

## **Media and Democratic Transitions during Zia and Musharraf Regimes in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

*Dictatorships reverse the democratization in a state, first by overthrowing an elected government and then by engineering undue legitimacy, taming state institutions, amending constitution, eliminating political opponents, limiting media freedom and violating human rights. On the other hand, democratization is a process of (re)acquiring democracy from the authoritarian regime. The process involves many a stages, transition being the first phase of democratization struggle. Transition is a stage of democratization where authoritarian regimes open up for elections and hands over the powers to the elected government. Pakistan has experienced four direct military dictatorships so far. The recent two dictatorships (by Zia-ul-Haq in 1979 and Pervaiz Musharraf in 1999) are interesting to be studied being the longest and led by two totally opposite mindsets. Zia attempted 'Islamization of Pakistan' while Musharraf called for 'Enlightened Moderation' of the state.*

*This study aims at exploring the media coverage of various electoral issues during general elections of 1985 and 2002 in Pakistan. The research attempts to measure differences and similarities in media coverage of the said elections by Daily Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt. It applies content analysis and draws its results by coding editorials*

*and editorial notes published by Daily Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt during the process of elections in the year 1985 and 2002. The results of the study reveal that various dimensions of electoral issues prominently remained in editorial coverage by the selected newspapers. Daily Jang was found attempting more neutrality of stance as compared to Nawa-i-Waqt, which covered the issues not only with more frequency but with higher criticism to the dictatorship led elections.*

*This research will facilitate the understanding of democratic transitions during Zia and Musharraf regimes. It will engage the readers in comparing the role of two prominent dailies in the process of democratization in Pakistan. It may also benefit the newspaper organizations to look into the analysis of given coverage.*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Transition, Elections, Dictatorship, Pakistan

## **1. Introduction and Contextual Framework**

The complex relationship of mass media with the political system of a state is widely investigated by the researchers. The capacity and performance of normative role playing by the media is heavily dependent on type and nature of political system where media is operating. The position of media in a society both as an agent of political socialization and active political actor are well settled in literature. The role of media becomes even more prominent in various phases of democratization due to diversity of actors, events and conditions. The media of a state struggling with democratization process advocates and safeguards the public interest as well as democratic culture (Fukyana, etal. 2014, Moller & Scheirnbeck, 2014)

Democratization is referred as process of acquiring democracy in a state where previous regime is non-democratic (O'Donnell &

Schmitter, 1986). But the definition of democracy itself is variously provided, contested and loose-fitted. Democracy is not considered dichotomous (i.e. either a state is democratic or not) but a subject of continuity. So the process of democratization struggles to acquire maximum of democracy ideals in a state, which results in some states ahead from the others in favorable condition for liberal democracy.

Elections are considered as primary requirement to democracy at all stages of democratization, but the elections at the transition stage are more crucial, as the prior regime (i.e. Authoritarian) attempt to engineer the electoral process in search of maximizing its stakes in upcoming regime. Elections engage general public, political actors, media and state institutions being their central focus (Stephan & Linz, 2013). They become more important if they are going to restore democracy from an undemocratic regime (Croissant, 2004)

Elections at the transition stage are challenging for state institutions, political parties, public and media. Journalism by providing expert commentary on elections plays important role in both reporting and supporting democratization process. Mass media during elections not only provides with information but also becomes carrier of political ideologies and party's agenda (Garyants & Murphy, 2010). While performing its role and reporting electoral issues, media organization may represent their editorial leaning (Howard, 2004). Hence, media as mirror of the society may practice journalism in both concave and convex way. The role of media in agenda setting and framing regarding political communication has widely been researched. The media of a state with fractured political past and chained media system ought to take the challenges of democratization with a lot more social responsibility to hinder undemocratic forces, encourage pro-democratic actors, educate voters, watchdog electoral process and facilitate institution building.

Pakistan, taken as case, has witnessed many dictatorship regimes since its birth. The breathing periods between these dictatorships were also not free from the involvement of military into politics. The media was always wished to be curtailed through various legal and extra legal restrictions. The regimes of General Zia (1979-88) and General Pervaiz Musharraf (1999-2008) are no exceptions in this regard, although Pervaiz Musharraf during his first few years liberated media and pioneered private television and radio industry. But as the democratization process progressed and problem of his legitimacy arose, he behaved with the media in the same way as dictators do. The study in hand is attempting to analyze the editorial coverage of electoral issues during transition phases (General Election 1995 and 2002) under Gen. Zia and Musharraf regimes respectively. The selected press for this analysis has journalistic history as well as top circulation among masses. The study intends to explore that which electoral issues were given more editorial coverage and with what editorial statue. It further wanted to explore how much stable the selected press remained during the both transition phases and which newspaper remained more critical, outspoken and pro-democratic.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Theories play a major role in modern scientific research as they explain the variables of a phenomenon to make them simple, understandable. Theories have always been used as a base networks in research to remove ambiguity and to eradicate the chances of replication and duplication. In fact a theory helps the researcher to narrow down his field of research and give support to be specific. Kerlinger (1979) defined a theory as “a set of interrelated constructs (variables), definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomenon by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining natural phenomena.”(cited in Wimmer & Dominick; 1994, p.17). Theoretical framework specifies the

relationship between the concepts in a study and provides a context for examining the problem. Its function is to provide a theoretical guideline under the light of which a researcher conducts his/her research work.

This paper is considering agenda setting theory as framework for bridging the variables and providing the base for the entire study in organizing the research questions and data collection procedures.

### **2.1 Agenda Setting Theory**

One role of a free press is seemingly to provide the public with information necessary for them to take part in governing themselves. Therefore, the question of how media organizations decide what issues are important and how to cover them becomes a matter of great importance in our society. Similarly, one of the great concerns of editorial writers/board has traditionally been with which issues are the most important to cover at any given time. Agenda setting theory is the idea that the news media by their display of news, come to determine the issue the public thinks about and talks about. This means that mass media attention to an issue causing that issue to be elevated in importance to the public (cited in Ishaq, 2002, p.180).

Cohen (1963) states that (media) may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about (cited in Severin & Tankard;1997).

The term ‘agenda-setting’ was first used in a study by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw published in 1972. In the study, the researchers interviewed 100 undecided voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and asked them what issues they were most concerned about in the coming (1968) election. In studying the way political campaigns were covered in the media, Shaw and McCombs found that the main effect of the news media was to set an agenda, i.e. to tell people not what to think, but what to think about as opposed to persuasion or attitude change. After determining the five issues the voters deemed most important, the researchers evaluated the media serving Chapel Hill (both print and broadcast) for the content of their

stories. McCombs and Shaw found an almost perfect correlation between the types of stories that were covered most often and the voters' concern for the same issues.

Agenda setting describes a very powerful influence of the media – the ability to tell us what issues are important. Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Two basis assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

According to Dominick (2002) “one influence of mass media that has turned up in many studies of mass communication is called agenda setting effect. (An agenda is a list of things to be considered or acted upon) when we say that the media have an impact on agenda setting, we mean that they have ability to choose or emphasize certain topics, thereby causing the public to perceive these issues as important” (p.543).

In this study the researchers has examined in the light of major postulates of agenda setting theory that which issues of electoral process are given priority of coverage? How media covered various issues of elections during Zia and Musharraf regimes in Pakistan? What was the consistency pattern in the editorial policy of the selected newspapers while covering the election issues during the said dictatorial regimes? For this study, ‘agenda setting theory’ has provided the basis for bridging the variables. It has guided the researchers through the phases of research design, data collection and analysis.

### **3. Research Design**

A research design defines a relationship between the research drive and research methods. The research method engaged in this study is content analysis, ‘a method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from the text (Weber, 1990). Kerlinger (1986) has also defined it as; ‘a method of studying and analyzing

communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables' (cited in Wimmer, 1994; p.163-164). Content analysis is perhaps the most widely used starting point in analyzing media texts. It is frequently assumed that content analysis is exclusively quantitative, but the method is used for qualitative purposes as well.

This research has implied content analysis as method of data collection and analysis to examine how the selected newspapers (Daily Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt) covered various issues of electoral conduct under the regimes of General Zia (i.e. General Elections 1985) and General Musharraf (i.e. General Elections 2002). The process of national level elections not only engages key political players, state institutions, election administration, media and public but also passes through the multiple stage, each carrying diversity of issues and policy stances. This huge diversity of electoral process and issues challenges the researchers to build up a sharp focus and then connect it with political context. For this research, an extensive survey of collected data was conducted and key electoral issues were recorded. The second round of data consultation further enabled us to shorten and fine-tune the list of electoral issues to be measured as pre-defined sub-categories of a larger subject (i.e Category A) with the application of content analysis. Further, these pre-defined sub-categories helped us refocus our research questions to make them more easily measurable as well as surrounding the larger debate of electoral issues under said dictatorial regimes. Following is the detail of categories under observation of this research;

**A: Coverage of Electoral Issues**

- A1: Legal and Constitutional Amendments
- A2: Accountability and Eligibility of Nominees
- A3: Election Campaign
- A4: Election Arrangements
- A5: Election Process and Polling
- A6: Election Results and Government Formation

A7: Rigging in Election

A8: Others

### **3.1 Research Questions**

Keeping in mind the aforementioned categories derived from the data scrutiny, following research questions are devised;

1. Which issues of the Category A (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8), were given more editorial coverage by Daily Jang and Nawa-e-Waqt during the General Elections (1985 and 2002)?
2. In which regime (Zia: General Elections 1985 & Musharraf: General Elections 2002) the selected press published more critical (Against) editorials on issues A?
3. Did Daily Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt maintain their editorial policy throughout the selected time against each election or not?

### **3.2 Population and Sample of the Study**

Defining the universe or population of a research is to specify the boundaries of the body of content to be considered, which requires an appropriate operational definition of two dimensions, ‘the topic area’ and ‘the time period’ (cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 1994; p.168). And, by clearly specifying the topic area and the time period, researchers provide a concise statement that spells out the parameters of the investigation. While, the process of drawing representative elements from a larger population or universe is called sampling. An obvious advantage of sampling is savings in time and money (cited in Khel, 2000; p.48). This study considers the editorial contents (editorials and editorial notes) of two major Urdu newspapers, Daily Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt regarding the electoral issues during General Elections 1985 and 2002 under the military regimes of General Zia-ul-Haq and General Pervaiz Musharraf respectively. Considering the nature and requirement of this study, the researchers have drawn a purposive sample against each election under study. The researchers have purposively selected three months, against each election by putting the ‘month of polling’ at



the center and placing 'one month before' and 'one month after' it. The sampled time period provides with a larger picture of electoral process as it includes all major steps starting from contestant's nominations, election campaign, election arrangements, polling process, election results and government formation. This selected time period also expected high media coverage as well as effective role playing supportive to democratic transition.

So, for analyzing the editorial coverage regarding General Elections 1985, the months of January, February and March are sampled. And, for General Elections 2002, the months of September, October and November are considered.

### **3.3 Unit of Analysis and Operationalization of Categories**

“Unit of analysis is the thing that is actually counted. It is the smallest element of a content analysis, but it is one of the most important. In written content, the unit of analysis might be a single word or symbol, a theme (a single assertion about one subject), or an entire article or story.” (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994; p.170). For the research in hands, the unit of analysis is 'Editorial(s) & Editorial Note(s)' regarding the electoral issues under 'Category A', published in Daily Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt during the sampled months against each election.

Once the unit of analysis is decided, the content analysis demands for the operationalization of the categories actually to be recorded in the coding process. According to Sarantakos (1998), operationalization is the process of converting the concepts into their empirical measurements, or of quantifying variables for the purpose of measuring their occurrence, strength and frequency. It is employed when concepts are vague, unclear or abstract and this involving a process of translating abstract concepts into synonymous empirical referents. Stang and Wrightsman (1981) state that operationalization is the process of specifying the empirical, measurable counterparts of abstract conceptual variables prior to the undertaking of research. (cited in Khel , 2000; p.45).

Hence, before entering into the coding process, we have operationalized the sub-categories of ‘A’ as following;

**A1: Legal and Constitutional Amendments**

This category includes the editorials regarding constitutional amendments, devolution plan, electoral reforms, election orders, executive orders, presidential orders, their acceptance, impacts, public and politician’s views, and any type of discussion and analysis around constitutional amendments.

**A2: Accountability and Eligibility of Nominees**

It includes the editorials regarding the accountability and eligibility of politicians and nominees, NAB policies, actions, rejection of applications of the defaulter nominees and any type of discussion about the accountability and nomination process.

**A3: Election Campaign**

It includes all the editorials regarding the campaign announcement, ethics and rules of campaign, election campaign laws, usage of media channels, election meetings, campaign expenditures, campaign duration and any type of concerns about election campaign.

**A4: Election Arrangements**

It includes all those editorials dealing with the code of conducts issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan regarding political parties, candidates, election campaigns, media coverage and monitoring the electoral process. Any editorial, which deals with the subject of election arrangements, policies and actions regarding elections and election management by Election Commission of Pakistan, is the member of this category.

**A5: Election Process and Polling**

This category includes the editorials discussing the polling day arrangements, process, opening and closing of polling, polling management, polling security, law and order, polling stations and the issues related to the polling day of any election.

### **A6: Election Results and Government Formation**

It includes all the editorials regarding the election results compilation, announcement of results, government formation process, the trends of political parties and candidates during the process of government formation. This category also includes the meetings of newly formed governments and the oath taking ceremonies.

### **A7: Rigging in Election**

This category includes the editorials discussing the pre-poll, during-poll and post-poll rigging, the arrangements against rigging by ECP, the complaints of political parties and candidates and the methods and impacts of rigging.

### **A8: Others**

It includes all other editorials (except A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8) regarding electoral issues. (e.g. NADRA, Candidates' Education, Voters' age, electoral rolls, Islamization of Zia, Defamation law, involvement of army and bureaucracy in elections, Pro-govt. candidates, Local govt. plan and NRB etc.)

Further, to measure the direction of the content categories, the method suggested by Berelson (1952) as "the total problem" or the "totality of the impression" (cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 1994; p.168) was adopted by the researchers. The researchers mainly relied on the 'over-all tone' of the editorials to determine the direction or stance. To gauge the 'total impression', different phrases, frames, ideologies, idioms, catchy words, themes, adjectives, slogans and tone (Favorable, Against, Neutral) were noted in the texts of newspaper editorials. This textual analysis is an interpretative approach seeking to bring forth the meaning of both manifest and latent contents formed within a particular text and rooted within a particular culture and time. To determine the direction of the contents of the editorials, data was ranked on a three-point scale as 'Favorable', 'Against' and 'Neutral'.

**Favorable:** Any editorial that appeared in Daily jang and Nawa-i-Waqt during the study period, regarding the electoral issues (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7 and A8) is considered ‘Favorable’ if its general stance favors the govt. stands, policies and actions. If it attempts to promote the public opinion in favor of govt. and positively portray its plans.

**Against:** Any editorial that appeared in Daily Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt during the study period, regarding the electoral issues (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7 and A8) is considered ‘Against’ if its general stance is critical towards the govt. stand, policies and actions. If it negatively portray govt. plans and criticize the issue in its analysis along with suggestions.

**Neutral:** Any editorial that appeared in Daily Jang and Nawa-e-Waqt during the study period, regarding the electoral issues (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7 and A8) will be considered as ‘Neutral’ if its general stance is simply interpretative without having any ‘favorable’ or ‘against’ posture.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results yielded in content analysis. Table 1 and 2 show the editorial coverage of General Elections of 1985 under General Zia regime by the selected press and is followed by a brief comparison. Similarly, Table 2 and 3 present the results editorial coverage regarding General Elections 2002 under General Musharraf regime followed by a comparison note. The last part of this section will draw some overarching conclusions and link them with theoretical perspective the study is built on.

##### 4.1 Editorial Coverage of General Elections 1985:

Table 1: General Election 1985: Editorial Coverage by Daily Jang																							
Months of year	A1			A2			A3			A4			A5			A6			A7			A8	Total in Month
	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	Others	



Regarding the stance of coverage, daily Jang has published majority (55/121) of editorials with Neutral stance or Favorable (47/121) to the government in power. It has been noted least critical to General Zia's regime and published only 19/121 editorials with mild criticism to the policies, plans and actions of those in power.

By looking closely we can find that Daily Jang has remained noticeably favorable to the regime regarding its moves in 'Constitutional Amendments' (A1) and 'Election Campaign' (A3). Although, the constitutional amendments are most controversial subject of discussion under dictatorship regimes as it provides window of legitimization and electoral engineering that are considered pure hindrance to the process of democratization. Daily Jang has published more Favorable (15/20) editorials regarding Constitutional Amendments than against (01/20). Similarly, Daily Jang has Favored (12/26) the stance of General Zia's regime regarding 'Election Campaign'.

Table 2: General Election 1985: Editorial Coverage by Daily Nawa-i-Waqt																								
Months of year	A1			A2			A3			A4			A5			A6			A7			A8	Total in Month	
	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	Others		
January	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	4	4	0	1	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	5	38
February	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	4	3	1	4	5	0	2	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	29
March	0	5	5	0	4	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	7	4	1	0	1	7	42	
Total in Direction	0	9	7	1	5	1	1	10	8	1	18	6	0	3	2	6	7	5	2	3	2	12	109	
Total in Category	16			7			19			25			5			18			7			12	109	

**Total in Direction of the Sub-Categories**

277 Favorable (+) : 11  
 Against (-) : 55  
 Neutral (o) : 43

**Category A: Coverage of Electoral issues**

- A1: Legal and Constitutional Amendments
- A2: Accountability and Eligibility of Nominees
- A3: Election Campaign
- A4: Election Arrangements
- A5: Election Process and Polling
- A6: Election Results and Government Formation
- A7: Rigging in Election
- A8: Others

Table 2 shows that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt has published total 109 editorials and editorial notes regarding various selected electoral issues during General Elections 1985. It has published 38/109 in January, 29/109 in February and 42/109 in March 1985.

While looking into the status of coverage regarding sub-categories, daily Nawa-i-Waqt has published majority of editorials regarding 'Election Arrangements' (A4=25/109) of which 18/25 were Against in coverage stance. It has published 19/109 editorials on the subject of 'Election Campaign' (A3) of which 10/19 were Against the government's stance.

By looking at the total score, we found that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt has published 55/109 Against, 43/109 Neutral and only 11/109 Favorable editorials, which reveals that the editorial policy of the selected newspaper is loudly critical in tone and clearly takes a position of stance.

**4.2 Comparative Analysis of Editorial Coverage regarding General Elections 1985**

From a comparative view, Daily Jang has either remained neutral in its editorial stance or published in favor of General Zia's regime during the conduct of General Elections 1985. Moreover, it has also given less coverage to the issues of 'Rigging' and 'Election Results' as compared to Daily Nawa-i-Waqt. On contrary, Daily nawa-i-

Waqt has been found strongly critical (Against) in editorial stance regarding editorial issues of General Elections 1985. Further, it has not at all favored any constitutional amendments made by General Zia's regime and remained outspoken regarding the process of government formation.

Daily Jang has published 121 total editorials, of which 55/121 were found Neutral, 47/121 Favorable and only 19/121 Against the governmental stance. On the other hand, Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published 109 editorials regarding the said electoral issues with 43/109 Neutral, 55/109 Against and only 11/109 Favorable stance. Although Daily Nawa-i-Waqt has published less frequently on the subject chosen, but its editorial policy remained consistently critical of the governmental policies and actions. Moreover, it can be observed that, contrary to Daily Jang, Daily Naw-i-Waqt does not intentionally position its editorial stance as Neutral. Rather, it attempts to take a strong editorial position, either Favorable or Against the government. While, Daily Jang situate its editorial policy around Neutral position. This editorial positioning of the selected newspapers has resulted in different relationship bond with the Zia regime. It has been observed that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt faced many hardships like limiting the newspaper print and advertising ban during the Zia administration. Perhaps, such sanctions made Daily Nawa-i-Waqt to take a step more in being critical in its editorial stance. On the other, Daily Jang by being Neutral for Zia regime has received less harsh feedback from the government.

### 4.3 Editorial Coverage of General Elections 2002

Table 3: General Election 2002: Editorial Coverage by Daily Jang																							
Months of year	A1			A2			A3			A4			A5			A6			A7			A8	Total in Month
	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	Others	



September	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	17		
October	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	1	1	0	0	0	4	1	4	2	0	2	2	23
November	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	4	1	0	0	4	20	
Total in Direction	1	0	0	2	0	2	2	1	3	5	2	8	0	0	0	6	6	8	3	0	2	9	60
Total in Category	1		4			6			15			0			20			5			9		60

- Category A: Coverage of Electoral issues**      **Total in Direction of the Sub-Categories**
- A1: Legal and Constitutional Amendments      Favorable (+) : 19
  - A2: Accountability and Eligibility of Nominees      Against (-) : 09
  - A3: Election Campaign      Neutral (o) : 32
  - A4: Election Arrangements
  - A5: Election Process and Polling
  - A6: Election Results and Government Formation
  - A7: Rigging in Election
  - A8: Others

Table 3 reveals that Daily Jang published total 60 editorials and editorial notes regarding the General Election 2002. It published 17/60 in September, 23/60 in October and 20/60 in the month of November 2002. Regarding the individual sub-categories, the newspaper has published maximum 20/60 editorials on the subject of ‘Election Results and Government Formation’ (A6). The ‘Election Process and Polling’ (A4) stood second in frequency table with 15/60 editorials. The remaining all sub-categories got less than 10 frequency of coverage. It shows that during the General Elections 2002, the process of ‘Polling and Government Formation’ got

considerable editorial importance for Daily Jang as compared to the other electoral issues.

Regarding the editorial stance, daily Jang has published 32/60 Neutral, 19/60 Favorable and only 09/60 Against editorials. So, Daily Jang has been found with more of factual and interpretative editorial stance to maintain its neutral posture.

Table 4: General Election 2002: Editorial Coverage by Daily Nawa-i-Waqt																							
Months of year	A1			A2			A3			A4			A5			A6			A7			A8	Total in Month
	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	+	-	o	Others	
September	0	4	0	1	5	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	21
October	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	11	8	0	1	0	3	37
November	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	8	10	0	1	0	3	32
Total in Direction	0	12	0	1	7	1	0	3	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	7	19	18	0	3	0	12	90
Total in Category	12			9			5			4			1			44			3			12	90

**Category A: Coverage of Electoral issues**

A1: Legal and Constitutional Amendments

A2: Accountability and Eligibility of Nominees

A3: Election Campaign

A4: Election Arrangements

A5: Election Process and Polling

A6: Election Results and Government Formation

**Total in Direction of the Sub-Categories**

Favorable (+) : 09

Against (-) : 46

Neutral (o) : 35

A7: Rigging in Election

A8: Others

During the conduct of General Elections 2002, Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published total 90 editorials and editorial notes. It published 21/90 in the month of September, 37/90 in October and 32/90 in November 2002.

Regarding the coverage given to the sub-categories, Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published 44/90 editorials regarding 'Election Results and Government Formation' (A6), that is far more out of proportion as compared to the coverage given to the rest of sub-categories. It reveals that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt has shown huge focus on the issue of 'Government Formation' as compared to the rest of electoral issues.

While looking into the editorial stance in covering the electoral issues, we found that the newspaper has published 35/90 Neutral, 46/90 Against and only 09/90 Favorable editorials. This shows consistency of Daily Nawa-i-Waqt in presenting its anti-government editorial policy in covering the electoral issues.

#### **4.5 Comparative Analysis of Editorial Coverage regarding General Elections 2002**

While comparing Daily Jang and Nawa-e-Waqt, regarding coverage of general election 2002, we found Daily Nawa-e-Waqt more vocal (total 90 editorials) than Daily Jang (total 60 editorials). Similarly, Daily Nawa-e-Waqt published more critical (against=46/90) editorials than Daily Jang (against=9/60). This shows that Daily Nawa-e-Waqt has not only given more coverage but also remained more critical in tone as compared to Daily Jang. This editorial stance predicts overall newspaper policy towards dictator-led regime. The coverage focus of Daily Jang remained on 'Election arrangement' (15/60) on the other hand, Daily Nawa-e-Waqt published more on the issues of 'Constitutional amendments'

(12/90) and 'Election Results and Govt. formation (44/90). This shows that both the newspapers were more focused to cover the process of Govt. formation.

## **5. Conclusion and Discussion**

Keeping in view the landscape of democratic transition from the military dictatorships of General Zia-ul-Haq (1979-1988) and General Pervaiz Musharraf (1999-2008) during the hold of first general elections (1985, 2002) under their rule respectively, press was ought to perform an important role to propagate, nourish and safeguard democracy by covering the issues of transitional elections. Since Pakistan had experienced two military dictatorships before Zia's regime, the press had also learnt a lot by passing through thick and thins of earlier democratization struggles. Previously, the press had been chained tightly under General Ayub Khan's era and later the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's democratically elected government continued with the example set. The dictatorship of General Zia was also not favorable for freedom of press. During his regime, Radio and Television were state owned media and there were only very few national dailies with not so massive circulations. Moreover, these national dailies were not economically self-sufficient to survive various restrictions by the military regime. The regime of General Pervaiz Musharraf was different precedent for the press freedom as compared to the past as it allowed the establishment of private television and radio channels in the country. Unlike dictators that hate press freedom, Musharraf established Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and opened licensing for both existing and new enterprises to start private media businesses. So, the existing media groups empowered themselves by acquiring licenses for their sister outlets that resulted in their stronger position on the country's media landscape. So the dynamics of the media industry under Zia regime were somehow different than those during Musharraf regime.

On the other hand, contrary to their media policy, their programs for (re)democratization were very similar. Both the military dictators at

first went harsh on their political opponents by either trying them in crime cases (i.e. hanging of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a murder case after Zia's martial law) or sending them to exile (i.e. exile of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia after Musharraf's coup). Then they launched newly designed local government systems and conducted elections with a mindset to provide an exhaust to public by engaging them in democratic process as well as bringing up new faces to replace mainstream national level politicians. So, a heavy amount of funds and discretionary powers were decentralized among local bodies. Lastly, they both legitimized their Presidential position in military uniform by conducting referendum. But these referendums were reported heavily rigged and considered as tools of acquiring legitimacy of unconstitutional post of President while keeping the headship of military too. Upon grabbing Presidential position, both Zia and Musharraf headed towards general elections with a lot of political engineering through electoral reforms and constitutional amendments. General Zia-ul-Haq opted for party-less elections in 1985 and sabotaged party politics in Pakistan. While General Musharraf backed a forward block of Pakistan Muslim League, which was later labeled as King's Party. The political leadership during Zia and Musharraf regimes participated in the contest of elections 1985 and 2002 believing it a step towards democratic restoration in the country. However it was large public opinion even before the results of the elections that the resulted government will be having less autonomy and work under fear of Presidential powers of Article 58/2b to dissolve the elected assemblies whenever a conflict arises between the elected government and President of Pakistan.

In such a political context, press was supposed to perform multiple sensitive roles that could support democratic process, hinder power concentration through constitutional amendments and nourish a pro-democracy political culture among parties and masses. In order to analyze the same role playing of the press, this study has compared the editorial coverage given to various electoral issues during

General Elections 1985 and 2002 by Daily Jang and Daily Nawa-i-Waqt.

The results of the study reveal that both the selected newspapers have given considerable editorial attention to the electoral issues of General Elections 1985 and 2002. By looking into the content analysis results of 1985, we can observe that Daily Jang published 121 total editorials on the subject of electoral issues, while Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published 109. Also, both the newspapers gave more coverage to the issue of 'Constitutional Amendments' (A1), 'Election Campaign' (A3), 'Polling Process'(A5) and 'Government Formation' (A6). The difference between Daily Jang and Daily Nawa-i-Waqt is prominent in their editorial stance. Daily Jang has published 55/121 Neutral, 47/121 Favorable and only 9/121 Against editorials. Hence, Daily Jang attempted to remain either Neutral or Favorable and has rarely gone Against the regime policies. On the other hand, Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published 55/109 Against, 43/109 Neutral and only 11/109 Favorable editorials. So, the editorial stance of Daily Nawa-i-Waqt was observed loudly critical to the regime policies during electoral conduct.

Regarding the transitional elections of 2002 under General Musharraf regime, Daily Jang and Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published 60 and 90 editorials respectively on different electoral issues. Both the newspapers gave prominent editorial coverage to the issues of 'Electoral Arrangements' (A4) and 'Government Formation' (A6), probably due to doubtful or limited transfer of powers from Musharraf regime to the newly elected assembly. Moreover, it published heavily (44/90 editorials) on the delay in the process of 'Government Formation' and transfer of powers. Both the newspapers carried diversity as well as coverage stance during the selected time period. The selected press exhibited the pro-democracy role playing during the dictatorial regimes in Pakistan.

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