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Media Underreporting as a Barrier to India-Pakistan Trade Normalization: Quantitative analysis of newsprint dailies

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, India and Pakistan have been involved in several activities regarding bilateral trade normalization. These developments have been concentrated around three periods: the late-1990s, mid-2000s, and early-2010s. Are these waves of trade-related activity reflected in popular media coverage? This question connects to a longstanding and important criticism that media coverage on India-Pakistan relations is pre-occupied with security events, to the exclusion of non-security issues such as trade. A dearth of popular awareness on trade-related activities between India and Pakistan may limit the extent to which it is politically feasible for governments to further invest in trade normalization, or perhaps the extent to which the public pressure politicians to do so.

This paper measures the quantum of nearly two decades of media coverage on India-Pakistan trade, among five newspapers: *Times of India* (TOI), *Economic Times* (ET), *Business Standard* (BS), *New York Times* (NYT) and *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ). Results indicate that ET, BS, and WSJ capture the dynamism of trade-related activities between India and Pakistan. TOI and NYT, by contrast, do not. The paper considers why underreporting in the TOI and NYT is problematic, and identifies future research directions.

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Disclaimer: Opinions and recommendations in the paper are exclusively of the author and not of any other individual or institution including ICRIER.

Abbreviations

BS	Business Standard
CDP	Composite Dialogue Process
CV	Coefficient of Variation
ET	Economic Times
MFN	Most Favored Nation
NDMA	Non-Discriminatory Market Access
NTB	Non-tariff barrier
NYT	New York Times
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAPTA	South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement
SD	Standard Deviation
TOI	Times of India
WSJ	Wall Street Journal
WTO	World Trade Organization

Media Underreporting as a Barrier to India-Pakistan Trade Normalization: Quantitative analysis of newsprint dailies

Rahul Mediratta

1. Introduction[1]

Is trade captured in popular discourse on India-Pakistan relations? Over the past two decades, officials in India and Pakistan's industry and Governments have been involved in several activities regarding bilateral trade normalization. These developments have been concentrated around three periods: the late-1990s, mid-2000s, and early-2010s. Activities have ranged from conducting roundtables and negotiating agreements, to coordinating trade expos and enhancing trade facilities at border crossings.

Are these waves of trade-related activity reflected in popular media coverage? This question comes at a time when popular media is being increasingly evaluated for its breadth of coverage on India-Pakistan relations. A longstanding and important criticism of media coverage on India-Pakistan relations is it tends to be pre-occupied with developments in the security realm, to the exclusion of developments in non-security areas. Among these works, there is consensus that media tend to favor reporting on negative events in order to improve viewer ratings. For example, in her analysis of the press' reaction to the Indo-Pak People's Conference in Delhi in 1995, Sumanta Bannerji (1995) finds that Indian mainstream press quoted hostile opinions expressed by Pakistani officials and no positive comments which appeared in Pakistani newspapers. This conference brought together Indian and Pakistani delegates from many professional backgrounds, such as politicians, activists, lawyers, scientists, trade union representatives, journalists, and artists. Smruti S. Pattanaik's (2004) examination of coverage on Kashmir, nuclear arms, and trade in India and Pakistan's English-language print media reveal that "there are limitations in expressing opinions… the commercial aspect is paramount—news has to sell… [and] newspapers are sometimes reluctant to publish material which would unnecessarily drag them into controversy… the opinion page, though maintaining a certain degree of autonomy, generally avoid confrontation with the official stand" (p.178). Beena Sarwar's (2009) analysis of coverage on more recent events such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks showcases the media's ongoing bias in favor of negative statements. Since no other string of events between India and Pakistan are more frequently negative than developments in the security context, this may partly explain the media's seemingly lackluster reporting on events beyond conflict, such as with trade-related activity. A recent volume on *Media Practice in Twenty-first Century India* thus characterizes Kashmir as a "media mecca;" denoting that "Kashmir dominates media and analytical spheres" (Ninan & Chatterji, 2013, p.xv, p.21).

[1] This paper has been written as part of research studies conducted under the project "Strengthening Research and Promoting Multi-level Dialogue for Trade Normalization between India and Pakistan" led by Dr. Nisha Taneja. The author is thankful to Dr. Aparna Sahwney, Dr. Nisha Taneja, Dr. Sanjib Pohit and panelists at the India-Pakistan Annual Conference held on 21-22 January, 2014, for comments.

These criticisms imply that information on non-security issues such as trade, has limited penetration into popular discourse on India-Pakistan relations. A dearth of popular awareness on trade-related activities between India and Pakistan may limit the extent to which it is politically feasible for governments to invest further resources towards trade normalization, or perhaps the extent to which the public necessarily pressure politicians to do so. Communication studies scholars label the effect of mass media on influencing public opinion and the public agenda as 'agenda-setting'. The foundational study in this literature by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) purports that though the media cannot necessarily tell the public *what* to think, it can influence its readers on *what to think about*, by divesting more coverage to certain issue areas and less coverage to other areas. Greater coverage can powerfully influence the select issues that public opinion focus on, and thus determine the public policy agenda.[2] Consequently, underreporting on trade-related activity can amount to an important impediment to trade normalization between India and Pakistan which can be labeled as an 'informational barrier'. Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director General of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, thusly commented the following at the 7th South Asia Conference:

> "Adversarial and negative perceptions come in the way of regional cooperation and integration. Hyperactive 24x7 media plays a role in perpetuating cynicism. A cooperative approach to resolving regional issues remains elusive. But this need not be so. An effort to forge positive perceptions about each other must be made" (2013, October 30).

Similarly, Dr. Pratap Bhanu Mehta, President of the Centre for Policy Research, pointed out the following in an article in the *Indian Express*:

> "Even simple things like trade and investment involve large assumptions about what you will let people do, how you will let them travel, how much presumed trust you repose in them and so forth…They have to make reference to a larger story towards which we are driving" (2013, October 13)

India-Pakistan trade normalization is especially pertinent in the wake of India's Spring 2014 elections. Pakistan has indicated they plan to grant Non-Discriminatory Market Access (NDMA)[3] to India, with the entry of India's new Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Nigam, 2014*)*. Industry voices such as Zubair Ahmed Malik, the President of the Federation of Pakistani Chambers of Commerce and Industry, urge that "MFN [Most Favored Nation] status must be given to India" regardless of the electoral results ("Pakistan should grant MFN", 2013). India's past Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh responded that he hoped to visit Pakistan should MFN be granted to India ("Manmohan may visit Pakistan", 2013*)*. These discussions intimate a future vision of India-Pakistan relations anchored on greater cooperation and less animosity, but does this discourse reach the newsstands? Recent scholarship on Indian public opinion and the country's foreign policy suggests that "with the spread of education and media, the Indian public is becoming increasingly aware of India's

[2] For a summary on the state of the art on agenda-setting theory, see McCombs (2005). The concluding section of this paper engages more robustly with agenda-setting theory in the context of reporting on India-Pakistan trade.

[3] NDMA is the nomenclature that Pakistan is adopting in place of Most Favored Nation (MFN)

foreign policy options and the issues at stake" (Blarel & Pardesi, 2013). Thus, to the extent that media coverage on India-Pakistan exercises a security bias, this trend may constitute an informational barrier to normalizing India-Pakistan trade.

The paper continues as follows. The next section reviews barriers to trade, which are typically categorized as tariffs or non-tariff barriers. Examples are cited for each barrier type in the India-Pakistan context. Overall, literature on informational barriers is least developed. The subsequent section summarizes trade-related activities between India and Pakistan over the past two decades, which has been concentrated around three periods: the late-1990s, mid-2000s, and early 2010s. This summary serves as a baseline for evaluating if news dailies capture these periods of activity. Methods for measuring quantum of coverage among five newspapers are described, which are the *Times of India* (TOI), *Economic Times* (ET), *Business Standard* (BS), *New York Times* (NYT) and *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ). The results reveal that the ET, BS, and WSJ capture the dynamism of trade-related activities over the past two decades between India and Pakistan. The TOI and NYT, by contrast, do not. The paper concludes with an in-depth discussion on why underreporting in the TOI and NYT is problematic, and future research directions. Subsequent research work may entail a qualitative content analysis to evaluate biases in reporting, agenda-setting in India's Internet age, agenda-setting in India's cognitive and social contexts, and a concept labeled the 'media agenda' as it relates to the *Aman ki Asha*[4] peace initiative between the TOI Group and the Jang Group of Pakistan.[5]

2. Barriers to Trade

Barriers to trade are typically categorized as tariff barriers or non-tariff barriers. Tariffs are essentially taxes, such as "customs duties on merchandise imports" (World Trade Organization [WTO], 2014). Para-tariffs also fall under this category, such as countervailing duties. Non-tariff barriers (NTBs) constitute non-tax measures that obstruct trade. These are numerous in variety, ranging from more tangible impediments that are legal, financial, and structural, to less tangible ones that are cultural and informational. Literature on NTBs has tended to focus predominantly on more tangible impediments, perhaps because corresponding policy implications are more concrete. Literature specific to NTBs between India and Pakistan has also concentrated on more tangible varieties, although new research work by ICRIER examines cultural impediments between professionals in both countries through a trade perception survey (2013). Table 1 organizes the aforementioned barriers to trade and cites empirical examples from the India-Pakistan context.

[4] Translates as 'Hope for peace', see http://amankiasha.com/

[5] McCombs' (2005) summary on agenda-setting theory demonstrates that this scholarship focuses predominantly on the overlap between media coverage, public opinion formation, and public policy, and minimally on the political economy of media production – labeled 'media agenda' – akin to the work of Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent: The political economy of the mass media* (1988). For this reason, while examining the political economy of news media is relevant to the central puzzle of this study – 'Is trade captured in media coverage on India-Pakistan relations?' – it is beyond the scope of this article, although I address this briefly in the discussion section in the context of the *Aman ki Asha* peace initiative.

Table 1: Barriers to trade

			examples	India -Pakistan*
tariff barriers		tariffs	duties	NDMA awaits**
		para-tariffs	countervailing duties	interferes with identifying MRP
non-tariff barriers	more tangible	legal	licenses; quotas; standards; country of origin ban; restrictive visa	positive list regime; city-specific visa
		structural	infrastructure for rail, road, sea, air	scarcity of rail wagons; transport protocols***
		financial	obstructions to currency exchange, payment clearance	Indian banks do not recognize Pakistani L/Cs; bilateral branches not permitted
	less tangible	cultural	norms, taboos	incongruent professional culture†
		informational	unclear rules; inadequate media coverage	unclear regulatory policies††; media preoccupied with security

*Taneja, 2007 unless noted otherwise; **Taneja et al., 2011a; ***Taneja et al., 2011b; †ICRIER, 2013; ††Taneja et al., 2013

3. Baseline: India-Pakistan Trade-Related Activities in the Last Two Decades

What trade-related activities have occurred between India and Pakistan? Looking over the past two decades, activity has been concentrated around three periods: the late-1990s, mid-2000s, and early 2010s. A summary of these activities follows, which serves as a base line to assess whether these are captured in media coverage.

3.1 Late-1990s

In 1993, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) signed its Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) to promote regional trade within the South Asia region. SAPTA became operational in 1995. In 1996, India granted MFN status to Pakistan as both countries became members of the WTO. Pakistan did not reciprocate MFN status back to India, though bilateral delegations among industrialists took place. These delegations did not include government officials. The following year in 1997, both countries agreed to a Composite Dialogue Process (CDP) which would cover eight issue areas including economic and commercial developments. In 1998, however, the political climate became tense as both countries tested nuclear arms. The following year as the Kargil War broke out, trade-related activities were curbed (Padder, 2012).

3.2 Mid-2000s

In 2003, India initiated a 'step-by-step' process to resume the CDP with Pakistan. Following, diplomatic and transport channels were re-opened and a ceasefire at the Line of Control was agreed to. The following year in 2004, SAPTA was subsumed into the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited

Pakistan, after which four rounds of bilateral CDP talks took place (Mehmood, 2013). Bilateral business delegations took place soon after in 2005 and 2006. Unlike in the previous decade, these delegations included industry representatives along with government officials. In 2006, SAFTA became operational. In 2008, however, the Mumbai attacks prompted India to suspend further trade talks.

3.3 Early-2010s

By 2011, trade talks were back in swing as the CDP resumed. A Pakistani business delegation visited Delhi that year, and the following year in 2012 an Indian delegation visited Lahore. Further in 2012, India's former Commerce Minister Anand Sharma visited Pakistan – the first-ever visit of an Indian Commerce Minister to Pakistan – during which time Pakistan abolished its positive list regime against India which had permitted 1,946 of her items. In accordance with WTO membership rules, Pakistan replaced this with a negative list that permits all Indian imports except for about 200 items. Bilateral trade expos have since occurred in Mumbai and Lahore. India legalized foreign investment from Pakistan, and the first India-Pakistan joint venture has been incorporate. A massive Integrated Check Post has been constructed at the Attari-Wagah land border to facilitate greater trade. Finally, a trade post was opened at the Line of Control in Uri.

4. Method: Measuring Quantum of Coverage, 'What to Think About'

To assess if trade-related activities are captured in popular discourse on India-Pakistan relations, a quantitative content analysis was conducted on newsprint media of the last 17 years from 1997 to 2013. Ideally, this study would examine coverage from the last 20 years in order to extend back to when SAPTA was signed in 1993. However, digital archives of newsprint media tend to reach no further back than 1997. Five English newspapers were examined to capture different audience categories: i) one national Indian daily with a broad focus; ii) two Indian national dailies, each with a narrow economic focus; iii) one international daily with a broad focus; and, iv) one international daily with a narrow economic focus. TOI ranks as the highest-read English daily in India (Indian Readership Survey, 2012). ET (Auletta, 2012) and BS rank among the highest-read English dailies with a more narrow economic focus, both of which are based in India and read predominantly by "serious business readers," (Business Standard, 2013) such as members of industry and policymakers. NYT and WSJ are the most widely read international dailies for a broad popular paper and an economic one, respectively ("Top 10 Newspapers", 2013). Ideally, English dailies from Pakistan would also have been analyzed,[6] except these are unavailable in digital format for the period examined here.[7]

Digital archives of the five aforementioned news dailies were accessed using the *Factiva* database owned by Dow Jones & Company, which aggregates content from more than 36,000 sources from nearly 200 countries in 28 languages. Three keyword searches were conducted

[6] *Business Recorder* is Pakistan's chief economic daily. The country's leading broad dallies are *The News International*, *The Nation*, and *Dawn.* See: Shah, 2010

[7] For analysis of Pakistani media on India-Pakistan relations, see Mustafa, 2004

on each newspaper for each year between 1997 and 2013. These searches were 'India', 'India AND Pakistan', and 'India AND Pakistan AND trade'. The 'India' search results provided a base line of content that was presumed to regard India. Results from the subsequent 'India AND Pakistan' search were divided by the number of results from the 'India' search for each newspaper year. The same equation was conducted for results from the 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' search – dividing these by the number of results for the 'India' search and 'India AND Pakistan' search for each country year. Microsoft Excel was used to record results for each search, calculate proportions of content over time, and generate line graphs. Standard deviations and coefficients of variation were calculated to identify periods during when the proportion of coverage on 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' varied most between different news dailies.

This quantitative content analysis enables us to ascertain the *quantum* of coverage regarding trade, as in the media's influence on *what to think about* based on which issue areas receive more prominent coverage. These methods do not enable us to decipher the *quality* of coverage regarding trade, as in the media's influence over *what to think* such as biases in reporting. This latter inquiry requires qualitative content analysis which I discuss in the conclusion.

5. Results

Table 2 displays the volume of keyword search results on each newspaper year from 1997 to 2013. Metrics indicate these keyword search results are reliable to use for further analysis.

For each newspaper, the 'India' search generated the greatest results out of all three keyword searches, followed by 'India AND Pakistan' and then 'India AND Pakistan AND trade'. This order is expected since each subsequent search includes an additional term, which thus narrows the number of results. TOI generated the largest results on all metrics for each keyword search, which reflects the fact that this newspaper has the most dedicated coverage on India-related issues than the other news sources examined. ET ranked second in volume of results under the 'India' search, which makes sense since ET is based in India. BS, NYT, and WSJ were roughly equal on narrower keyword searches. This probably reflects that while BS is more dedicated to India-related issues than NYT and WSJ, the latter two are larger presses (Auletta, 2012).

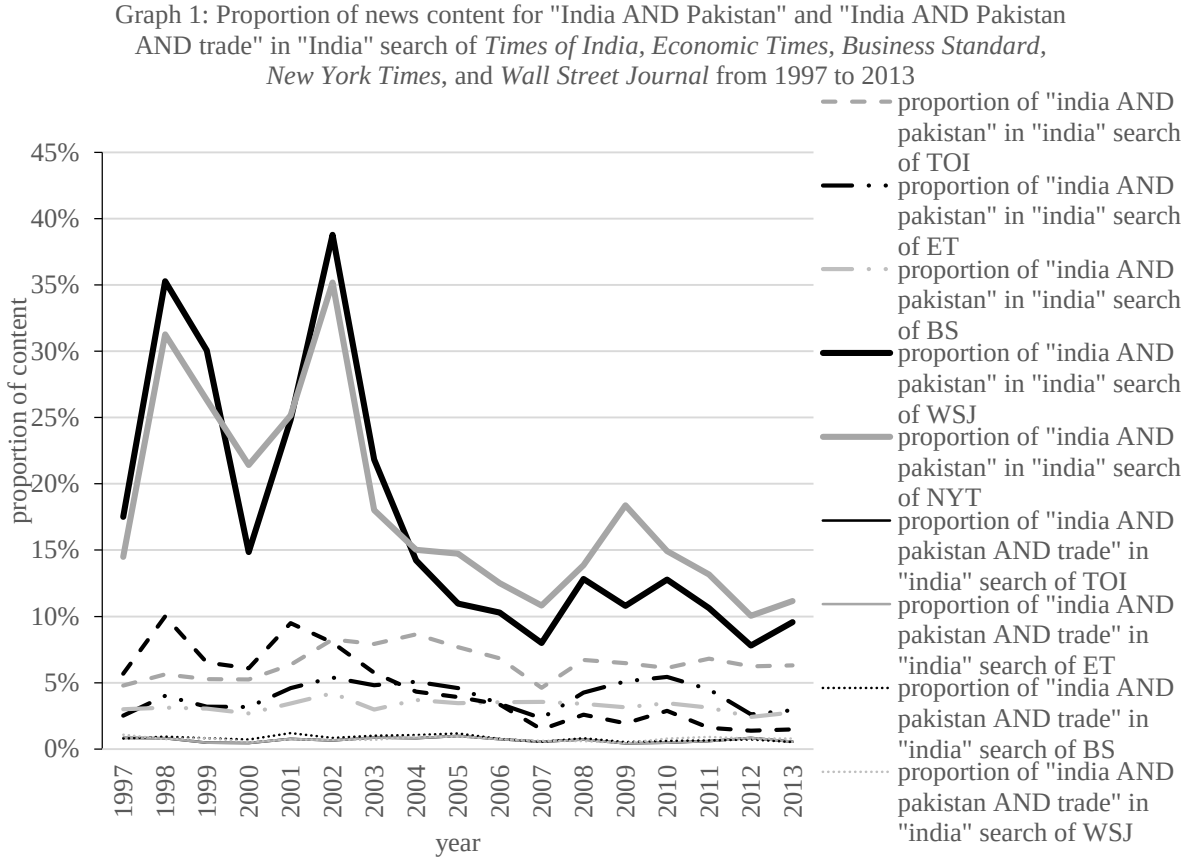
Table 2: Keyword search results on Times of India (TOI), Economic Times (ET), Business Standard (BS), New York Times (NYT) and Wall Street Journal (WSJ) from 1997 to 2013

keyword searches	**newspaper**				
	TOI	*ET*	*BS*	*NYT*	*WSJ*
'India'					
min	25,583	8,328	7,961	1,242	1,160
max	186,513	24,883	14,749	5,822	15,089
mean	67,973	16,416	11,223	2,599	5,885
median	46,800	17,370	11,289	2,319	3,870
India AND Pakistan'					
min	1,510	383	238	180	203
max	11,762	1,022	509	821	1,580
mean	4,281	635	364	429	730
median	2,932	575	363	418	489
India AND Pakistan AND trade'					
min	168	74	47	29	66
max	1,505	200	136	133	351
mean	439	127	85	66	164
median	294	129	79	58	152

Source: Compiled by author using *Factiva* database owned by Dow Jones & Company

Graph 1 displays results generated by an 'India AND Pakistan' search and an 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' search, as a proportion of results generated by an 'India' search of TOI, ET, BS, NYT, and WSJ. These results may be interpreted as illustrating that proportion of content regarding India which also touches on Pakistan, and on Pakistan and trade. Overall, 'India AND Pakistan' results account for around 5% of 'India' results, and 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' results account for around 2.5% of 'India' results among Indian dailies. As for the two international dailies, NYT and WSJ, it is interesting to note that proportion of content containing 'India AND Pakistan' among 'India' results is much higher and more dynamic than is the case with Indian dailies. This variation may reflect that when news is less local (as with international dailies), coverage centers on a smaller number of issue areas and mostly on 'big' stories. Unsurprisingly, the 'India AND Pakistan' results for NYT and WSJ in Graph 1 peak at security events: 1999 when the Kargil War broke out, 2003 when the Indian Parliament was attacked, and 2008 when Mumbai was attacked.

Graph 1: Proportion of news content for "India AND Pakistan" and "India AND Pakistan AND trade" in "India" search of *Times of India, Economic Times, Business Standard, New York Times,* and *Wall Street Journal* from 1997 to 2013



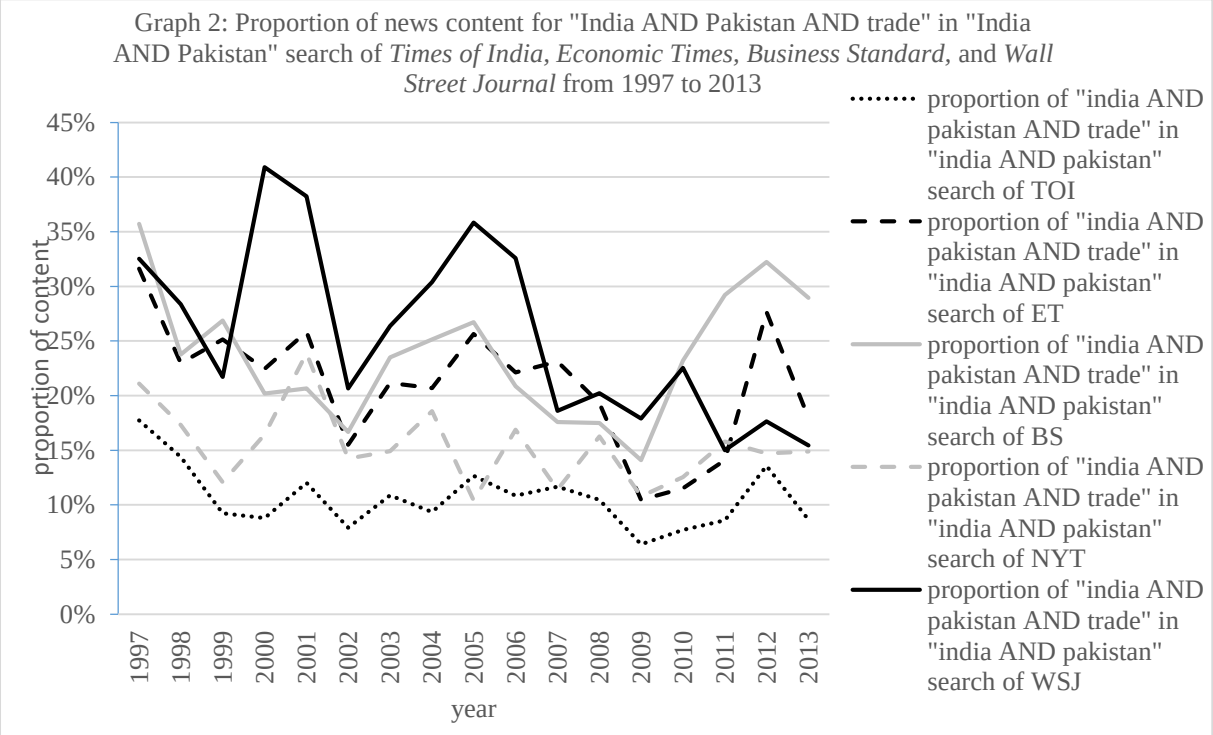
Note: Some results are difficult to view which remain around 1% for the entire period examined, and these are "India AND Pakistan AND trade" in "India" search of TOI, ET, BS, and WSJ

Source: Based on compilation by author using *Factiva* database owned by Dow Jones & Company

Graph 2 illustrates an interesting narrative. Graph 2 displays results generated by an 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' search as a proportion of results generated by an 'India AND Pakistan' search in TOI, ET, BS, NYT, and WSJ. These results may be interpreted as illustrating that proportion of content regarding India and Pakistan which also touch on trade. The interesting observation from Graph 2 is not to compare the volume of 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' as a proportion of 'India AND Pakistan' results, between different newspapers. Instead, the interesting takeaway is to compare how these proportions vary over time. The ET, BS, and WSJ exhibit waves over time with proportions of coverage that rise and fall around similar periods. The TOI, by contrast, exhibits a relatively flatter line throughout the same period. The pattern of coverage in the NYT is a middle-ground, which hovers between 15% to 20% throughout the period examined, but also exhibits considerable waviness during the late-2000s. This contrast in proportion of coverage over time – between a wavier line, versus a flatter one – suggests that two different narratives are appearing among the newsprints examined. The ET, BS, and WSJ seem to offer a narrative that captures the dynamism of trade-related activities in the past two decades between India and

Pakistan. Notice that among these three dailies, Graph 2 displays three peaks during when content reaches a high proportion – the late-1990s, the mid-2000s, and the early-2010s. These peaks parallel those periods highlighted earlier during when the largest concentrations of trade-related activity took place between India and Pakistan. In light of this dynamism, the flatness of the TOI's proportion of content over time suggests this newspaper fails to capture trends in trade-related activity between India and Pakistan. Even if proportion of content on India-Pakistan trade is smaller in a popular daily like the TOI as compared with an economic daily, the dynamism of an issue should at least be captured in both types of platforms. That is, the lines in Graph 2 should all be wavy or all flat, rather than exhibiting a dichotomy between a cluster of wavy lines among the economic dailies and a far flatter line for the popular daily.

Graph 2: Proportion of news content for "India AND Pakistan AND trade" in "India AND Pakistan" search of *Times of India, Economic Times, Business Standard,* and *Wall Street Journal* from 1997 to 2013



Source: Based on compilation by author using *Factiva* database owned by Dow Jones & Company

Variation in coverage displayed in Graph 2 can be examined mathematically by deriving the Coefficient of Variation (CV)[8] for each newspaper period, and then calculating the Standard Deviation (SD) of CVs for each period. The analysis below identifies periods with some of the larger SD of CVs, which is basically periods with some of the widest variations in proportion of content for keyword searches. Overall, these periods tend to overlap with times when India and Pakistan have had high concentrations of trade-related activity, which are the late-1990s, mid-2000s, and early-2010s as indicated earlier.

[8] Coefficient of Variation (CV) is a function of Standard Deviation (SD), divided by mean.

Table 3 displays that for the keyword search 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' among all five newspapers, the periods with some of the widest variation in proportion of content are 1999 to 2000, 2001 to 2008, and 2009 to 2012. These periods overlap with the aforementioned times with higher concentrations of trade-related activity. Although these periods do not correspond precisely with the aforementioned times, the overlaps arguably lend further support that among the dailies examined in this paper, coverage regarding India-Pakistan trade in the ET, BS, and WSJ is far more dynamic – and thus in line with events summarized earlier – in contrast to the more stable proportion of said coverage in the TOI. For all three periods listed in Table 1, the TOI exhibits the smallest CV which affirms that variation in its proportion of content containing 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' was far more narrow than ET, BS, NYT, and WSJ; respectively, 0.03 as compared with 0.08, 0.20, 0.22, and 0.43 from 1999 to 2000, 0.14 as compared with 0.16, 0.18, 0.27, and 0.27 from 2001 to 2008, and finally 0.15 as compared with 0.15, 0.34, 0.19, and 0.21 from 2009 to 2012.

Table 3: Variation in proportion of content containing "India AND Pakistan AND trade" in "India AND Pakistan" search of *Times of India* (TOI), *Economic Times* (ET), *Business Standard* (BS), *New York Times* (NYT) and *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ)

		newspaper					
period	**metric**	*TOI*	*ET*	*BS*	*NYT*	*WSJ*	overall
1999 to 2000	SD*	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.14	
	mean	0.09	0.24	0.24	0.14	0.31	
	CV**	0.03	0.08	0.20	0.22	0.43	
	SD of CVs						0.16
2001 to 2008	SD	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.08	
	mean	0.11	0.22	0.21	0.16	0.28	
	CV	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.27	0.27	
	SD of CVs						0.06
2009 to 2012	SD	0.01	0.02	0.08	0.03	0.04	
	mean	0.08	0.12	0.22	0.13	0.18	
	CV	0.15	0.15	0.34	0.19	0.21	
	SD of CVs						0.08

*SD = standard deviation; **CV = coefficient of variation
Source: Based on compilation by author using *Factiva* database owned by Dow Jones & Company

How do proportions of coverage compare between the two broad news dailies, TOI and NYT? On the whole, these news dailies do not exhibit large variations in the proportions of their coverage for keyword 'India AND Pakistan AND trade'. There is one exception, however, which is from 1999 to 2001, the NYT exhibits a far more dynamic pattern of coverage than the TOI – indicated by a wavier pattern -- which generates a relatively large SD of CVs at 0.12.

How do proportions of coverage compare between the narrow economic dailies, ET, BS, and WSJ? Table 4 displays that these news dailies exhibit large variations in the proportions of their coverage from 1999 to 2001 which overlaps with the late-1990s, and from 2009 to 2013

which overlaps with the early-2010s. As for the mid-2000s, proportion of coverage is roughly constant rather than wide-ranging and is thus omitted from Table 4. In the late-1990s, the WSJ increased their proportion of content containing 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' far more than ET and BS. Table 4 substantiates this based on the rank ordering of CVs of ET and BS at 0.07 and 0.17 respectively, as compared with WSJ much higher at 0.34. As of the early-2010s, by contrast, stories containing these keywords are carried in greater proportion by ET and BS, and decreasingly so by WSJ. Table 4 substantiates this based on the rank order of CVs of ET and BS at 0.43 and 0.28 respectively, as compared with WSJ much lower at 0.15.

Table 4: Variation in proportion of content containing "India AND Pakistan AND trade" in "India AND Pakistan" search of *Economic Times* (ET), *Business Standard* (BS), and *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ)

		newspaper			
period	**metric**	*ET*	*BS*	*WSJ*	overall
1999 to 2001	SD*	0.02	0.04	0.06	
	mean	0.24	0.23	0.17	
	CV**	0.07	0.17	0.34	
	SD of CVs				0.14
2009 to 2013	SD	0.07	0.07	0.02	
	mean	0.16	0.26	0.14	
	CV	0.43	0.28	0.15	
	SD of CVs				0.14

*SD = standard deviation; **CV = coefficient of variation
Source: Based on compilation by author using *Factiva* database owned by Dow Jones & Company

Finally, how do proportions of coverage compare among Indian dailies? Table 5 displays that these news dailies exhibit large variations in the proportions of their coverage from 1999 to 2002, from 2003 to 2009, and from 2009 to 2011. These times overlap with the three aforementioned periods of higher trade activity, namely the late-1990s, mid-2000s, and early-2010s respectively. As with Tables 3 and 4 although these times to not correspond precisely, the substantial overlap lends support that coverage was more dynamic during when trade-related activity was higher. In the late-1990s, as the ET and BS were increasing coverage the TOI was lagging behind somewhat. Table 5 substantiates this based on the rank ordering of CVs of ET and BS at 0.21 and 0.20 respectively, as compared with TOI at 0.19. The mid-2000s displays a similar patterns, with ET and BS leading at 0.24 and 0.22 and TOI behind at 0.18. Finally, as of the early-2010s, the variation in proportion of coverage is quite large at 0.11. Coverage in BS rapidly jumps, as evidenced by a CV of 0.34. Although ET and TOI have the same CV of 0.15, it is interesting to note from Graph 2 that in this period proportion of coverage in ET is rising while was TOI coverage was rapidly falling.

Table 5: Variation in proportion of content containing "India AND Pakistan AND trade" in "India AND Pakistan" search of *Times of India* (TOI), *Economic Times* (ET), and *Business Standard* (BS)

		newspaper			
period	**metric**	*TOI*	*ET*	*BS*	overall
1999 to 2002	SD*	0.02	0.05	0.04	
	mean	0.09	0.22	0.21	
	CV**	0.19	0.21	0.20	
	SD of CVs				0.01
2003 to 2009	SD	0.02	0.05	0.05	
	mean	0.10	0.20	0.21	
	CV	0.19	0.24	0.22	
	SD of CVs				0.02
2009 to 2011	SD	0.01	0.02	0.08	
	mean	0.08	0.12	0.22	
	CV	0.15	0.15	0.34	
	SD of CVs				0.11

*SD = standard deviation; **CV = coefficient of variation
Source: Based on compilation by author using *Factiva* database owned by Dow Jones & Company

Time periods that appear in Tables 3 to 5 are those which exhibit the largest SD of CVs. While these periods generally correspond to one another between different tables, they are not precisely the same since SD of CVs vary with the inclusion versus exclusion of different dailies. In Table 3 for example, the first period listed is 1999 to 2000 whereas in Table 4 the first period listed is 1999 to 2001. We might be concerned that since these periods are not precisely the same, then the base SDs, means, and CVs vary and these results are thus not comparable. For example, in Table 3 the WSJ exhibits a mean and CV of 0.31 and 0.43, respectively, whereas in Table 4 with the inclusion of an additional year these measures drop to 0.17 and 0.34. This comparison illustrates how the means and CVs can be highly sensitive to change in number of years covered in a sub-period, however these base measures are less meaningful on an individual basis as compared to the rank ordering of CVs. In Table 3 for the period 1999 to 2000 and in Table 4 for the period 1999 to 2001, the rank ordering of WSJ relative to the other dailies is constant; positioned with the largest of CVs, which affirms more dynamic coverage. In sum, evaluating the ranking ordering of CVs among a group of dailies across periods and tables is more meaningful and easier to interpret, as compared with assessing the CVs of an individual daily across periods and tables.

6. Discussion & Implications

First and as mentioned earlier, holding constant the proportion of content on an issue area in a broad popular daily versus an economic one, the dynamism of such an issue should be captured across both types of newspapers. That is to say that proportion of coverage across such dailies should generally rise and fall in tandem with one another, rather than being disconnected as the TOI appears to have been (and less so NYT) compared with the ET, BS,

and WSJ regarding India-Pakistan trade. This disconnect may indicate that users of one daily are largely shielded from the issue areas covered by a different daily. Since the TOI and NYT cater to a wide and popular audience base (as compared to the more select and politically and economically influential users of the ET, BS, and WSJ), an implication of such a dichotomy is that a large voting public is under informed on the comings and goings of a small decision-making elite. In the context of India-Pakistan trade, a dearth of awareness on this issue in popular discourse may limit the extent to which politicians can feasibly invest further resources towards trade normalization, or perhaps the extent to which the public necessarily pressure governments on whether or not to do so.

Second, it is expected that as an issue area becomes more salient to broad interests, then the proportion of coverage on such an issue will grow among dailies and especially among popular dailies. Though trade should sensibly receive more coverage in an economic daily like ET, BS, and WSJ than in a broader popular daily, the security implications of India-Pakistan trade arguably merit greater coverage in a popular daily like the TOI and NYT. Consider that the economic benefits of India-Pakistan trade liberalization will be far greater for Pakistan, and thus for India the benefits are disproportionately more concentered on improved political relations which are topics of great popular interest. Expanding coverage on India-Pakistan trade can thus correct a concerning imbalance relative to media's seeming pre-occupation with these countries' relations in security.

6.1 Second level agenda setting

This study is a *quantitative* content analysis that establishes the *quantum* of coverage regarding trade, and thus suggests how the media influences *what to think about* with regards to India-Pakistan relations. In communications literature, the media's influence on *what to think* based on *quantum* of coverage is labeled first level agenda-setting. By focusing on select issues, the media transfers salience to said issues (also referred to as 'objects') (McCombs, 2005). My results substantiate a long-held claim that media coverage contains a focal bias on security to the exclusion of other issues areas, such as trade. Extant literature contains at least one other example of quantitative content analysis of coverage on India-Pakistan relations, which is a study that measures the frequency of editorial commentary on security issues from 1965 to 1966 in the TOI and *Times of Pakistan* (Rao, 1971). Thus, there is much opportunity to make new and important studies on India-Pakistan media coverage of this quantitative variety.

Subsequent research can perform a *qualitative* content analysis on the *quality* of coverage regarding trade, as in the media's influence over *what to think* such as with biases in reporting. The media's influence on *what to think* based on *quality* of coverage is labeled second level agenda-setting, in which the media focus on select attributes that comprise an object (i.e. an issue) powerfully frame how the public understands these objects (McCombs, 2005). A qualitative content analysis would be akin to Pattanaik's (2004) examination of opinions expressed in news dailies. For example, does coverage on India-Pakistan trade contain a negative bias or perhaps a positive one? A promising approach might be to

examine for bias on a temporal basis by comparing periods with higher concentration of trade-related activity (i.e. the late-1990s, mid-2000s, and early 2010s), and also moments when trade activities are curbed by security events (e.g. 1999 Kargil War, 2003 Indian Parliament Attack, 2008 Mumbai attacks).

Digital access to Pakistani news dailies would invariably enhance research on media coverage of the region. The *Factiva* database used in this study enables powerful analysis, and particularly so for quantitative work. Unfortunately, Pakistani dailies do not extend very far back in this database (nor in the *Access World News Bank* database) requisite for this study, if at all. Serious efforts were made to source these through university library subscriptions in India, Pakistan, and the US, but none turned up access to a substantial enough digital archive of Pakistani dailies. These data gaps demand concerted attention among media groups, research universities and institutes, and database administrators in the South Asia region and beyond.

6.2 Internet age

The seminal work on agenda-setting by McCombs & Shaw (1972) emerged within an environment with relatively fewer media outlets as compared with the present Internet era. Some scholars have questioned whether the Internet has introduced so many new informational channels so as to spell the end of agenda-setting as audiences fragment and "virtually everyone has a unique external media agenda that is a highly individualized composite constructed from this vast wealth of online news and information" (McCombs, 2005). In other words, does the Internet significantly diminish agenda-setting? Across India, the Internet may have a limited diminishing effect on agenda-setting insofar as 90% of the country's population remain offline (McKinsey, 2013). Furthermore, research suggests that with online news, consumers converge on a fewer number of dailies as compared with newsprint dailies (Hamilton, 2004). Still, as Internet news technologies continue to evolve rapidly and access in India continues to grow, this represents an important frontier for future research in the Indian context.

6.3 Cognitive and social effects

A section of agenda-setting literature examines the interactive effect between media coverage and people's pre-existing attitudes and worldviews (Ha, 2002; Takeshita, 1993; Weaver, 1977). Related work examines how social communication immediately following news exposure can powerfully shape and possibly override agenda-setting effect (Goldenburg & Miller, 1980). The cognitive and social communication components of agenda-setting theory assign a more active role to the public in forming their opinion about public affairs vis-à-vis media effects. These factors are particularly relevant to consider in the Indian context where identity attributes powerfully shape public opinion according to region, language, religion, caste, income, and education, among other attributes (Chandra & Wilkinson, 2008; Chandra, 2006). Certainly with respect to India-Pakistan relations as one of the country's most political sensitive and longstanding issues, we would expect the Indian public to have strong and varied pre-existing opinions that interact with media effects.

6.4 Media agenda

Finally, an important stream of agenda-setting theory asks "if the press sets the public agenda, who sets the media agenda?" (McCombs, 2005, p.548). Extant literature examines how relations among news organizations, journalistic norms, and corporate relations shape the media agenda. Much of this is famously explored in Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky's (1988) *Manufacturing Consent: The political economy of the mass media*. Media agenda is particularly relevant to India-Pakistan relations given the *Aman ki Asha* peace campaign launched in 2010 by the Jang Group of Pakistan in collaboration with The TOI Group. These media groups are striving to expand debate on issue areas affecting India-Pakistan peace, including commercial ones such as trade normalization. The results in Table 5 for the period 2009 to 2011 are especially ironic since content in the TOI containing keywords 'India AND Pakistan AND trade' rapidly dropped as *Aman ki Asha* was launched (and simultaneously, such content rose in the ET, BS, and WSJ). One explanation might be that *Aman ki Asha* siphons away trade content from TOI's mainstream broadsheet, and thus inadvertently isolates coverage on this issue from readers. An alternative explanation is that in spite of *Aman ki Asha*, TOI's proportion of content on India-Pakistan trade has indeed fallen in recent years. Either scenario is concerning and deserves some rectification.[9]

[9] A qualitative content-analysis of *Aman ki Asha* which identifies key issue areas (rather delineating if coverage has a negative-bias or a positive one) is conducted in Tere, 2012

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