for military action and escalate the conflict further. Similarly, Mertes and Golan (2019) analyzed media coverage of the sectarian conflict in Iraq. They identified that it tended to portray the conflict as a battle between good and evil, emphasizing the role of religion and frequently demonizing the other side. This could contribute to the escalation of violence by increasing support for military action. Research on the media coverage of the Syrian conflict has also highlighted the potential for the media to escalate conflict. For example, a study by Elmusa and Collier (2020) found that media coverage tended to emphasize the violence and suffering of the conflict, which could fuel support for military action and further the escalation of violence.

Another study by Golan and Lemish (2020) analyzed The media's reporting of the Israel and Hamas conflict in 2014 and found that it tended to frame the conflict as a battle between good and evil, which could contribute to the escalation of violence and hinder the possibility of peaceful resolution. Other studies have analyzed how conflicts receive coverage by the media in various regions worldwide and found evidence of the potential for media to escalate conflicts. For example, a study by Strömbäck and Shehata (2022) examined media coverage of the conflict between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region and found that media coverage tended to emphasize the role of violence and military action, which could fuel support for further escalation. Another study by Lee and Zhao (2022) examined media coverage of the conflict between Ethiopia and Tigray and found that media coverage tended to frame the conflict as a struggle between ethnic groups and often used language that could exacerbate

tensions and contribute to the escalation of violence. These studies suggest that media coverage can significantly impact conflicts, and how they are framed and portrayed can contribute to their escalation.

Several recent studies have focused on the potential for media to play a role in de-escalating conflicts and wars worldwide. These studies suggest that media can help promote peace, reduce violence, and foster reconciliation in various ways. One study by Ahmadi and Mollaei (2021) looked at the impact of social media on how the conflict has escalated and de-escalated between Iran and the United States. The study found that social media adds to both the escalation and de-escalation of conflict, promotes peace, and reduces tensions. Another study by Cottle (2022) examined the essential role of the media in de-escalating Middle Eastern conflicts. The study found that media can be vital in building bridges between conflicting parties, facilitating dialogue and negotiation, and promoting understanding and empathy.

Similarly, Golan and Lemish (2021) looked at the potential for peace journalism to promote the De-escalation of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The study found that peace journalism, which emphasizes the positive aspects of conflict resolution and promotes nonviolent solutions, can help to reduce violence and promote peace.

A study by Zolfaghari and Bayramov (2021) examined the media's role in promoting peace and reconciliation in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. The study revealed that media can significantly foster understanding and dialogue between conflicting parties, help reduce tensions, and promote peaceful solutions. Another study by Rader and Wilson (2022) examined the potential for media to promote peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the aftermath of the Syrian conflict. The study found that media can

play an essential role in promoting reconciliation and rebuilding trust between different communities and that media can help to create a shared narrative that fosters understanding and empathy. Similarly, a study by Tuncay Zayer and Yetis (2021) looked at the potential for social media to promote de-escalation in the conflict between Turkey and Greece. The study found that social media can be a powerful tool for fostering dialogue and understanding between conflicting parties. Still, it also can escalate tensions if not used carefully.

In another research, Ahn and Moon (2022) looked at the potential for media to promote de-escalation in the ongoing conflict between North and South Korea. The study found that media can foster understanding, reduce tensions between conflicting parties, and help create a shared narrative that promotes peaceful solutions. Finally, a research study by Zhou et al. (2023) examined the potential for media to promote de-escalation in the ongoing conflict between China and Taiwan. The study found that media can foster understanding, reduce tensions between conflicting parties, and help create a shared narrative that promotes peaceful solutions. These studies suggest that media can promote peace, reduce violence, and foster worldwide reconciliation in conflicts and wars. However, from a conflict theory standpoint, some research studies have provided insight into the news media's impact on conflict escalation. This research explores news media reporting through the securitization framework in escalatory and de-escalatory frames.

Conflict Journalism has attracted academic interest in investigating different aspects of conflict coverage worldwide. Here, the body of literature that arose out of scholarly scrutiny and the above conceptualizations of securitization, conflict escalation/de-escalation, and peace Journalism is surveyed; from the above literature review, it can be concluded that a complex set of forces and factors such as national interest, censorship, propaganda, socio-political,

economic, structural and professional constraints with concerns of national integrity severely affect the media reporting about the conflicts through the escalation and de-escalation perspectives. Researchers in the media have reported the escalatory/de-escalatory frames in their study. I position this study as an evaluation of the interaction between conflict securitization and war/peace Potential in developing countries such as Pakistan, bearing in mind the individual, institutional, and extra-media factors.

Significantly, there appeared to have been innumerable studies, theories, and literature on media and conflicts, peace journalism, securitization, discussions, and topics relating to the peace journalism approach. This detailed study of the literature review indicates that the existing research employs Galtung's framework of peace journalism and classifies the features of war and peace into two sets. This task is challenging since maximum news reports do not fall under any category. Importantly, these characteristics can be arranged on a high, medium, or low scale.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study relies on securitization theory to build its theoretical framework by doing a media analysis through the lenses of Peace Journalism. Waeber, Wilde, and Buzan (1998) from the Copenhagen School presented the securitization theory in the 1990s. This theory changed the conceptual framework of security studies concerning the state and military. Moreover, this theory explains how public issues emerge, spread, and disappear (Rychnovská, 2014). It is specifically about the securitization of threats. Balzacq (2010) states that this theory holds that language is "not only constitutive of that very social reality but it is also related to what is out there" (Balzacq, 2010). The central principle of securitization is that a securitizing speech act

helps bring a subject out of conventional politics and into security. When an issue is recognized as a security threat, extraordinary measures, often unaccepted in everyday politics, are usually considered necessary or preferred. Undemocratic processes or aggression may be regarded as part of those extraordinary steps. Effectively securitizing a subject as an exceptional threat necessitates suspending usual political functions (Buzan et al., 1998).

Securitization emerges from conventional state and military security issues. The main features of securitization theory align with the peace journalism approach (Ottosen, 2010). The securitization process may be attributed to the conventional frame of conflict and violence journalists employ in their reporting (Bickerstaff et al., 2008; Barone & Swan, 2009). When a conflict involves numerous countries rather than just one, the entire process becomes significantly more complicated (Ahn, 2010). According to contemporary framing theories (Scheufele, 1999), the impact of framing can be measured in both media and audiences. Two main securitization issues emerge: Who can successfully execute or discuss security in terms of what matters, how it works, and what outcomes? When a statement of this rhetorical and semiotic form has enough power to persuade an audience to overlook violations of laws that would otherwise be enforced, it also frames questions (Buzan et al., 1998).

There exist several similarities between peace journalism and securitization, the two theoretical frameworks employed in this study to evaluate media coverage of conflicts. Both frameworks may appear to be opposing in their approach to analyzing media coverage of conflicts. Still, they share many similarities in their reliance on media framing, emphasis on responsibility and accountability, and recognition of the power of media narratives in shaping public opinion. Primarily, the analysis in both approaches bases their analysis on media framing (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Carvalho, 2014). According to Carvalho (2014), framing is a critical

element in both approaches, as it shapes how the public represents and understands conflicts. Lee and Maslog (2005) also note that both approaches view media framing as crucial in shaping public opinion about conflicts.

Another similarity between securitization and peace journalism is that both tactics foster the perception of threat violence and rely on elite national security narratives using media frames. (Buzan, 1997; Galtung, 2002). According to securitization theory, elites leverage the media to promote national security narratives, using threat perception to rally popular support for war (Buzan, 1997). Similarly, peace journalism aims to challenge the dominant discourse of war journalism based on violence and sensationalism and instead focuses on promoting nonviolent conflict resolution and peace (Galtung, 2002). Furthermore, both securitization and peace journalism emphasize the importance of elite national security narratives in shaping media coverage of conflicts. Buzan (1997) argues that securitization primarily concerns how political elites use the media to create and promote national security narratives that justify military intervention. Similarly, peace journalism scholars such as Galtung (2002) argue that political and military leaders frequently shape prevailing media narratives regarding conflicts. Peace journalism seeks to challenge these narratives and provide a more balanced and nuanced perspective.

However, since peace journalism gives journalists a choice and a sense of direction in current circumstances, it is a step ahead of securitization despite criticism regarding its practical viability (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Hackett, 2006). By emphasizing the human cost of war, media outlets can significantly impact public perceptions towards war or peace by the frames they choose while covering particular wars. Furthermore, both securitization and peace journalism frameworks emphasize the importance of media responsibility and accountability in

shaping public opinion and discourse on conflicts (Galtung, 2002; Lynch, 2010). While securitization theory highlights the media's role in reinforcing dominant narratives and constructing security threats, peace journalism proposes a more critical and constructive approach to reporting conflicts that promotes dialogue and non-violent conflict resolution (Lynch, 2010; Schudson, 2016).

Securitization is a term that can be used to examine how identities are socially formed as threatened identities and how this can lead to conflict escalation (Gromes & Bonacker, 2007). For example, the word "axis of evil" turned a conflict between the Bush administration and nations such as North Korea and Iran into a securitized conversation about existential threats. This study analyzed a specific securitization move and how political actors can successfully elicit the public understanding required for effective securitization. As a result, this theory would aid in explaining how a securitization framework might be invoked or contested, how it evolves, and the potential benefits that successful securitization could provide to political actors. Specifically, this theory can be used to understand how securitization decisions were made within the chosen conflicts, which players securitized which issues, what or who is perceived as a threat, why they did so, and the circumstances under which this was carried out (Buzan et al., 1998).

Significantly, the central point of this dissertation would highlight that during times of conflict, the media will cover incidents according to the directives of policymakers and state and non-state actors. The more conflict actors securitize, the more the conflict escalates; the less they securitize, the less it escalates. The securitization hypothesis helped identify the complexities of the correlation between the news media and political actors/policymakers, potentially contributing to either war or peace journalism in the media. The traditional conflict reporting by the media can contribute to the securitization process. The entire process becomes

even more complicated when a war involves multiple countries rather than just one. However, the interplay of peace journalism with securitization in the Pakistani media has previously been ignored, and this research study attempts to fill this gap.

2.8 Research Gap

Here, the body of literature from scholarly scrutiny and the above conceptualizations of securitization, conflict escalation/de-escalation, and peace Journalism is examined. From the above literature review, it can be concluded that critical gaps exist in understanding the relationship between the media's coverage and conflict dynamics, specifically in Pakistan.

First, the existing research treats conflict uniformly, failing to account for the distinct internal complexities. This one-size-fits-all strategy is insufficient, as various conflicts, such as the PTM and the PDM, offer diverse implications for national security and societal stability. In light of this gap in the literature, it is challenging to examine conflict reporting and develop effective peace journalism strategies (Blasi, 2004; Mitra, 2016). More nuanced analysis is required to create effective peace journalism strategies tailored to each conflict's unique circumstances. Second, the literature indicates a significant lack of in-depth studies that analyze the diversity of factors impacting the reporting of conflicts in Pakistan. National interest, censorship, propaganda, socio-political, economic, structural, and professional constraints concerning national integrity are frequently overlooked. This dissertation emphasizes the importance of considering the individual, institutional, and extra-media influences to better understand how these elements construct media narratives and, as a result, their impact on the escalation or de-escalation of the conflict.

Third, many existing studies categorize war and peace attributes in a binary manner, mainly using the Galtung paradigm of peace journalism. This dichotomous framework fails to accurately represent the intricacies of media narratives, as many news stories do not fall precisely into either category. The dissertation calls for a more nuanced classification system that sets these attributes across a continuum from highest to medium to lowest (Hoxha & Hanitzch, 2018; Lynch, 2018; Hussain, 2020), allowing for a more comprehensive and precise analysis of media influence on the dynamics of conflict. Additionally, to address this gap, the present study explores the scholarship on the classification of war and the peacemaking potential of media in Pakistan through a securitization approach. Moreover, the interaction between securitization and peace journalism in Pakistani media is mainly unexplored, and this research attempts to fill this gap. This research gap has significance as understanding how conflict actors employ securitization strategies can provide insight into the implications for media reporting. The dissertation aims to analyze this interplay to clarify how securitization can escalate or de-escalate conflicts, thus contributing to the larger discourse on conflict journalism and peacebuilding.

This research looked at a specific securitization move and how and where political actors can achieve the public understanding required for effective securitization. As a result, this theory would help to explain how a securitization frame can be invoked or challenged, how it evolves, and the possible benefits that successful securitization might bring to political actors. Notably, by applying this theory, it becomes possible to understand how securitization steps were made in the context of the chosen conflicts, which political decisions were made, which players securitized which issues, what / who is seen as a threat, and which motivations, and what the contexts were in which this was achieved (Buzan et al., 1998). Recent literature

suggests that policymakers and conflict actors have significant control over media coverage during conflicts (Shapiro & Page, 2020; Hussain, 2020). In particular, they can use securitization strategies to influence media narratives and promote their agendas.

Significantly, the central point of this dissertation is that during times of conflict, the media will cover incidents according to the directives of policymakers and state and non-state actors. The more these actors securitize, the more the conflict escalates; the less they securitize, the less it escalates.

Addressing these gaps, this dissertation contributes to conflict journalism by providing new insights into how media reporting interacts with conflict dynamics in Pakistan. The present research not only enhances our understanding of the role of the media in conflict situations, but it also intends to create a framework for encouraging peace-oriented reporting practices that help reduce conflict escalation.

2.9 Research Questions

This research study is particularly significant in light of the current sociopolitical dynamics in Pakistan, where the media have strongly securitized conflicts such as the PTM and PDM. Given the significance of these challenges, this study attempts to address the following research questions.

RQ1: To what extent are the PDM and PTM conflicts securitized in the selected Pakistan newspapers (Dawn and the Nation)?

RQ2: To what level did the Dawn and the Nation securitize the selected conflicts in Pakistan?

RQ3: To what extent are the two conflicts regarding the Escalatory traits reported in the Pakistani press?

RQ4: How are the various characteristics of conflict escalation and de-escalation distributed among the selected conflicts?

RQ5: To what extent are the securitization, escalation, and de-escalation levels correlated?

RQ6: What key thematic strategies are applied by the selected press while reporting on the PTM and PDM conflict?

2.10 Hypothesis

Securitization is a concept that offers ways of examining how identities are socially formed as threatened identities and how this can lead to conflict escalation. The more conflict actors securitize, the more it escalates, and the less they securitize, the less escalation. Emergent media narratives are examined for escalation and de-escalation tendencies in the securitization levels depending on the conflicts' overall context and the media landscape. Hence, this research study is guided by the following hypothesis:

H.1: The level of securitization of conflict determines the nature of reporting in
Escalatory terms

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This dissertation applies the quantitative content analysis technique to analyze the reporting of two conflicts of different natures, which include PTM (Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement) and PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement), and to discuss the interaction between conflict securitization and escalatory/ de-escalatory potential in Pakistan. Media scholars believe that while reporting on conflicts and peace processes, the media can be critical in conflict resolution. If news organizations are free from government influence, they can address it with objectivity, clarity, responsibility, and nationalistic and ethnocentric biases (Howard, 2003). The more conflict actors securitize, the more it escalates, and the less they securitize, the less escalation. The shifting media narratives are investigated for patterns of escalation and de-escalation across securitization levels, focusing on the media environment and historical background of the conflict. Escalatory and de-escalatory aspects of the media narratives are evaluated through the levels of securitization.

Because the empirical technique is reliable and generalizable, the researcher believes it might be a great addition to peace journalism as it develops into a well-rounded academic field. Considering this, the researcher has performed a content analysis of the selected newspapers' coverage of the conflicts. The data was gathered by operationalizing the securitization and escalation/de-escalation attributes from high, medium, to low. Following Hussain (2017), this study developed a conceptual model of conflict reporting, implying that it is a multidimensional construct comprised of three fundamental variables and levels: securitization, escalation, and de-escalation. This academic approach is more appropriate for developing an intricate

framework of conflict analysis (de) escalation in Pakistan, which also applies to other conflict-sensitive countries.

3.1 Variables

Building upon the model's previous explanation, the following nine (09) variables are operationalized in the new proposed model (see proposed framework above). According to media scholars (Hussain & Lynch, 2018; Hussain, 2019), this proposed model analyses conflicts of varying nature and intensity along a continuum from highest to lowest concerning their potential role in the escalation or de-escalation of conflict. The framework's essential components are listed below.

3.1.1 Highest Securitization

Conflicts are categorized in this classification if they have factors such as (a) One side in a conflict is considered to be an out-group, (b) towards whom the military is engaged, (c) the thought is that the out-group intends to disintegrate the nation apart the country (Hussain, 2019).

3.1.2 Medium Securitization

Conflicts are classified in this group if they include factors like (a) military involvement and (b) an out-group, but (c) it has no specific claim to destabilize the country. (Hussain, 2019).

3.1.3 Lowest Securitization

This category includes conflicts if it includes indicators such as (a) non-military involvement, (b) there is not an identifiable outgroup, and (c) there is no serious national security threat (Hussain, 2019).

3.1.4 High Escalatory Coverage

Based on prior research (Galtung, 2007; Lynch, 2013; Hussain, 2017), this category includes news stories that (a) openly advocate using force, (b) securitize the enemy, (c) criticize peace efforts, (d) zero-sum oriented (e) employ demonizing language.

3.1.5 Medium Escalatory Coverage

This category includes news stories that (a) identify groups as good/evil, (b) take a partisan stance, and (c) generate elite-focused reporting (Hussain, 2019).

3.1.6 Lowest Escalatory Coverage

This category includes news stories that (a) employ victimizing and emotionally charged language, (b) exclude the perspectives of victims, and (c) ignore their concerns and problems (Hussain, 2019).

3.1.7 Strong De-Escalatory Coverage

This category includes news stories that (a) explicitly advocate for peace and reconciliation, (b) critique war strategies, (c) humanize all parties to a conflict, and (d) provide solution-focused reporting. Although uncommon in conflict coverage, these attributes attract great attention due to the journalism profession's particular limits (Hussain & Lynch, 2018).

3.1.8 Moderate De-Escalatory Coverage

This category includes news stories that (a) avoid good and poor reporting, (b) are nonpartisan, (c) focus on people, and (d) employ objective language (Youngblood, 2017). These characteristics are compatible with good journalism practices (Lynch, 2013; Kempf & Shinar, 2014) and support the claim that good journalism can significantly assist conflict resolution (Howard, 2003; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

3.1.9 Weak De-Escalatory Coverage

This category includes news stories that (a) include attributes such as the victims' voice, (b) emphasize their concerns and problems, and (c) avoid victimizing and emotional language. While uncommon in conflict coverage, these characteristics draw considerable attention because of the unique limitations of the journalistic profession (Hussain & Lynch, 2018).

3.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a frequently employed research method in media studies that allows researchers to systematically analyze media content to identify patterns, themes, and other important information. It involves systematically examining and interpreting the messages conveyed by various forms of media, including text, images, and audiovisual content (Neuendorf, 2016). Numerous studies have used content analysis, including studies of media coverage of conflicts, politics, health, and social issues, among others. Scholars have provided multiple descriptions of content analysis in the media. Weber (1990) defines content analysis as a research strategy that utilizes processes to generate meaningful findings from text.

According to Krippendorff (2004), an effective and consistent way to make inferences from texts to the contexts in which they are utilized is through content analysis."

Similarly, Krippendorff (2018) asserts that content analysis is "A research strategy for concluding by objectively and methodically identifying certain properties of messages." This research method enables researchers to quantify and analyze media messages, making it a valuable tool for investigating media coverage of conflicts and wars. As Berelson (1952) described, Content analysis is a research strategy for the unbiased, scientific, and quantitative evaluation of the apparent content. Neuendorf (2002) also emphasized the importance of doing a systematic, objective, and quantitative analysis of messages to arrive at numerical conclusions. As she described, content analysis aims to provide a quantitative summary of messages. According to Kohlbacher (2006), classical content analysis is primarily a quantitative approach, with its system of categories serving as its core and critical instrument. As a result, the most essential assessment form is to count the number of occurrences in each category.

As seen from the above discussion, some academics see content analysis as a quantitative methodology that yields reliable, numerical results by quantifying the frequency of a text component (frequency analysis). Content analysis is a valuable research method because it provides a systematic and replicable way of examining media content; this can help researchers find patterns and trends that are not immediately obvious. This method is beneficial when studying media coverage of conflicts because it allows researchers to analyze how different actors and institutions frame the conflict and how these frames change over time (Mertes & Golan, 2019).

The benefit of content analysis is that it allows researchers to collect and analyze data relatively objectively and systematically. By defining clear criteria for coding and analyzing media content, researchers can reduce the potential for bias and subjectivity in their analysis (Krippendorff, 2019). Moreover, content analysis can identify manifest and latent content, providing a more nuanced understanding of the messages conveyed by media content (Neuendorf, 2016). Despite its many advantages, content analysis also has some limitations. One potential limitation is that it can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, particularly when analyzing large volumes of media content. Furthermore, the quality of the data under consideration limits content analysis; biased or inadequate data may compromise the analysis results (Krippendorff, 2019).

There are two categories of content analysis: qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative content analysis concerns the frequency and distribution of particular phrases or words in media content, while qualitative content analysis emphasizes the interpretation and meaning of media messages (Neuendorf, 2016). Both types of content analysis can be used to identify media frames, which are "patterns of presentation that enable people to develop a schema through which to understand a complex reality" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Media frames are essential in media studies because they can influence public opinion and policy decisions (Reese, Gandy & Grant, 2003).

Furthermore, content analysis has been used extensively in studies of media reporting of wars and conflicts. For example, Elmusa and Collier (2020) used content analysis to analyze the Visual representation of the Syrian war in US news media. Mertes and Golan (2019) used content analysis to explore framing in US newspaper coverage of the sectarian conflict in Iraq. Strömbäck and Shehata (2022) used content analysis to compare the reporting on the Kashmir

conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers. These studies demonstrate the usefulness of content analysis in investigating media coverage of conflicts and wars. Content analysis is valuable for studying media coverage of conflicts, politics, and other social issues. This method provides researchers with a systematic and replicable way of analyzing media content, allowing them to identify patterns, themes, and additional important information. Despite its limitations, content analysis is a powerful tool for media scholars and social researchers seeking insight into how media shapes our understanding of the world around us.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The population in this study consisted of stories from *Dawn* and *The Nation* about selected conflicts during the specified period. This selection is justified because these newspapers are Pakistan's leading English-language daily, with broad and diverse coverage of national issues, including political movements and conflicts. As a result, they are appropriate sources for analyzing the media narratives about the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and the Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM) during the specific time. By selecting two distinct newspapers, the study has taken a greater range of media narratives and framing approaches, allowing for a more comprehensive comparison of how different outlets cover the same conflicts. To gather all the stories associated with the study, the researcher used a systematic sampling technique to collect all the stories related to the study. This probability sampling method involves sampling every member or unit of the population (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). By using systematic sampling, the study provides an extensive and objective analysis of media narratives surrounding significant political movements in Pakistan, thereby leading to a better understanding of the media's role in conflict dynamics. Systematic sampling is a

structured method for selecting samples that ensures the sample is representative of the larger population. The study's systematic approach aimed to provide a comprehensive view of media coverage while avoiding the bias associated with random selection methods (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

Moreover, this strategy is efficient for data gathering, especially when dealing with significant volumes of media content. It allows a diverse array of articles to be studied without overwhelming the researcher. Additionally, the systematic approach serves to operationalize key variables like securitization, escalation, and de-escalation, assuring a consistent selection process across the dataset, which is critical for quantitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011; Neuendorf, 2016). The data was collected from the Lexis-Nexis database. **A sample size** of 701 stories was sampled, providing a large dataset that strengthens the findings. This sample size allows for statistical analysis, which helps ensure that the findings are generalizable to the entire population of news stories reporting these conflicts.

3.4 Dates and Keywords

The dates and keywords listed below have been entered in the Lexis-Nexis network for both conflicts.

3.4.1 Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)

Start Date: 16 October, 2020

End Date: 15th October, 2021

Keywords

Pakistan Democratic Movement, PDM

3.4.2 Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM)

Six Months before the PTM leader was detained:

Start Date: January 28, 2020

End Date: July 27, 2019

Six Months after the PTM leader was detained:

Start Date: January 28, 2020

End Date: July 27, 2020

Keywords

Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement, PTM

After reading all the stories, the researcher chose only those containing vital information in the introduction or headline section. After selecting the relevant stories, the systematic sampling technique was employed to include each second story in the sample. A total of 701 stories were sampled.

3.5 Unit of Analysis

In content analysis, a unit of analysis is a core concept that refers to the underlying text or content being coded. The final selection of the unit is determined by the particular research question and the level of understanding needed for the analysis since it influences the research's focus and scope (Stemler, 2000). For this study, the whole news story was taken as a unit of analysis. According to Treadwell & Davis (2019), the entire text, such as a news story, can be used as a unit for analysis to understand the overall meanings. Holsti (1969) defined a coding unit as a segment of the content that is usually placed in any given category, and a single symbol

or word is the smallest unit of analysis in any text. At the same time, the context unit is generally the largest body of text to characterize its recording unit. All paragraphs were counted to ensure a systematic study, and the choice to place a news article in a specific category depended on the overall number of paragraphs favoring that category. The title was considered as if each category had an equal number of paragraphs.

3.6 Time Period of the Study

The study focused on the media's coverage of two major conflicts in Pakistan: the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM). The PDM's analysis focused on the peak time around its first major anti-government demonstration, which took place on October 16, 2020. This event marked a significant expansion of the movement's activities, attracting increasing media coverage in Pakistani newspapers, particularly Dawn and The Nation. The study looked at news coverage for one year after the demonstration to better understand the movement's dynamics and media representation.

In the case of the PTM, the study examined media coverage from six months before and six months after a watershed moment: the arrest of a PTM leader outside the press club in Islamabad on January 28, 2020. This time period was chosen to analyze the attributes of securitization and the media's representations of conflict escalation and de-escalation processes. The study aimed to generalize findings more broadly by focusing on this time. Overall, this organized approach allows an extensive understanding of how these movements received coverage in the media during significant stages of their development.

3.7 Rationale for Selection of Newspapers

Two newspapers, *Dawn* and *the Nation*, were selected for this study, considering their prominence in the country's media landscape. Both are leading dailies in Pakistan. **Dawn** is Pakistan's largest English-language daily, widely recognized as Pakistan's newspaper of record. Established in 1941 by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, it has a long history of objective news reporting and in-depth analysis. Dawn's editorial position has evolved throughout time, reflecting the political climate and the leadership of its editors. It is also admired for its extensive coverage and readership across the country, making it a reliable source of information.

The Nation, on the other hand, is a prominent English-language newspaper in Pakistan. It is known for its concise perspectives and effective news coverage. The Nation is widely recognized in academic and media circles, cementing its reputation as a respected publication in Pakistan's English-language journalism. Its editorial content frequently reflects varied viewpoints, contributing to its reputation as a reliable source of news and commentary.

3.8 Conceptualization and Operationalization of Variables

The media act as the mediators of speech in securitization (Dolinec, 2010). In such situations, the mass media becomes one of the securitizing players, as they inform the public (readers, audience, and listeners) of a threat. In times of conflict, the media serves two purposes. It either initiates and escalates or de-escalates conflict, supporting social stability and peace. Based on the previous discussion, the following nine variables in the suggested model are operationalized, and to analyze the media coverage of the PTM and PDM, variables are conceptualized and operationalized in the following way:

3.8.1 Securitization

Securitization involves infusing a topic with a sense of threat, assigning it a sense of urgency that must be dealt with, and requiring the implementation of debated measures or laws meant to act as a defense against the issue. The media is a significant factor in shaping public discourse and securitizing the security discourse by choosing the audience's speech act. The selected conflicts were analyzed and placed for securitization attributes along the highest, medium, and lowest continuum. For instance, consider this story by Dawn (October 13, 2021): “Pashteen and some party leaders were taken into custody by the police for sedition, inciting people to revolt against the government, and using derogatory language against security personnel at a protest in Sohrab Goth. These leaders included Muhammad Shafi, Hidayatullah Pashteen, Dawar, and MNA Ali Wazir”.

3.8.2 Conflict Escalation

The escalatory media perspective is defined by demands for action against the opponent and the coverage's zero-sum tendency. The conflict is portrayed as a win-lose situation, with only one side able to win and the other having to lose. For instance, examine this story by *The Nation* (June 3, 2019), which reported that PTM aims to threaten Pakistan. It is not a legitimate movement, and the authorities must take strict measures against its leaders. The media depicts identification offerings favoring one of the conflict sides while adversely portraying the opponent, making identification with the latter unlikely. The mass media has a dual role to play in conflict situations. It either initiates and escalates or de-escalates conflict, promoting societal stability and peace (Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Hussain, 2017; Ginosar & Cohen, 2019; Hussain &

Lynch, 2019; Alimba, 2020). The selected conflicts were analyzed and placed for escalation attributes along the high, medium, and low escalation continuum.

3.8.3 De-Escalation

A peace call, a win-win orientation, and narrating the event from a humanized viewpoint are all characteristics of a de-escalatory media approach. The coverage presents identification offerings on behalf of all conflict sides' victims. In one representative news story, Dawn (October 25, 2019) reported a rally held by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) in Quetta, where opposition leaders demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The report gives details about the rally, the speeches delivered by the opposition leaders, and the demands made by them. It also provides information on the government's response to the rally and the security measures the authorities took to ensure a peaceful protest.

Mass media frequently plays a critical part in today's conflict. Their role can take on two separate and competing dimensions. Either the media actively participates in the dispute and bears responsibility for further violence, or it stays independent and outside of the conflict, leading to conflict resolution and violence reduction (Puddephatt, 2006). The media plays a crucial role in positively affecting conflict areas by exerting its influence towards ending the conflict, or at least improving the peace environment and moving the public toward peace (Howard, 2002) in the same manner. The selected conflicts were analyzed and placed for de-escalation attributes along the high, medium, and low de-escalation continuum.

3.9 Data Coding

Citing Lee and Maslog (2005) and Hussain and Siraj (2018), a single paragraph served as the unit of analysis for coding. Based on three indications for each frame, all paragraphs were

classified as high, medium, or low securitization, escalation, and de-escalation. Then, based on the overall amount of paragraphs, a story was assigned to a given frame. Due to its low frequency, the neutral frame was eventually eliminated from the study after being included.

In developing a coding manual, the researcher collaborated with the senior faculty to establish a complete coding manual that included explicit definitions, examples, and rules for each securitization, escalation, and de-escalation category. This guide is used as a reference during the coding process. Moreover, the researcher performed a pilot coding exercise on a subset of articles to become acquainted with the coding method and identify any ambiguities or discrepancies. During this phase, the supervising faculty reviewed the researcher's coding and rectified any discrepancies. During the coding process, the researcher discussed regularly with the supervisory faculty to address any issues or concerns. The faculty offered direction and support to ensure the coding was uniform and aligned with the study's objectives. Most importantly, by applying this complete training process, the researcher intended to improve the coding scheme's reliability and objectivity. Senior faculty members from the media department, who have vast experience in content analysis and media studies, contributed to the validity of the coding procedure and the entire study.

3.10 Factor Analysis

The factor analysis is incorporated into the overall method utilizing the same coded data obtained from the content analysis of newspaper stories. The relationships revealed through factor analysis offer insight into how different dimensions of media coverage (e.g., securitization, escalation, and de-escalation) are interrelated. This integration enables a

more comprehensive evaluation of the research questions by providing insights into the underlying processes that shape the media narratives.

A limited set of fundamental characteristics or factors that can be used to show relations between related variables can be identified using a statistical technique termed factor analysis. The primary objective of factor analysis is to identify the "factors" underlying the dimensions related to data variability. It is a widely used data analytic approach that has been around for most of the 21st century. It is best described as a tool for finding underlying components that may identify and explain the elements linked to high data variability (field, 2005).

It has never been used for exploratory research of this nature. However, it has been widely utilized by social scientists for examining patterns of interactions, data reduction, instrument building, data classification and description, data translation, hypothesis testing, studying links in new domains of interest, and mapping the construct space. Factor analysis provides a geometrical shape that allows behavioral correlations to be demonstrated. Factor analysis can be used to (1) comprehend the structure of a set of variables, (2) construct an instrument for measuring an underlying variable, (3) condense a data set to a more manageable size while maintaining as much original information as feasible (Field, 2005).

Therefore, a factor analysis was carried out on a dataset of news story characteristics collected over one month. The goal was to explore the relationship between these characteristics and identify underlying factors that explain their covariance. The factor analysis resulted in a rotated component matrix consisting of 9 components. The values in the matrix represent correlation coefficients between the variables (news story characteristics) and the components. These coefficients show the degree and direction of each variable's relationship to its

corresponding component. Positive coefficients imply a positive relationship, while negative coefficients suggest a negative connection. By evaluating these findings, the researcher understood how various elements of media coverage connected to the framing of the PDM and PTM issues.

It is worth noting that the range of values for each component reflects the strength of the relationship between the variables and the respective component. Higher absolute values suggest a stronger association between a variable and a component. Additionally, the coefficient sign indicates the variable and the element's direction, which can be either positive or negative. The 9-factor model obtained from the exploratory factor analyses aligned well with understanding the factors and their respective groupings. This suggests that the factor analysis results are consistent with the underlying theoretical framework or knowledge in the field.

While the initial model achieved a reasonably acceptable fit, other potential sources of variance were also examined to enhance the model fit further and improve its overall viability. The factor analysis was a valuable tool for testing the model's reliability and validity, providing insights into the relationships between the news story characteristics and the identified factors.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this study, the researcher has contently analyzed the interaction between conflict securitization and war and Peace potential in Pakistani Press while reporting on two socio-political conflicts in Pakistan. The content analysis technique frequently discusses media content characteristics (Riffe et al., 2014). The data were collected by operationalizing nine variables and further indicators of the proposed model: highest, medium, and lowest securitization, as well as strong, moderate, and weak escalatory or de-escalatory coverage. Furthermore, the researcher empirically tests the above-proposed model. By empirically testing a detailed model to analyze conflict (de)escalation in the Pakistani context, this research contributes to the limited literature on the media-security nexus in non-Western settings. This method is more suitable for devising a detailed model for analyzing the conflict and (de) escalation in a Pakistani context, which can also be applied to other settings prone to conflicts.

Each paragraph was counted to ensure a systematic analysis, and the number of paragraphs indicating a particular tendency determined whether a news story was positioned in which thematic category. For instance, if there were four paragraphs in a news story, three about escalatory and one about de-escalatory coverage, the entire news story was considered escalatory. Additionally, the heading was analyzed when there were an equal number of escalatory and de-escalatory paragraphs. Initially, a neutral category was created but later deleted due to extremely low frequency. The two conflicts included the PDM (Pakistan

Democratic Movement) and PTM (Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement) in 2019; Dawn and The Nation, two of the most prominent English publications, were chosen. Both the publications are managed by Pakistan's earliest and most famous media firms, which also own TV networks and social media platforms and are considered agenda-setters for the rest of the country's news media. The data/ news stories were gathered from the Lexis-Nexus database. Total 701 news stories were analyzed, and the findings revealed significant variations in how both conflicts were portrayed. The answers to research questions and hypotheses are as follows:

RQ1: To what extent are the PDM and PTM conflicts securitized in the selected newspapers of Pakistan (Dawn and the Nation)?

Table 1: Distributions of Conflicts in terms of High Securitization

Conflicts	Lowest securitization	Medium securitization	Highest securitization	Total
PDM	202	116	95	413
Percentage%	48.9%	28.1%	23.0%	100.0%
PTM	101	108	79	288
Percentage%	35.1%	37.5%	27.4%	100.0%
Total	303	224	174	701
Percentage%	43.2%	32.0%	24.8%	100.0%

Table 1 shows the distribution of conflicts regarding high securitization in the selected newspapers, focusing on the two main conflicts in Pakistan, PDM and PTM. From the content analysis results in the above table, it is clear that the lowest securitization approach mainly dominated the Pakistani media's coverage of the PDM conflict. The low securitization category

received 48.9% of the total news pieces in this group, more than any other category. Compared to the different categories, which received 28.1% and 23.0%, respectively, for medium and highest securitization levels. The difference is sufficiently significant to justify statistical significance, adding credibility to the debate, and hence, the hypothesis is supported. Overall, 24.8% were categorized as having the highest level of securitization, 32.0% had a medium level, and 43.2% had the lowest.

In contrast, for the PTM conflict, the medium securitization category received 37.5% of news coverage, while the lowest securitization accounted for 35.1%, and the highest received only 27.4%. PTM is mainly nonviolent, but due to its criticism of the military, the media portray it as foreign-funded and, therefore, a threat to national security (Pashteen, 2019). In one representative news story, *The Nation* (June 3, 2019) reported that PTM aims to destabilize Pakistan, is not a legitimate movement, and that the authorities should take strict measures against its leaders.

RQ2: To what level did the Dawn and the Nation securitize the selected conflicts in Pakistan?

Table 2: Difference Between Dawn and the Nation Coverage in Terms of Securitization

Newspaper	Lowest Securitization	Medium Securitization	High Securitization	Total
Dawn	214	131	69	414
Percentage%	51.7%	31.6%	16.7%	100.0%
The Nation	89	93	105	287
Percentage%	31.0%	32.4%	36.6%	100.0%
Total	303	224	174	701
Percentage%	43.2%	32.0%	24.8%	100.0%

The above table shows the difference in coverage between the two newspapers, Dawn and The Nation, regarding the level of securitization of the selected conflicts in Pakistan. The conflicts are categorized into the lowest, medium, and highest securitization levels. As shown in Table 3, the level of securitization varies across the two Newspapers' coverage of selected conflicts. The coverage of the Dawn was heavily low securitization oriented, with a percentage of 51.7%, compared to the other indicators in this group. The two newspapers covered the conflicts differently, with Dawn leaning towards low securitization and the nation trending towards high securitization, with 36.6% of the nation's news items falling into that category. Overall, the findings suggest a difference in how the two newspapers cover the selected conflicts regarding securitization level, with the Nation emphasizing higher securitization levels than *Dawn*.

RQ3: To what extent are the two conflicts regarding the Escalatory traits reported in the Pakistani press?

Table 3: Difference in Escalatory Coverage between PDM and PTM Conflicts

Conflict	Weak Escalatory	Moderate Escalatory	High Escalatory	Total
PDM	220	152	41	413
	53.3%	36.8%	9.9%	100.0%
PTM	144	115	29	288
	50.0%	39.9%	10.1%	100.0%
Total	364	267	70	701
	51.9%	38.1%	10.0%	100.0%
Chi-square	0.788			
p-value		0.674		

Table 3 presents data on escalatory coverage differences between the PDM and PTM conflicts in the Pakistani press. The table shows that of 413 PDM conflict news articles, 53.3% were categorized as weak escalatory, 36.8% as moderate escalatory, and 9.9% as high escalatory. In contrast, out of 288 PTM conflict news articles, 50% were categorized as weak escalatory, 39.9% as moderate escalatory, and 10.1% as high escalatory. Overall, the data suggest that both conflicts received similar coverage in terms of escalatory traits, with a slightly higher proportion of high escalatory coverage in the PDM conflict.

A chi-square test was performed to evaluate the association between the variables under comparison. The Pearson chi-square value was 0.788, and the P-value was 0.674. The chi-square test results were analyzed to determine if escalatory coverage differs significantly between PDM and PTM conflicts. The data indicate no significant difference in escalatory

coverage between the two conflicts ($p=.674$). In conclusion, the data presented in Table 4 suggest that both the PDM and PTM conflicts received similar coverage regarding escalatory traits in the Pakistani press. Therefore, there is a slight variation here.

RQ4: How are the various characteristics of conflict escalation and de-escalation distributed among the selected conflicts?

I. To what extent are the two conflicts regarding the weak-deescalatory coverage reported in the Pakistani press?

Table 4: Distribution of Weak- De-Escalatory Coverage of Conflicts				
Conflict	Weak De-Escalatory	Moderate De-Escalatory	Strong De-Escalatory	Total
PDM	59	135	219	413
Percentage %	14.3%	32.7%	53.0%	100.0%
PTM	60	147	81	288
Percentage %	20.8%	51.0%	28.1%	100.0%
Total	119	282	300	701
Percentage %	17.0%	40.2%	42.8%	100.0%
Chi-square	43.079			
p-value	0.000			

Table 4 presents data on the distribution of weak de-escalatory, moderate de-escalatory, and strong de-escalatory coverage of the PDM and PTM conflicts in the Pakistani press. The table shows that out of 413 PDM conflict news articles, 14.3% were categorized as weak de-escalatory, 32.7% as moderate de-escalatory, and 53.0% as strong de-escalatory. In contrast, out of 288 PTM conflict news articles, 20.8% were categorized as weak de-escalatory, 51.0% as moderate de-escalatory, and 28.1% as strong de-escalatory. The data suggests that the PTM

conflict received more moderate de-escalatory coverage, while the PDM conflict received stronger de-escalatory coverage.

In one representative news story, Dawn (October 25, 2019) reported a rally held by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) in Quetta, where opposition leaders demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The report gives details about the rally, the speeches delivered by the opposition leaders, and the demands made by them. It also provides information on the government's reaction towards the rally and the security measures the authorities took to ensure a peaceful protest. The report does not take sides and presents both the opposition and the government's viewpoints. In another story, Dawn (November 26, 2020) reported on the announcement made by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) regarding a long march towards Islamabad in January. The report details the PDM's plan to rally in Lahore before the march towards the capital, the relevant information on the government's response to the announcement, and the security measures the authorities took to ensure a peaceful protest. The report presents the opposition and government's viewpoints and does not take sides.

In addition, a Pearson chi-square test was performed to determine if there is a significant connection between the variables being compared (weak de-escalatory, moderate de-escalatory, and strong de-escalatory coverage) between the PDM and PTM conflicts. The chi-square value for the Pearson test was 43.079, with a P-value was less than 0.001 (asymptotic significance = 0.000). These findings provide strong evidence against the hypothesis that these variables are independent, indicating a statistically significant relationship between them. The test results indicate a significant difference in coverage between the two conflicts ($p=0.000$). In conclusion, the data presented in Table 6 suggest a significant difference in weak, moderate, and strong de-escalatory coverage between the PDM and PTM conflicts in the Pakistani press.

The PTM conflict received more moderate de-escalatory coverage, while the PDM conflict received stronger de-escalatory coverage.

II. To what extent did the two newspapers (Dawn & The Nation) report on the conflicts regarding escalatory coverage?

Table 5: Relationship between Newspaper and Strong Escalatory Coverage

Newspaper	Weak Escalatory	Moderate Escalatory	High Escalatory	Total
Dawn	244	117	53	414
Percentage%	58.93%	28.26%	12.81%	100.00%
The Nation	120	150	17	287
Percentage%	41.76%	52.27%	5.94%	100.00%
Total	364	267	70	701
	51.92%	38.09%	10.00%	100.00%
Chi-Square			43.246	
p-value			0.000	

Table 5 presents the relationship between newspapers and strong escalatory coverage. The table shows the frequency and percentage of articles published by two newspapers, Dawn and The Nation, concerning three levels of Strong Escalatory Coverage: Weak Escalatory, Moderate Escalatory, and High Escalatory. The above table indicates that Dawn published 244 articles (58.93%) with Weak Escalatory Coverage, 117 news stories (28.26%) with Moderate Escalatory Coverage, and 53 articles (12.81%) with High Escalatory Coverage. On the other hand, The Nation published 120 articles (41.76%) with Weak Escalatory Coverage, 150 articles

(52.27%) with Moderate Escalatory Coverage, and 17 articles (5.94%) with High Escalatory Coverage.

The total number of articles published by both newspapers is 701, out of which 364 articles (51.92%) have Weak Escalatory Coverage, 267 articles (38.09%) have Moderate Escalatory Coverage, and 70 articles (10.00%) have High Escalatory Coverage. In total, 364 (51.9%) news stories had weak escalatory coverage, 267 (38.1%) had moderate escalatory coverage, and 70 (10.0%) had high escalatory coverage. The chi-square value of 43.246 with a p-value of 0.000 indicates a significant relationship between the two categorical variables, Newspaper and Strong Escalatory Coverage. The above table shows that a higher proportion of news stories in The Dawn had weak escalatory coverage than in *The Nation*. Moreover, The Nation had news stories with a more significant percentage of moderate escalatory coverage than Dawn.

Additionally, Dawn had a slightly higher percentage of news content with high escalatory coverage than the nation. Still, Dawn newspaper applies for weak escalatory coverage compared to the *Nation* newspaper or other groups and is also statistically significant following chi-square results. The chi-square value and p-value are presented at the bottom of the table, indicating the statistical significance of the relationship between the newspaper and strong escalatory coverage.

III. To what extent do the two newspapers (Dawn & The Nation) report on the conflicts regarding weak de-escalatory coverage?

Table 6: Crosstabulation of Weak De-Escalatory Coverage by Newspaper

Newspaper	Weak De-Escalatory	Moderate De-Escalatory	Strong De-Escalatory	Total
Dawn	68	153	193	414
Percentage%	16.4%	37.0%	46.6%	100.0%
The Nation	51	129	47	286
Percentage%	17.8%	44.9%	107	287
Total	119	282	300	701
Percentage%	17.0%	40.2%	42.8%	100.0%
Chi-Square Value	6.323			
P-value	.042			

Table 6 shows the crosstabulation of weak de-escalatory coverage reported by two newspapers, Dawn and The Nation. Dawn observed 68 weak, 153 moderate, and 193 strong de-escalatory coverages, accounting for 16.4%, 37.0%, and 46.6%, respectively. Additionally, in one representative news story, *The Nation* (November 1, 2019) reported the arrest of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) leaders Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar on charges of sedition and incitement to rebellion. The news report details the charges against the PTM leaders and the circumstances leading to their arrest. It also provides information about the protests in response to the arrest and the government's response to the PTM's demands. The report shows weak de-escalatory reporting as it only presents the government's viewpoint and does not provide a neutral perspective on the PTM's demands or the arrests. On the other hand, the Nation had 287

news stories related to conflicts: 17.8% had weak de-escalatory coverage, 44.9% had moderate de-escalatory coverage, and 37.3% had strong de-escalatory coverage. In total, 119 (17.0%) had weak de-escalatory coverage, 282 (40.2%) had moderate de-escalatory coverage, and 300 (42.8%) had strong de-escalatory coverage.

Additionally, the above table shows that chi-square tests show a significant association between the newspaper and weak de-escalatory coverage of conflicts (Pearson chi-square = 6.323, $p = 0.042$). Hence, the Chi-square test is significant. The table indicates that both newspapers reported on conflicts primarily with moderate or strong de-escalatory coverage. However, The Nation had a slightly more significant percentage of news reports with moderate de-escalatory coverage than Dawn. Dawn had a higher percentage of stories with strong de-escalatory coverage than The Nation. Another news story in Dawn (February 15, 2021), indicating strong moderate-de-escalatory coverage, reported that the PDM announced a boycott of Senate elections and said it would launch a long march instead. The news story details the PDM's decision to boycott the elections, its reasons, and the criticism it received from other political parties. It also provides information about the PDM's plan to launch a long march and the government's response. The report presents the opposition and government's viewpoints and does not take sides.

RQ5: To what extent are the securitization, escalation, and de-escalation levels correlated?

Table 7: Correlations Between Securitization, Escalation, and De-Escalation Levels

		Level of Securitization	Level of Escalation	Level of De- Escalation
Level of Securitization	Pearson Correlation	1	.179**	.093*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.014
	N	701	701	701
Level of Escalation	Pearson Correlation	.179**	1	-.042
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.270
	N	701	701	701
Level of De- Escalation	Pearson Correlation	.093*	-.042	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.270	
	N	701	701	701

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows the correlation between three variables: level of Securitization, level of escalation, and level of de-escalation. The correlation coefficient between the level of securitization and the level of escalation is 0.179, indicating a positive relationship that is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that as the level of securitization increases, the escalation level in reported conflicts also rises. The correlation coefficient between the level of Securitization and the level of de-escalation is 0.093, which is positive and significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that as the level of securitization increases, so does the level of de-escalation in the reported conflicts, but to a lesser extent than with escalation. Overall, this table demonstrates that the level of securitization correlates positively with both escalation and de-escalation, though to varying degrees.

- I. Regarding the securitization of the conflict coverage, the selected conflicts are mainly reported in weak-escalatory fashion/terms compared to other categories.

Table 8: High Securitization * Strong Escalatory Coverage Crosstabulation

		Weak Escalatory	Moderate Escalatory	High Escalatory	Total
High Securitization	Low sec	269	29	5	303
	Percentage%	88.8%	9.6%	1.7%	100.0%
	Medium sec	86	137	1	224
	Percentage%	38.4%	61.2%	0.4%	100.0%
	High sec	9	101	64	174
	Percentage%	5.2%	58.0%	36.8%	100.0%
Total		364	267	70	701
		51.9%	38.1%	10.0%	100.0%
Chi-Square Value		441.206			
P-value		0.000			

Table 8 shows the cross-tabulation of both conflicts: strong escalatory coverage and high securitization. It indicates that out of the 303 articles categorized as High Securitization, 88.8% were reported in a weak-escalatory fashion, 38.4% in a moderate-escalatory fashion, and 5.2% in a high-escalatory fashion. This suggests that regarding securitization, both conflicts were covered mainly in a weak-escalatory manner compared to the other categories. The Chi-Square tests reveal a significant association between strong escalatory coverage and high securitization, with a p-value of 0.000. This implies that the levels of escalation and securitization in conflict coverage are interdependent, indicating a relationship between them. Overall, this table supports the conclusion that the selected conflicts in Pakistan are mainly reported in weak-escalatory terms, even when categorized as high securitization.

II. Regarding the securitization of the conflict coverage, the selected conflicts are mainly reported in a strong d-escalatory fashion/terms compared to other categories.

Table 9: High Securitization * Weak De-Escalatory Coverage Crosstabulation

		Weak De-Escalatory	Moderate De-Escalatory	Strong De-Escalatory	Total
High	Low sec	23	48	232	303
Securitization	Percentage%	7.6%	15.8%	76.6%	100.0%
	Medium sec	33	157	34	224
	Percentage%	14.7%	70.1%	15.2%	100.0%
	High sec	63	77	34	174
	Percentage%	36.2%	44.3%	19.5%	100.0%
Total		119	282	300	701
		17.0%	40.2%	42.8%	100.0%
Chi-Square		292.100			
p-value		.000			

Table 9 shows the coverage distribution for the selected conflicts regarding their securitization and weak-de-escalatory coverage. The conflicts are reported mainly in a de-escalatory fashion, with strong de-escalatory coverage being the most reported category. Both conflicts are statistically significant regarding their weak de-escalatory coverage, indicating that the coverage is de-escalatory oriented, which is consistent with peace journalism. Moreover, most coverage for both conflicts falls under the strong de-escalatory category. The table also shows that both conflicts have been reported in a weak escalatory fashion regarding securitization. In one representative news story, Dawn (February 5, 2021) reported the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) rally held in Islamabad, where opposition leaders demanded fresh elections. The report gives details about the rally, the speeches delivered by the opposition leaders, and the demands made by them. It also includes details regarding the government's

stance on the rally and the security measures the authorities took to ensure a peaceful protest. The news report shows strong de-escalatory reporting, presents both the opposition and government's viewpoints, and does not take sides.

The Chi-Square shows that the results are statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a relationship between the securitization of the conflict coverage and the weak de-escalatory reporting. This implies that the selected conflicts are primarily reported in a de-escalatory form, consistent with peace journalism and that the coverage is weak-escalatory regarding securitization.

H.1: The level of securitization of conflict determines the nature of reporting in escalatory terms

Table 10: Model Summary, ANOVA, and Coefficients

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Model Summary	.179 ^a	.032	.031	.28843	-	-	-	-	-
ANOVA	-	-	-	-	1.920	1	1.920	23.085	.000 ^b
Coefficients	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(Constant)	.864	.050	-	-	-	-	-	17.339	0.00
Level of Securitization	.150	.179	0.31	-	-	-	-	4.805	0.00

a. Predictors: (Constant), Level of Securitization

b. Dependent Variable: Level of Escalation

Table 10 shows the results of a linear regression analysis conducted to examine the relationship between the level of securitization of conflict and the nature of reporting in

escalatory terms. The model summary shows that the regression model accounts for only 3.2% of the variance in the dependent variable (level of escalation), as indicated by the R square value of .032. The adjusted R square value is slightly lower at .031. The standard error of the estimate is .28843, which indicates the average difference between the dependent variable's actual and anticipated values according to the regression model.

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($p < .001$), as indicated by the F-value of 23.085 and the associated p-value of .000. This means that the model can predict the level of escalation based on the level of securitization of conflict better than by chance alone.

The coefficient results show that the intercept value is .864, which means that when the level of securitization is zero, the predicted level of escalation is .864. The coefficient for the level of securitization variable is .150, which indicates that for every unit increase in the securitization level, the predicted level of escalation increases by .150. This coefficient is also statistically significant ($p < .001$), as indicated by the t-value of 4.805 and the associated p-value of .000.

Hypothesis 1 conjectured that the level of securitization of conflict determines the escalatory level of coverage. The analysis suggests that there is a positive and statistically significant association between the level of securitization of conflict and the nature of reporting in escalatory terms, as indicated by the coefficient for the level of securitization variable. Hence, it proved that the level of securitization of conflict determines the level of escalatory reporting.

RQ6: What key thematic strategies do the selected press apply when reporting the PTM and PDM conflict?

The present study of conflict reporting on the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) reveals several significant thematic themes in press coverage.

I. Securitization and Conflict Escalation

The reporting of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) conflict leans primarily on themes that exacerbate tensions. Media outlets frequently portray PTM activities as an actual threat to national security, highlighting occurrences such as protests and clashes with security forces (Sevea, 2021). This securitized framing, explored by Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde (1998), promotes the PTM's portrayal as a destabilizing force threatening state authority, adding to rising tensions.

II. Elites' Influence and Escalatory Coverage

The findings indicate a correlation between elite influence and escalating media coverage of the PTM conflict. McChesney (2023) emphasizes how powerful interest groups and political elites can significantly influence media narratives. In the case of the PTM, elite influence over media discourse reinforces the securitized narrative and presents the movement's demands as subversive and anti-state (Sevea, 2021). This framing suits the interests of some elites while impeding productive dialogue and peaceful resolutions.

III. Balanced Coverage and De-Escalatory Themes in PDM Reporting

In contrast to the PTM conflict, news coverage of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) is more evenly distributed between escalating and de-escalating themes. While the PDM's political agitation may still be seen as confrontational, the media covers the movement's grievances and demands in a less sensationalized manner (Gul & Ali, 2023). This balanced approach, advised by academicians and researchers such as Shabbir Hussain, an advocate for peace journalism (Iqbal & Hussain, 2017), allows for a more nuanced understanding of the PDM's goals and decreases the risk of further escalation.

IV. Conflict Intensity and De-Escalatory Potential

The analysis emphasizes a significant aspect: the relationship between the perceived conflict intensity and the de-escalation nature of media coverage. Conflicts considered less threatening to national security, such as the PDM, obtain greater de-escalation scores in media coverage (Khan, 2023). This shows that when conflicts are not presented as existential threats, there is a greater probability of peaceful resolution through negotiation and dialogue.

Hence, the thematic analysis of media coverage of the PTM and PDM conflicts highlights the importance of media framing in affecting the public's perceptions and determining conflict outcomes. Although securitization and elite influence may contribute to escalatory reporting, adopting a more balanced approach that addresses underlying grievances and promotes dialogue could help in reducing tensions and facilitating peaceful resolution.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Recent research studies indicate that media narratives can dynamically influence conflict trajectories, with nuanced interactions between reporting strategies and sociopolitical contexts, particularly within the intricate socio-political landscape of Pakistan, where the complexities of media's role in either escalating or fostering understanding remain largely unexplored, and the potential mechanisms by which media representations transform conflict dynamics remain largely opaque. Responding to this critical research gap and based on the objectives, this study analyzes the interaction between conflict securitization and media coverage, specifically focusing on two significant movements: the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and the Pakistan Democratic Movement. By examining the reporting strategies of leading newspapers like Dawn and The Nation, this research highlights the gaps in the literature on peace journalism. It proposes and empirically tests a new framework for evaluating conflict journalism based on the level of securitization of the conflicts. Additionally, the researcher explored the distribution of different characteristics of escalation and de-escalation between these conflicts.

The Data were collected by operationalizing nine variables along with additional indicators from the proposed model. These variables contribute to a new classification framework for evaluating conflict journalism, highlighting the importance of understanding how media narratives can exacerbate or mitigate situations based on their securitization levels. The study underscores the need for an improved strategy for conflict reporting that takes these characteristics into account to effectively promote peace. This section offers a comprehensive analysis of the research findings, culminating in a thoughtful conclusion. It delves into a detailed

discussion of the results, highlighting significant patterns and insights from the data. It also outlines critical recommendations and highlights the broader implications of the research. By synthesizing the findings, this chapter provides a clear understanding of the study's contributions and their importance in the field.

The study's findings indicate that the securitization level of conflict determines the nature of reporting in escalatory terms. The study revealed that the more conflict actors securitize, the more it escalates, and the less they securitize, the less escalation (Hussain & Lynch, 2018; Hussain, 2019). Moreover, the study revealed a positive, statistically significant association between these variables. More specifically, there is a higher probability that media coverage will use escalation rhetoric the more securitized the conflict.

Notably, the securitization of conflict can lead to a cycle of escalation, where framing the issue as a security threat reinforces the need for military action and contributes to the normalization of violence (Hussain, 2019). A conflict seen as a national security threat may result in a cycle of escalation, where military action is seen as the only solution. The media narratives are assessed for escalatory/de-escalatory tendencies using securitization levels. The greater the level of conflict intensity, the stronger its escalation and the lower its de-escalation. As elites influence the media, the coverage becomes more escalatory.

Similarly, the lesser the intensity of a conflict regarding national security threats, the higher the de-escalation score. Likewise, framing conflicts as national security threats can result in a cycle of escalation wherein military intervention appears as the sole option. This is consistent with how a conflict is viewed and influences the escalation process (Pabón & Duyvesteyn, 2023). Furthermore, it is worth considering that the securitization theory is a core component of this study. It argues that the level of securitization directly impacts the nature of media coverage, with higher securitization resulting in escalatory reportage. This nuanced approach demonstrates how framing conflicts as

security threats can increase violence and militarized responses. The framework developed in this research study enables a more dynamic understanding of media coverage, demonstrating how conflicts can exhibit both escalatory and de-escalatory traits and capturing the intricacies of how media narratives can shift depending on the perceived intensity of the conflict. The chosen conflicts demonstrated different patterns regarding the distribution of conflict escalation and de-escalation characteristics.

The PTM conflict was predominantly characterized by escalatory coverage, whereas the PDM conflict showed a more balanced distribution of escalatory and de-escalatory reportage. The findings indicated a negative and statistically significant association between these two variables. More specifically, the higher the de-escalation score, the lesser the conflict's intensity regarding threats to national security. This implies that conflicts are more likely to be resolved peacefully when not framed as security threats. This can be explained by variances in the conflicts and actors involved. This finding underscores the need for greater media pluralism and diversity in Pakistan to ensure a more balanced and nuanced coverage of conflicts.

Furthermore, the study found that conflict, believed to pose direct threats to national security, was mainly reported in an escalatory manner. In contrast, less intense conflict regarding threats to national security was reported with higher de-escalatory scores. The results of the analysis revealed a strong positive connection between the level of securitization and escalatory coverage. This signifies that as the level of securitization increases, escalatory coverage also tends to increase. The current study's findings are consistent with previous research (Peri, 2013; Hussain, 2017; Hussain, 2019; Hussain, 2020), which has shown that when the media portrays a conflict in a securitized manner, emphasizing the threat it poses to national security, it can create a climate of fear and anxiety that may cause the conflict to escalate, and the media portrays conflicts can immensely affect the public's opinions of those conflicts. Similarly, the thematic analysis of media coverage of PTM and PDM conflicts also

highlights the importance of media framing in shaping public perceptions and influencing conflict resolution. In the case of PTM, securitization and elite influence lead to exaggerated reporting, depicting the movement as a threat to national security and exacerbating conflict dynamics. In contrast, the PDM coverage takes a more balanced approach, emphasizing de-escalation themes that promote dialogue and lessen the potential of further escalation. This contrast emphasizes the significance of implementing a nuanced media strategy that encourages productive discourse and peaceful conflict resolution.

Overall, this dissertation highlights the importance of understanding how media covers the conflicts and how this can impact public perceptions and attitudes toward these conflicts. The study shows that securitized coverage of conflicts can lead to fear and support for military actions, while de-escalatory coverage can promote understanding and peaceful resolution. Moreover, the media's focus on escalatory events, such as violent attacks or military actions, can contribute to a cycle of violence that further exacerbates the conflict.

The study highlights the necessity of adapting peace journalism to the specific context of the conflict, as it is not a static strategy. Media practitioners should be conscious of the different dynamics of conflicts and adapt their reporting accordingly to promote peace and understanding. The present research provides evidence that the intensity of the conflict concerning possible national security threats influences the media's escalatory or de-escalatory nature of reporting. The greater the perceived security risks a conflict poses, the higher its score on escalatory parameters (Hussain, 2019). This research also shows that conflicts are not static and must not be perceived as such. Moreover, the conflict's contributing factors impact coverage in the media; therefore, the strategy of having one solution for all problems, which dominates present peace journalism scholarship, is ineffective. To more effectively comprehend the conflict, media, and peace debates, it would be more fruitful to deconstruct conflicts and the escalatory or de-escalatory reportage that results.

These distributions can apply to theorizing and identifying practical approaches for peace journalism, which has nevertheless escaped academic consensus (Gilewicz, 2011). This study's findings significantly contribute to the theoretical discourse of peace journalism. Furthermore, the findings add to the theory and practice of the peace journalism debate in Pakistan and abroad by demonstrating that peace journalism is not a static practice. The findings show that various conflicts are reported differently within one country (Hussain, 2019; Hussain, 2020). To advocate for peace journalism, practitioners must rank the conflict across a continuum from (a) lowest to (b) medium to (c) highest level.

In conclusion, the study's findings are consistent with existing literature and contribute to current peace journalism research in Pakistan by empirically testing a new classification framework and detailed model. This study makes an essential contribution to the academic scholarship on the categorization of the war/ peacemaking perspective of Pakistani media through a securitization perspective. The study highlights the interplay of peace journalism with securitization in the Pakistani media, which has previously been ignored. The present study provides an insight into the interaction between conflict securitization and war and peace potential in the Pakistani Press. This study underlines that conflicts are not static and must be understood within the context of their specific circumstances. It opposes a one-size-fits-all approach to peace journalism, instead advocating for a continuum of conflict intensity that affects coverage, implying that different conflicts necessitate specialized reporting strategies.

The findings suggest that conflict securitization is crucial in determining the level of reporting in escalatory/ de-escalatory terms. The severity of a conflict concerning a national security threat determines its de-escalatory score (Hussain, 2019; Hussain, 2020). Few research studies (Zaheer, 2016; Hussain, Siraj & Mahmood, 2019) highlight the relationship between conflict securitization and media narratives in Pakistan. Media coverage frequently intensified the securitization of

conflicts, affecting public views and contributing to escalating dynamics. Mainstream media reporting on conflicts neglected peace journalism approaches that focus on solutions, victims, and underlying causes. Despite striving to be fair, media outlets experienced difficulty in avoiding covering violence and rights violations. The negative and statistically significant relationship between these two variables indicates that conflicts not framed as security threats are more likely to be resolved peacefully. The study also identifies deficiencies in the available literature and empirically tests a new classification framework and detailed model for evaluating conflict journalism. Significantly, the study found that the level of securitization of conflict determines the nature of reporting in escalatory terms, and conflict that was thought to pose a direct national security threat was reported mainly in an escalating manner. In addition, the present study provides evidence of a significant positive connection between the level of securitization of conflict coverage and the level of escalatory coverage.

These results indicate how media portrayal of conflicts can significantly impact the escalation of those conflicts. Moreover, the media's emphasis on the security repercussions of a conflict and escalatory events can contribute to a cycle of violence exacerbating the conflict. Notably, given the importance of media in influencing the public's opinions on the conflict, journalists and news outlets need to be aware of the potential impact of their reporting on conflict escalation (Hussain, Siraj & Mahmood, 2019). News organizations and journalists should try to cover conflicts accurately and impartially, avoiding sensationalism and securitization that can contribute to escalating violence. Additionally, policymakers and other stakeholders should work to promote a more nuanced understanding of conflicts that goes beyond simplistic securitized narratives and addresses the underlying causes and dynamics of the conflict. By doing so, it may be possible to prevent the escalation of conflicts and promote more peaceful and stable societies. It is worth noting that the findings emphasize the need for media professionals to take a more responsible approach to

reporting. The study results suggest that recognizing the securitization of conflicts might help the media avoid sensationalism and contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

This study highlights the pervasive nature of securitization in the Pakistani media and its impact on conflict escalation and de-escalation. The findings suggest the media's potential to either exacerbate or mitigate conflicts based on its coverage. Therefore, media professionals must adopt a more responsible and constructive approach to conflict reporting, considering the nuances and complexities of the conflicts they cover. Likewise, other research studies (Zaheer, 2016; Hussain, 2020) underscore the widespread application of securitization framing in Pakistani media coverage of conflicts and their significance in increasing tensions. However, they emphasize the potential for the media to positively contribute to conflict resolution by engaging in more responsible, solution-oriented, and ethical reporting techniques.

Moreover, policymakers and media regulators must ensure greater media pluralism and diversity to promote more balanced and inclusive coverage of conflicts. Additionally, this study has implications for policymakers and security analysts. The securitization of conflicts in the media can lead to allocating more resources to military and security responses rather than addressing the underlying reasons for the conflict. This study emphasizes the need to consider alternative approaches, such as diplomatic and political solutions, in addition to military action.

This study highlights the importance of media literacy and critical thinking skills among the public. Media consumers should be aware of the biases and agendas of different media outlets and strive to consume news from diverse sources. This can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of conflicts and promote a culture of peace and nonviolence. These findings add to the peace journalism research in Pakistan and highlight the importance of responsible conflict reporting to promote peace and stability in the region. Overall, this study establishes a platform for future research on the interplay between peace journalism and conflict securitization in the Pakistani media, and this study

provides valuable insights for scholars, journalists, and policymakers interested in understanding the media's role in conflict situations in Pakistan.

This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on peace journalism and the media's role in conflict reporting. The findings suggest that journalists and media outlets are responsible for reporting conflicts in a way that promotes peace and understanding, and policymakers should consider alternative solutions beyond military action. Moving forward, further research is required to explore the impact of media coverage on conflict resolution and peace-building efforts and to develop strategies for promoting more constructive and balanced reporting of conflicts.

5.1 Recommendations

The following suggestions can be made in considering the study's findings:

1. Future research should investigate the impact of different conflict management strategies and media ownership structures on conflict reporting in Pakistan. This will help identify the most effective strategy for promoting peace journalism and reducing conflict securitization in the Pakistani media.
2. Policymakers and stakeholders must promote a more nuanced understanding of conflicts beyond simplistic securitized narratives. Addressing conflicts' underlying causes and dynamics can help prevent their escalation and promote more peaceful and stable societies.
3. The media in Pakistan should provide context and background for their reporting on conflicts to avoid misinformation and wrong conclusions. Critical and professional reporting can also help reduce conflict securitization and promote peace journalism.
4. Peace journalism scholarship provides guidelines for ethics regarding reporting on conflicts. Journalists in both countries can use these rules to practice peace journalism for the more significant benefit of humanity.

5.2 Limitations

Like all human endeavors, this study has some significant limitations. The following are the limitations of the dissertation:

1. The study's limitations indicate that future studies should incorporate a larger sample size and other news sources to comprehensively understand conflict reporting in Pakistan. In this study, only two Pakistani newspapers were available for content analysis. This might be expanded to include more publications and broadcast stations to understand better how the media covers these conflicts.
2. The research was carried out using a quantitative method. Future research might include more qualitative methods, such as stakeholder interviews and textual analysis. A comprehensive qualitative study might give a more detailed picture of the problem.
3. Social media are critical institutions that can be used for peacekeeping. In this area, several platforms are already available. Future studies could research the impact of social media on sociopolitical conflicts.
4. Further research could investigate the impact of different conflict management strategies and media ownership structures on conflict reporting in Pakistan.

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