

A Community of Common Destiny or Geopolitics? Representations of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Transnational Press

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Abstract

Today, media form and often fuel the narrative which inevitably covers mega infrastructural projects. This study examines, through the content analysis, how the transnational, i.e., Pakistan, China and India, press frames China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Framing was applied as a theoretical foundation of the study which was most relevant and congruent to the aim of the research. By using multi-stage sampling technique, a sample of 399 news stories from timeline of April 20, 2015 to April 30, 2017 was drawn from the selected press to explore the frames used while reporting CPEC. By and large, the findings indicate that the transnational press presented CPEC as an economic game-changer which would help stakeholders build a community of common destiny. At an individual level, the Pakistani press focuses on the presentation of the economic game-changer whereas the Chinese and the Indian press concentrate on trust restoration among key players involved. The overall difference in framing of CPEC among the selected press was found significant. The implications of the findings have also been discussed.

Keywords: Belt and Road initiative; CPEC; Framing; Transnational press; Content analysis; Newspapers

Introduction

Among other functions, surveillance is the function of media through which it provides information to the public related to the world around them [1]. When media performs the function, it composes, edits, and frames the content in a way that it re-presents reality. In other words, framing is a technique which can shape up reality for an audience and it influences the public perception about events and issues [2-4].

In September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan and delivered a speech at Nazarbayev University where he proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt Initiative. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, jointly called Belt and Road Initiative, is a trans-regional cooperation model connecting Asia, Africa and Europe's policies, trade, facilities, funds and people in the 21st century [5,6].

Belt and Road (B&R) Initiative will encompass more than 60 countries of the world geographically that account for 60% population of the world and China will invest more than \$100 billion to finance projects under the initiative. Generally, of two parts of the initiative, "Belt" includes 6 economic corridors i.e., (1) New Eurasian Land Bridge (2) China - Mongolia - Russia Corridor (3) China - Central Asia - West Asia Corridor (4) China - Indochina Peninsula Corridor (5) China - Pakistan Economic Corridor (6) Bangladesh - China - India - Myanmar Corridor whereas "Road" is known as 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road [7]. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of the most significant parts among the proposed framework of six economic corridors.

Close relations between China and Pakistan are certainly not new and generally framed in terms of the two countries which have a mutually rival with India.

In May 2015, China announced to invest \$46 billion on CPEC in Pakistan. Now, the cost of CPEC has reached to \$57 billion and this is remarkable for its size and scope [8,9]. It is a territorial or sea-based transportation infrastructure that will be used for trade of goods and

services. It will also be a connection between economic hubs that help link up financial resources and actors of market [10]. The plan of CPEC is not only limited to the transportation route among Pakistani port at Gwadar and the city of Kashgar in Xinjiang region of China, Arabian Sea, Gulf and Middle East but also it includes energy infrastructure, industrial cooperation, and roads and railways along the CPEC route in Pakistan (Pakistan-China Institute, n.d.). In addition; China has agreed to pay for the Pakistani portion of the off-delayed Iran-Pakistan natural gas pipeline. Ritzinger [11] described Pakistan would act as a corridor linking China to the rest of the world. Emphasizing the importance of CPEC, President Xi Jinping once wrote in an article that its location was very prime in a way that it was connector between Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. It was the mega project of B&R, he added [10].

The size of the plan far exceeds total U.S. aid to Pakistan since 2002 and dwarfs Pakistan's generally paltry FDI figures [11]. The decision by China to make such a high-profile investment in its long-time partner is indicative not only of the enduring regional dynamics that have compelled the two countries' alliance but also of China's increasingly global stands. Burki stated that the motivations behind China's promised investment in Pakistan are primarily threefold, in order of global relevance: providing economic support to a long-time ally and strategic hedge, facilitating trade, and building linkages to the west through which China can expand its influence. Moreover, China has a real cause to be concerned about Pakistan's susceptibility to terrorism and insurgency because Elements of China's own Muslim Uyghur

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insurgency in its western most Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are reportedly tied with extremist networks in Pakistan and carry terrorist activities.. Beijing hopes that a massive economic infusion will promote economic growth and stability both at home and abroad, while strengthening its struggling ally.

Rafi et al. [12] expressed that China's interest in the CPEC is its potential to diversify energy trade routes from Middle East and it will reduce its reliance on Indian Ocean and Strait of Malacca.

China invites India to participate in the enterprise but Delhi has serious concerns on the route of CPEC because it goes through territories which India claims, namely, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and it infringes the sovereignty of Indian [13,14]. Hamid and Hameed [15] examined the coverage of Pakistani media during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping with reference to CPEC and found that the visit and initiative were presented as positive for the development of Pakistan. In contrast to it, Khan and Gul [16] concluded that, instead of framing CPEC as an economic project, Indian press portrayed it as a political initiative. In addition to these studies, there are some researches on infrastructural project and CPEC but most of them are commentary and focus on opportunities, challenges and route controversy among the stakeholders [17-20].

Among these studies, though [15,16] analyzed the newspaper content of Pakistani and Indian press respectively yet these studies were limited to each country press only. Therefore, this study will address the gap identified in the studies of Hamid and Hameed [15] and Khan et al. [16]. The researchers will find how the transnational press framed CPEC.

Literature Review

Framing of CPEC or any other issue in the selected transnational press depends on the nature of relationship among these three countries so it is important to see how Pakistan, China and India treat one another when it comes to political, economic, social and cultural ties. China considers Pakistan as an "Iron Brother" whereas relationship between Pakistan and India has a long history of tension and there are many issues including Kashmir as a bone of contention between them (United Nation, n.d). Likewise, the relationship between China and India has not always been favorable. Recently, the Indian Government boycotted the Belt and Road Forum held in Beijing on May 14-15, 2017 due to its serious concerns and reservations on CPEC [21].

Some of previous studies used generic as well as issue specific frames while portraying different conflicts or issues related to any of the three countries [22-25]. While studying media framing in Chinese and US media of anti-terrorism operation (Zarb-e-Azb) in Pakistan found that Chinese media portrayed Pakistan as victim or sufferer of terrorism where US media framed Pakistan as spreading country of terrorism. On the other hand Ji et al. [22] exploring the image of India in Chinese press came to know that Indian was portrayed mainly as neighboring competitor in a negative manner. Similarly, Singh [24] arguing on China's "Three Warfares" strategy (media, psychological and legal warfare) concluded as the Chinese interest in the Indian Ocean increases, China will speed up the usage of 3Ws against India. He added, in the meanwhile, Chinese media would lobby internationally to make India alone on the stand point of benevolent of Indian Ocean Power and would exploit its insecurities. Analyzing Indo-Pak relations [23] found that Pakistani government and media emphasized on good bilateral relations with India but Indian media was continuously engaged with promoting anti-Pakistan sentiments.

Exploring frames in media coverage, examined how the Pakistani press treated visit of the President Xi Jinping with reference to CPEC. The researchers found that the coverage was positive with a minor portion of concerns and reservations on the project. One limitation to the study is that the time period of the research was confined to one week only. Secondly, this paper was limited to the coverage given in the Pakistani press. On the other hand, Khan [16] aimed to find treatment of CPEC in the India press and they found the India press portrayed CPEC as a political initiative instead of an economic project. The study has also methodological concerns. The research questions and hypotheses are not mutually exclusive and supported by literature. Also, the method of selection of newspapers and sampling is not clear. Moreover, this study was limited to the time period of almost 3 months. London [20], while exploring emerging media discourses, found that media framed the debate on cruise infrastructure characterized by mistrust, corruption and lack of consensus building on objectives of the project among key stakeholders. Other than these studies on infrastructural project and media representation, there are some other researchers which were conducted qualitatively with a focus on opportunities, challenges and route controversy without any relation to CPEC and media coverage [18,19]. Abid and Ayesha [17] while discussing prospects and challenges of CPEC to the participants concluded that no doubt the project would be a game-changer for Pakistan and the region but at the same time it would be vulnerable to political challenges and security risks. Similarly, Naseem [19] analyzed the impact of CPEC on economy of Pakistan in a research report, the report described that the CPEC will transform the geographical position of Pakistan into an asset which would boost the economy of Pakistan in the long run. Bengali [18], while addressing which route of CPEC should be constructed first, analyzed the political strands of different parties on three routes of CPEC i.e., the central route, the eastern route and the western route and suggested that the western route was cost-effective and it would be built in a short period of time. He suggested if the eastern route was given a priority on the basis that the central and the western route carried security risks, the propaganda against CPEC by neglected and less underdeveloped provinces would become a cause of political instability. Though the Government of Pakistan has announced that the western route is being constructed on priority basis yet the concerns and doubts are not over. Kakar [26] explained that patterns of allocation of funds to the western and the eastern route clearly indicated that the eastern route was the government's priority since the initiation of the project and still there was no practical change in the initial construction plan. Also, the time period of construction of the western route will limit its position as an auxiliary route.

The research work of is a research paper but it is a commentary on CPEC. It lacks in research methodology whereas piece of work is a commentary and a research report respectively. However, the researchers could not find any study in which comparative analysis of transnational press was made to explore frames.

The framing theory is used for this research. There are several definitions of framing with multiple dimensions.

Framing is a process which conceptualizes way of thinking about an issue [27]. However, Griffin [28] argues that framing highlights some aspects of reality and downplays others. Benford [29] advocate that it is psychological idea more specifically related to the cognitive structures. Goffman [30] is the initiator of the idea of framing [30,31] expressed that framing builds the mental cognitions of people related to a phenomenon or some event. In addition to it, Goffman [30] describes that frame is "schemata of interpretations" which help people

process information related to some issue or event and develop their understanding. It facilitates people to identify and group information of some issue and events with their domains. Framing as a part and parcel of construction of some reality and it has an influence on the cognition of people related to some event or phenomenon [32,33].

Framing, according to some researchers is a second level of agenda setting; guides people how to think about issues or events [34-37]. Framing is all about slanting opinion, focusing on some aspects of issue, selection of words and expressing them in a specific background [38]. Frames lies in narratives and describes some attributes of phenomenon that help shape opinion of audience [39]. Ray [40] defines framing as choosing some characteristics of an issues or event and transmit them to the people as more important than others.

According to Zald [41] “frames are specific metaphors, symbolic representations and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of action” [42]. States information is wrapped in press that encourages specific interpretation only. Frames are the techniques which shape up reality for audience and “define the boundaries of the discourse concerning an issue and categorize the relevant actors based on some established scheme of social taxonomy”. In short, “frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world”.

Framing is a dynamic communication process which consists of frame building and framing setting [43,44]. Frame building states how frames in different studies converge. Shoemaker and Rees [45] express that process of frame building is influenced by various factors. On the other hand, frame setting is about an inter-play between frames of media and thinking pattern of people [44]. It depicts that the frames can be located at various places. These locations include sending of message, content of message, the audience and the culture [39].

Entman [39] explained that frames in text can be found by using specific keywords, phrases, stock phrases stereotyped images and source of information or rhetoric in verbs, nouns or modifiers- adjectives or proverbs [40].

Goffman [30] described that frames transmit context of some phenomenon to the audience and they interpret frames according to their cognitive structures and these structure guide them how to process the information [46]. Though every individual is different than others in terms of their mental ability to process and interpret information yet it is deemed that frames affects most of people in a uniformed way, if not all, of the audience exposed to them [47]. That is why, it is important to study effects of frames used by mass media on audience [40]. In addition to it, it also shows that there is an influence on the understanding of readers [48] and affect the ability to remember an issue or event [49] about events and issues.

Concluding the above mentioned literature, it can be said that framing is to convey a certain meaning related to some issue or event to the audience with the help of selective certain keywords, emphasizing or excluding specific attributes of selected issue or event and all these provides content to the audience to interpret the issue or event. The study borrows definition of framing given by Entman [39].

Summarizing the above literature, this argument is formulated that media frames events or issues according to its nationalistic approach, or corporate interests. This indicates that the Chinese press, being an initiator of project, will try to build consensus to shun the prevailing misunderstandings and mistrust among the stakeholders. Similarly,

it can be supposed that the Pakistani press will highlight economic benefits of the project while the India press will frame it on political grounds.

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, following research question is developed.

Research Question

Q.1 How CPEC project was framed in the selected transnational press?

Research Methodology

The study aims at analyzing the news stories of content of selected transnational press of Pakistan, China and India for exploring frames employed in the coverage of CPEC based on framing theory, therefore a comparative content analysis is suitable for it. Kerlinger [50] defined content analysis as a method of studying any communication and its content in a systematic, objective and quantitative way for the purpose of measuring variables. Since the study is related to quantification of frames in news stories of selected transnational press, therefore, quantitative content analysis technique is used, [15,16,20] employed the same method with qualitative approach to find the emerging media discourses or frames. Furthermore, they suggested that infrastructural projects should be studied with quantitative approach.

Hamid and Hameed (2016) selected timeline for the analyzing coverage on CPEC from April 20, 2015 through April 26, 2015 whereas Khan et al. [16] conducted their research work from April 20, 2015 to June 30, 2015. However, the researcher could not find any other research work conducted after these two studies on media representation of CPEC. Therefore, the researchers for present study selected the timeline from April 20, 2015 to April 30, 2017. During this period, political differences among stakeholders were observed on route of CPEC, Government of Pakistan tried to hide terms and conditions of CPEC agreement and this chaos gave birth to rumors and propaganda related to CPEC on media. In addition to it, the first B&R Forum was conducted in May, 2017 so the research selected the timeline before the first forum on B&R. Thus, this selected time period is important to study to analyze framing of CPEC in the transnational press more comprehensively. As the purpose of the study is to explore frames employed in the coverage of CPEC by transnational press so the population will be all the newspapers published in Urdu or English language on daily basis with more than 1, 00,000 weekdays' circulation and online data is accessible. From Pakistan, Daily Jang, Daily Nawa e Waqt, Daily Express, Daily Dunya, The Nation, The News, and Dawn, whereas People's Daily, China Daily and Global Times were selected from China. Besides this, Times of India, The Telegraph, The Hindustan Times, The Hindu, Deccan Herald and The Tribune India were included in population from India. Keeping in view our limitations of the time and resources, the researchers use multi-stage method and newspapers (Daily Jang by Pakistan=Pakistani Press, Global Times by China=Chinese Press and The Hindu by India=Indian Press) were sampled randomly. After selecting the representative press from transnational countries under study, the further narrowing down of sample was made. London [20] while exploring media discourse in cruise infrastructure debate in New Zealand gathered data online by searching with keywords. The present study employed the same technique and used “CPEC” and “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor” as keywords to search news stories online through the websites of selected transnational press. Initially, 1142 news stories from the Pakistan press, 216 from the Chinese press, and 140 were found from the Indian press. After reading thoroughly and

carefully, stories exclusively related to CPEC were selected. So further filtering stories, 690 stories from the Pakistani press, 104 were from the Chinese press and 58 by the Indian press were in hand. On the next stage, the researchers applied one skip method on sample frame and final sample was comprised of 345 news stories by the Pakistani press, 52 by the Chinese press and 29 by the Indian press. The present study is concerned with the frames defined by focusing on what attributes of the CPEC are highlighted and how they have been emphasized in the coverage of the transnational press.

The whole news story will be considered as a single contextual unit for the identification of frames. The frames will be identified from context point of view by looking at the various framing devices i.e., phrases, catch phrases, metaphors, verbs, adverbs or adjectives or the themes in a story. The devices will help form totality of impression. Frame in the story will be coded with the help of following rules (Figure 1).

Propaganda and reservations

If news story emphasizes on rumors, blame game, attention seeking behavior, doubts or concerns of stakeholders about CPEC, such news would be framed as propaganda and reservations.

Economic game-changer

If the news story indicates that implementation of CPEC will be a source of investment and opportunities, the story will be coded under economic game-changer frame. Furthermore, CPEC will not only increase China-Pakistan cooperation but also it may enhance possibility of regional and international connectivity and economic cooperation; such stories will also be framed as economic opportunities frame.

Trust restoration

If the news story hints that there has been immense trust deficit among stakeholders and to achieve win-win situation consensus building process and comprehensive dialogue is necessary, such context will guide researchers to code news story as trust restoration.

Security threat

If the news story highlights that there could be challenges of

extremist groups, non-state actors, borders incursion, conflicts or intervention that can affect the implementation of the CPEC project systemically and pragmatically, the frame of security threat will be employed.

Training of Coders and Inter-Coder Reliability

Two coders who have attained a Master of Arts degree in media studies from the Communication University of China were trained for coding the data. In the beginning, 10 percent proportionate data from press of each country was given for coding against pre-established frames according to the stated rules for framing in a pilot study. They coded news stories individually. To know, whether frames are reliable or not, inter coder reliability was calculated by using Holsti [51] formula. This accumulates up to 44 stories, which includes 36 from the Pakistani press, 5 from the Chinese press and 3 were taken from the Indian press, which were given to code. It was found that inter-coder reliability for frames was 0.850 (85 %). Hence, it shows that frames are highly reliable. After establishing the reliability of the categories, the entire sample was coded by the two coders; resulting in 50 percent each.

Analysis and Findings

Data was analyzed by the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), by the researchers themselves. Since the data is categorical, to measure whether the difference among transnational press is significant or not, test of Chi-square goodness of fit was run.

Coverage by Frames

Frame analysis represents that the transnational press published the frame of Economic Game-Changer 159 times in total. Out of 159, the share of the Pakistani press is 134 whereas the Chinese press and the Indian press contributed 19 and 6 frames respectively. Among 119 counts on Propaganda and Reservations frame, 113 were published by the Pakistani press, 4 by the Chinese press and 2 by the Indian press. Similarly, among 107 counts on Trust Restoration frame, 64 were published by the Pakistani press, 27 by the Chinese press and the Indian press contributed 16 frames. Security Threat frame appeared 41 times in the selected press. Out of 41, the Pakistani press used it 34 times; the Chinese press employed it 2 times whereas this appeared 5 times in the Indian press (Table 1 and Figure 2).

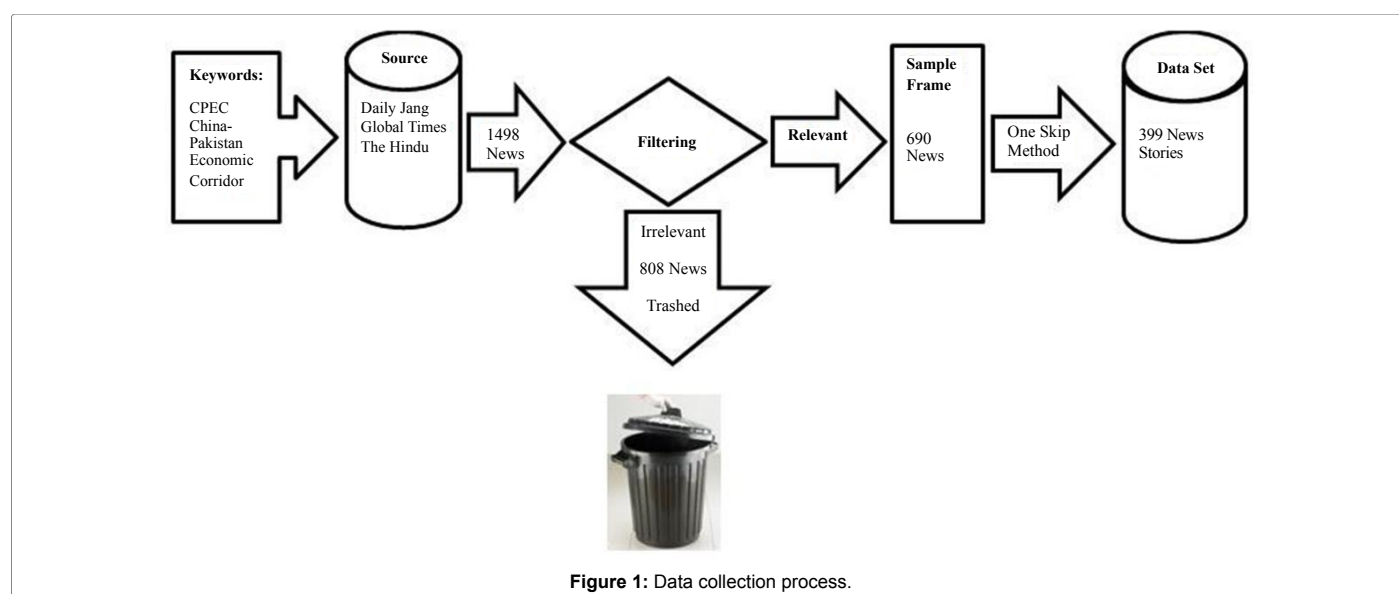


Figure 1: Data collection process.

Variables Frames	Newspapers			Total N (%)
	Pakistani Press f (%)	Chinese Press f (%)	Indian Press f (%)	
*1Economic Game-Changer	134 (94.9)	19 (3.3)	6 (1.6)	159 (100)
*2Propaganda and Reservations	113 (84.2)	4 (11.9)	2 (3.7)	119 (100)
*3Trust Restoration	64 (59.8)	27 (25.2)	16 (14.9)	107(100)
*4Security Threat	34 (82.9)	2 (4.8)	5 (12.1)	41 (100)
Total	345 (80.9)	52 (12.2)	29 (6.8)	426 (100)

*1Chi-sq=187.28; p<.000, df=2, *2Chi-sq =203.41; p< .000, df=2, *3Chi-sq =35.45; p: .000, df=2, *4Chi-sq =45.70; p<.000, df=2

Table 1: Distribution of coverage by frames.

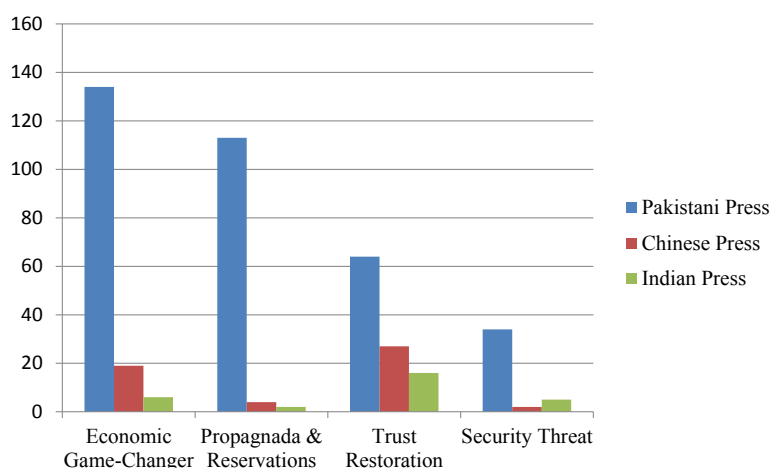


Figure 2: Distribution of total frames in the selected press.

Table 2 that the Chinese press used significantly higher number of frames under every frame head other than Security Threat frame which was significantly higher in the Indian press (Figure 3).

Discussion

The results show that selected transnational press framed CPEC as a project which aimed at promoting regional connectivity and cooperation under the slogan of win-win situation. In other words, it was framed as a project which helped create a community of common destiny but, in the same press, the second most largely used frame in press was propaganda and reservations. It means that some political parties, social groups, either they want to sabotage this “fate changer” project or they have concerns about it, need to be addressed to shun confusions and misunderstandings that result in propaganda.

There is a significant difference in the coverage of frames among the selected transnational press. The researchers discuss the following reasons behind this extent and treatment of news stories.

In the collective and individual coverage, the Pakistani press, just like the Chinese and the Indian press, focused mainly on episodic coverage of CPEC.

The overall frame coverage depicts that the transnational press used economic game-changer frame more than any other. The Pakistani press employed it more than the Chinese and the Indian press and this difference was statistically proved. On the other hand, when the Chinese and the Indian press were compared with respect to this frame, it came to know that Chinese press published it significantly higher than the Indian press. The reason behind this significant difference and framing is that Pakistan has more expectations and also realized

Variables Frames	Newspapers		Total N (%)
	Chinese Press f (%)	Indian Press f (%)	
*1Trust Restoration	27(62.7)	16 (37.3)	43(100)
*2Economic Game-Changer	19 (76)	6(24)	25 (100)
*3 Propaganda and Reservation	4 (66.6)	2(33.3)	6 (100)
*4Security Threat	2 (28.5)	5 (71.5)	7 (100)
Total	52 (64.1)	29(35.9)	81(100)

*1Chi-sq=2.81; p<.093, df=1 *2Chi-sq=6.76; p<.009, df=1 *3Chi-sq=0.66; p<.41, df=1 *4Chi-sq =1.28; p<.257, df=1

Table 2: Distribution of coverage by frames.

that through CPEC, it can revitalize its economy positively by give rise in job opportunities, benefiting business and industry, building road infrastructure, energy projects and developing a seaport. Also, this project will help Pakistan realize its dream of becoming Asian Tiger. The Chinese press also used the same frame more than the Indian press because CPEC is one important section of overall Belt and Road Initiative. The success of CPEC is also a matter of recognition for the Belt and Road Initiative which is mega project of economic collaboration with a significant part of the world. Likewise, the Indian press, The Hindu, also used economic game-changer frame to highlight its benefits for the Indian and public government. For the present study, The Hindu represents the Indian press and this newspaper is not a radical and ideological newspaper rather it is left-pronged newspaper. That's why it framed stories in a way that CPEC can give economic benefits to India.

Secondly, the transnational press employed propaganda and reservations frame while publishing news stories about CPEC. The

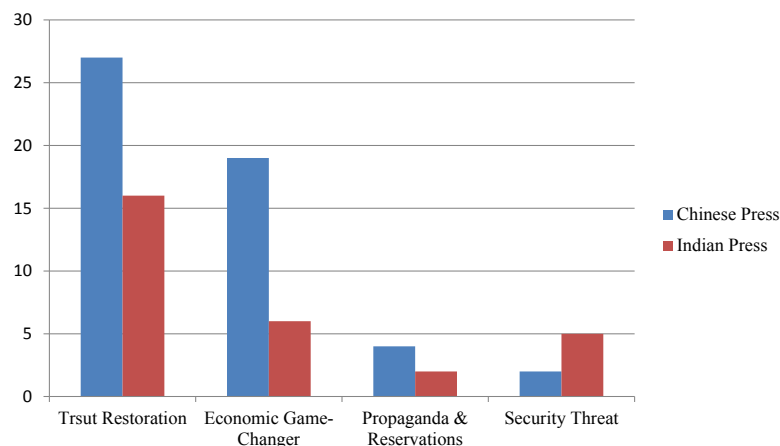


Figure 3: Distribution of frames in Chinese and Indian Press.

Pakistani press used this frame more significantly than the Chinese and the Indian press. The reason behind such propaganda and reservations frame can be explored in the history of relationship among Pakistan, India and China. Pakistan and China does not want India to view the project with the lens of historical prejudice or antagonism. Because of its, reservations on CPEC, India did not participate in the Belt and Road Forum 2017 held in Beijing, China [21]. Furthermore, CPEC route controversy has also been a bone of contention among provinces of Pakistan as indicated by Bengali [18]. It was due to lack of unanimous consensus building among the stakeholders within Pakistan that a few voices were raised against the project to gain political benefits or show their concerns. Thus, since the initiation of the project the Pakistani press continued publishing news stories reflecting reservations, propaganda and counter-narrative. Likewise, the Chinese and the Indian press also employed propaganda and reservations frame but the difference between the Chinese and the Indian press is not statistically significant. In short, the transnational press represented the geopolitical concerns on CPEC and this frame was found at second highest level after economic game-changer.

Thirdly, trust restoration frame was also identified in the transnational press and it was employed more significantly in the Pakistani press than others. The Pakistani press framed stories in a way which could help bridge the difference among the stakeholders at national and international levels. Interestingly, the Pakistani press used thematic frames to address geopolitical concerns and promote dialogue among stakeholders. In other words, the stories gave an impression of need for the dialogue to build consensus to build community of common destiny by achieving CPEC goals. Similarly, the same frame was also identified more in the Chinese press as compare to the Indian press. Since, China is an initiator of the project, it wants to complete CPEC successful and open this gateway to the region connected with CPEC. Likewise, the Indian press also employed the same frame and it meant that the Indian press also encouraged participation of India to the project. It indicated that the project should not be boycotted and rejected by the Government of India rather concerns and reservations should be put forward and discussed with China and Pakistan to clear misunderstanding and find a solution.

Conclusion

Lastly, while analyzing the data, it depicted that the Pakistani press focused on attempts of non-state actors who wanted to affect the grand

project adversely. The Pakistani press used the frame more than the press of other two countries. The framing analysis indicated that the project might have security problems and extremist groups or non-actors could impede the CPEC work. By using the frame, the Chinese press directed that CPEC is a project of win-win situation and China has no desire to expand its influence and power. Also, it respects the sovereignty of other countries and does not want to interfere in the regional disputes among countries. Though the Indian press also used the frame more than the Chinese press yet there was no significant difference between them in this regard. The Indian press pointed that if the route controversy is not resolved, the project could be a security risk for the India and Pakistan in the future.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that CPEC was framed as an economic game-changer. In other words, the transnational press presented it as a project which could help connect region, deepen cooperation and bring prosperity that would shape a community of common destiny finally. The study support the research conducted by Hamid and Hameed (2016) as the coverage is favorable towards the development of community of common destiny.

Keeping in view the limitation of time and resources, the study is confined to three national dailies of Pakistan, China and India; whereas its scope can be extended to the television news or regional press. Also the content of newspaper, related to CPEC, other than news stories can be analyzed the findings of the study are generalizable only under operational definitions of variables. Different findings with same news content can be gained if rules for framing are operationalized differently.

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