

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF
REPRESENTATION OF INDIA
IN *DAWN*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the representation of India in the prominent Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*. India and Pakistan have long been in conflict and the media play a crucial role in representing that relationship and prioritizing issues for the general public, including foreign policy priorities. This study also aims to expand the work on the relationship between media and state by providing a case study of *Dawn's* media practice. It uses a thematic analytic approach to investigate the representation of India in the opinion pages of *Dawn* during India's general election 2019. A total of 88 editorials and columns were sampled and coded in NVivo, generating six main themes: 1) India is reluctant to resolve the Kashmir dispute, 2) the two countries are perpetual adversaries, 3) Hindu majoritarianism is rising in India, 4) Prime Minister Modi is hostile and aggressive toward Pakistan, 5) presence of secular political forces in India and 6) tendency to establish moral parallels. This study finds that *Dawn* focuses mostly on differences between the two countries and on conflicts, particularly the long-standing dispute over Kashmir. It also represents India in narrow terms, framing it as a Hindu majoritarian state while downplaying its democratic credentials, and mostly viewing India with the Pakistani ruling establishment's perspective. Indeed, although contradictory views are also reflected in the opinion pages at times, this study finds a high degree of convergence with *Dawn's* editorial content and official Pakistani perspectives on India. Despite *Dawn's* independence as a private media outlet, its congruence with official viewpoints on many counts suggests it's not as much of a source of diverse and balanced discussions on issues of conflicts with India.

(Keywords: thematic analysis, Indo-Pakistan conflict, *Dawn*, representation, Hindu majoritarianism)

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List of abbreviations

BJP - Bhartiya Janata Party

CRPF – Central Reserve Police Force

ECI - Election Commission of India

IAF - Indian Air Force

ICC – International Cricket Council

IHK – Indian Held Kashmir

INC - Indian National Congress

J&K - Jammu and Kashmir

JeM - Jaish-e-Mohammad

NWFP – North West Frontier Province

PM - Prime Minister

TA - Thematic Analysis

USA - United States of America

UN - United Nations

UNSC United Nations Security Council

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Contextual background: Indo-Pakistan relations

Pakistan was created in 1947 by dividing British India on the basis of religion (Ahmed, 2002; Bipan, Mridula, Aditya, Panikar, & Sucheta, 1989; G. Pandey, 2001). The process of drawing new political boundaries between two independent nation states was accompanied by the world's largest and prolonged forced displacement, migration and sectarian violence of 20th century. More than 14 million people were displaced and as many as one million killed (Hajari & Malhotra, 2015). In the immediate aftermath of the partition, India and Pakistan started fighting over the region of Jammu & Kashmir (Marlow, 2019; Mohan, 1992). "Since 1947 the general domestic narrative in both countries has been hostile to the other – generations have been brought up to mistrust, dislike, hate their neighbour, mainly because of the repercussions over the unresolved dispute over Jammu and Kashmir" (Schofield, 2015, p. 22).

In the backdrop of this adversarial relationship that has stretched into all ensuing decades after political partition, this study is an attempt to find out the representation of India in *Dawn's* opinion pages during India's general elections in 2019. During the period selected for this research *Dawn's* opinion pages mostly focused on Kashmir conflict, Pulwama aftermath, article 370, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ideology among other things. This section briefly explains and contextualizes the key issues discussed in *Dawn*.

The troubled relations between India and Pakistan are deeply rooted in the turbulent history of the Indian subcontinent. The demand for Pakistan as a separate nation-state was made for the first time in 1940 by the Muslim League. A student of then undivided India Chaudhary Rehmat Ali coined the idea of Pakistan while studying at Cambridge University in 1933. He suggested that Pakistan

should consist of five provinces: Punjab, North-West Frontier Province (Afghan), Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan (S. P. Cohen, 2004; Dixit, 2002; Lyon, 2008).

The demand for a separate homeland for Indian Muslims was based on a two-nation theory (Bipan et al., 1989; Guha, 2007). Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, claimed that Hindus and Muslims could not co-exist and live together in one nation. He argued,

it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literary traditions. They neither intermarry nor eat together, and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. (Kermani, 2017, para. 4)

Due to the rising tide of support among the Muslim community for a separate nation, the leaders of the Indian National Congress accepted the demand for the division of India (Dalrymple, 2015) and a plebiscite, with limited franchise, was conducted in all Muslim majority provinces. Without exception, all of them chose to go with Pakistan (Haqqani, 2010).

Pakistan was located at the western and eastern corners of British India divided by fifteen hundred miles of Indian territory. Later in 1971, East Pakistan became Bangladesh. However, rather than bringing peace, South Asia has emerged as the hotbed of conflicts due to India and Pakistan rivalry after the partition. Other countries of South Asia do not have as serious disputes and conflicts with their neighbours, although internal conflicts based on ideology, religion, language, sectarianism and ethnicity are not uncommon.

India and Pakistan are locked in perpetual conflict with each other and each blames the other for their bilateral disputes. The popular discourse against India in Pakistan perpetuates a notion of victimhood. Pakistani citizens have been taught to believe that during the partition of India on communal lines in 1947,

India deprived Pakistan of territories that were rightfully its. So, there are “unfinished tasks of partition”. Secondly, at the deepest level, India has not accepted Partition. Third, the Hindu

majority of civil society in India wants to diminish and dominate the Muslims of India and Pakistan. (Dixit, 2002, p. 7)

This feeling is still persistent and causes conflicts in the region. It is constantly perpetuated by the nationalist forces led by the military establishment. Due to this, both nations are fighting over the region of Kashmir, which is roughly the size of the UK, and Kashmir remains the main cause of Indo-Pakistan conflict (R. Ganguly, 2001; Schofield, 2010, 2015; Wirsing, 2003), although ideological opposition to India goes beyond Kashmir conflict (Dixit, 2002; Fair, 2014; Haqqani, 2010).

India and Pakistan both claim Kashmir in full. Eminent US scholar S. P. Cohen (1995) suggests that, if it remains unresolved, confrontation over Kashmir could escalate to nuclear war. "Pakistan's claim to Kashmir is based upon religion whereas India's is based upon its ruler's accession to it in 1947" (Bajoria, 2010, para. 14).

Pakistan has harboured and promoted terrorist groups operating against India in its territory (Bajpai, 2003; Devasher, 2016; Fair, 2014, 2018; R. Kumar, 2002; Stern, 2000) and also accused of tactically using Islamic fundamentalists who might be useful once the US forces leave Afghanistan (Tankel, 2018) as a weapon to put constant pressure on India. Terror strikes, cross border firing, internal violent protests, clashes with the police force and loss of life due to unrest in Indian Kashmir are widely reported in South Asian and international media.

The conflict between both nations has developed many complexities which are not easy to sort out in the short run. Conflicts with India and the constant focus on a security doctrine empowered armed forces within Pakistan to control foreign policy. Pakistan has a standing army of more than half a million soldiers and spends a considerable portion of revenues in maintaining large armed forces at the cost of developmental needs (B. S. Syed, 2018), in part because of prevailing discourses that India reluctantly accepted partition and looks for an opportunity to undo Pakistan (Dixit, 2002). Comments by radical Hindu nationalists further contribute to that narrative (Haqqani, 2013).

Excessive focus on a security doctrine in Pakistan has led to the creation of a powerful military establishment which considers itself not only the guardian of the state but also of its ideology (Islam) and devalues civilian leadership (Haqqani, 2010). So far, democratically elected governments have struggled to complete their terms, being alternately dismissed by presidents or removed from power by army chiefs (Hasim, 2013).

The Muslim majority region of Jammu & Kashmir is a key source of conflict between the two countries. Pakistan considers the territorial status-quo unacceptable (Kasuri, 2015) and India rejects further partition of the country on the basis of religion. The need to resolve the Kashmir dispute is described as a core interest of Pakistan, which demands that all the principles which led to the partition of India in 1947 should be applied to Jammu and Kashmir (S. P. Cohen, 2004; S. Ganguly, 2019) as it is also a Muslim majority region.

Proxy war

Even though there is another view that geopolitical enmity in the region goes beyond the Kashmir issue, which is a symptom, not necessarily cause of all bilateral disputes (Fair, 2014; Haqqani, 2016). However, continuous Pakistani support for the violent separatist movement in Jammu and Kashmir has deteriorated Indo-Pakistan relations (Fair, 2011, 2018; R. Ganguly, 2001).

Militant groups based in Pakistan have targeted India many times in the last two decades. More recently, on 14 February 2019, a suicide bomber rammed his explosive-laden car into the convoy of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir. More than 40 troops were killed in the suicide-bombing (Ashiq, 2019), for which the Pakistan-based terror organization Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) took responsibility (Safi & Farooq, 2019). Pulwama suicide bombing was the largest terror attack after the Mumbai carnage of 2008 in terms of the number of deaths.

While India mourned its dead and photographs of fallen soldiers spread across the country on social media, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) government decided to retaliate (R. Roy & Shah, 2019) by targeting an alleged terrorist training camp in Balakot (S. Singh, 2019). The United States also gave tacit approval to India to retaliate (Miglani & Bukhari, 2019; S. Roy, 2019).

On February 26, 2019, 12 Indian Air Force Mirage-2000 jets bombed an alleged JeM terrorist training camp outside Balakot, a small town in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, about 70 kilometres from the Line of Control and 40 kilometres north from Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir (Haidar & Peri, 2019). The target was allegedly a Madrasah run by JeM (Rej, 2019) which had taken responsibility for the attack, though the suicide bomber was a local Kashmiri. Indians rejoiced the revenge and news channels went berserk, though the government of India was careful to emphasize the non-military and non-state nature of the target. It means Modi government considered it necessary to underline that the attack was targeted only at internationally banned terrorist outfit.

Pakistan dismissed the attack as propaganda and claimed that only ten trees were destroyed, nonetheless, Indian PM Narendra Modi was hailed as a strong leader for deciding to punish the Pulwama attackers. No government had done it before him. The next day Pakistan symbolically fired at four targets including the northern headquarters of Indian Army command and their supply depot by using F-16 aircraft. In the process, Pakistan also shot down a Soviet-era Mig21- Bison fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF). Pakistan also captured its pilot who fell inside Pakistan controlled territory. In the confusion that followed, the Indian Air Force also shot down its own Mi-17 helicopter killing all 7 soldiers on board.

India claimed that it had shot down a Pakistani F-16 fighter aircraft and Pakistan insisted that it had shot down two Indian fighter jets (Safi & Zahra-Malik, 2019). Independent open-source intelligence

analysis has failed to verify Indian claims at Balakot. Even the Indian claim to have shot down an F-16 (Lalwani & Tallo, 2019) was denied by the US sources (Seligman, 2019) as well.

The Pulwama aftermath and the issue of article 370 and 35 A were intensely discussed in *Dawn's* opinion pages as the BJP had promised to remove both articles in its election manifesto (Kuchay, 2019). Article 370 and 35 A provided partial autonomy to the state of Jammu & Kashmir to make its laws in all matters except finance, defence, foreign affairs and communications. The state had a separate constitution and a flag, and Indians from other states were not allowed to acquire property in the region.

Article 370 & 35A also allowed the legislative assembly of the state to define its permanent residents. It also prevented outsiders from permanently settling, buying land (Noorani, 2014), holding local government jobs or winning education scholarships. The article also denied female residents of Jammu & Kashmir from property rights if they married a person from outside the state. This law also applied to their children (Santha, 2019).

After its electoral victory, the ruling BJP removed both articles on 5 August 2019. It divided the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two, the Union Territory of Ladakh and Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It also released a new political map of newly created Union Territories.

MAP OF UT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR AND UT OF LADAKH

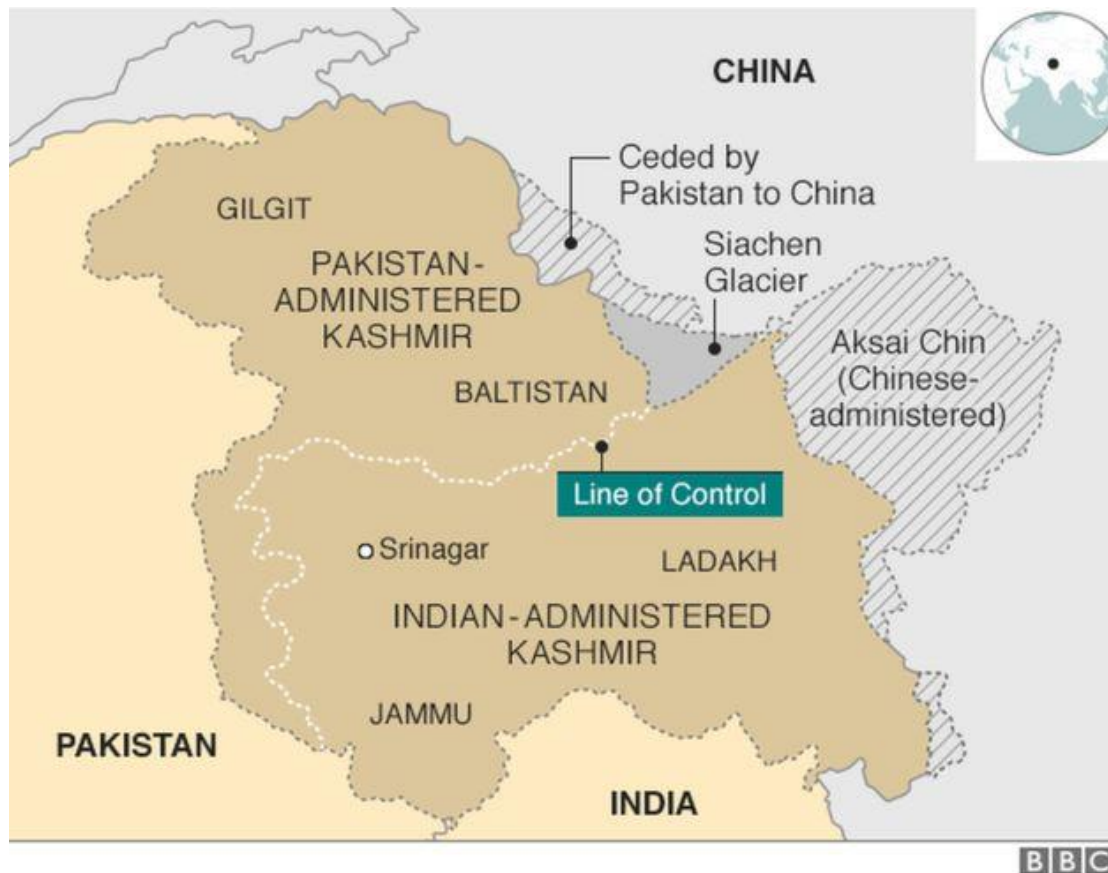


Source: Press Information Bureau, India ("Map of UT of Jammu & Kashmir and UT of Ladakh ", 2019)

The political map of India released by the government of India showed the entire Jammu and Kashmir, where in reality, India controls only 45 per cent of it (Maizland, 2019).

Its original area of 222,713 square kilometres has undergone considerable change as a result of Pakistan aggression in 1947-48. At the ceasefire in 1949, 78,932 square kilometres of the state's territory remained under the illegal occupation of Pakistan. Another major change occurred when the People's Republic of China launched a massive attack on India in 1962 and forcibly occupied 37,555 square kilometres of Indian territory in Ladakh Division of the state. Later Pakistan transferred 5180 square kilometres of the States territory under its illegal occupation of China (Bamzai, 1994, p. 1).

The map does not reflect the current ground realities. Pakistan ceded thousands of square miles of territory of Jammu and Kashmir to China to cement its bilateral ties in 1963.



Source: BBC website (*Kashmir territories profile*, 2019)

The small triangle-shaped contested region showed in the above map as Siachen Glacier is controlled by India. It was acquired by India in 1984 after Pakistan started laying claims on the glaciers. It is also considered the world's highest battle zone. This territorial conflict generates highly polarizing views in both countries. Pakistan protested against the scrapping of article 370 & 35 A as an attempt to change the status quo (Gupta, 2019).

Media & foreign policy

Media in India and Pakistan are not directly controlled by the government and on some issues take an adversarial position, however, overall they tend to show an ideological symmetry with their respective governments particularly in relation to foreign policy matters.

State and non-state actors also try to influence the media in Pakistan. "Media workers have been kidnapped, tortured, and beaten to death for delving into the nation's potent military apparatus and

spy agencies” (Ricchiardi, 2012, p. 4). The “Pakistani media has clearly demarcated no-go areas” (Sarwar, 2008, para 4) and violence by non-state actors worsened the situation (Walsh, 2012).

“Bodies have been found with throats slit and flesh punctured with electric drills by Islamic militants, political extremists, and gangsters who take umbrage at what they write” (Ricchiardi, 2012, p. 4).

Media in South Asia are not different from their western counterparts on foreign policy issues, as United States media have exaggerated or sometimes marginalized the coverage of various issues to support government’s point of view or organizing public opinion in the favour of the government’s policies (Saleem, 2007, p. 153). Similarly, mainstream media in India and Pakistan rarely questions the government’s foreign policy.

Media in Pakistan can be broadly divided into two categories: English-language media and vernacular media. There are hundreds of Urdu newspapers and at least eight major English newspapers in Pakistan currently in circulation (Rais, 2016). About ten per cent of the population in Pakistan can read English-language newspapers, giving the Urdu-language press a far wider reach. That press is considered more radical and continues to push hawkish perspectives on India, likely shaping the views of a large portion of Pakistan population (H. Shah, 2010).

This study focuses on the representation of India in the English-language newspaper *Dawn*, partly because it offers an insight into understanding the moderate sections of the Pakistani ruling elite’s views about India. Since the colonial days, the ruling elite in South Asia has been using English as a language to discuss the affairs of the state. Even the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, could hardly speak a few words in Urdu and often used English in his public speeches, which was not much understood by Muslim audience, yet, he emerged as the sole spokesman of the Muslim community (Puri, 2008, p. 33).

Mahatma Gandhi, the undisputed leader of the Indian National Movement known for his non-violent methods, studied law at London University (Nanda, 1958). The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru was educated in England, at Harrow School, and then at Trinity College, Cambridge

(Ghose, 1993). Dr Manmohan Singh, who was the Prime Minister of India between 2004-14 also did his doctorate in economics from Cambridge (Baru, 2015) and the present Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan has also studied in Oxford. It's a long list and has helped to ensure that English remains a language of the ruling elite in the region.

As a result, English-language newspapers provide a glimpse into the concerns and world view of the ruling elite in both India and Pakistan. In Pakistan, *The News* and *Dawn* are the two largest circulating newspapers. *The News* ranks first in English newspapers and fifth nationally, with 120,000 papers in circulation. *Dawn* is second in the English-language category and sixth in the nation with a circulation of 109,000 (H. Shah, 2010). However, *Dawn* has a better online presence. As per Alexa records on June 20, 2019, *Dawn* has 4.36 million monthly unique visitors, 2.11 million daily and 56.8 million monthly page views. It has a global rank of 1058 as per the global internet traffic and engagement over the past 90 days. Traffic on *Dawn's* website also highlights a unique trend. Only 43.24% of total traffic comes from Pakistan. 15.78% traffic comes from India and around 14 per cent traffic comes from the United States and the rest from other parts of the globe, whereas '*The News*' stands at 1617 in global rankings and it attracts 71.4% of traffic from Pakistan, 5.9% from India and 4.6% from the United States.

These online trends are changing daily but offer a picture here of *Dawn's* wider reach globally, probably among the overseas Pakistanis settled in huge numbers in the UK, US and Middle East. Three of its online readers out of 20 come from India in comparison to one in 20 in the case of *The News*, which also reflects on the reach, credibility and influence of the news and analysis published in *Dawn*. Its wide following outside of the country is also visible in comment sections under most of the articles published on its website. By catering for an external as well as the domestic audience, *Dawn* could be expected to be the more moderate of the two newspapers, which makes it a useful object of study. On one hand, *Dawn* is considered a liberal newspaper and is "known for its progressive content" (Fair & Hamza, 2016, p. 582). It has been targeted many times in the past for

advocating modernization and democratic ideals, and for its pro-civilian-rule orientation (Bearak, 2000).

Dawn has faced intimidation, harassment of its journalists, a ban on hawkers distributing the newspaper in military cantonments in every city in the country, cable operators told to take its TV channel off air, and massive cuts in revenue as advertisers are warned not to promote their goods in *Dawn*. (Rashid, 2018, para. 11)

On the other hand, it can also be considered a powerful voice of the Pakistani ruling elite as most of the contributors of its columns are public intellectuals, former high-ranking bureaucrats, foreign office officials, and well-connected journalists.

Though it has a smaller circulation than *The News*, *Dawn* also has high credibility. It is published from Karachi and Lahore at the same time (S. Ali, 2010, p. 148), and historically has played an important role in the evolution of Pakistani society.

Dawn begun as a weekly newspaper in 1941 and transformed into a daily in 1942, was the main avenue through which Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948) and the All-India Muslim League, advocated the creation of Pakistan. Its news pages, its editorials and its invited articles were used to publicize, to advocate and to defend the demand for Pakistan from criticism from the British, the INC (Indian National Congress) and other Muslims. It was also used to establish the figure of Jinnah as the charismatic leader of the Muslims of South Asia (Long, 2009, p. 407).

This study will investigate and analyse articles published in the opinion pages of *Dawn* between 10 March 2019 to 23 May 2019, including columns and editorials, but not letters to the editor and news from the past section. Similar studies on other popular English dailies in Pakistan or larger studies covering major English language press for longer durations should be able to expose a wide prevalence of identified trends.

Dawn publishes two opinion pages in its middle. Generally, the first opinion page carries two columns and three editorial pieces. The next opinion page carries letters to the editor, news from past editions of *Dawn* and two small columns on current issues. In the online version, the first page comes under the heading of 'editorial' and the second page comes under the heading 'opinion' (the printed copy does not use the two separate terms for two mid pages, rather it mentions the word opinion).

The complications of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan have been widely discussed in the media in both countries. This study attempts to take a snapshot of various narratives prevalent in *Dawn's* opinion pages about India. It will provide a glimpse about the perceptions of India among the readers as propagated by the Pakistani elite.

1.2 Aims & Research Questions

1. How is India discussed, debated and represented in the opinion pages of *Dawn* (Pakistani newspaper) during the general elections 2019?
 - a. How are the political tensions between India and Pakistan shaping and influencing *Dawn's* approach?
 - b. What are the discernible patterns of *Dawn's* discourse about India?
2. What is the ideological spectrum in *Dawn's* discussions on India?

1.3 Hypotheses

1. Pakistan's internal political dynamics and constant quest for identity at the global level decisively influence its approach towards India in the mainstream media.
2. Press is overly focussed on the differences and conflicts between the two nations, ignoring the commonalities.
3. India is framed as a religious state, without any secular credentials, completely controlled and dominated by Hindutva forces.

4. Dominant print Media in Pakistan views India with the state lens in the context of regional geopolitics and global power structure.
5. The perspective of the ruling (military and intelligence) regime is reflected in the media coverage about India.
6. The media narrative about India is predominantly shaped by Pakistan's long-standing conflict with India on Kashmir issue and ongoing developments in the Kashmir region and international dynamics.
7. In the backdrop of non-resolution of Kashmir issue, *Dawn* does not reflect the peace journalism orientation to push peace initiatives and normalization of relations.

1.4 Rationale

The media have considerable influence in shaping public opinion and thereby policy-making processes (Albritton & Manheim, 1983; Ammon, 2001; Appadorai, 1981; B. C. Cohen, 1963; Jurdem, 2018) and the press, in particular, has a significant role to play in relation to foreign policy (Jurdem, 2018). The negative portrayal and demonization of the 'other' can force governments to put peace initiatives on the back burner. While referring to the link between media, public perception, foreign policy and US Presidential campaigns, it has been observed that "the more negative coverage a nation received, the more likely respondents were to think negatively about the nation" (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004, p. 364). Thus, media indirectly hold considerable influence on ruling governments (Routray, 2014) through their role in shaping public opinion.

An analysis of the public opinion's impact on the foreign policy-making process in four liberal democracies with distinct domestic structures, the United States, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Japan, clearly suggested public opinion matters, particularly in liberal democracies (Risse-Kappen, 1991). Although Pakistan cannot be described as a liberal democracy, but public opinion likely to have an impact in all South Asian nations as well due to the vocal press and a large number of political parties vying for votes.

The media also play a vital role in the reproduction of ethnic prejudice and stereotype (Van Dijk, 1989). Hatred, disaffection, distrust, dislike and enmity with 'others' are socially acquired phenomenon and India and Pakistan provide a good case study given the long-standing enmity between nation-states and the media's negative portrayal of each other (H. Shah, 2010).

Since independence, Pakistan has struggled to build democratic institutions of the state, but it has a vibrant press which is not under the direct control of any authority. Most of the powerful media outlets in Pakistan are privately owned. However, security agencies are known for using various tactics to suppress the press through various methods if journalists go beyond the red lines put up by the ruling apparatus (M. Z. Malik, 2018; Siraj, 2009; Toppa, 2018). The security establishment is also known for resorting to intimidation and violence to control individual journalists and media outlets. Out of 180 countries, Pakistan stands at 142nd place and India at 140th position in the world press freedom index of 2019.

Arguably, it would be easier for governments to launch peace initiatives and compromise on issues to reach bilateral agreements if the media showed the societal complexities of other states to their readers. That would help people in developing an informed opinion (Siebert, Siebert, Peterson, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956) as media responsibility theory suggests. It is too much to expect that media alone can establish peace or rupture friendly relations among the nations, but they certainly play a role and are an important element in configuring bilateral relations between India and Pakistan.

All, the international system is not simply a battleground for self-interested states. Indeed, the world is constitutive of states, an array of non-state actors, narratives, cultures, communities, and people. It is inevitable that each of these constitutive elements of the international system will shape the outcome of international affairs, albeit to varying degrees. (Waikar, 2018, p. 157)

Civil society groups and independent media play an essential role in preparing the ground for peace initiatives taken by political leadership, especially as the media can reinforce, amplify and set the agenda for wider public opinion.

Examining India and Pakistan relations through the prism of *Dawn* is also important as people in South Asia have little first-hand experience of each other beyond social media. Among all the forms of media, the press still plays an influential role (M. McCombs, 2002). It is difficult to get a Pakistani visa in India and Indian visas are also considered a lottery in Pakistan. On social networking sites, Indians and Pakistani citizens are known for their opposite opinion on most of the issues and argue for their national positions. Collective knowledge is created and transmitted through the media, which is why it is essential for media to create an objective image of the perceived other so that, in the case of Pakistan and India, the scope for rapprochement can exist.

It is appropriate to expect that if the press, as an independent element, provides all competing arguments to its readers, it can make ground for peace and stability in the region by shaping informed public opinion. Democratic leaders are beholden to voters and if voters oppose war because of its human and financial costs (Tomz & Weeks, 2013), that reduces the likelihood of violent conflicts. On the other hand, media can play a key role in legitimising the actions of government (Tiainen, 2017) and in that case can perpetuate an antagonistic status quo.

Apart from the strategic purpose of bilateral relations media “text carries meaning and even the processes of identity formation are at times included within this dimension of meaning: people can be seen to be making sense of themselves as well of new information and the world around them” (Dahlgren, 1998, p. 47). As “Pakistanis are at a loss how to settle matters of national identity and the nature of the state – democratic or authoritarian, secular or Islamic” (Jalal, 2017, para. 12), it is essential to examine how media defines it.

This study will touch upon the issues of media, identity, foreign policy, peace, democracy and so on specifically in the context of Indo-Pakistan relations through examining the representation of India in *Dawn*. This study lies at the intersection of international relations and media and communication studies. The utility of this work also lies in the purpose of the academic study of international relations, the role of media in building narratives around conflicts and perceived enemies.

This study will also provide a sense of how one of the most liberal and prominent newspapers in Pakistan represents India and, in so doing, how it creates an identity for Pakistanis. It will also give a sense about the widespread discourse about India, which in turn, can affect public policy perspectives.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

This research relies on the premise of agenda-setting theory. As it has been accepted globally that media plays a role in agenda-setting in society (Gilberg, Eyal, McCombs, & Nicholas, 1980; Lowry, Nio, & Leither, 2003; M. McCombs, 2002; Pollock & Rindova, 2003) then there is a need to inquire further what kind of ideas the media is sharing in the public sphere that might influence the wider population. Are those ideas non-discriminatory and egalitarian? Are they ideas that will bring peace, tranquillity and human progress? Are those ideas inspired by liberal ideals and will they contribute in making this world a better place?

The agenda setting theory suggests that media can prioritize the issues for the masses. “While the media do not tell people what to think, they tell people what to think about. That is, the media determine which issues—and which organizations—will be put on the public agenda for discussion”(M. McCombs, 1977, p. 89). Media shapes the political reality as readers learn how much importance to attach to the issues (M. E. McCombs & Shaw, 1972). This study relies on the premise of agenda setting theory to study *Dawn’s* content on opinion pages about India.

Although *Dawn* cannot set the agenda for masses in Pakistan alone, but it is a part of the overall media landscape. The dominant narratives present in the opinion pages of *Dawn* likely to be reflected in other media outlets as well. Overall the media plays an important role in shaping the agenda about how Pakistan should deal with India. The findings of this study will also provide a clue about the larger narratives about India in Pakistani media. It can also be seen from the perspective of peace, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" (Huxley, 1946, p. 27).

So, the content of newspapers can provide a tool to launch an inquiry. The issue of representation is also linked with public opinion. The state needs all communication tools to reinforce ideology essential to promoting cohesion and cementing ties among its citizens. Media can penetrate the

collective consciousness of society, which makes them a powerful tool in the hands of power elites and ruling governments (or a powerful counter to authorities).

Attempts to bring cohesion and integrity can also rely on the process of othering. For instance, the

process of othering is evident in the character as well as the behaviour of nations, which not only define themselves in respect to each other but also seek for some kind of purity for the self through the demonization of the other. Otherness is further reinforced through hegemonic, homogenising, state-centric discourses on 'national identity' and 'national (in)security', and exclusivist geopolitical imaginations of various ethnoreligious groups. (Chaturvedi, 2002, p. 149)

Pakistan is an ideological state whose foundations have been laid on Islamic ideology based on the Quranic teachings and Sunnah (Majid, Hamid, & Habib, 2014, p. 181) and that national identity is widely visible in its media content, particularly the Urdu press. A study conducted on columns related to ethnicity, race and religion published in two leading Urdu-language newspapers reveals that issues related to sub-cultures in Pakistani society remain generally ignored or downplayed and there is, instead, an overwhelming emphasis on Pakistan's Islamic identity (J. Syed, 2008).

In every walk of life in Pakistan – from academia to journalism, from sports to bureaucracy – a vast majority of people have been instilled with anti-India notions. (Abadi, Jelen, & Agadjanian, 2004, p. 265).

Evidence of anti-Indian sentiment can be seen in the Urdu press, where contributors criticise India. For instance, "Backstabbing is an indispensable instinct of Hindus. Moreover, their narrow and dark houses, their way of living, their places of worship and their stone-made idols indicate that Hindu civilization is meaningless and hollow" (Turabi, 2015, p. Para. 5). Hafeez Saeed, the chief of Jamaat-ud-Dawa wrote in one Pakistani Urdu paper

the narrow mindedness and cowardice of Hindus are not accidental; rather they are born with such instincts. There is no concept of brotherhood, tolerance and humanity in

Hinduism. It is a religion defined by bloodshed, hatred, selfishness and deceit. (Turabi, 2015, para 5)

Such examples can confuse readers as the nation-state of India and Hinduism are two different things, but Pakistan's genesis as a country for South Asian Muslims has helped to conflate the idea of India as also being symbolized only through religion, in this case, Hinduism.

Interestingly, various scholars who have analysed the Pakistani school curriculum to study the depiction of South Asian history find that increasing Islamization in Pakistan has been used to create a national identity around religion (Ahmad, 2004; Durrani & Dunne, 2010; Lall, 2008; Leirvik, 2008; Zaidi, 2011) and it has serious implications. "Ironically, this emphasis creates social polarization and the normalization of militaristic and violent identities, with serious implications for social cohesion, tolerance for internal and external diversity, and gender relations" (Durrani & Dunne, 2010, p. 215). Pakistan studies textbooks forge an identity exclusively based on Islam and derived in opposition to India (Afzal, 2015a; Rosser, 2004; Tripathi, 2018), however, studies analysing the depiction of India in the Pakistani press and vice-versa rare. Some South Asia scholars have conducted studies to investigate various aspects of bilateral relations through the media, but that work is not published in international journals.

In one of the few works, Riaz and Pasha (2009) argue that most of the Pakistani media outlets believe India is an enemy country that must not be trusted, and produce content against India (though some promote peace campaigns and argue for enhanced people-to-people contacts and other confidence-building measures). Another study conducted during the bilateral cricket series in 2004, emphasized that media can play a vital role in bringing the two nations closer to each other (Riaz, Shelat, & Sinha, 2006) as was being done during the series. A recently published study on the representation of India in *'The Pakistan Times'* between September 1950-February 1951 suggested that the newspaper provided wide coverage to various social and political developments taking place in India and its narrative was not limited to disputes and disagreements (Ankit, 2020).

Analysis of Pakistan's largest Urdu and English language newspapers conducted by (Rais, 2016) highlighted that the Kashmir dispute, democracy in India, electoral processes, the rise of the BJP (the ruling right-wing political party in India), India's regional ambitions and search for dominance were widely reported in the press, and the Pakistani press provided a place for most of the competing perspectives on most of the issues. However, there was a strong tendency to blame India for all disputes and conflicts. While Saffee (2016) in the content analysis of *Times of India* and *Dawn*, suggested, "Indian mindset is more communally charged and views Pakistan with a specific security lens. Whereas, Pakistani print media reflected a conciliatory policy, which was rejected by India. Recently, it has begun to counter Indian propaganda in the print media" (p.92).

Also, there is some evidence that Pakistani media provides more coverage to on India. A content analysis of *The Hindu* and *Dawn* in the '*The Hoot*' website suggested that *Dawn* gave far more coverage to India than the Indian publication did to Pakistan during the period of 1 May to 31 May 2016. During this period also more than half of the coverage in *Dawn* was about issues other than defence and foreign policy (A. Pandey, 2016).

A study of four Indian newspapers *The Tribune*, *The Hindu*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Times of India* revealed that for conflicts between both the nations, all of the papers pinned responsibility on Pakistan (G. P. Singh, 2015). Other studies claim that rather than having a stance of their own, the media reflect the wider trends in their countries' bilateral relationships; analysis of *Dawn's* coverage of trade relations certainly reflected this trend (Saleem, Jabeen, Omer, & Hanan, 2014). Peace overtures by the government have resulted in support by some sections of media, however, which can serve as an excellent avenue for citizen diplomacy (Shendurnikar, 2013).

It has been argued that when the political elite in Pakistan identified more with religious and cultural identity than with secular conception, that has increased the prospects of confrontation rather than cooperation (Commuri, 2009). Pakistan's desire to differentiate itself by "relinquishing its obvious historical links to United India" (Tripathi, 2018, p. 99) and by drawing on its political leaders'

ideologies to interpret its national self (Das, 2010, p. 146) has helped to predispose it towards conflict, especially the region of Jammu and Kashmir (S. Ganguly, 2002). The violent conflict emerging after 1990 was not a historical discontinuity, rather it was an extension of the collision over the Kashmir dispute in 1948 (Swami, 2006).

By examining the prevailing discourse about India in a leading Pakistani media outlet, this research will contribute to the literature dealing with India-Pakistan relations. It will also add to the small literature on Pakistani media representation and will make a specific contribution by underlining the core concerns and narratives reflected in *Dawn* during India's general elections.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Thematic Analysis Approach

This study analyses the articles published in the opinion pages of prominent Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* during India's general election. The dates for elections were announced on 10 March 2019. The result was announced on 23 May 2019. During this period of 74 days, a total of 106 articles were published in *Dawn*'s opinion pages carrying the word 'India'. This study did not include letters to the editor or the 'Stories from the past' section, thus only 88 articles out of the 106 were used for coding. Out of these 88 articles, 28 were anonymous editorials and 68 were columns, authored by 31 different columnists. Not every article specifically focuses on India but it is mentioned in at least in one paragraph or more.

This study carefully identifies the narratives and lists suitable analytical categories by using a thematic analysis approach in NVivo software. All articles for the research have been retrieved from the official website of *Dawn*.

Columns and editorials from the opinion pages of *Dawn* were chosen as they are generally written on the most pressing issues of the day. Most of the daily newspapers keep their mid-two pages as op-ed pages to have an opportunity to discuss and explore the ideas of thinkers who have no institutional connection to the newspaper (Tumin, 2017). These mid two pages are referred as opinion pages in *Dawn*. The opinion pages provide information, analyses, benchmarks to assist readers in making decisions and taking action on issues (Ernest C Hynds, 1994). Studying editorials is of special significance when analysing the ideological role of news media because editorials are expressions (Izadi & Saghave-Biria, 2007) of "the broader ideological stance of the newspaper's owners and managers" (Henry & Tator, 2002, p. 93).

Dawn has published incisive articles on its opinion pages to articulate Pakistani national perspectives. They provide a starting point for discussion about the representation of India in Pakistan, as positions taken by the authors are not only "personal opinions but also manifestations

of more complex, socially shared and dominant ideological frameworks that embody institutional relationships and power structures” (Van Dijk, 1989, p. 232).

Although this study takes material from only one newspaper for analysis, its results might hint at the existence of larger patterns. As Baker and Levon (2015) argue, a non-corpus based approach is likely to deliver the same results as a corpus-based approach if down-sampling is carried out sensitively. In their own analysis, both approaches (corpus-based and selected articles) uncovered enough shared findings, to be confident in a non-corpus approach.

The complex part of this study is to generate concrete themes and launch an informed discussion about them. Although it is highly unlikely that a newspaper would present a uniformly singular view and not have some paradoxical stories, within an overall ideological structure those contrary stories are unlikely to change the long-term structure of dominant discourse. Guzman (2016) concluded that news coverage of the Egypt revolution in United States television channels was not symmetric. Frames do not always fit into the polar dichotomies, but through subtleties in language reflect shades along a continuum. It means the coverage mentions the alternate perspectives but overall supports the official position of the government.

This research will not be representative of the entire media system in Pakistan as it analyses only one newspaper in a country of more than 170 million people and home to hundreds of newspapers mostly in Urdu (Eijaz, Rahman, Ahmad, & Butt, 2014). However, the study of *Dawn*, one of the most influential newspapers in Pakistan, which was established by none other than the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, is likely to reflect dominant discourses of the Pakistani English-speaking elite. As a study of collective understanding about India in Pakistani media this research will inevitably touch also on debates around bilateral relations, the formation of identity and peace prospects in the region.

Subsequent paragraphs of this section deliberate on aspects the research design, including: justification for the study period, how themes and sub-themes have been generated/identified, how

coding categories were allotted to the paragraphs to generate themes, how the political and ideological positioning of the researcher has impacted the coding process, and how this work might contribute to the existing knowledge of the discipline, in other words, what the significance of this study might be from the point of view of conflict, peace and identity formation in the context of Indo-Pakistan relations and media's role in it.

Research design

This study uses a thematic analysis approach, which is a method for capturing patterns ("themes") across qualitative data sets (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2019). The thematic analysis (TA) as a research tool is closely linked to psychology and related disciplines. There are not many examples of the application of thematic analysis on newspaper texts for studying bilateral conflicts between two nation-states or representation of one country in another. That said, plenty of studies have been conducted all over the globe to minutely examine media text, many of which are close to thematic analysis in many ways, though they do not necessarily use the term thematic analysis.

Unlike news, content in opinion pages is not just about the transfer of information to readers but also about guiding them on how to make sense of social reality. Most of the ideological positions taken by the newspapers are informed acts of rational or irrational choices after due considerations to their potential impact. Many of those are contentious positions. As there is always more than one version of social reality. The "editorial pages provide information, analyses, benchmarks, and public forums to assist readers in making decisions and taking action on issues" (Ernest C. Hynds, 1994, p. 573). Newspapers use editorial voice to influence politics either indirectly, through reaching public opinion, or directly, by targeting politicians (Firmstone, 2019).

TA is also a study of meaning, but first themes must be created and curated to launch any inquiry. Themes must have a certain identifiable structure and should represent an idea clearly and coherently. Texts in all forms provide immense opportunities for exploration from varied directions. It is highly likely that generated themes will vary depending on the prior knowledge and expertise of

the researcher dealing with the data. It also depends on the individual positions of the researchers and their personal experiences.

Any study dealing with geostrategic relations between warring nation-states is likely to be contentious, especially when media become conduits for government propaganda, as was arguably the case in some US media reporting on Iraq's so-called weapons of mass destruction (the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* published self-critical articles regarding their coverage of the run-up to the Iraq War (Hindman, 2005) though their biases were more profound than these pieces acknowledge (Wiegant, 2016)). TA approaches can provide a useful tool to study dimensions of the collective consciousness of a nation-state as is reflected through mainstream media. Here the word 'collective consciousness' means the collective ability of a nation-state to perceive other nations in a specific ideological frame.

3.2 Data collection

Pakistani newspapers closely watch developments in India as any changes in the government can drastically impact bilateral relations for better or worse, depending on the ideology of elected leadership. As such the period of India's general elections makes for a useful timeframe for this study. The period of 10 March 2019 to 23 May 2019 was selected for this study as it was 10 March 2019 that the Election Commission of India (ECI) declared the dates of the general election, and 23 May 2019 when the election results were declared. Over this period, *Dawn* intensely discussed what might be the impact of election results on bilateral relations if the incumbent government returned to power or lost an electoral battle.

There are many important facts which make the general election in India remarkable for developing countries and beyond. For one, it's scale – as the BBC describes, the election is mind-bogglingly big, takes a long time and costs a lot of money (Biswas, 2019) among other things. Due to the massive Indian population, 900 million people are eligible voters. All citizens of above eighteen years of age

are eligible to vote without any discrimination to elect members of parliament in the lower house, also known as Lok Sabha. It is the largest electoral exercise on the planet.

Secondly, it can influence other nations by inspiring people in other countries in the region to vote. The “hard shell of nation-state is permeable; that is it has been penetrated by external demonstration or diffusion effects, and that these effects are generated by the global context, the regional context and neighbour effects” (Starr, 1991, p. 357). In other words, India’s general elections can encourage people in other third world countries to demand functional democracy. In South Asia, India is comparatively a stable democracy, while others are still trying to establish a democratic culture with rule of law, adult franchise, smooth transfer of power and complete civilian control over all organs of the state except judiciary. Some, including Pakistan, are still struggling to create democratic institutions to empower ordinary citizens and keep the power balance tilted towards democratically elected bodies.

3.3 Analytical framework

It is important to explain how this study conceptualizes themes as there can be different approaches to it. Themes are not just a description (Braun & Clarke, 2006) but also “a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 161).

For generating themes this study relies on a thematic analysis approach as described by Victoria Braun and Emily Clarke in their 2006 paper titled ‘Using thematic analysis in psychology’. It is one of the most-cited research papers in recent decades (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Apart from relying on thematic analysis as defined by Braun & Clarke, this paper also borrows from other scholars who have worked on thematic analysis and code development, such as Richard Boyatzis and others.

As this study deals with the media representation of a nation-state within the dynamics of a long-running conflict, the researcher's familiarity with India and Pakistan have shaped research questions, broader hypotheses and theme-generation. Familiarity with all aspects of data generally helps in generating themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006); they cannot be generated in a vacuum. Prior knowledge of the data at hand and its contextual boundaries equip researchers to launch an informed inquiry.

There are certain themes which are easier to create than others due to their high prevalence, but this prevalence does not mean that a specific theme is crucial because it appeared more in the data than others. It depends on its utility concerning the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, "the number of individuals independently expressing the same idea is a better indicator of thematic importance than the absolute number of times a theme is expressed and coded" (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006, p. 72).

TA is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. It involves searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning. "The exact form and product of thematic analysis vary" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 15), a though effective use of TA should involve explaining, describing and summarizing not only key patterns in data but also interpreting important elements, features and traits (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

TA has six phases as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation of data, coding, generating initial themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up. The process of coding involves

generating succinct labels (codes!) that identify important features of the data that might be relevant to answering the research question. It involves coding the entire dataset, and after that, collating all the codes and all relevant data extracts, together for later stages of analysis. (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, et al., 2019, p. 848)

The last stage defined as writing up involves binding together analytic narrative and data extracts. It also involves contextualizing the findings with the existing literature on the subject (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After initial readings of the dataset for this study, all paragraphs mentioning the word 'India' were captured through NVivo and were allocated a coding category, which can also be termed as the initial label or sub-theme or node or code. This paper uses the word codes, sub-themes, labels and nodes interchangeably, but all the words point towards the same thing. Codes are potential smaller themes which can be clubbed together under a bigger idea, meaning subthemes of themes.

“Generating codes requires marking interesting features of the data in a systematic way and then collating the data” (Scharp & Sanders, 2019, p. 118). They are the building blocks for themes and can be used in multiple ways. The same set of codes can be used to create, organize and develop themes depending on the research question as codes highlight the interesting features of the data (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

As has been stated above all paragraphs mentioning the word 'India' have been considered for coding, but not necessarily coded if the narrative was not linked to the research questions. If the entire article specifically deals with India, then all the paragraphs of that article have been coded into various nodes (coding categories/sub-themes/codes), even if they were referring to India without naming it. It means the context of the overall conversation in the column and editorial have been considered. In other words, all paragraphs referring to India have been coded if they are representative of any view, perspective and opinion depending on each case, but the article must mention the word India at least once to be included in the data set for analysis. In the coding process, many of the paragraphs were coded for more than one node. If any editorial or column represented India in any manner without naming the country, it not included in the study.

The 'find' tool of the MS Word software was used to check whether the article carried the word 'India' or not. If the article carried the word, only then was it read and examined and coded accordingly. All selected articles were read in full to ensure that representation was captured in totality as India can be referred in subsequent paragraphs as well without using the word 'India', once the context of the conversation is established. An attempt has been made to ensure all references to India should be covered in one theme or another but without "right or wrong method for determining prevalence. What is important is that you are consistent in how you do this within any particular analysis"(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83).

Codes function here as the building blocks of themes. Through a preliminary scanning of the text (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 83), the coding process aimed to capture the variety of patterns in the data. Once the coding was completed, initial codes were collated into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to that particular theme (Scharp & Sanders, 2019, p. 118).

All the coding categories were subsequently compartmentalized under the six broader themes, with all paragraphs under each sub-theme pinned to one of the six mother themes. Reviewing subthemes and themes was essential after the in-depth reading and re-reading of data and related literature as there is hardly any scope for initial codes to survive in their initial structure. While interacting with data, coding constantly evolves. Reviewing themes is the "process of checking whether the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. Defining and naming themes consists of determining the heart of what each theme conveys: knowing what it is and what it is not" (Scharp & Sanders, 2019, p. 118). In the initial phases of coding itself, the description and purpose behind creating each code were also mentioned in the node properties box available in the NVivo to maintain transparency and rigour in the process. In case of any questions regarding the basis of assigning paragraphs to codes/subthemes, node properties could be referred to for an explanation.

Node properties are also subject to frequent changes as they are repeatedly clarified and elaborated, so providing concise explanations of the intended purpose of each node is useful.

TA can be understood as a systematic decoding of ideas related to a phenomenon under study to uncover the dominant narrative. It can be done on the basis of 'words' used in the text or talk about a particular issue or it can be done based on sentences or paragraphs. In all three cases, word, sentence and paragraph, the researcher will get a window to go inside the meaning of the text and attempt to deconstruct it. "TA moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes" (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012, p. 9). Lawless and Chen (2019, p. 96) in a paper titled 'Developing a Method of Critical Thematic Analysis for Qualitative Communication Inquiry' argue, "TA searches for patterned results...while being acutely aware of ideological surroundings and its impact".

In this study, theme generation through coding also depends on the understanding of the researcher and their subjective positioning with regard to Indo-Pakistan relations, their contemporary history, cultural affinities, religious orientation and so on. Braun & Clarke insist that themes can only be generated and reject all other suggestions regarding the use of the word 'emerged' in relation to themes. They prefer the term 'generating (initial) themes' to emphasise that themes are not 'in' the data, somehow pre-existing analysis and awaiting retrieval (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Themes exist in the minds of researchers and are the result of researchers' intense engagement with data. Both scholars vehemently oppose any other suggestion (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2016, 2019; Braun, Clarke, & Hayfield, 2019; Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, et al., 2019; Clarke & Braun, 2017).

II

Methodological process

It is important to spell out how the themes were generated in this study. Initially, no paragraph was coded to a mother theme. Rather, paragraphs were coded into subthemes, which were then

analysed in turn and collated into six 'family' groups that became the major themes. Thus, the themes are generated out of categorising the subthemes and, once generated, paragraphs were revisited and coded to one of the six major thematic categories.

It is also important to understand here that relying on numbers generated in NVivo for analysis can be highly misleading. As most of the editorials were written only in two large paragraphs, each paragraph expressed more than one idea which was then coded into various subthemes. Many of the paragraphs in the columns have also been coded multiple times, while some were coded only once. As such, this study aims to avoid quantitative analysis of the data.

Initially, this project tried to cover a one-year period for coding, but later reduced the timeframe to a more manageable period when it became clear that dataset was too large for this study. That means coding was initially done on almost eight months' worth of data. Though files for the longer time period were deleted from NVivo, they helped to build confidence in the coding for the smaller dataset. Despite the reduction in duration of the selected timeframe, the number of subthemes did not reduce much (rather, the number of paragraphs allocated to subthemes decreased in the shorter period) and only a few subthemes subsequently needed to be deleted from the original code list. This suggests a coherence in the representation of India in *Dawn* that might be tested in future research looking either at longer or alternative time periods.

It is important to note, too, that this study is interpretative. Any attempt to claim mathematical accuracy on the lines of content analysis would be misleading and does not serve the purposes of this work. In other words, all themes irrespective of how many coded paragraphs in it are important. A high frequency does mean a theme has been stated again and again, but it does not mean that issues not repeated frequently are less worthy of attention.

After giving further thought to it I sincerely believe that relying on numbers generated by NVivo does not serve the purpose of this study. In fact, it will defeat the purpose of having a meaningful and interesting discussion on India and Pakistan and the complexities of their bilateral relations in a

substantial way based on the content extracted from *Dawn's* opinion pages. In my understanding lists, tables, names or other mathematical, statistical or structural detailing would dilute the purpose and effectiveness of conducting this kind of theoretical study. And in fact, avoiding it does not mean any dilution of rigour and intensity of study of the subject matter under investigation.

Even though in the findings section, the word clouds have been used but merely as an illustrative tool to tease out the dominant ideas reflected in the coded paragraphs pinned under each theme. As word clouds are a visual display of data and the font size of each word depicts the relative frequency of occurrence of each word in the texts, it reflects on the debated issues.

In terms of the analysis process used here, the first step was to code paragraphs for subthemes. The second step was to generate themes, which effectively builds an analytical narrative by outlining patterns using the coded text. The third step is then to attempt to offer an explanation based on the wider context, drawing on the literature for explanations about the representations that are reproduced through the media.

Although six major themes were generated in this study, all themes and subthemes are inherently connected in multiple ways. As coding of paragraphs smoothly flows from one subtheme to another across all six major themes, it means one paragraph might be coded in multiple subthemes and in more than one theme.

3.4 Reflexivity

Any analysis related to Indo-Pakistan relations is likely to be considered partisan by one party or the other depending on how much it deviates from their officially stated positions. Both nations have official positions, and citizens in both countries (of which I am one) have been submerged in the national narratives disbursed through multiple communicative events. However, it is possible for the researcher to keep personal biases, prejudicial positions and ideological positions separate from their work by recognizing their limitations and reflecting constantly on their interpretive work.

This process is difficult and subjective (Finlay, 2002b, p. 531). “The process of engaging in reflexivity is full of muddy ambiguity and multiple trails as researchers negotiate the swamp of interminable deconstructions, self-analysis and self-disclosure” (Finlay, 2002a, p. 209). And even the “acknowledgement of positionality, reflexivity, identity, and representation does not necessarily bring about dramatic changes but the alternative of not heeding such issues is even more problematic” (Sultana, 2007, p. 383).

It is difficult to conclude how a researcher’s own political and ideological position might have affected coding, but a concerted effort has been made to avoid any inclination towards either exaggerating or underplaying any ideas reflected in *Dawn*. The former foreign minister of Pakistan Khurshid Ahmad Kasuri wrote a book in 2015 titled ‘Neither a hawk, nor a dove’ capturing his perspective aptly on India. An Indian parliamentarian Shashi Tharoor remarked, “I tend to behold Pakistan with a heart of a dove but head of a hawk” (Tharoor, 2017). My position lies somewhere in between. I consider myself a Nehruvian nationalist who believes that a ‘centre to left orientation’ is better suited for India, not only in framing internal issues but also in fixing its external social, political and economic orientation. In other words, I will associate my political belief with moderates in India, who are committed to plurality of thought, language, culture, religion and so on. I have attempted to at all times to read *Dawn* with an open mind and with the perspective of a friendly outsider.

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Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

In all, 88 articles were included for analysis, all of which were published in *Dawn* between the periods of 10 March 2019 to 23 May 2019, a total of 74 days. Each article refers to India at least once directly. All of the articles in sampled data deal with different issues concerning Pakistan, but a few of the articles directly addressed the dynamics of Indo-Pakistan relations and in the process represent India in unique ways.

The coded articles deal with a variety of subjects ranging from social justice issues (gender conflicts, the plight of minorities), environmental issues (impact of pollution, climate change), economic issues (state of the economy, troubles of the agriculture sector), strategic issues (Afghanistan conflict and CPEC, Belt and Road Initiative), foreign policy matters (US role in the region, Iran-Pakistan relations), and internal and external conflicts (insurgencies in Baluchistan, hostilities with India) among other things. Many of these issues are not directly linked with India, and are instead related to Pakistan's internal fault lines or the routine problems of third-world countries relating to poverty alleviation, slow economic progress, and the need for accountable government (Todaro, 1977) among other things, but it is interesting to observe how the authors writing in *Dawn* use India as an example to validate their perspective or reject an argument even when writing about these other topics.

In all articles mentioning the name of PM Modi and his party, both are portrayed negatively by columnists and editorial writers, without exception. PM Modi is depicted as anti-Muslim and as an anti-Pakistan Hindu extremist. Articles paint a grim picture of Muslim minorities in India under the tenure of the Hindu nationalist government, and while *Dawn* identifies the main opposition party Indian National Congress (INC) as a secular political outfit, it depicts both parties as treating Pakistan badly, building a picture of India as antagonistic to Pakistan irrespective of the party in power.

Many articles in the sampled data referred to Kashmir as a disputed territory, to removal of article 370 and 35 A as a ploy to change the demography in Jammu and Kashmir, to PM Modi as a communal politician, and to the BJP as a Hindu nationalist political outfit, as well as to the Pulwama attack, Balakot strikes and anti-Pakistan rhetoric in the election campaign, among other things.

A total of six themes were identified; 1) India is reluctant to resolve Kashmir dispute, 2) both countries are perpetual adversaries 3) India is becoming of majoritarian state 4) PM Modi is hostile and aggressive against Pakistan 5) presence of strong liberal politics in India and 6) moral equivalence. By way of brief explanation, the first theme refers to India's approach towards the Kashmir conflict. *Dawn* claimed that India was not willing to talk to Pakistan over the status of Jammu and Kashmir. The second theme highlighted the adversarial nature of both countries in different areas, including geopolitics and geo-economics and is the most prominent theme in the sampled data. The third theme focuses more on the rise of Hindu fundamentalists in India and in connection with rising hatred for Muslims internally and Pakistan externally. The fourth theme is about the Modi government's increasingly aggressive postures against Pakistan (though, while insisting that the Hindu nationalist government was likely to harm peace in the region, it also argued that animosities against Pakistan in India existed irrespective of the party in power). Few of the articles in *Dawn* suggested that strong liberal and progressive voices also existed in India. *Dawn* referred to civil society groups and the main opposition party Indian National Congress (INC) to substantiate this argument. Lastly, it also establishes a moral equivalence by referring to India when discussing the internal problems of Pakistani society concerning forced conversions and communal politics among other things.

All themes are the result of a larger debate in Pakistan about national interest, culture, survival, peace, prosperity, identity, geopolitics and dominance. The relative weight of themes can be

partially indicated based on the number of file and paragraph allocations, but is not intended as a quantitative analysis; it simply provides a sense of each theme's prevalence during this timeframe.

Table 1 Number of files and paragraphs allocated to different themes.

Name	Files	References
T1 India is reluctant to resolve Kashmir dispute	23	63
T2 India and Pakistan are perpetual adversaries	44	96
T3 India is becoming a majoritarian state	33	86
T4 PM Modi is hostile and aggressive against Pakistan	18	36
T5 Strong liberal politics in India	23	35
T6 Moral Equivalence	13	15

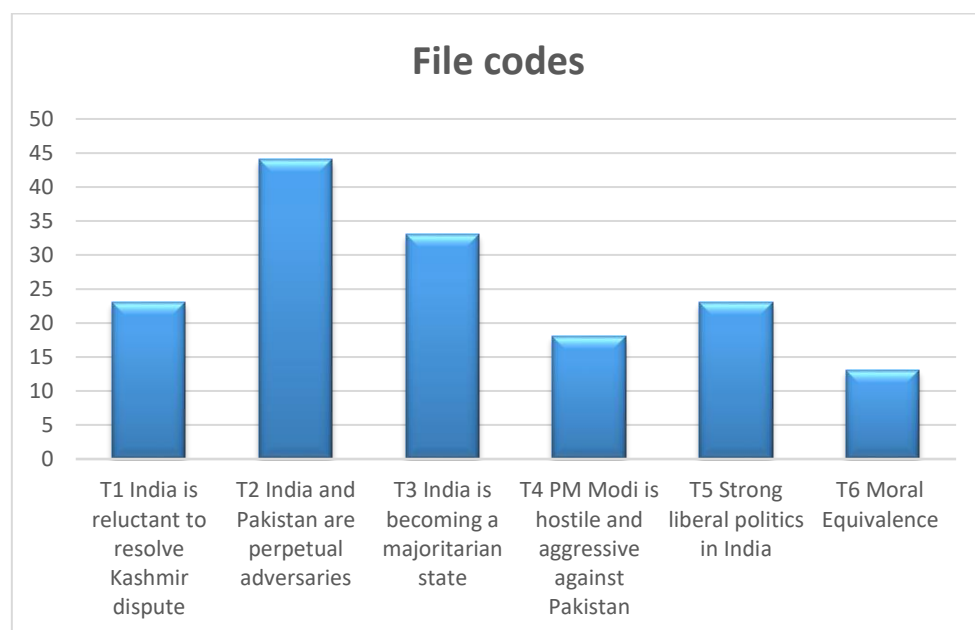


Figure 1 Bar chart showing the number of files allocated to different themes

4.2 Reluctant to resolve Kashmir dispute

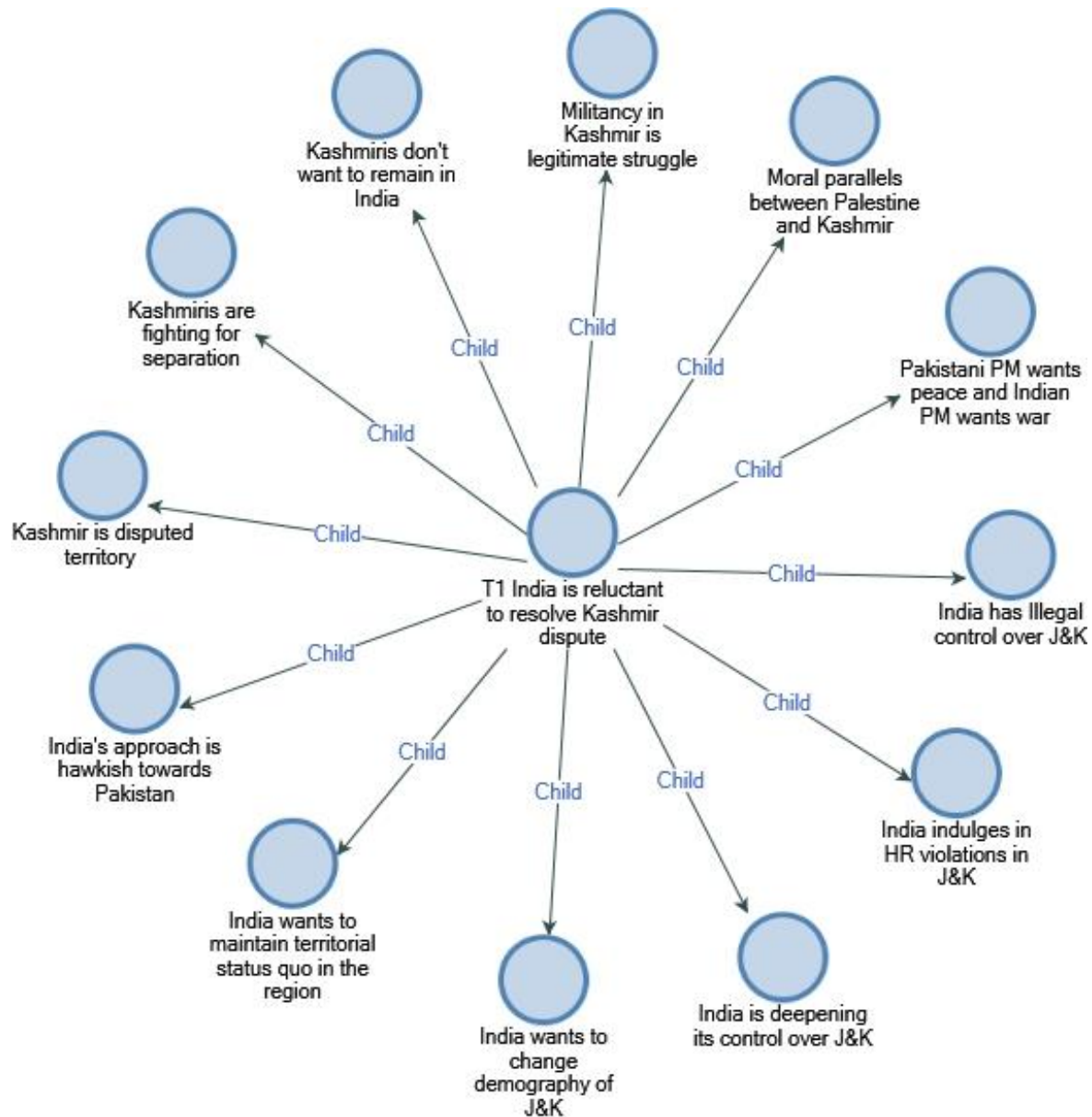


Figure 2 Project map mentioning all the subthemes of theme 1

India is reluctant to resolve the Kashmir dispute has been identified as the first major theme in this study. 63 paragraphs from 23 files have been coded under this theme. Its 11 subthemes are:

1. India wants to change the demography of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)
2. India is deepening its control over J&K

3. India indulges in human rights violations in J&K
4. India has illegal control over J&K
5. Pakistani PM wants peace and Indian PM wants war
6. Attempts to establish a moral parallel between Palestine and Kashmir
7. Militancy in Kashmir is a legitimate struggle
8. India wants to maintain the territorial status quo in the region
9. India's hawkish approach to Pakistan
10. Kashmir is disputed territory
11. Kashmiris are fighting for separation

This section identifies and reveals the trends, patterns, orientation, traits, characteristics and nature of the representation of India in *Dawn's* opinion pages in relation to the Kashmir dispute. The analysis utilizes the texts coded under this theme to examine that representation.

Mostly the texts in *Dawn* argue that Jammu and Kashmir is an occupied territory, that India is indulging in human rights violations, people are fighting for freedom, India is an aggressor and Kashmiri Muslims are victims, militancy is indigenous and represents legitimate struggle, the United Nations should intervene, a plebiscite should be immediately conducted, and that the international community should condemn India and support the separatist movement. These narratives are repeated throughout the opinion pages of *Dawn*.

A word frequency chart has also been created by using all the coded paragraphs under this theme simply as an illustrative tool to tease out recurring or dominant ideas. It captured the following words such as occupied, torture, struggle, freedom, dispute, war, resolution, international, police and article 370 among others.

was repeatedly raised in all articles referring to Kashmir and its association with India, building a narrative linking India with human rights violations.

Unrest in Kashmir is represented in terms of Hindu atrocities on Muslims. India is represented as a fundamentalist Hindu state and Kashmiris as Muslim and victims of the Hindu state. The political ideology of the current ruling political party in India is used to substantiate the argument; the BJP is a right-wing political outfit and opposes the idea of secular India (S. Ganguly, 2003; Harriss, 2015; Hasan, 2010; Jaffrelot, 2009).

A highly critical editorial written about the Indian cricket team's effort to collect funds for the families of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel who were killed in the Pulwama suicide bombing describes the CRPF personnel as Indian-occupying troops,

To claim that this was merely a "fundraising drive and in memory of" the Indian-occupying troops killed in Pulwama, as Indian skipper Virat Kohli and the ICC have stated, is a rather clumsy smokescreen, and extremely irresponsible given the silly season of war-mongering hysteria in India against Pakistan at this time. But no matter the extent of national fervour, a cricket field is not a battlefield. – Editorial, Cricket or combat? - 13 March 2019

This editorial also suggested that the Indian cricket team's fundraising effort was tantamount to the politicization of the game of cricket, and reflected an ultranationalist approach in *Dawn's* writing.

The narrative in *Dawn's* opinion pages represents Kashmir as a Muslim majority province and describes it in opposition to India in terms of religion. It also suggests that India is a Hindu state and minorities are second-class citizens in it. The coded texts refer to the Jammu and Kashmir as occupied territory, Indian security forces as occupying forces and counter-terrorism operations as

state terrorism. The texts also refer to Indian-administered Kashmir as “Indian occupied Kashmir”, while Pakistan administered Kashmir is referred as “Azad (free) Kashmir”.

The texts in *Dawn* represent Kashmir as a Muslim majority region and stake a claim on it based on religion while ignoring the region’s considerable minority population of Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains among others. The texts mostly frame the unrest in Kashmir as Muslim aspirations to join the Muslim majority Pakistan.

The narrative creates a frame of victimhood. Muslims are represented as victims, while their religion and distinct culture rooted in Islam is depicted as threatened by the majority Hindu community. India is represented as the embodiment of Hindu majority and as victimizing innocent Muslims. It also fits into a two-nation theory that Hindus and Muslims represent separate nations and cannot remain in one country (Majid et al., 2014; Mehrotra, 1981).

The texts also describe the government’s action against Kashmiri separatists as irresponsible tactics to garner votes in the general elections. After the BJP government came to power it decided to curtail the activities of prominent separatists and their grouping known as Hurriyat leaders (Ashiq & Singh, 2017), which was criticized in *Dawn*.

The texts also argue that separatists are true representatives of the Kashmiris while showing disdain for unionists who regularly contest elections. Few of the articles specifically highlighted the ban against Hurriyat leaders, the umbrella organisation of parties fighting for creating an independent state or its merger with Pakistan (Jaleel, 2015). One of the editorials described the actions against separatist leaders an extension of Modi’s tactics to “intimidate and scare off opponents”.

The narrative in some of the articles in *Dawn* represented PM Modi as fascist and compared India to Second World War Germany. Some columnists also compared Prime Minister Modi with Adolf Hitler. One of the articles specifically compared Kashmir with Sudetenland.

Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is to Modi what Sudetenland was to the elected German chancellor Adolf Hitler – Scrap of paper, F.S. Aijazuddin, 18 April 2019

The Pakistani PM's repeated rhetoric to invite India to discuss the future of Jammu and Kashmir was described as akin to PM Chamberlain's efforts to reach peace with Germany, in another article. The author claims that as Hitler perceived the British PM's peace overtures as a sign of weakness, PM Modi also sees Pakistan's calls for dialogue as a weakness. This frame demonizes India and creates a hero versus villain, aggressor versus victim binary where India represents the tyrant and Pakistan a peace-loving nation fighting for human rights and justice.

All articles coded under this theme strongly reject the territorial status quo and any suggestions regarding converting the line of control into an international border. Few even compared the Indo-Pakistan conflict with the Israel-Palestine conflict.

What India desires is that Pakistan accept India's rule in India-occupied Kashmir, much as Israel's Arab neighbours are being asked to accept the 'reality' of Israel's occupation of Jerusalem, the Golan and most of the West Bank. But, unlike Israel's neighbours, Pakistan has not been militarily defeated by India. Even if Pakistan were to set aside its strategic stakes in Kashmir (territory, affiliated people, water, China access), it will continue to be drawn into supporting the resilient 70-year struggle of the Kashmiri people for self-determination and freedom (azadi) from India. – Peace is difficult, Munir Akram, 14 April 2019.

The literature establishing parallels between the situation in Kashmir and Palestine (Schumacher, 2020; Zia, 2020) is slowly rising. There is one more interesting element to note, that the texts did not

associate any negative connotations with the Pulwama suicide bombing. In fact, words like “Pulwama episode”, “Pulwama crisis” or just “Pulwama” were used to refer to the incident and its aftermath.

One of the articles also claims that India is under tremendous pressure to discuss Kashmir with Pakistan as the present position has become untenable given Islamic terrorists and their activities are widely supported by the local population.

The fact is that no matter how much India tries to blame Pakistan for the situation in IHK (Indian Held Kashmir), discontent in the region is at alarming levels and the movement against India is a largely indigenous one. The reason for this is not hard to fathom; India has treated Kashmir like a colony, using brutal military force against its civilian population. –

Editorial, IHK poll delay, 15 March 2019

Attempts by India to raise the issue of open support to Islamic terror organizations in Pakistan are described as an Indian ploy to embarrass Pakistan rather than India’s efforts to protect itself from terrorist attacks. In one editorial, which highlighted India’s efforts to ban Masood Azhar, chief of Jaish-e-Mohammad, through the UN Security Council, *Dawn* argued that India was trying to project unrest, protest and militancy in Kashmir as a terrorist insurgency.

The texts in *Dawn* frequently raise the spectre of nuclear conflict: that it would be suicide for India to escalate the conflict due to Pakistan’s nuclear weapons, and the international community would not allow it.

The Indian airstrikes at Balakot on Feb 26 and Pakistan’s retaliation the next day brought India and Pakistan to the brink of nuclear war like never before. It is the first time in history that two nuclear-armed states carried out airstrikes against each other in a situation so volatile that it could have conceivably got out of hand and led to a nuclear apocalypse. –

Nuclear apocalypse, Rabel Z. Akhund, 17 March 2019

The texts in some of the articles describe the arrest of prominent separatists and counter-insurgency operations by security forces as state terrorism and portray the fight against terrorism as a war against Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir. They also claim that the cover of counterterrorism is being used by India to suppress the legitimate rights of Kashmiris, while India attempts to link Kashmir with global changes in terror discourse.

One of the articles argues that at a global level the war against terrorism is essentially a war against Islamic terrorism, with acts of violence by Muslims referred to as terror acts, while similar violence by non-Muslims is not labelled as terror acts. In many of the articles, the writers imagine future escalations and argue that Kashmir may face war if Hindu fundamentalists persist with their aggressive plans.

One of the articles argues that the use of violence must not be compromised if people are fighting for self-determination. It refers to Indian opposition to the use of violence as a method for resolving conflicts and dismisses it as a ploy to delegitimize unrest in Kashmir. Basically, through this narrative, India is described as an occupying force in Jammu and Kashmir, and armed militants represented as freedom fighters. The article dismisses the view that all violence should be rejected irrespective of its purported objectives.

In this narrative, India is not facing any terrorism and Kashmiri Muslims have legitimate reasons to fight for self-determination. It consistently uses words like occupied territory, state terrorism, Hindu terrorists, Hindu fundamentalists, Hindu religious supremacy to describe and define the nature and character of the Indian state, particularly in relation to Kashmir. It implicitly suggests that Kashmiri militants are freedom fighters.

Notably, there is no concern for or expression of sympathy with the victims of the Pulwama attack, and questions about how militants in Kashmir get sophisticated weapons and military-grade training to launch their attacks are avoided. Indian reactions to the Pulwama suicide bombing are routinely

described as warmongering, fascism, Hindu fundamentalism, ultra-nationalism and dismissal of gestures of peace.

The overall narrative about Kashmir is one of Indian brutality and ultra-nationalism.

When the Indian military machine has no qualms about killing, raping and humiliating Kashmiris, it is understandable that the local people will drape their fallen in the Pakistani flag. However, the Indian establishment refuses to soften its tone and shun the path of violence. – Editorial, IHK poll delay, 15 March 2019

In this respect, *Dawn's* opinion page narrative appears to closely follow the stated position of the Pakistani state on the Kashmir conflict, which can be summarized in four points. First, the State of Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory. Second, UN Security Council resolutions remain operative and cannot be unilaterally disregarded by either party. Third, India must talk to Pakistan over the future status of Jammu and Kashmir and conduct a plebiscite. Fourth, the plebiscite should offer the people of Jammu and Kashmir the choice of permanent accession to either Pakistan or India (S. R. Hussain, 2007; M. A. Shah, 1995).

To explain the cultural closeness with Pakistan, one of the authors claims that

Kashmiri Muslims have traditionally been deeply religious and conservative — perhaps far more than Muslims in any other part of the subcontinent. For reasons of its own, the government of India decided to strike terror in Kashmir by launching prosecutions against separatist leaders. – Custodial deaths, 30 March 2019, A.G Noorani

The narrative in *Dawn* also suggests that militancy cannot be ended in Kashmir by launching anti-terror operations, as it represents the people's voice. A few of the articles claim that India wants to change the demography of Kashmir. Even the resettlement of Kashmiri pandits in the valley, who were forced to leave their homes by Islamic militants in the 1990s (Evans, 2002; Pandita, 2013), was described as an attempt to change demography.

In the last few years, the BJP government has attempted to change the demographics of the occupied territory using targeting measures such as through the setting up of Israeli-style settlements or townships for Kashmiri Pandits or via the establishment of Sainik colonies to permanently settle Indian soldiers displacing local Kashmiri residents. Repealing Articles 35-A and 370 is, however, a more serious and insidious attempt to destroy the culture and identity of the Kashmiri people - A new strategy, 20 April 2019, Sikander Shah

The texts claim that India wants to create Israeli-style settlements and make Kashmiri Muslims foreigners in their land. They also suggest that Modi escalated tensions by conducting Balakot strikes not to avenge the Pulwama attack but to divert attention from the deteriorating situation in Kashmir valley, and argue that Modi's re-election is not good for Kashmiris and Muslims in general in India.

Overall, India is blamed for all troubles in Kashmir in the coded texts under this theme. The issue of cross border terrorism and rising militancy is dismissed as India's indigenous problem. The overall narrative builds a case for Pakistan to stake a claim in the territory of Kashmir and its Muslim population.

4.3 India and Pakistan are perpetual adversaries

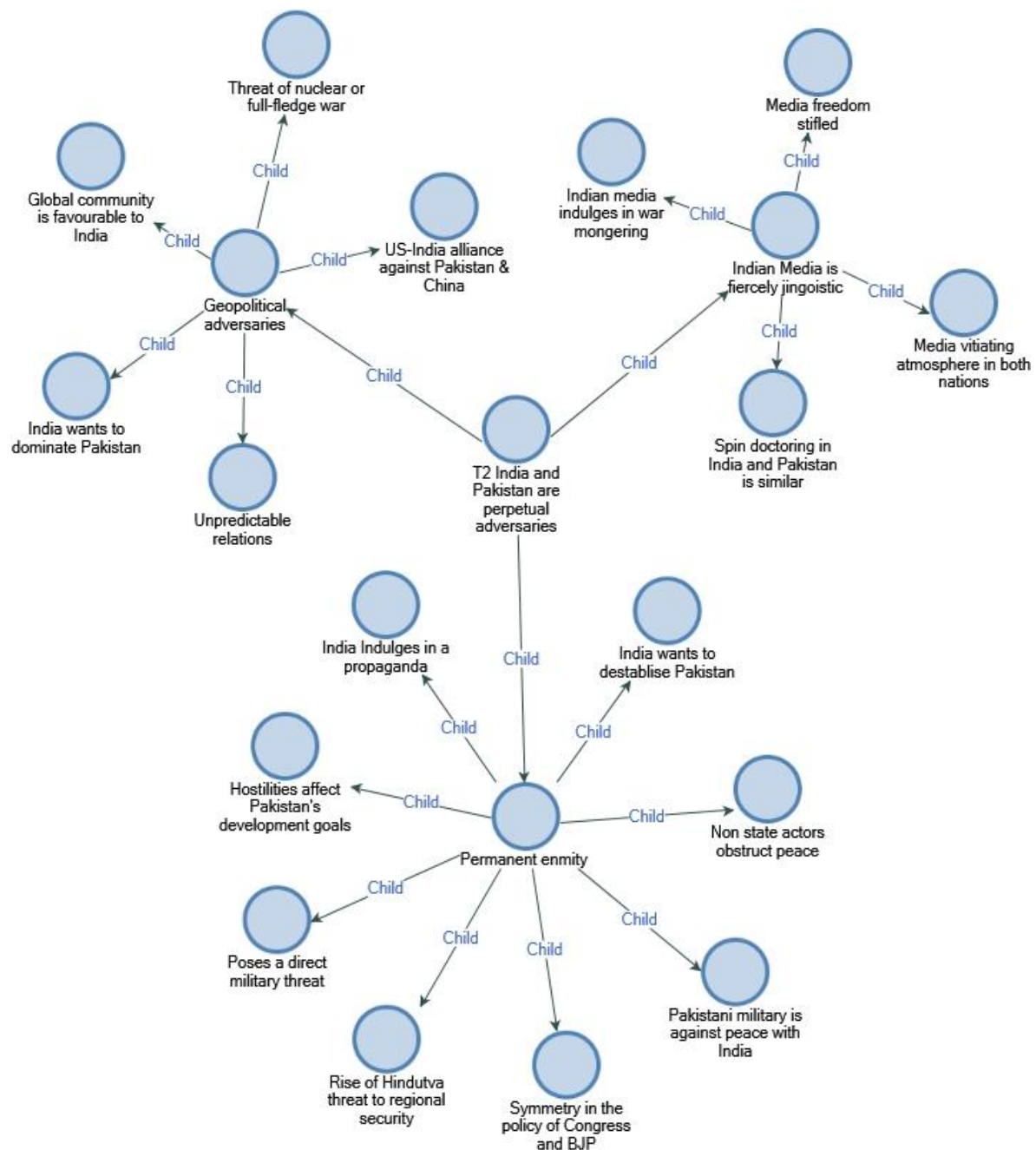


Figure 4 Project map mentioning all the subthemes of theme 2

'India and Pakistan are perpetual adversaries' has been identified as the second theme in this study. 96 paragraphs from 44 articles have been coded in this theme, making it the largest theme in terms of coded articles and paragraphs. Its subthemes are:

1. India wants to destabilize Pakistan
2. Non-state actors obstruct peace
3. Pakistani military establishment is against normalizations of relations with India
4. Symmetry in the policy of the Congress and the BJP against Pakistan
5. Rise of the Hindutva threat to regional security
6. India poses a direct military threat to Pakistan
7. Hostilities with India affect Pakistan's developmental goals
8. India indulges in propaganda against Pakistan
9. Media is jingoistic in India
10. Both countries are geopolitical adversaries.

Two of the subthemes have been configured by including smaller ideas in it. The subthemes of 'media in India is jingoistic' are

1. Media indulges in warmongering
2. Media freedom is stifled in India under the Modi regime
3. Media spin-doctors the debate to suit nationalist narratives
4. Media vitiates the atmosphere in the region

Whereas the geopolitical adversaries consist of

1. India-US alliance against Pakistan and China
2. The threat of nuclear or full-fledged war
3. The global community is favourable to India
4. India wants to dominate Pakistan
5. Unpredictable relations

on Pakistan by fully supporting the ruling party. The texts further argue that Indian media unquestionably accept the government's narrative on the Balakot bombings, while underlining that governments in both countries can spin-doctor any incident to push their narrative.

In *Dawn's* narrative, the role of China, the United States and the international community was placed within the dynamics of the Indo-Pakistan tussle, with China viewed highly positively, and the United States viewed with deep scepticism and distrust. The United States and China were judged by the parameters of Pakistan's policy priorities, and the interests of China and Pakistan were seen to be perfectly aligned.

While discussing ways of dealing with India, the many of the articles argue that nuclear deterrence would ensure that hostilities would not cross beyond a certain threshold, as the international community would engage to de-escalate tensions in the region. They also argued that if India escalated conflict, Pakistan would use nuclear weapons. Indian attempts to describe Pakistani postures as a nuclear bluff were described as a dangerous miscalculation.

India's claims on Balakot and the downing of a F-16 fighter aircraft were dismissed unanimously. Moreover, Pakistan's release of the captured Indian Mig21-Bison pilot within 48 hours was described as a peace gesture, with one author stressing that Pakistan did India favour by not asking it to "rub its nose" on the ground before releasing the pilot. Cases of perceived discrimination against Indian Muslims were highlighted in the texts, as was the issue of Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails. Many articles claimed that India had deployed all tools to destabilize Pakistan.

As the columns and editorials in *Dawn* are written by different authors, they express multiple perspectives. Some articles have hawkish and conservative leanings while others expressed more liberal, accommodative and conciliatory perspectives about India. While discussing the troubles

faced by Pakistan, Indian efforts to mobilize the international community and the UN actions against terrorism were described as an attempt to isolate, destabilize and harm Pakistan. The actions which are likely to read elsewhere as humanitarian efforts are read through a strategic lens of impact on Pakistan.

The narrative that emerges in *Dawn's* opinion pages clearly portrays both the countries as regional and geopolitical rivals with contrary interests. The tone and tenor of the PM Narendra Modi's political campaign during the elections was also termed as anti-Pakistan and as a contributing factor to the increasing animosities between India and Pakistan. The texts manifest the bilateral rivalry and enmity at multiple levels, and always with one's loss represented as the other's gain and vice versa.

The narrative in the opinion pages of *Dawn* about India reflects insecurities in Pakistan: that India is a direct military threat, that foments trouble in the restive regions and uses Afghanistan as its base, that it indulges in warmongering and has a highly nationalistic media. The texts hold India responsible for troubles in the countries' bilateral relations and suggest that India is also working in tandem with global powers to undermine the core interests of Pakistan.

The narrative represents Pakistan as a nation in danger, and India as an existential threat. Many of the articles repeatedly refer to nuclear weapons to deter aggressive Indian designs to undo Pakistan.

The unfortunate reality is that Pakistan has been categorised as an adversary by the US 'establishment', due to: America's 'strategic partnership' with India against China and 'radical Islamic terrorism'; the blame assigned to Pakistan for the US military failure in Afghanistan; Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability and the considerable influence in Washington of the Indian-American expatriate community, the Israeli lobby and Christian 'fundamentalists' – Peace is difficult, 14 April 2019, Munir Akram

The paragraph above cites Pakistan's nuclear capability as one of the reasons why the United States treats Pakistan as an adversary. It suggests, too, that an Israeli lobby, along with Indian ex-pats and Christian fundamentalists in the United States, is working to ensure that Pakistan is viewed as an adversary of the United States.

The narrative positions India as a geopolitical adversary and a United States ally working against the interests of Pakistan and China. Some of the articles also suggest that India wants to dominate Pakistan. One of the articles suggests that even if a dialogue starts between the countries, India is unlikely to offer compromise on its stated position on Kashmir and until it happens the bilateral disputes cannot be resolved. It further interprets continued territorial status quo in Jammu & Kashmir as continued dominance of India in the region and argues that Pakistan rejects India's dominance in South Asia and considers this development against its core interests.

The overall narrative in the coded paragraphs under this theme also emphasizes that India's position on bilateral disputes is responsible for perpetual enmity in the region, not the other way around. Most of the articles discuss the world by keeping Pakistan at the centre of it, while ignoring that there are far larger geopolitical and economic stakes drive the decision of India, United States and China in the region.

The larger narrative suggests that China's rise and domination are more suitable for peace in the region. It praises the global initiatives launched by the Chinese government and advises India to accept the Belt and Road Initiative, rather than imagining itself as a rival to China.

Peace could come to the entire region if India decides to become a part of the Asian 'order' being created under the Belt and Road Initiative and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Unfortunately, Modi and the BJP's obsessive ambition to emerge as China's 'equal' has propelled them towards an alliance with America and may consign South Asia to remain a 'zone of crisis' in the New Cold War. – Munir Akram, Peace is difficult, 14 April 2019.

The above article also claims that the rise of the PM Narendra Modi and the nationalist forces in India are likely to intensify geopolitical competition involving India, China and Pakistan.

Few of the articles also link the enmity between India and Pakistan with the ideology of the ruling political party in India. The narrative follows a circular loop. It starts with describing PM Modi and the BJP as communal. Then it claims that Modi has failed in delivering on his promise of economic progress during his first tenure 2014-19, and now to hide his failures he is using nationalistic rhetoric to succeed in general elections.

Rising Hindu nationalism was described as hostile to Pakistan and to Muslim minorities in India in the coded texts. The uncompromising stand of India over bilateral disputes was seen as the source of hostilities and problems in the region. Some of the articles also argue that the ill-treatment of Muslims in Kashmir is likely to worsen under the rule of the Hindu nationalist party and will further harm bilateral relations with Pakistan. This argument was made to lay a moral claim on the territory and its people.

One of the articles argues that the geopolitical and geo-economic dimensions are the reasons non-state actors are being used by countries in South Asia to hurt each other as terrorist attacks and insurgency also affect the economic prosperity and potential growth of the targeted country. This argument hints at the harbouring of militant groups as a tool of statecraft by Pakistan, while claiming that other countries in the region also do it.

Few of the articles in the opinion pages of *Dawn* also dealt with India's role in Afghanistan and underlined the Pakistani establishment's desire to provide Taliban with a legitimate role in governing Afghanistan after the departure of US troops. They dismissed the US-backed Afghan government as a puppet which is unlikely to survive the Taliban offensive without US security cover.

Few of the articles also questioned the Indian presence in Afghanistan because India could use its presence in Afghanistan to destabilize troubled regions of Pakistan, mostly by supporting an insurgency in Baluchistan and Pashtun dominated areas.

One of the articles also highlights that India opposes US withdrawal and providing a political role to Taliban in governing Afghanistan.

Equally little needs to be said about India's dislike for the shape of the current peace bid in Afghanistan. Any viable peace deal will legitimise the Taliban's role in Afghanistan. To add to India's worries, if the sun begins to set on US troop presence as part of the deal, India would lose the hard security umbrella that enabled it to successfully expand its development footprint in Afghanistan post-9/11. It makes little sense for India to support either. - Moeed Yusuf, Afghan Peace, 07 May 2019

In other words, Indians in Afghanistan would be targeted by the Taliban after the departure of the US forces and no one would be able to protect them. India and Pakistan are perceived as adversaries in Afghanistan and their perceived interests are considered poles apart not only in *Dawn's* narrative (Joshi, 2014).

In an example that demonstrates the centrality of India in the Pakistani imagination, one of the articles argues that Pakistan can have good relations with Iran despite the objections of Saudi Arabia, which has a cordial relationship with India. It is a distant link but illustrates how even minor points are made in relation to India.

Dawn's writers also claim that the Indian media aggravating the situation by indulging in warmongering and supporting the policies of the right-wing government.

armchair 'generals' on prime-time talk shows egged on their respective establishments towards war; the Indian media was particularly vitriolic in its shrill anti-Pakistan pronouncements. – Editorial, Fake news and war hysteria, 11 March 2019

It is important to note that one of the columnists questioned Pakistan's continued support for Islamic terrorist groups operating in Kashmir. It argues that rather than serving any strategic depth to Pakistan, the country was being isolated internationally due to the cross-border attacks by Islamic terror organizations.

A conciliatory perspective toward India is rare, whereas the hawkish perspective dominates. When there is a more conciliatory approach, it follows a pattern where the larger narrative first states and emphasizes Pakistan's stated position on Kashmir and its legitimacy, then it curbing support to Islamic militant groups attacking India, as the existing practice involves many risks.

The possibility of nuclear war was underlined in the texts of many articles if India decided to retaliate militarily against militant organizations based in Pakistan. One article went to the extent of claiming that the Kashmir dispute posed an existential threat to life on the planet as, in a nuclear war, tens of millions of people would likely perish directly and nuclear winter would hit the planet, resulting also in global economic collapse.

As Pakistan is compelled to extend material support to the Kashmiri freedom movement, war with India will become almost inevitable. Every war game of a Pakistan-India conflict indicates the high probability of its escalation to the nuclear level. Recent studies have concluded that a nuclear exchange in South Asia will kill over 100 million people, devastate the entire region and trigger a 'small nuclear winter' and global economic collapse. –

Genocide, war or peace?, Munir Akram, March 17, 2019

Two further elements were present in this theme. First, "no new normal" should be established regarding the Indian reaction to Pulwama suicide attack, that is it must not become a routine for India to target militant groups inside Pakistan's territory after every terror attack. Secondly, India must not believe that its Balakot strike succeeded, as it would erode the stability of mutual deterrence.

One article commented on the struggle between the security establishment and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the issue of dealing with India. It suggested that the security establishment targeted politicians who were willing to normalize bilateral relations with India.

Pakistan's real hidden rulers can and have often removed assertive civilian rulers covertly via dubious cases. That Nawaz had disputes with these forces on ties with India and jihadists is known, fans say. - Political prisoner, Dr Niaz Murtaza, 09 April 2019}

As the above paragraph suggests the followers of former PM of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif believe that he was targeted by the military establishment because he was opposed to supporting militant outfits against India and preferred normalization of relations. The use of the words 'fans say' is also notable. The author distanced himself from the stated position, although he was arguing against the treatment meted out to former PM Nawaz Sharif by the nexus of judiciary and military establishment.

One of the articles also claims that due to the geopolitical considerations, the countries in the region support terrorists against each other. It is interesting to note that Pakistan has only four neighbours: Afghanistan, India, Iran and China. Except for China, all other neighbours blame Pakistan for supporting and exporting Jihadi groups (S. Ganguly & Howenstein, 2009; Rehman, 2014; Stern, 2000).

The narrative in the opinion pages of *Dawn* represents India and Pakistan as geopolitical adversaries, who belong to two different camps led by China and the United States. Afghanistan was also described as Pakistan's backyard and theatre of conflict for both the nations. While India is represented as a threat that is fomenting troubles in restive regions of Pakistan. Mainstream media, PM Modi and his BJP party, previous ruling governments, even Indians settled in the United States were described as antagonistic to the interests of Pakistan in the coded text.

4.4 Majoritarian Hindu state

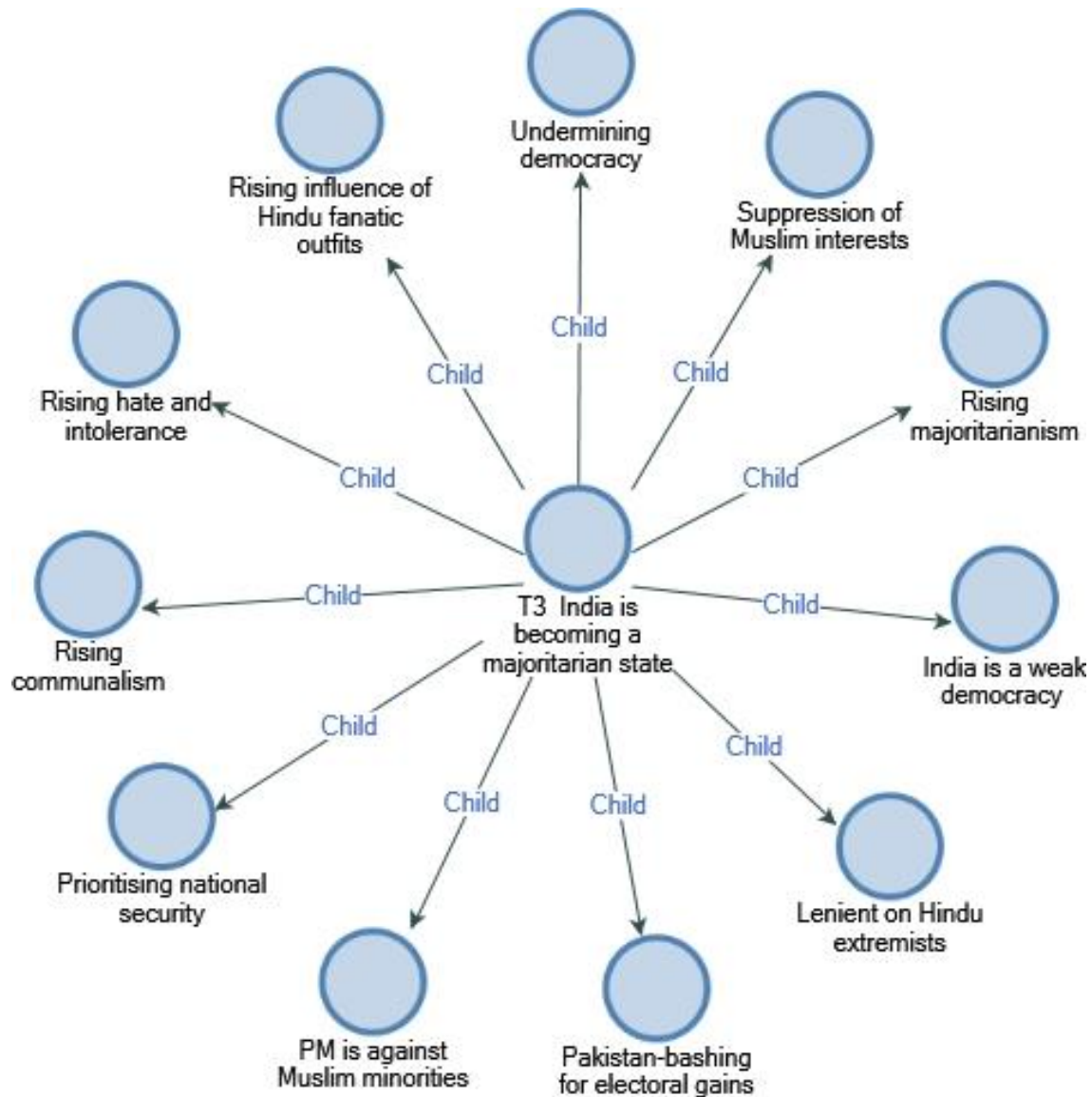


Figure 6 Project map mentioning all the subthemes of theme 3

India is becoming a majoritarian state under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party is identified as the third major theme in this study. A total of 86 paragraphs from 33 files has been coded under this theme. It has eleven sub-themes. All the subthemes refer to the emerging majoritarian tendencies in India under the BJP's rule.

1. BJP uses Pakistan for electoral gains
2. The Indian state is lenient on Hindu extremists
3. PM Modi is against Muslim minorities
4. Prioritizing national security over development
5. Rising communalism
6. Rising hate and intolerance
7. Rising influence of Hindu fanatic outfits
8. Rising majoritarianism
9. Suppression of Muslim interests
10. Undermining democracy
11. India is a weak democracy.



Figure 7 Word cloud of all the paragraphs pinned under theme 3

The word cloud generated by using all coded paragraphs under this theme captured the words including Modi, Muslims, Pakistani, Hindus, Indian, accused, majority, Hindutva, hatred, attack, killed, BJP, nationalism, death, violence, Nehru, democracy, communal and campaign among others.

The coded texts under this theme refer to the changing nature of the Indian polity under the prime ministership of Narendra Modi. The rise in religious fundamentalism, intolerance to dissent, violence against minorities and the deteriorating human rights situation in Kashmir valley were highlighted to suggest that India was no longer functioning as a liberal democracy.

The narrative in *Dawn* stresses that the tilt towards prominence of national security issues in India's general elections rather than a focus on traditionally prominent issues such as employment opportunities, electricity, roads, water supply, healthcare etc is not a good sign for peace and prosperity in the region. The texts also highlight increasing majoritarian tendencies as Hindu fundamentalists increasingly target Muslims. The BJP government's attempts to deal with unrest in Kashmir was also described in terms of Hindu bigotry, hate and intolerance.

The narrative also emphasizes the tendency among BJP supporters to label opposition to Modi as hatred against India. It also highlighted many of the trends to bring the spotlight on the weaker nature of Indian democracy including police brutalities, the duplicity of Indian leaders, successful US lobbying in the appointment of ministers, feuds among the higher judiciary and widespread support for jingoism in the country.

The narrative in *Dawn* also focuses on what it portrays as the regressive turn India has taken under the present ruling government, where extremists are celebrated as icons and liberals are being targeted for their views. The texts suggest that instead of silencing communal propaganda, the BJP government was lenient on Hindu extremists (unlike previous governments), who now feel empowered to attack minorities with impunity.

The narrative in the opinion pages of *Dawn* refers to the various aspects of majoritarian tendencies emerging in Indian society under the BJP rule. It characterizes Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a

divisive figure, who has polarized Indian society on religious lines. It also underlines the injustices against Muslim minorities and lower-caste Hindus.

Most of the article argues that under the BJP's rule, not only liberal social perspectives have become unacceptable, but even criticism of the government has been dismissed as unpatriotic. They also highlight that after the BJP came to power Hindu fundamentalist groups started functioning with impunity as state law and order machinery was lenient in dealing with them.

Dawn writers suggest that the BJP government has increased the rhetoric against Muslims and Pakistan due to the general elections, and was functioning against the norms of democracy and trying to polarize society for electoral gains. If BJP leaders succeeded in their campaigns, then the outcome of general elections would be decided.

The argument runs that a politics of fear is prevalent in India under Modi's rule, unlike the past, and India is gradually changing as right-wing tendencies are in ascendency. Earlier, majoritarian tendencies had limited influence, but now right-wing outfits in India are openly targeting Muslim minorities and questioning their commitment to the country (Anderson & Jaffrelot, 2018; Basu, 2018; Subramanian, 2020).

'Muslims are not entitled to assimilation and deserve expulsion' – F.S. Aijazuddin, Quit home, go home, 25 April 2019

Dawn's opinion writers used various examples to substantiate the allegation that India has become a majoritarian Hindu state, arguing that the BJP wanted to throw Muslims out of India and that the exodus of Muslims "could begin with the states bordering Pakistan". BJP President Amit Shah's controversial reference to Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh as termites was cited to prove the communal nature of the party and its leaders.

One of the articles also claimed that the BJP considered modernity and the project to unify Hindus as incompatible. Another article alleged that Hindu fundamentalists had formed a plan to kill a high-ranking police officer who had been investigating cases against their illegal activities during the terror attack on Mumbai in 2008.

Some of the articles specifically discussed the BJP's election manifesto as it promised to make India a Hindu nation, building a temple at Ayodhya and removing article 370 and 35 A. Questions related to the well-being of Muslims in India are repeatedly raised in the opinion pages of *Dawn* and linked to the BJP's rise and changing character of the Indian state.

One column claims that the BJP is trying to limit Muslims to specific towns, cities and certain areas.

public spaces in schools and colleges and universities have created an extremely restrictive environment in which the powerful appear to be proud of excluding Muslims and would likely welcome thoroughly strong-arm tactics that would restrict Muslims to certain living spaces in certain areas of Indian cities and towns. The narrowing of the Indian mind, the evisceration of Indian democracy, it seems, is here to stay, regardless of what the outcome of the ongoing elections may be. - Rafia Zakaria, *Winning the empathy*, 24 April 2019

Another expressed apprehension that after the elections, India would provide citizenship to non-Muslim asylum seekers but Muslims would not be offered the benefit of the new law. Indeed, exactly as feared, the BJP introduced the Citizenship Amendment Act on 11 December 2019 and "fast-tracked citizenship for persecuted Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who arrived in India before Dec. 31, 2014, from Muslim-majority Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan" (Bhat, 2019). That led to protests and riots in New Delhi during President Donald Trump's visit in early 2020 (Vaid, 2020).

Under this theme, *Dawn* writers also claimed that the BJP was controlling the media to expand its ideology and that the government was targeting dissenting journalists, while mainstream media was reflecting right-wing biases.

One of the articles argued that Modi had explicitly

undermined democratic institutions, criminalised dissent and played up fears of the 'outsider' to try and institutionalise a tyranny of the demographic majority – Sajjad Akhtar, Who is sovereign, 19 April 2019

The BJP government is represented as being intolerant of dissenting voices and discouraging of a multiplicity of voices on controversial issues. Modi is characterized as a strongman who demonizes his opponents and strongly opposes liberal ideas in the social sphere, and who has spread so much war hysteria that the common masses in India would likely oppose any peace efforts with Pakistan.

Writers also connect the condition of Muslim minorities with other marginalized groups in India, by portraying Muslims, Dalits, tribal community, rationalists, independent journalists and secular political opponents among others as victims of Hindu fundamentalism. They also flagged issues of the issue of the lynching of Muslims for cow slaughter and eating beef, attacks on left-leaning liberal intellectuals across the country, attempts to demonize poor Muslim migrants from Bangladesh among others.

Interestingly, in this narrative journalists are seen as victims of the government, where other *Dawn* texts view Indian media as a propaganda machine for the government. This inconsistency demonstrates how *Dawn* writers select and argue different things to illustrate a case, but the focus is always on how India is at fault/in the wrong/a threat.

One article criticizes an official statement by the External Affairs Ministry in India for not mentioning Muslims and Mosques when condemning the 2019 terrorist attack in New Zealand in which 51 people were killed. This instance was mentioned as a sign of deep-rooted hatred in the Indian

government for Muslims. An article's use of the phrase "explicitly anti-Pakistan and implicitly anti-Muslim" to describe Modi's election campaign neatly captures *Dawn's* wider representation of PM Narendra Modi.

4.5 Hostile & Aggressive India

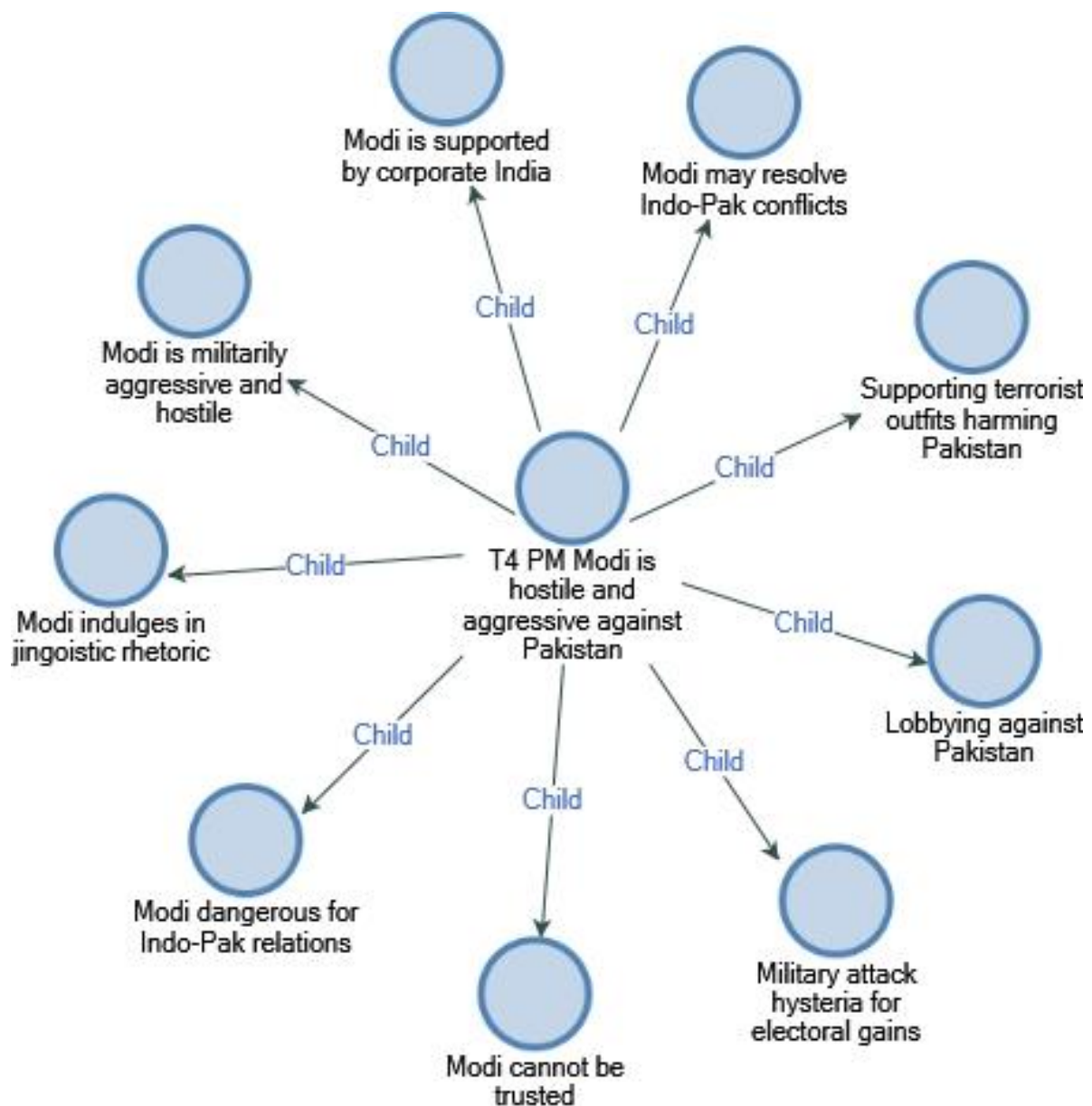


Figure 8 Project map mentioning all the subthemes of theme 4

PM Modi is hostile and aggressive against Pakistan is the fourth major theme of this study. A total of 36 paragraphs from 18 files were coded under this theme. It has the following nine subthemes:

1. Modi cannot be trusted
2. Lobbying against Pakistan
3. Military attack hysteria for electoral gains
4. Modi is dangerous for Indo-Pakistan relations

from that disturbingly bad dream to a 'glad morning'. In the end, Hitler's Germany was defeated by the Allies and destroyed by its own lies. - Quit home, go home, F.S.
Aijazuddin, 2019

The texts also claim that Modi was trying to win elections by indulging in communal rhetoric, because he had failed in delivering on his campaign promises of job creation, better infrastructure and high growth during his first tenure 2014 - 2019. Instead, he was relying on national security concerns, the Balakot strike and anti-Muslim politics to polarize people on communal lines.

Following the Pulwama episode, which brought Pakistan and India to the brink of war not too long ago, jingoism and war hysteria were at their peak on both sides, with the Indian media playing a particularly vitriolic role in drumming up support for war. - F-16s & disinformation, Editorial, 7 April 2019

The texts suggest that India was gripped by war hysteria due to Modi's propaganda campaign and this would help his party in the general elections. They also suggest PM Modi has changed the Indian approach towards Pakistan. First, he propagated the idea of surgical strikes inside the Pakistani territory to dismantle terrorist camps. Then, he resorted to an act of aggression in Balakot to revenge the Pulwama suicide bombing. His approach to Pakistan is described as aggressive.

INDIA'S election continues to move apace — sadly, to the beat of war drums. In recent weeks, Prime Minister — or should it be 'Chowkidar' — Narendra Modi has transformed his campaign into an explicitly anti-Pakistan and implicitly anti-Muslim diatribe. — Huma Yusuf, Modi's threat, 6 May 2019

There was a uniformity to the narrative on PM Modi, with all articles carrying his name portraying him negatively. There was evident distrust in his leadership, and he was held responsible for

deteriorating bilateral relations between the two nations. Even the remarks by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan that chances of resolution of bilateral disputes are high if the right-wing regime was in power in India were questioned in *Dawn's* opinion pages.

The discussion in the op-ed pages of *Dawn* is shaped by rising hostilities in the region, as polling for the general elections in India took place just weeks after the Pulwama suicide attack and the Modi government's response to it. As such, PM Modi is characterised here as a warmonger and his approach to Pakistan is criticized as hawkish and ultra-nationalist. PM Modi is criticized in almost all editorials and columns mentioning his name. There was only a difference of degree, otherwise, he was dismissed as a fascist, fundamentalist and Hindu extremist.

As has been visible in the days leading up to the election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have deployed every flavour of divisive rhetoric to whet the appetite of their Hindu nationalist base. Such has been the vile desperation that even a near war with Pakistan was brought into the mix, the attendant claims of the killing of militants and the downing of Pakistani F-16 planes all to be admitted as fabrications, as perceived. -

Rafia Zakaria, *Winning with empathy*, 24 April 2019

Dawn writers claim that India started the military escalation by targeting the alleged terrorist training camp at Balakot and that Pakistan had rightfully retaliated against it. The narrative does not recognize the role of the Pulwama suicide bombing, and instead focuses on PM Modi and describes the Balakot strikes as an act of aggression. The narrative focuses on Indian atrocities in Kashmir as the catalyst for the Pulwama terror attack, and not the activities of Islamic militant groups.

One of the articles specifically questioned the popular notion on two grounds. First, under the Modi government tensions are constantly rising and it has made no efforts to solve the bilateral issues amicably. Second, Congress and other opponents of BJP might not appreciate the idea that

Pakistanis are questioning their legitimacy to take important decision to govern the country. While others argued that PM Modi does not believe in peace and he cannot be trusted.

Some of the articles also raised the issue of the plight of Pakistani nationals imprisoned in India. Most of them are fishermen who inadvertently cross maritime boundaries, as there is no border demarcation on the seas and most of the fishermen use substandard boats with no modern equipment to track their exact location. One of the editorials claims that the death and beatings of Pakistani prisoners inside Indian jails have increased due to BJP's anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan rhetoric during the election campaign.

Some articles point out that when Modi was elected in 2014 he promised economic development but, in the 2019 general elections, he is gathering support for his campaign based on national security issues, and the writers claim that the escalation of tensions with Pakistan is part of a plan by India to divert focus from unrest in Kashmir valley.

The National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's doctrine of 'offensive defence' was also highlighted as an example of the aggressive nature of the Modi government in a few of the articles. As per this doctrine, India must not act entirely defensively but should try to raise the cost of hostilities in the restive regions of Pakistan as a deterrent (George, 2018), thus rejecting the idea in India that a peaceful and stable Pakistan is in India's long-term interest (Jamal, 2016).

Many of the articles further claim that India had failed in achieving anything through the Balakot strike other than using the event to advance Modi's strongman credentials amongst his followers. One article even describes the electoral victory of BJP as an outcome of communal frenzy in the 2014 general elections, while other texts mostly focus on highlighting communal politics & anti-Pakistan rhetoric in the 2019 general elections. Throughout PM Modi was described as communal and a warmonger.

Modi's recklessness may have won him votes in the Hindu heartland, but it brought the region close to a conflagration. The underlying calculation of Modi's escalation was that India could afford this brinkmanship given the country's growing diplomatic clout. – Zahid Hussain, *If Modi returns*, 22 May 2019

Another *Dawn* article starts with a sentence that PM Modi has an iron will, nerves of steel, heart of lead and a war chest of gold, and builds on a narrative of how his hard stance against Pakistan will lead to war. It ends with the words

Gold, lead and twisted metal make for poor coffins. – *Twisted Coffins*, 21 March 2019

Dawn's opinion writers also raise concerns about the BJP's polarizing election manifesto promises to transform India into a Hindu nation, build the Ayodhya temple, remove the special status for Jammu and Kashmir, and implement the national register of citizenship and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The Citizenship Amendment Bill proposed to offer citizenship to persecuted religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, except Muslims, and *Dawn's* writers argued that India was highly discriminatory in excluding them from the fast-tracked citizenship proposed in the bill. Indeed, after winning the general elections, the BJP introduced the Citizenship Amendment Act, which, for the first time since independence in 1947, used religion as a criterion to grant citizenship (Regan, Gupta, & Khan, 2019). India's opposition parties described it as discriminatory and nationwide protests were launched against it (Dutt, 2019).

Overall, the narratives in this theme describe Modi's political ideas as explicitly anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim, and argue that ongoing war hysteria in the election campaign is the result of the BJP's rhetoric on Pakistan. Modi is described as dangerous for peace in the region and unable to be trusted.

4.6 Presence of liberal politics in India

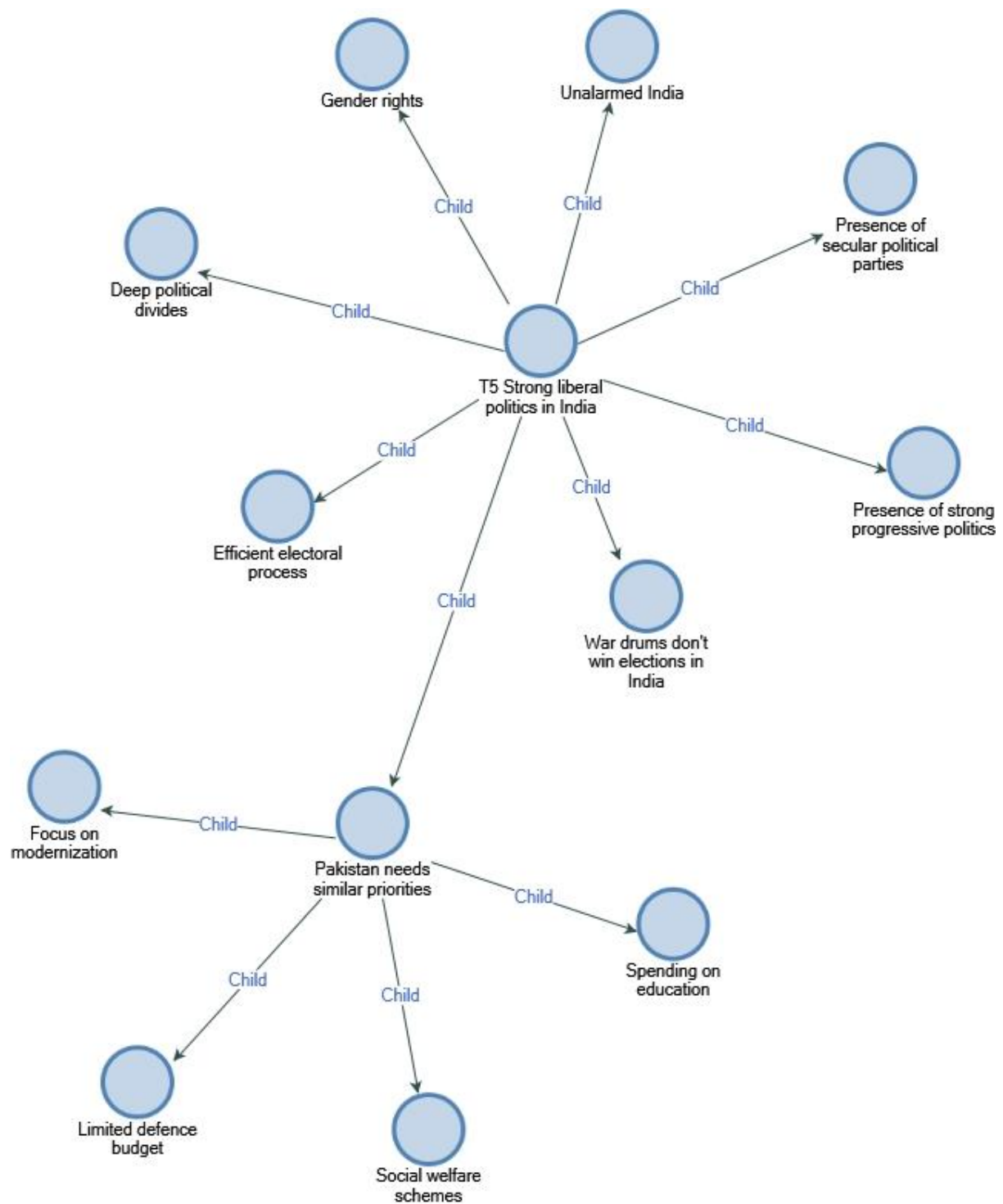


Figure 10 Project map mentioning all the subthemes of theme 5

India has a strong tradition of liberal politics is identified as a fifth major theme. 35 paragraphs from 23 files were coded under this theme. In this theme, the word 'liberal' has been used in the wider

context and includes the secular character of Indian polity and welfare priorities of the state among other things. It has nine subthemes:

1. Pakistan needs similar priorities
2. Gender rights
3. Presence of secular political parties
4. Shared past
5. War drums don't win an election in India
6. Presence of strong progressive politics
7. Efficient electoral politics
8. Unalarmed India
9. Deep political divides.

The subtheme 'Pakistan needs similar focus' also consists of

1. Social welfare schemes
2. Focus on modernization
3. Spending on education
4. Limited defence budget.

The texts pinned under this theme suggest that India has a vibrant and assertive civil society. It has secular politicians, public intellectuals, political parties, non-governmental organizations and vocal student leaders committed to different political ideologies, and its secular opposition parties and large corporate groups have a vested interest in communal harmony, peace, order and stability. The leadership of the main opposition party the Indian National Congress (INC) was also described as secular.

One article compares the situation of women's rights in both countries to highlight the gap in 'gender equality' in Pakistan.

Unfortunately, Pakistani attitudes towards working women are not as forward-thinking as in India, and women police officers are the targets of the same misogyny as the victims they are charged with protecting. – Bina Shah, Women in police, 14 April 2019

While writing on the role of women in the police department and their exemplary work, the article author highlights how a senior female police officer led an Indian investigation team consisting mostly of men after the 2012 Delhi bus rape case, noting that was unlikely to happen in Pakistan. The article also highlighted the work of a limited number of women in the police department in Pakistan in relation to their difficulties in the workplace, and underlined the poor condition of women in society in general.

When discussing other problems in society, many authors cited experiences in India that could be replicated in Pakistan. One underlined the need to implement a job guarantee scheme to boost the economy and empower poorer sections of the population, citing India's National Rural Guarantee Scheme and suggesting that a similar scheme should be designed and implemented in Pakistan.

While another article notes that unlike the current Indian government, past governments did not divide people based on their religion to get political support, rather India had remained secular and had not discriminated against any group (Smith, 2015), until the present ruling regime (Basu, 2018; Kim, 2017). This suggests to some extent that a focus on Modi and the BJP government, as evidenced by their dominance in the other themes, might be distorting *Dawn's* representation of India, that is, that the newspaper's lens is too narrowly focused on a government it views as hostile and aggressive.

Other articles suggest Pakistan should learn from solutions that have been tried and tested in India, such as with its insurance schemes for farmers and moderation and accreditation systems for

schools. In arguing that Pakistan's school accreditation system needs improvement, one author draws parallels with India.

India is a pretty good example, in so far that even students from relatively privileged households continue to sit for their federal or state board examinations, even in elite schools. – Umair Javed, Credentialed inequality, 25 March 2019

The same article notes that India had successfully updated its school curricula and closed the quality gap between their system and global standards at the school level.

In another article about the state of higher education and the low level of academic skills among scholars of hard sciences, an author argued that barring a small section of bright scholars', Pakistan's doctoral students would not be able to get through the entrance exams to India's IITs' (Indian Institute of Technologies) for undergraduate courses or would flunk in undergraduate exams in top-notch western universities.

Notably, while criticizing India for rising fundamentalism under the Modi regime, few of the *Dawn's* opinion writers also highlight the liberal forces resisting these tendencies as well. There are a

large group of men and women who have dedicated their lives to the eradication of superstition and blind faith from the Indian milieu. – Heritage and Hex, Jawed Naqvi, 23 April 2019

One column highlighted various campaigns by theatre groups to promote social harmony and peace. While few of the articles also described the Indian National Congress, the main opposition party in India, as a secular outfit. They discussed how the Indian National Congress, along with other secular outfits, could defeat the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is also interesting to note the texts in *Dawn's* opinion pages sees BJP's rule in India as problematic and hopes that under the rule of secular outfit it would be easier for Pakistan to manage bilateral relations. It also reflects on the spectrum of opinion expressed in *Dawn's* opinion pages on India.

One article argued that India had upheld the principle of popular sovereignty to a much greater extent than Pakistan, and highlighted resistance at top Indian universities against rising fundamentalism in India, specifically referring to the Jawaharlal Nehru University student union president who was arrested by police and went on to contest parliamentary elections.

Modi's efforts notwithstanding, India's educational institutions remain relatively democratic spaces where students can learn about competing political ideologies and actively campaign around progressive causes. In Pakistan, students like Mashal Khan are hunted down by peers and administrators alike, let alone encouraged to take their experiences on campus onto a countrywide political stage. – Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, 19 April 2019

This article also mentions Mashal Khan, a Pakistani University student who was lynched by staff and students for blasphemy. His death made headlines in South Asia after the video of his lynching in the university premises was widely distributed on social networking sites (Farhan & Akbar, 2017)

One of the articles in *Dawn's* opinion pages also deals with the concept of development and its linkages with democracy, suggesting that India had progressed well so far, especially given its more than 100 ethnicities and deep divisions based on caste, class, ethnicity and religion.

India is hugely complex, but still doing well. Its case doesn't disprove complexity's drag but shows how to overcome it via democracy. China is equally large, but much less complex ethnically and class-wise. It has grown faster under dictatorship. Autocracy in the more complex India would not produce higher growth but higher conflict. – Dr Niaz Murtaza, Complex States, 12 March 2019}

There were not many comments and opinions on the functioning of democracy in India (most focused instead on the role of PM Narendra Modi and his policies in deforming the country) but one article states:

the Indian electoral process is the envy of nascent democracies for its logistical efficiency — an electorate of 900 million contesting 545 Lok Sabha seats, electronic voting conducted in seven phases, spread over a six-week period staggered from April 11 to May 19, with all the results declared on 23 May 2019. – F.S. Aijazuddin, Unjustifiable ends, 28 March 2019

This was the only reference highlighting the efficiency of the electoral system in India, despite of the fact that general elections were on the full swing and reported globally by the international media outlets, think tanks and public intellectuals interested in world affairs.

Interestingly, the electoral battle is presented as a contest between secular and communal forces, with congress and its allies represented as secular forces (and the BJP as a reactionary group that had risen due to religious fundamentalism), and secularism as the force that had kept a multi-ethnic and multi-faith India united.

In this theme, *Dawn's* narratives use positive aspects of India to demand social and economic changes in Pakistan. Many of the articles display a left-leaning tilt and argue for bringing changes in Pakistani society related to women rights, freedom in educational institutions and reducing the overarching influence of religion on the legislature and so on.

4.7 Moral equivalence

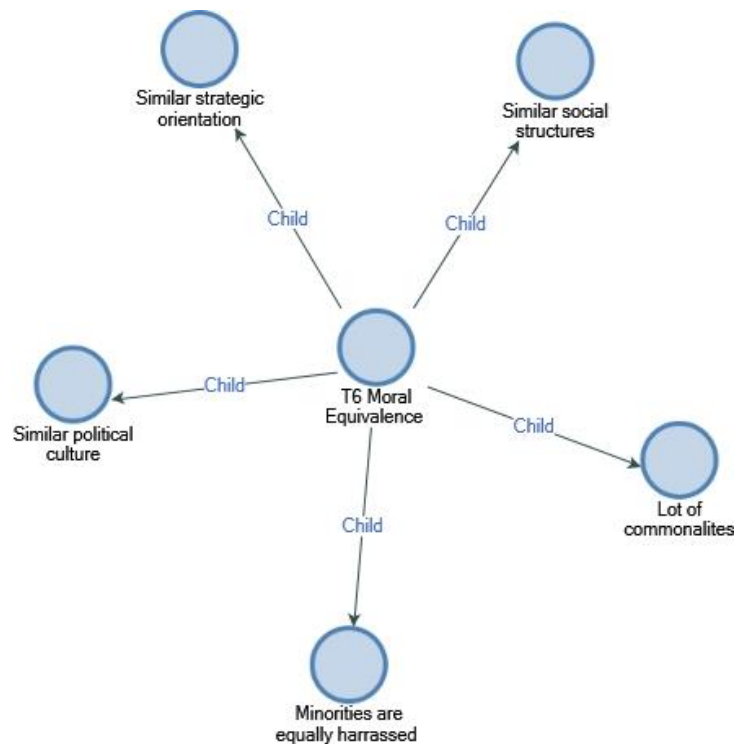


Figure 12 Project map mentioning all the subthemes of theme 6

Attempts to establish a moral equivalence is the last theme in this study. 15 paragraphs from 13 files were coded under this theme. In terms of the number of coded paragraphs and articles, it is the least prevalent pattern in the data. It has five subthemes:

1. Minorities are equally harassed in both countries
2. Commonalities
3. Similar social structure
4. Similar strategic orientation
5. Similar political culture.

This theme is based on the narrative that both the countries are facing a similar level of social problems and often appears when writers are discussing internal problems in Pakistan, and refer to India as facing a similar problem. The effect is to dilute the problem and normalize the social ills in

The texts do not focus on cultural commonalities but mostly attempt to establish a moral equivalence in negative traits, that is that both countries are equally intolerant, unstable, lack democratic political culture, horribly treat their religious minorities and so on.

Attempts to establish a moral equivalence are targeted to seek moral parity with India as a nation-state. This narrative helps in normalizing and diluting the existence of problems within Pakistan. It suggests, too, that India always looms large in the Pakistani imagination – that even when talking about domestic issues, Pakistani writers draw on India as a natural reference point.

Similarly, internal problems, such as problems faced by minorities due to forced conversions, abduction of girls and their subsequent marriages to Muslim men, blasphemy laws, declaration of Ahmadi Muslims as non-Muslims, targeted killings of Hazara community, child marriages, debarring minorities from occupying higher positions in the government and violence against Baloch nationalists are discussed by way of comparison to problems in India. Many of the parallels drawn are only remotely connected, if at all, but are presented as similar ideological developments. The social, political and economic situation in India works as a benchmark for *Dawn's* writers. One after another, they make comparisons with India to pass judgement on the state of affairs in Pakistan, and paint India with a similar brush.

For instance, in an article claiming that India was also posturing aggressively in relation to nuclear weapons, the writer argues that India and Pakistan had similar perspectives on the use of nuclear weapons, with both resorting to brinkmanship to force concessions from the international community.

The fear of nuclear war is the reason the world has been so interested in preventing a Pakistan-India conflict since the 1998 tests. Both countries know that. Earlier, when they brandished their nuclear capabilities during crises, it had partly meant to unnerve third

parties and force them to make concessions. This strategy worked in past major crises, suitably scaring the world and forcing them to show greater intent to de-escalate tensions immediately. – Moeed Yusuf, A changed approach, 16 April 2019

By putting both countries on the same footing, this narrative dilutes the threat of nuclear weapons by Pakistan against India.

Another article claims that people are still struggling for real freedom in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Rather than objectively weighing these contexts, the article generalizes across the three countries, which have charted different directions since their independence.

The same article also argues that colonial-era laws had been implemented by military and civilian rulers and state-backed mobs in these countries, establishing moral equivalence in their respective excesses of state while ignoring the different nature of each country's situation.

Few of the articles coded under this theme also draw parallels between Hindu and Islamic fundamentalism, arguing that Hindu fundamentalism exists on religious lines and it is not so different from Islamic fundamentalism. These parallels orient readers to a view that India and Pakistan are the same, and that Pakistan's problems are not unique (and maybe do not stem from its missteps) because India faces similar challenges.

The issue of forced conversions in Pakistan is similarly outlined in relation to India. When criticising Pakistan's response to the abduction of two young Hindu girls who were converted to Islam and forced to marry their abductors, an editorial refers in passing to India as also having a poor record toward religious minorities.

National discourse on minority rights, particularly of Pakistani Hindus, should not be framed in opposition to India's own abysmal track record regarding religious minorities, but of its own

accord, in unqualified commitment to affirmatively upholding their fundamental rights. –

Editorial, Forced conversion, 26 March 2019.

One of the columns also highlights the issue of honour crimes in Pakistan, discussing the killing of women for dancing and singing with men at a wedding.

‘Honour’ crimes have long been a thorn in Pakistan’s side — taking the lives of women who were accused of clapping and enjoying themselves at weddings, women who were related to men who had erred in some way, women who wanted to pursue higher education, and women who were simply unfortunate. - The crime of shame washing, Rafia Zakaria, 22 May 2019

The article goes on to say that reports of honour killings also emerge in India, adding to an overall pattern of looking for similar problems in neighbouring India when discussing problems in Pakistan.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Context of themes

The narratives in *Dawn* generally back a conservative Pakistani position, particularly in relation to the Kashmir conflict, which looms large in the backdrop and shapes *Dawn's* narratives about India.

This study endorses three hypotheses: First, that *Dawn* mostly focusses on conflicts and differences in relation to India; Second, that *Dawn* views India from the perspective of geopolitics and global power structures; And third, that it repeats the perspectives of the ruling establishment.

Generally, four reasons are given in the literature for Pakistan's concern about India. First, Hinduism and Islam are two opposite philosophical systems and have deep ideological conflicts. Second, Pakistan is fearful of India's size and increasing economic and strategic asymmetry. Third, there is a legacy of misperceptions and mistrust due to partition, and fourth, the unsolved issue of Kashmir (R. Hussain, 2006). This study suggests that *Dawn* views India as an enemy state due to its focus on the Kashmir conflict, rising Hindu fundamentalism and Modi's aggressive fear-mongering.

The themes underlining the rising Hindu fundamentalism, increasing hostilities under PM Modi's tenure, India's unwillingness to address Kashmir dispute, attempt to seek moral parity with India and recognition of the presence of secular politics in India are generated in this study. The coded texts pinned under six identified themes highlight the key patterns in the discussions, debates & representation of India in *Dawn*. The themes and their contradictory nature also highlight the ideological variations in the coded texts.

The narrative in *Dawn* represents India as a Hindu state. There is merit in the argument that India has taken a right turn under the BJP government. These changes in India's social and political landscape have been observed by the scholars across the globe (Anderson & Jaffrelot, 2018; Chatterji, Hansen, & Jaffrelot, 2019; Kim, 2017) and international news outlets as well (Subramanian, 2020; Taseer, 2019). The questions are being raised about the communal nature of the BJP and its leaders (Adeney, 2015). "At no point in the history of modern India have they wielded so much— or

such legitimate—power within the Indian state and among middle classes as they do now” (Banaji, 2018, p. 335). Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the “authoritarian populism” is on the rise and “secular liberalism” is on decline (Harriss, Corbridge, & Jeffrey, 2017). The rising influence of Hindu fundamentalists has threatened the social fabric of Indian society. Violence against the Muslims have been increased all over the country and the government has chosen to remain silent on the issue (Ashraf, 2019; Chacko & Talukdar, 2020; Griswold, 2019).

The *Dawn* also describes India’s hostility towards Pakistan in communal terms. Although Modi’s approach to foreign policy cannot be described as fundamentally different from the previous governments’ (Basrur, 2017; S. Ganguly, 2017). Nevertheless, the BJP government allowed security forces to conduct surgical strikes in border areas in Pakistan Administered Kashmir against militant camps (Gokhale, 2017; Sasikumar, 2019). Though, “India has been frustrated by what it sees as the Pakistan military’s support for terror groups that strike inside its territory (Marlow, 2019, para 2). *Dawn* also describes the alleged retaliation against militant groups as aggressive and hostile policies towards Pakistan.

Dawn also recognized a few of the elements of liberal politics in India. It also highlighted the focus on economic and social welfare schemes designed to help the poor and downtrodden. This highlights the desire in the section of Pakistani elite to create a moderate state, as many of the positive portrayals appeared as a relative case in point for the state of affairs in Pakistan. Although it is important to note that the perceptions about India are changing globally after the BJP government came to power in 2014. Now India is increasingly being viewed as majoritarian Hindu state not treating its Muslim minorities as equals (Anderson & Jaffrelot, 2018; Anderson & Longkumer, 2018).

This study also captured the tendency in *Dawn* to establish moral parallels or equivalence by mentioning India while discussing the prevailing problems and social evils in the Pakistani society. India and Pakistan share a lot of traits, but both the countries have moved into different directions since the partition in 1947. Pakistani military and political establishment created a new identity for

itself based on religion. It tried to create a country culturally different from India by emphasizing on the role of Islam (Afzal, 2015b). A new national identity based on the religion has been forged by revamping education system and re-writing of history (Khan, 1985).

5.2 Outcomes/contributions

This study contributes to an understanding that *Dawn* tends to attribute responsibility for problems in Pakistan/India's bilateral relations on India and India's belligerence. It is an important contribution as *Dawn* is a part of the mainstream media in Pakistan with a wide readership and serves as a key platform and agenda-setter for discussion on issues of national interest. *Dawn* is also considered one of the liberal and less hawkish of Pakistan's mainstream media, so evidence here of a hard-line view toward India is noteworthy.

Media play an essential role in framing the public debate, "selecting certain issues and portraying them frequently and prominently, which leads people to perceive those issues as more important than others" (Wu & Coleman, 2009, p. 776). This study demonstrates how *Dawn's* opinion writers prioritize certain elements in relation to India, mostly conflicts, differences and divergent interests above all other issues. In this way, *Dawn* oversimplifies its representation of India. The theme 'India is reluctant to resolve Kashmir issue' is a further example of *Dawn's* oversimplification, in that the two countries' relations are boiled down to one dominant issue.

Interestingly, though this study was timed to capture the period of India's general elections, the election did not figure much in *Dawn's* opinion pages. That is not to say that it did not report on the election in its news coverage, but it showed limited interest in *commenting* on it. Instead, *Dawn* refers to the general elections mainly in passing when it argues that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is targeting Muslims and Pakistan for electoral benefits.

Dawn's attempts to establish a moral equivalence between India and Pakistan is a key finding of this study. The purposes and reasons of the moral equivalence are possibly connected to the struggle for

identity. The pursuit of parity with India has been Pakistan's ambition of the past (Haqqani, 2018). Also, the two-nation theory is premised on the logic that Hindus and Muslims cannot live together in one country, and it is possible that Pakistan looks for justification of the theory in Hindu-Muslim strife in India. Even the fault lines of Pakistan were discussed by underlining similar problems in India, which looms large as a reference point for Pakistani socio-politics. Much of *Dawn's* debate is framed in relation to India, and not just in terms of conflict; even when talking about the need for more liberal social policies in Pakistan, India is the reference point. *Dawn's* writers use India often to validate or invalidate their arguments, which is possibly linked to the struggle for a separate identity in Pakistan. In other words, themes identified here, such as rising majoritarian tendencies and attempts to establish moral equivalence have less to do with India and more to do with the struggle for identity in Pakistan.

5.4 Implications

The findings of this study have implications for the newspaper's editors and columnists, whose work tilted more towards favouring nationalist positions on bilateral disputes with India than conciliatory approaches. The narratives in *Dawn's* opinion pages amplifies dominant ideas and subscribes to a rigid position against India, and demonstrate a narrow range of views. Though it is natural to see dominant narratives/ideologies replicated in the mainstream media as many previous studies about the media and state relations suggest (Bennett, 1990; Hayes & Guardino, 2010; E. Herman & Chomsky, 2012; D. Kumar, 2006; Mullen, 2009).

Rather than presenting India as a place where diverse communities cooperate for peace and progress, *Dawn's* writers tend to look at developments in India from a Hindu-Muslim binary, and mostly question the intentions of the BJP government in terms of treating Muslims as equal citizens (notably, they rarely name any other religious or linguistic minorities in their editorials and columns). India is mostly represented as a battleground of Hindus and Muslims for dominance. It also suggests

an interesting area for further research about how much does *Dawn* serve an Indian Muslim readership.

5.4 Limitations

First, this study is qualitative research and did not quantify the trends described here. Although the numbers generated through NVivo provide a basic sense of the scale of trends to an extent, they cannot provide statistical accuracy, and were not relied on. This study assumes that each perspective is important irrespective of its quantity/prevalence; the aim was to capture and examine a snapshot of *Dawn's* narratives, not to weigh them in importance. This may prove a big assumption. It may be that repetitive themes reach readers more easily or reflect the intense commitment of newspaper to certain positions. However, further research (whether through audiences studies or content analysis over a longer timeframe) would be needed to test this.

Second, this study also has a methodological limitation since only those articles which carry the word 'India' at least once were included. All the references to India which are made without using the country's name have escaped inclusion (although the likelihood of implicit referrals without naming the nation are probably low).

Third, this study analyses the representation of India in *Dawn's* opinion pages during the general elections. The coded paragraphs reveal that the large proportion of discussion in the opinion pages during the selected period focussed mainly on the Kashmir conflict and the Pulwama aftermath. It is highly likely that the representation of India in *Dawn* is influenced by this charged atmosphere and could provide a distorted picture of how *Dawn* represents India. During a period of heightened tensions, the narrative is likely to be more hawkish. Studies about the representation of India during a more peaceful period might throw up different themes and sub-themes. Even if the nature of themes did not change drastically, the allocation of paragraphs to conciliatory and aggressive

stances might change in the absence of major escalations.

Fourth, this study has not drilled down into the details of each author (their names and background) or whether an article is a column or editorial, and instead treats all texts in the opinion pages as one unit. Within the limitations and brevity of a Master thesis this approach makes sense, however, it also conceals important details which might throw up more nuanced results about how individuals bring different narratives about India to their articles. It also conceals potential differences between 'guest' opinion (which might be commissioned to offer a contrary view) and the editorials, which are written to encapsulate the newspaper's voice. As many of the columns were written by overseas Pakistanis, former bureaucrats and civil society activists, further analysis might have divulged further details about the differences in narrative emanating from different sections of Pakistani society. Similarly, the texts could have been divided into gender lines as many of the columns were contributed by women columnists, providing an interesting measure for analysis.

Fifth, the representation of India in one newspaper is not adequate to make appropriate conclusions about the nature of representation in Pakistan's media as a whole. Similarly, the period selected for this research was also a limiting factor. Conducting this study for a longer period could have provided enough data to make more substantial findings regarding the patterns in representation of India in *Dawn*.

Sixth, the thematic analysis could be supported through other research methods to expand on the results. Along with statistical tools, interviews with the authors who contributed to the opinion pages of *Dawn* could help in explaining patterns in the representation of India and its impact, and would be a useful area for further research.

Seventh, coding based on paragraphs or sentences risks placing a text out of its context, and this is a limitation of the data that needs to be kept in mind. The paragraph as one independent unit can be

misleading, especially once detached from the overall argument made in the articles published as columns or editorials in the newspaper. Articles dealing with conflicts in particular might try to balance an argument by mentioning the opposite view but this may be lost in coding based smaller units, such as paragraphs or sentences or words.

Finally, in any interpretive study (as this is), there is a risk of bias on the part of the researcher. As an outsider looking in, I have some advantages in terms of not taking representations for granted, but also maybe some disadvantages in terms of missing cultural nuances.

5.5 Implications for the future

Dawn is considered a left-leaning newspaper in Pakistan (Tabassum, Shah, & Bilal, 2013) but preferred to remain neutral even during the Military coup of 1999 (Parveen & Zahoor, 2018). Although it publishes articles opposing extremism and the religious persecution of minorities. *Dawn* takes a “secular and tolerant approach to some of the burning issues in Pakistan” (Mezzera & Sial, 2010). Extremist groups and military establishment has targeted *Dawn* (Schorzman, 2018) and consider its approach as a compromise on core national issues. This study, however, suggests that *Dawn* does not pose much challenge to dominant narratives about India. Indeed, it has a strong nationalist tilt in dealing with issues related to India.

That means *Dawn* walks a line between supporting the state narrative on India and challenging the ruling establishment on internal Pakistan conflicts. That suggests an avenue for further studies on how *Dawn* navigates such as tightrope, particularly as so much of Pakistan’s internal politics is linked to its policies towards India. This might can be extended in several ways.

This study contributes to an understanding of the relationship between the state and *Dawn* in Pakistan. Its findings are in symmetry with the view that the mainstream media tend to reflect the interests of dominant groups or ruling establishment against perceived enemies and to become their

propaganda tool (Kellner, 2004; D. Kumar, 2006). Despite having differences over certain domestic issues, on matters of national interest *Dawn* mirrors the state on foreign policy objectives in relation to India. It contributes to narratives favouring the state's strategic goals. It shapes reality for its readers along the lines of popular understanding. It contributes to expanding the dominant narrative. These findings raise questions about whether the press functions as an extended arm of the state in Pakistan, even when the state has no direct control over it. As per the propaganda model, the purpose of media is to integrate people into the larger narratives about reality (E. Herman & Chomsky, 2012; E. S. Herman & Chomsky, 2010; Mullen, 2009). In any case, "media independence is a contested concept that carries different meanings in different contexts" (Karppinen & Moe, 2016).

Dawn is also known for its controversial leftist social agenda (S. Malik & Iqbal, 2010, p. 8) in Pakistan. It has been targeted in the past by fundamentalist groups and military regimes for questioning their narrative as it takes a progressive position on controversial issues (U. Ali, 2019; Farmer, 2018; Withnall, 2019), contrary to its symmetric narrative on India as this study claims. This contradiction opens up the door for many hypotheses regarding the other media outlets known for their more hard line approaches. If the masses will get a regular dose of the dominant narrative mostly preaching victimhood, it will generate support for the Pakistani security establishment fighting for wresting Jammu & Kashmir from India. It poses questions regarding how negative media narrative empowers security establishment in Pakistan by ignoring their internal differences.

The concerns frequently raised in India about the presence of anti-India militant groups, mainly Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which are supported by the Pakistan security establishment (Fair, 2014, 2018; Haqqani, 2018) are not necessarily reflected in the opinion pages of *Dawn*, which dismisses the militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and beyond as an indigenous revolt against India.

This work also paves the way for raising similar research questions about other media outlets in Pakistan and India. It would be interesting to study whether the prioritizing of issues as they appear in the dominant narratives about India, in terms of scale and intensity, are in sync with broadly held public opinion. It would shed more light on whether the animosities with India have been percolated to the level of ordinary citizens or not. Even though an earlier study by Fair and Hamza (2016) about the Pakistani public opinion about US drone strikes in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to kill terrorists suggests that "newspaper editorials are a good barometer of Pakistani opinions" (p.578). All this provides immense opportunities for raising pertinent questions in relation to media, public opinion and foreign policy priorities of the state.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This study is a thematic analysis of the representation of India in the opinion pages of the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* during India's general elections 2019. It identified the six themes in *Dawn's* opinion pages, which broadly shows its view on India is tightly framed within the lens of conflict primarily over the region of Jammu and Kashmir. The themes generated in this study deal with 1) conflict in Kashmir, 2) bilateral enmity, 3) rising extremism, 4) belligerent postures towards Pakistan, 5) presence of liberal voices and 6) tendency to establish parallels with India.

Based on the analysis of these themes, this study argues that the opinion pages of *Dawn* primarily view India through the ruling regime's perspective. The narratives are overwhelmingly informed and shaped by the Pakistani state's perspective on conflict over Kashmir dispute and other related developments in the region. As earlier studies also suggest "nationalism, religious identity and a growing sense of professionalism shape the worldview of Pakistani journalists, whose overarching goals include defending national sovereignty" (Pintak & Nazir, 2013).

This study also suggests that narratives in the opinion pages of *Dawn* seek a moral parity with India, as is reflected in its tendency to establish moral parallels in having negative social and political traits. The "political affiliation, religion and national identity are the major influences on the journalists' worldviews in Pakistan" (Akhtar & Pratt, 2017) and it can be connected with the tendency to establish moral equivalence as India looms large in the Pakistani imagination.

This study also underlines that the sampled data takes less notice of positive social and cultural similarities and instead describe India as a Hindu majoritarian state dominated by religious zealots. Thematic coding shows that the general elections in India gained attention in the opinion pages of *Dawn* only with reference to conflicts over the Kashmir issue and rising Hindu nationalism. In-depth deliberations on election issues, contestants, political campaigns, regional issues, power dynamics within political parties and their different ideologies were remarkably missing in the opinion pages of *Dawn*.

The entire narrative on India was mostly focused on conflicts, disputes and troubles. It did not comment on the various aspects of highly competitive and vibrant general elections. Previous studies have suggested that media in Pakistan tend to focus on the Kashmir dispute and the emergence of right-wing political outfits in India, but that they also cover electoral processes and nature of democracy in India (Rais, 2016).

Although the thematic analysis of opinion pages of *Dawn* in this study suggests that primary focus was on Kashmir and the ideology of the BJP, it did not show any inclination to discuss other aspects of Indian society in any detail. One of the possible reasons is the overwhelming impact of the Pulwama suicide bombing and its aftermath as it led to the escalation of bilateral animosities. It also suggests that the narrative in *Dawn* is mostly concerned about dissimilarities and disagreements and ignores the shared culture of the two countries.

It would be fair to conclude that the issues directly concerned with Pakistan or perceived to be connected to its long-term national goals or identity issues were discussed with alacrity. In other words, India mostly appeared in *Dawn's* opinion pages when it was connected with Pakistan's strategic interests, which was essentially in relation to bilateral conflicts over the status of Kashmir region and wrangling over the rights of Muslim minorities in India. Representation of India outside this conflict frame was limited.

A right-wing resurgence, heightened escalations, the BJP's election manifesto, the rhetoric around the Balakot strikes, a focus on claims about destroying a terrorist training camp inside Pakistani territory, and the communal nature of the BJP and PM Narendra Modi were all used to demand resolution of bilateral disputes. There was a consistency to *Dawn's* representation of India as a Hindu state where Muslims are facing discrimination as the country is completely dominated and controlled by Hindutva forces. The narrative lay the responsibility for troubles in bilateral relations on India. This study reinforces the existing view that media in both countries blame each other for all their conflicts (Rais, 2016; G. P. Singh, 2015).

This hawkish representation of India in the opinion pages of *Dawn* appears paradoxically at times alongside a more conciliatory approach. While the narratives strongly blame India for rising escalations, the argument is also made that supporting anti-India terror outfits has created problems for Pakistan and should be reconsidered. It also refers to the presence of liberal voices within India fighting against communal forces.

That said, the overall narrative is consistent with the stated position of Pakistan on bilateral disputes. The narratives in *Dawn* about India look at India from the Pakistani ruling regime's perspective. It argues that the territorial status quo is unacceptable and the Kashmir dispute should be resolved as it is an unfinished agenda of partition. It demands plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir to offer choice to Kashmiris to become part of Pakistan or remain in India. The third option of complete independence conspicuously remains missing in the narrative.

The narrative in *Dawn* raises the issue of human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir. It claims that the region is being targeted by the Hindu nationalist government because it is a Muslim majority region. It alleges that Muslims are being treated as unequal citizens in India due to the rising influence of Hindu nationalists, and tries to connect the rising Hindutva nationalism with the rising unrest in Kashmir. It creates a view that in a Hindu majority state Muslims cannot live as equal citizens.

This representation has several effects. First, it reiterates and reinforces the validity of the two-nation theory in Pakistan. Second, it suggests that demand for partition of India on religious lines in 1947 was the struggle for Indian Muslims to protect their rights from the onslaught of the Hindu majority, and it was not a communal demand (Jalal, 1994) as other scholars describe it (Dhulipala, 2015). Thirdly, it builds an argument emphasizing that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling BJP's policies are guided by a deep-rooted ideological hatred for Muslims internally as well as externally, that is, the Indian government led by BJP targets Muslim minorities inside the country and is hostile to Pakistan as it is an Islamic nation. And fourth, India is not a secular state, but a

Hindu state, so it does not have any legitimate right over the state of Jammu and Kashmir as it is Muslim majority territory.

The opinion pages of *Dawn* are full of criticism of India's approach to the Kashmir conflict, of the BJP government and PM Narendra Modi. *Dawn's* narratives about India are shaped by the Kashmir dispute and ongoing developments in the region throughout the sampled data. Though the narratives recognize the presence of secular political outfits in India, any positive representation is submerged deep in a highly critical narrative.

Although it would not be fair to dismiss the concerns raised in *Dawn* regarding rising majoritarianism in India as concerns regarding rising Hindu extremism have been raised all over the globe since the BJP government has come to power in 2014, this study demonstrates that *Dawn's* opinion pages represent India primarily through a deeply critical approach and exaggerate its fault lines by reducing the discourse to and overemphasizing the conflict between Hindus and Muslims.

Though limited in coverage, the subjects relating to social welfare schemes, higher spending on education, gender rights and focus on modernization have been discussed with a neutral and unbiased approach. In other words, while discussing issues perceived to be not relating to identity and the national interests of Pakistan, India is relatively referred to without any prejudice and bias.

Overall, though, *Dawn's* opinion pages adhere to the ruling regime's view of India, and there was an inadequate recognition in *Dawn's* narrative about the role of militant groups in deteriorating the situation in the region. *Dawn* writers did not recognize the activities of militant groups as reasons for escalation, but rather argued that the hateful ideology of the Hindu nationalist government and general elections were responsible for shaping in India's approach towards Muslims and Pakistan.

The opinion pages of *Dawn* also represented India as a geopolitical adversary that is working against the interests of Pakistan even in its relationships with other countries, which are understood in terms of their impact on Pakistan. India was described as a western ally conspiring against Pakistan

and China. The narrative in *Dawn* viewed cooperation between India and Afghanistan as detrimental to the interests of Pakistan and favoured legitimizing Taliban leadership in Afghanistan, which has close links to the security establishment in Pakistan (Riedel, 2008).

The ideological and geopolitical positioning of India substantiates two existing concerns about the nature of the narratives which emerge in the opinion pages of *Dawn*. First, it functions within the overall ideological framework of the state for dealing with perceived external challenges. Second, the conciliatory approaches exist within the precincts set up by the dominant narrative, so it argues for changing the means but still focused on the same end.

This study contributes to the ongoing debates about the complexity of bilateral disputes and the possible role of print media in shaping them further. It argues that any change in the bilateral relationship cannot emerge from the media when they work in tandem with ruling regime's perspectives. It reinforces the view that until the resolution of Jammu & Kashmir dispute, *Dawn's* opinion pages are unlikely to focus on the urgent need for the process of peace and normalization of relations beyond the state rhetoric as it is also a part of overall social structure oriented towards their national objectives.

In other words, this study endorses the view that *Dawn*, as part of the mainstream media, mostly reflects dominant narratives (Saleem et al., 2014)(though, the tone and tenor of the conversation about India qualitatively change in *Dawn* if the conversation is not about conflicts). The narrative in *Dawn's* opinion pages could be described as a collaborative facilitative frame (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018), meaning *Dawn* works as a mouthpiece, collaborator and facilitator of the ruling establishment's views at least in relation to its commentary on India.

Chapter 7 References

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Chapter 8 Appendix

List of columns and editorials published in *Dawn* which have been used for coding. The list is on the ascending order based number of codes on each file.

Sr. No.	Title	Date of publication	Codes	Category/Author
1.	Breathing poison	8 April 2019	1	Editorial
2.	Winning the peace	21 April 2019	1	Column/Nazish Brohi
3.	Plastic surgery	15 April 2019	1	Column/Zarrar Khuhro,
4.	Now the hard part	16 March 2019	1	Column/Irfan Husain
5.	FATF's conflict of interest	14 March 2019	1	Editorial
6.	The contest of Baluchistan	19 May 2019	1	Column/Mohammad Amir Rana
7.	The making of the patriot	11 May 2019	1	Column/Abbas Nasir
8.	Email security	1 April 2019	2	Editorial
9.	Bhutto's legacy	4 April 2019	2	Editorial
10.	Political prisoner	9 April 2019	2	Column/Dr Niaz Murtaza
11.	Fishermen released	9 April 2019	2	Editorial
12.	Fatal Fatalism	13 April 2019	2	Column/Irfan Hussain
13.	Jallianwala and Jinnah	13 April 2019	2	Column/A. G. Noorani
14.	F-16 or JF-17 - which was it	13 April 2019	2	Column/Parvez Hoodboy
15.	The love-hate with Urdu	16 April 2019	2	Column/Jawed Naqvi
16.	Scared of Criticism	16 April 2019	2	Column/Arifa Noor
17.	Untimely rains	23 April 2019	2	Column/Marwah Maqbool Malik

18.	Security concerns	24 April 2019	2	Editorial
19.	Keynes in Islamabad	25 April 2019	2	Column/Aqdas Afzal
20.	The Haroon story	25 April 2019	2	Column/Muhammad Ali Siddiqi
21.	Suitable boy	29 April 2019	2	Column/Shahzad Sharjeel
22.	Lanka's existential moment	30 April 2019	2	Column/Jawed Naqvi
23.	Who is sovereign	19 April 2019	2	Column/Aasim Sajjad Akhtar
24.	Credentialed inequality	25 March 2019	2	Column/Umaid Javed
25.	Forced conversions	26 March 2019	2	Editorial
26.	Force and faith	27 March 2019	2	Column/Rafia Zakaria
27.	Prisoner's death	28 March 2019	2	Editorial
28.	Cricket combat	13 March 2019	2	Editorial
29.	The new normal	17 March 2019	2	Column/Ali Tauqeer Sheikh
30.	Nation Reboot	22 March 2019	2	Column/Aasim Sajjad Akhtar
31.	Crunch times for universities	4 May 2019	2	Column/Pervej Hoodboy
32.	Afghan peace	7 May 2019	2	Column/Moeed Yusuf
33.	The desperation on both sides	14 May 2014	2	Column/Jawed Naqvi
34.	Politicians' self-annihilation	May 14 2019	2	Column/Arifa Noor
35.	Neutral Posture	20 May 2019	2	Column/Human Yusuf
36.	Report on torture in IHK	22 May 2019	2	Editorial
37.	Fake news & war hysteria	11 March 2019	3	Editorial

38.	Nuclear apocalypse	17 March 2019	3	Column/Rabel Z. Akhund
39.	The head that wears the crown	21 May 2019	3	Column/Jawed Naqvi
40.	The crime of shame washing	22 May, 2019	3	Column/Rafia Zakaria
41.	Does Rahul want to win	2 April 2019	4	Column/Jawed Naqvi
42.	Jallianwala Bagh	13 April 2019	4	Editorial
43.	Samjhauta Express	22 March 2019	4	Editorial
44.	Custodial deaths	30 March 2019	4	Column/A.G. Noorani
45.	Jaish in the spotlight	18 March 2019	4	Editorial
46.	The marriage of age debate	16 May 2019	4	Column/I.A. Rehman
47.	An ongoing war	5 May 2019	4	Column/Mohammad Amir Rana
48.	Women in police	14 April 2019	5	Column/Bina Shah
49.	Heritage of hex and curse	23 April 2019	5	Column/Javed Naqvi
50.	BRI a historic opportunity	28 April 2019	5	Column/Munir Akram
51.	Constructing the enemy	16 March 2019	5	Column/Faizaan Qayyum
52.	War and property	9 May 2019	5	Column/F.S. Aijazuddin
53.	A changed approach	16 April 2019	6	Column/Moeed Yusuf
54.	Who is sovereign	19 April 2019	6	Column/Sajjad Akhtar
55.	Complex States	12 March 2019	6	Column/Dr Niaz Murtaza
56.	Water wars	4 April 2019	7	Column/F.S. Aijazuddin
57.	A foreign post	11 April 2019	7	Column/F.S. Aijazuddin
58.	Imprisoned in India	29 April 2019	7	Editorial
59.	F-16s & disinformation	7 April 2019	7	Editorial
60.	Forget Rafale, win the polls	12 March 2019	7	Column/Jawed Naqvi
61.	IHK poll delay	15 March 2019	7	Editorial

62.	Masood Azhar ban	3 May 2019	7	Editorial
63.	India's wild elephant	4 May 2019	7	Column/A.G. Noorani
64.	Twisted coffins	21 March 2019	8	Column/F.S. Aijazuddin
65.	Siege mentality	14 May 2019	8	Column/Sayed Saadat
66.	PM on the BJP	11 April 2019	9	Editorial
67.	Democracy at the pawnshop	19 March 2019	9	Column/Jawed Naqvi
68.	Pak-India stand-off	9 April 2018	10	Column/Najmuddin A. Shaikh
69.	A new strategy	20 April 2019	10	Column/Sikander Shah
70.	Kashmir's example	28 April 2019	10	Editorial
71.	Kashmir Matters	16 March 2019	10	Column/A.G. Noorani
72.	Peace is the sole option	14 March 2019	10	Column/I.A. Rehman
73.	When Modi is defeated	7 May 2019	10	Column/Jawed Naqvi
74.	Future of Pak-US relations	12 May 2019	10	Column/Munir Akram
75.	Scrap of paper,	18 April 2019	11	Column/F.S. Aijazuddin
76.	Quit home, go home	25 April 2019	11	Column/F.S. Aijazuddin
77.	Ban all terrorism	31 March 2019	11	Column/Munir Akram
78.	Nature of the threat	8 April 2019	12	Column/Huma Yusuf
79.	Going forward	26 March 2019	12	Column/Moeed Yusuf
80.	Games nations play	23 March 2019	12	Column/Irfan Hasain
81.	A tonga and a peanut vendor	26 March 2019	13	Column/Jawed Naqvi
82.	Unjustifiable ends	28 March 2019	13	Column/F.S. Aujazuddin
83.	Modi's threat	6 May 2019	13	Column/Huma Yusuf
84.	Winning with empathy	24 April 2019	14	Column/Rafia Zakaria
85.	The state's libels	23 March 2019	14	Column/A.G. Noorani

86.	Genocide, war or peace	17 March 2019	16	Column/Munir Akram
87.	Peace is Difficult	14 April 2019	17	Column/Munir Akram
88.	If Modi returns	22 May 2019	22	Column/Zahid Hussain