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EXPLORING THE PREDOMINANT DISCOURSES IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA REGARDING THE 'REGIME CHANGE' (2022) IN PAKISTAN

Muhammad Junaid Ghauri[*1], Muhammad Hasan[2], Nauman Khan[3]

[1]*Assistant Professor and In-Charge Academic Affairs at the Department of Media & Communication Studies in International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.*
[2]*Independent Researcher and Media & Communication Officer at the Media Department of Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), Islamabad, Pakistan*
[3]*Lecturer at the Department of Mass Communication in Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS)*

[*1]muhammad.junaid@iiu.edu.pk

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Corresponding Author: *

Abstract

The removal of Mr. Imran Khan and the subsequent change of government in April 2022 in Pakistan gave rise to a variety of political discourses through the politicians and media around the world. The political discourse ranged from the 'democratic process', 'win of democracy', 'no-confidence motion', 'foreign conspiracy', to the 'regime change'. Ousted PM Mr. Khan's political party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), conflated the change of government to 'regime change operation' with the help of 'external elements' i.e. 'foreign conspiracy'. However, the consequent government of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) - an anti-PTI political alliance of 13 parties, claimed the change of government as a 'success of democracy' with the help 'no-confidence motion'. This research endeavor is an attempt to explore and analyze how did the selected newspapers from the USA, UK, India and Turkey portray the 'regime change' in Pakistan in their news coverage. Within the premise of framing analysis, the researchers have explored and analyzed the issues highlighted by the selected newspapers. The findings of this research show that none of the newspapers has supported the discourse of 'regime change', and 'foreign conspiracy' as claimed by the ousted PM Mr. Imran Khan. However, there is evidence that all the newspapers have described the change of government as a result of the 'success of no-confidence motion'.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan, a nation that has faced many political crises in its history, turned 75 on August 14, 2022 with yet another significant change in its internal political landscape. The country has seen many changes in politics over the years, including the rise of the military into politics and causing problems for the

democratic process. The year 2022 saw an unusual and unprecedented development in the form of a 'change of government' through a vote of no confidence. The dynamics of the 'regime change' and its social, political and economic implications make it an interesting topic to study in detail. In this research, however, the researchers attempt to explore and analyze how did the selected newspapers from the USA, UK, India and Turkey portray the 'regime change' in Pakistan in their news (Ahmed et al., 2024; Ghauri et al., 2023).

The change of government in Pakistan in 2022 gave rise to various political discourses from the national and international politicians and media outlets ranging from the 'democratic process', 'win of democracy', 'no-confidence motion', 'foreign conspiracy', and 'regime change'. The consequent government of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) - an anti-PTI political alliance of 13 parties, celebrated the success of 'no-confidence motion' to oust the then Prime Minister Mr. Imran Khan, Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The PTI leadership and its supporters labeled the political move as a 'regime change operation' with the help of external elements. This research endeavor is an attempt to explore and analyze how did the selected newspapers from the USA, UK, India and Turkey portray the 'regime change' in Pakistan in their news. Within the premise of framing analysis, the researchers intend to explore and analyze the issues highlighted by the selected newspapers. The findings of this research attempt would help to understand and analyze the ways and specific issues used by the newspapers to evaluate and comment on political scenario understudy. This will help the researchers to conclude which of the political discourses related to the removal of Imran Khan as PM has been supported by the selected newspapers.

Following are the main objectives of this research endeavour;

- To explore the news coverage of the 'regime change' (2022) in The New York Times, *The Guardian*, *Hindustan Times*, and *Daily Sabah* during April 10, 2022 to May 10, 2022.
- To find out the ways and specific issues used by the newspapers to evaluate and comment on the political scenario understudy.
- To determine which of the political discourses (success of 'no-confidence motion' or 'regime change') received more prominence in the news of the selected newspapers.

This study is based on the following broader research question;

- How did the selected newspapers from the USA, UK, India and Turkey portray the 'regime change' in Pakistan in their news coverage during April 10, 2022 to May 10, 2022?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a significant amount of literature available that provides evidence that the researchers have attempted to explore the role of media during political upheavals around the globe. Particularly in Pakistan the political instability has been a well explored and discussed issue. Many research findings have evidenced that due to its political economy the Pakistani media usually cannot report and opine on national political issues independently. This research endeavor is an attempt to explore and analyze how did the selected international newspapers cover and opine on the 'regime change' in Pakistan during April and May 2022.

Pakistan has a history of military governance and political instability. It's rare that an elected prime minister gets to finish their 5 years of service; military generals often impose martial law before that and try to change the rules to make a strong president who is also the top general and make the lawmakers less powerful (Bokhari, 2023). But in comparison to the past history of Pakistan, a different path has been seen in regime change in 2022. Pakistan, a nation that has experienced a lot of political disruption in its history, turned 75 years old on August 14, 2022, with another significant change in its internal political landscape. The country has seen many shifts in politics over the years, involving the military stepping in and causing issues for the democratic process. The year 2022 experienced an exceptional development – a 'regime change' via a vote of no confidence (Ghauri et al., 2023).

On April 10, 2022, Pakistan saw a shift in its government through a process known as a 'vote of no confidence'. This is when the parliament formally declares its lack of confidence in the existing government, causing it to step down. In the history of Pakistan, such shifts often occurred from military

interventions rather than democratic methods making it a rare event (Ahmar, 2022). At the time, Prime Minister Imran Khan claimed that the vote of no confidence against him was a result of a foreign conspiracy suggesting he believed that foreign elements were involved in destabilizing his administration (Khaliq, 2022). Although such claims are not uncommon in the world of politics, it's important to highlight that some of these claims might not be backed by solid proof.

Although Imran Khan made claims it must be underscored that the vote of no confidence was carried out in strict legal conformity. This means it abided by Pakistan's constitutional and legal guidelines for such actions within Pakistan's democratic framework. This legal approach markedly differentiates it from historical regime changes in the country that frequently used methods outside the constitution or undemocratic ways (Khaliq, 2022). The vote of no confidence resulted in a change in the way people see politics in Pakistan. It symbolized a pivotal shift in the way politics work in the country, demonstrating that democratic structures and legislative procedures could alter leadership transitions. This incident challenged the stability of Pakistan's democracy and the democratic institutions, as it deviated from the traditional pattern of regime transitions in the country (Ahmar, 2022).

In short, the 'regime change' through a vote of no confidence in 2022 was a rare and legally executed event in Pakistan's history, which contrasted with previous regime changes often associated with military interventions. The situation became even more complex by Imran Khan's insinuations of a foreign plot against him. However, the method remained anchored in constitutional norms, showing that the nature of the political landscape is evolving.

Since its creation, Pakistan has had to deal with political ups and downs which ultimately had an impact on its economy. The regime of PTI, led by Imran Khan, however, brought significant economic progress. According to the data from the Business Recorder and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the GDP growth during Imran Khan's regime reached 6 percent. This percentage broke previous records, even surpassing Ayub Khan's era which touched a progress of 5.87 percent. This achievement was a proof of the strong economic strategies and skilled financial teams under the PTI government. Multiple sectors showed notable growth including the agricultural sector which grew by 4.40%, the industry which grew by 7.19%, and the services which grew by a percentage of 6.19% (Ali et al., 2023). However, this changed after a shift in leadership in April 2022. The next period under the Shahbaz Sharif-led PDM regime faced an economic decline. Economic challenges such as the instability of the US dollar's value, erratic oil and gold prices, rising inflation, and increasing unemployment became prevalent which resulted in both local and international investors' lack of confidence in Pakistan. The PDM government made efforts and took numerous challenging decisions like a ban on imports, but the economy is yet to regain its former stability. Indicators such as foreign remittances, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), direct investment portfolios, and bilateral investments have seen a notable decline. This decline is a testament that the recent regime change has impacted Pakistan in a negative way (Ali et al., 2023).

In short, Pakistan's economic momentum was shaken by the regime change of the year 2022. Although the government of Imran Khan took the country's economy on the right path even during the global pandemic Covid-19 from 2019 to 2021, the current regime is having a hard time keeping the economy stable. This decline also shows the importance of the delicate balance between politics and economic growth of the country (Ali et al., 2023).

Pakistan's political trajectory faced a very important event in the year 2022, when the country encountered a regime change which was a result of democratic actions unlike previous regime changes which mostly occurred due to military interventions. This shift not only signified the power of the country's democratic institutions but also revealed the delicacy of the relationship between the politics and economic prosperity of the nation. The country's economic growth was record breaking and impressive in various sectors during the era of the PTI government led by Imran Khan. However, the sudden leadership change resulted in various economic challenges that are yet to be dealt with, making it a dire need to achieve a balance between political stability and economic prosperity and highlighting the importance of that balance. For the

nation, these incidents are not just historical events but an insight into the essence of politics, democracy, and economics. The nation's future depends on whether it decodes those insights or not and whether it can move forward toward both political stability and economic growth.

This whole political scenario in Pakistan is a worth studying phenomenon. It is pertinent to explore and analyze that how the international media covered the 'regime change' incident in Pakistan.

Political stability is an immense conundrum for economically impoverished countries. Attenuate political system, staggering political parties and enervated political milieu turns into a government which cannot keep stability intact (Ahmadani & Noonari, 2020). In multiethnic societies political disruption turn to be an overwhelming menace. The political stability of a state has obvious ramifications on its modernization (Tabassam et al., 2016). As for the case of Pakistan, it is uncertain, having staggering political system and political parties which has caused political instability in the country. In nascent countries political instability is charged as the reason for an economic turmoil (Memon et al., 2011). Political turmoil has wreaked havoc socially politically, economically across the globe, it has trembled the states from ground, same is the reason of downturn of various spheres in Pakistan (Ghauri et al., 2024; Nawaz et al., 2021).

Imran et al., (2023) summed up by asserting that political stable milieu is imperative for building nation and for growth of the country. Nation is built for two reasons; one it assists in stabling the identity and recognition of a state. Second the administrative structure of the state, hence the stability of politics has sway over socio-economic and political realm. Pakistan having all the natural resources, strategic location, sagacious citizen, and nukes, but is victim of earnest political instability (Jiskani et al., 2020). Due to enervated internal and external policy making failure, international society has queries over the future sustenance of Pakistan, for its scattered divided society and tarnished image. The social strata of Pakistan are devoid of unity in order to achieve national goals that features a society, this is for the reason that leadership driving principle is not an ideological one but based on ethnic, sectarian and community angles. The leadership which is elected through votes represents the credence of entire nation (Bowlsby et al., 2020). The Continuous coups and eroding democratic rule have jeopardized the future of the citizens of Pakistan. It was political disruption which has resulted in separation of East Pakistan and fanned inside tensions (Rauf et al., 2016). Each province of federation is passing through repercussions of political instability, albeit, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan is enduring its severe intensity. Inconsistent and shattering ambience of politics cause impediments in tactful counterterrorism strategy (Hakro & Ghumro, 2007). It is mandatory for socio-economic development, that there must be a politically stable system, if an issue or grievance emanate it ought to be addressed immediately.

The literature reviewed by the researchers encourages the researchers to look into the discourses produced by the selected international newspapers on the 'regime change' in Pakistan during April and May 2022.

Theoretical Framework

Keeping in view the research objectives, the researchers have used the framing analysis as theoretical underpinning in this study. Framing analysis or the frame analysis and the framing theory is a broad theoretical approach used in multi-disciplinary social sciences. Framing analysis has been used as a broad theoretical approach in political studies, news and communication studies (Johnson-Cartee, 2005). "Framing is the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy" (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997, p. 221).

Framing is a multi-disciplinary approach being studied in psychology, sociology, communication, linguistics and economics (Sovianti, 2019). In this regard, sociologist Erwing Goffman (1974), define frames as "Schemata of interpretation" which help people "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" the happenings in social settings and for assigning meanings. Similarly, according to Gitlin (1980), frames are "the continuous pattern of cognition, interpretation, presentation, selection and exclusion by which symbol handlers (journalists) routinely organize discourse". However, Gamson and

Modigliani (1989) describe frame as "Interpretative Packages" that assign meanings to an event or situation or topic. He further states that at the center of interpretative package is "central organizing idea or frame" for the understanding of events. According to Entman (1993), individual frames are "mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information" which help an individual in understanding the current and future issues and views. Similarly, D'angelo (2008) argues that framing studies intends the way how various stakeholders and sources directs or guide reporters to disseminate news and inculcate in the minds of audience according to their interest.

According to Stephen Reese (2007), frame are the limitations and outlines which classify ideas and make some ideas include and relevant in their net and others exclude. However, to Goffman (1974), frames are in the forms of non-transforming and transforming. The non-transforming termed by Goffman as Primary frameworks are further categorized as natural and social Primary Frameworks. The situation or event which is considered to be happening by natural determinants and which is unavoidable and beyond the scope of any direction by individuals are natural primary frameworks, while humanly guided events, issues and systems like norms, values, organizations and rules are social primary frameworks, (Goffman, 1974).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Sampling

Keeping in view the research objectives, the researchers have selected four internationally renowned newspapers including The New York Times from the USA, *The Guardian* from the UK, *Hindustan Times* from India, and *Daily Sabah* from Turkey. The selection is made to explore and analyze international discourse on the 'regime change (2022)' in Pakistan. All four countries have international strategic ties with Pakistan with a particular influence at public and state level. Similarly, the newspapers are well known, credible and most quoted ones in the Pakistani context.

The researchers have selected data from the credible data source namely LexisNexis by applying key words 'regime change', 'no-confidence motion', no-confidence move', 'no-trust motion', 'Imran Khan' during the time period of April 10 to May 10, 2022. The search results produced a total of 38 news items from all newspapers. However, after 'data cleansing', there were 5 relevant news items available in The New York Times, 3 news items in *The Guardian*, 3 in *Hindustan Times*, 2 in *Daily Sabah*. To receive and select a same size of sample from all the newspapers, 2 news stories from each newspaper have been selected following the convenient sampling method (Ahmed et al., 2022; Ghauri, 2024; Ghauri et al., 2023; Ghauri, 2019; Ghauri & Umber, 2019). However, initially published news stories from the first three newspapers have been selected. This is how a total of eight news stories have been analyzed as sample from the selected four newspapers.

Data Analysis; Framing Analysis

In this research, the researchers have employed the framing analysis as a systematic approach for the objective of descriptive analysis of the news coverage of the 'regime change' (2022) in Pakistan in the selected international newspapers. The researchers aim to explore and analyze how did the selected newspapers from the USA (The New York Times), UK (*The Guardian*), India (*Hindustan Times*) and Turkey (*Daily Sabah*) portray the 'regime change' in Pakistan in their news during April 10, 2022 to May 10, 2022.

In terms of following the steps involved in the framing analysis, a broad research question has been devised along with three different research objectives. The researchers will focus on the news discourses produced by the selected newspapers regarding the 'regime change' within the content categories; 'success of democracy', 'success of no-confidence-move', 'foreign conspiracy', 'regime change', and 'political instability'. The researchers will look into the direction of the content in terms of positive, negative, and neutral discourses produced by the newspapers in their news regarding these content categories within the context of 'regime change' (2022) in Pakistan. Various words, phrases, sentences, headlines, and overall tone of the news would help the researchers to determine the direction of the news contents. To make the analysis more credible, the researchers would employ 2 to 3 fellow scholars to code the news contents into the relevant content

categories. A coding sheet will be designed to facilitate the coding of the data.

The researchers intend to find out the answer of the research question under study by employing the framing analysis as a research methodology. Many academic fields including media studies, sociology, psychology, and market research use the framing analysis as an application of content analysis as a systematic and structured process. This approach scrutinizes how media selectively present information to shape perceptions or opinions. It identifies how different aspects are emphasized or de-emphasized in media communication, highlighting the role of media in influencing audience interpretations and viewpoints on various issues. It systematically assesses and understands data from a variety of recorded sources such as texts, photos, audio files and video recordings. This systematic analysis aims to extract meaningful insights, trends, and patterns hidden within the content (Luo, 2023).

Jim A. Kuypers (2009) proposed a step-by-step guideline to perform framing analysis with special refence to the rhetorical analysis. Kuypers maintains;

"Framing is a process whereby communicators, consciously or unconsciously, act to construct a point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be interpreted by others in a particular manner. Frames operate in four key ways: they define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. Frames are often found within a narrative account of an issue or event, and are generally the central organizing idea" (Kuypers, 2009; 2006)

Key Frames of the Study

The researchers have identified and applied three of the four key ways proposed by Kuypers (2009; 2006) to explore and analyze the discourses produced by the selected newspapers regarding the 'regime change' (2022) in Pakistan. The three key frames, "defining the issue of 'regime change' (2022)", "diagnosing the causes of 'regime change' (2022)", and "making moral judgements about the 'regime change' (2022)" are defined and delimited in the following table;

Operationalization of the key frames within the premise of framing analysis as suggested Kuypers (2009; 2006)

Key Frames (Kuypers, 2009; 2006)	**Codes**
Defining the problem of 'regime change'	Prime Minister Imran Khan's allies in Parliament had spent the day Saturday working for any delay they could, filibustering with angry speeches denouncing the opposition as traitors. Around government buildings, military troops were put on alert and prison vans were deployed… Mr. Khan had fought bitterly for his political survival after key military leaders appeared to withdraw their support for his government, and after a group of lawmakers that included some defectors from the prime minister's coalition moved to remove him from office… Mr. Khan, a populist leader and former cricket star, denounced his political opponents as traitors conspiring with American officials to oust him from power, a claim denied both within Pakistan and the United States…
Diagnosing the causes of 'regime change'	continued military dominance of public affairs… deep polarization… …any effort by Mr. Khan to fire the country's powerful army chief, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa… …key military leaders appeared to withdraw their support for his government… But after Mr. Khan veered from military leaders' foreign policy priorities and clashed with them over major military

	appointments, they helped orchestrate his fall, analysts say. "This fits into the larger historical arc of a civilian government losing favor with the establishment, that is Pakistan's military, and that leads to their ouster from office," the capital was on the brink… On Sunday, many observers expressed relief that the crisis did not end in a military intervention after a week that was notably tense even by the standards of Pakistan's tumultuous political history… He rallied tens of thousands to the streets in a pointed reminder of his past as an opposition leader who could paralyze the capital with mass unrest. And he defied the Constitution to dissolve Parliament and block the no-confidence vote — a move Pakistan's Supreme Court later overturned… But Mr. Khan's bid to remain in office was the first time a civilian leader had openly violated the Constitution for his own political gain, analysts say. And during his time in office, he increasingly used the country's institutions to harass his opponents and critics — especially journalists… Pakistan's grave crises,
Making Moral Judgements about the 'regime change'	

According to Kuypers' arguments the framing process can best be understood through rhetorical analysis because the framing is primarily a rhetorical process. In this research endeavor, the researchers have attempted to find out how did the selected newspapers defined the 'regime change (2022)', how did they diagnose the issue, and what kind of judgements they passed (adjectives/verbs/words/frames used) regarding the issue in their news.

For this purpose, a coding sheet has been developed. Expected discourses such as; 'democratic process', 'win of democracy', 'no-confidence motion', 'foreign conspiracy', and 'regime change' have been operationalized.

Operationalization of Key Terms

The operationalization of the key terms/themes and the identified codes have helped the researchers in identifying and analyzing the predominant discourses produced by the selected newspapers in their news coverage regarding the 'regime change' (2022) in Pakistan.

Following table contains the operational definitions of the key terms and expected discourses in the data;

Key Terms/Expected Discourses and Codes

Key Terms/Expected Discourses	Codes
Democratic process	Mr. Khan was still pushed out by a majority no-confidence vote… a moment hailed by some as a triumph for Pakistan's fragile democratic institutions… For now, his charged rhetoric has left an already deeply polarized public even more divided. double blow to the former cricketer-turned-politician, the embattled leader said Pakistan was being turned into a banana republic,
Win of democracy	important milestone for the country,

No-confidence motion	no-confidence motion,
Foreign conspiracy	Mr. Khan, a populist leader and former cricket star, denounced his political opponents as traitors conspiring with American officials to oust him from power, an 'international conspiracy' has been hatched to topple his government, Removal one person who was not ready to fall in line with American demands… The country should not have taken aid from the United States…
Regime change	military intervention, constitutional vandalism, key military leaders appeared to withdraw their support for his government, the crisis offered a stark reminder that in the country's deeply compromised political system, powerful military leaders still hold the reins, But after Mr. Khan veered from military leaders' foreign policy priorities and clashed with them over major military appointments, they helped orchestrate his fall, analysts say. "Friends of America are traitors!"

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Analysis on daily The New York Times

Following pages contain the framing analysis of the sample news items selected from daily The New York Times during the time period under study.

First news item understudy as a unit of analysis from the sample of daily The New York Times was published on April 10, 2022 under the headline "Pakistan Closes a Chaotic Political Chapter. It May Not Be the Climax".

Drawing on the framing analysis the researchers have found out that the intro of the news contains frames against PTI political discourse. In the news, one frame is against military involvement, however, three frames are considered as neutral. The tone of the paragraph appears negative. The frames used by the newspaper that go against Imran Khan's political discourse are; the deep polarization during his time, filibustering and denouncing the opposition as traitors. As far as the neutral frames about the issue is concerned, the newspaper has employed frames such as; no-confidence motion in Pakistan's Parliament, midnight deadline, military troops alerted and prison vans deployed. The newspaper has employed one frame against military involvement in terms of 'continued military dominance of public affairs' which in turn supports the 'regime change' discourse of PTI. Therefore, it can be claimed that intro of the news contains a balanced tone however it reinforces the discourse of 'regime change'.

In the next paragraph the researchers have found out that there are no words in support of the political discourse of the PTI and Imran Khan. However, the newspaper has employed two frames against military interference and four frames are considered as neutral. As far as the farming analysis is concerned, the paragraph contains frames against the military's role which are; 'a pre-emptive petition filed in Pakistan's high court to try to block any effort by Mr. Khan' and 'the country's powerful army chief'. In terms of supporting the PDM political discourse the newspaper has not employed any frames. As far as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, the newspaper has employed frames such as; wave of denials from both camps, stoked fears of further turmoil, majority no-confidence vote, week notably tense even by the standards of Pakistan's tumultuous political history.

Drawing on the framing analysis the researchers have found out that the third paragraph of the news contains 123 words. Out of the 123 words, three frames are against the political discourse of the PTI and Imran Khan. However, three frames are considered as neutral.

As far as the framing analysis is concerned, the paragraph contains frames against the political discourse of Imran Khan and PTI. These frames include; 'denouncing the opposition as traitors conspiring with American officials, a claim not proved', 'an opposition leader who could paralyze the capital with mass unrest', and 'defied the Constitution'. As far as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, fought bitterly for his political survival, a populist leader and former cricket star

Drawing on the framing analysis the researchers have found out that the fourth paragraph of the news contains 81 words. Out of the 81 words, there are six frames used against the military's involvement. There are no frames supporting the PTI political discourse as well as the opposition. Three frames are found to be neutral. As far as framing analysis is concerned, the paragraph doesn't contain any frames in favor of PTI political discourse or military involvement. The frames used against the military's role include; powerful military leaders, holding the reins, easing Mr. Khan into PM's post, winnowed, coercion and intimidation. The frames that seem neutral are; Pakistan's fragile democratic institutions, compromised political system and military denial of the accusations.

Drawing on the framing analysis the researchers have found out that the fifth paragraph of the news contains 113 words. Out of the 113 words, one frame is against military. As far as the words in favor of the PTI government discourse and military is concerned, the newspaper has not employed any frame. However, five frames are considered as neutral. As far as the framing analysis is concerned, the paragraph contains neutral frames. The frames used by the newspaper neutral are; things happening now are different, constitutional changes made over the years, prospect of more turmoil, highly contentious elections, and bitterly polarized. In terms of supporting the PTI and military, political discourse the newspaper has not employed any frame. The frame used that sounds critical to military include 'orchestrate his fall'.

Drawing on the framing analysis the researchers have found out that the concluding paragraph of the news contains 142 words. Out of the 142 words, four frames are used against PTI political discourse but none are employed against the military's involvement. As far as the words in favor of the PTI government discourse and military is concerned, the newspaper has not employed any frames. However, three frames are considered as neutral. As far as the framing analysis is concerned, the paragraph contains neutral frames. The frames used by the newspaper neutral are; public support may not be enough to win Mr. Khan's party a significant number of seats, significant support within its ranks opening the door for his possible return, top brass he's at odds with. In terms of supporting the PTI and military, political discourse the newspaper has not employed any frame. The frames that sound critical to the military's interference are also not employed. The frames used that criticize PTI political discourse include; his charged rhetoric worsening the already deeply polarized public, this rhetoric of extreme personal attack, visceral hatred and calling each other traitors. This news does not favor any of the political discourse. The tone appears more analytical and descriptive in nature, mostly stating the facts. It also criticizes Imran Khan and other political blocs in general as well as the military's interference in politics at some points. Most importantly it highlights the effects their fights have imposed on the political situation in Pakistan.

Second news item understudy as a unit of analysis from the sample of daily The New York Times was published on April 15, 2022 under the headline "Days After Ouster, Imran Khan Is Back on the Trail in Pakistan".

Drawing on the framing analysis, the researchers have found, in terms of supporting the PTI political discourse the newspaper has not employed any words. The headline does not contain frames against the political discourse of the PTI and in favor of the PDM narrative. As far as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, the newspaper has employed frames like; Days After Ouster, Imran Khan Is Back, on the Trail in Pakistan. In conclusion, the findings of this headline can be coded as neutral. This means that text does not favor any viewpoint of any party.

By analyzing the content in terms of framing analysis, the researchers have found out the introductory paragraph of the news story, in terms of supporting the PTI political discourse the newspaper has not employed any words. The paragraph contains frames against the political discourse of the PTI which are;

"stoked fears of more political turmoil". As far as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, the newspaper has not employed any neutral frames. In conclusion, considering the framing analysis, findings of this introductory paragraph can be labeled as negative. This means that the text has criticism against the political narrative of PTI and Imran Khan.

Considering the frames used such as "Protesters brawled in a small mosque", the researchers have found the second paragraph neutral because factual information is stated and the neutral frames are; "recently ousted prime minister", "Imran Khan", "a lawmaker in Pakistan's new government". In terms of supporting the PDM or PTI political discourse, the newspaper has not employed any frame or words. In conclusion, considering the framing analysis findings of this second paragraph can be coded as neutral. This means that the text does not express opinions or biases related to PTI or the opposition but instead focuses on reporting the fight between people supporting these parties.

Drawing on the framing analysis the researchers have found out that the third paragraph of the news does not contain any frames in favor of the political discourse of the PTI, however frames against Imran Khan are; "tumultuous week in Pakistan", "no-confidence vote in Parliament", "capping a political crisis", "country's fragile democracy to the brink", "a new chapter of political turmoil". Also, there are impressions such as; "For weeks, Mr. Khan, a former cricket star, had unleashed fiery denunciations of his opponents at large rallies, demonizing them as traitors in an attempt to block the vote". And, "He is fighting for a comeback after losing the support of top military leaders, embracing the inflammatory tactics he used for years to whip up unrest and keep his predecessors off balance". Keeping in view the framing analysis findings of this paragraph the researchers code it as negative. This means that the text is against the political narrative of PTI.

Considering the framing analysis of the fourth paragraph of the news, the researchers have found out that in terms of supporting the PTI political discourse, the newspaper has not employed any words. The frames against PTI are; "Mr. Khan's repeated assertion that a United States-backed conspiracy pushed him from office". However, the newspaper does not employ neutral frames in the paragraph. In conclusion, considering the framing analysis findings of this paragraph can be coded as negative. Text is against the narrative of Imran Khan and PTI.

Employing the framing analysis, the researchers have found out that the fifth paragraph does not contain any frames in favor of the political discourse of the PTI or Imran Khan. The frames used against PTI stance are; "a move many saw as an attempt to undercut the legitimacy of the new government", "heightened tension". In terms of supporting the PDM political discourse the newspaper has not employed any words. As far as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, the overall tone of the news is a bit critical to the PTI's viewpoint. Overall, considering the framing analysis findings of this fifth para can be coded as negative.

The overall tone of the news, by analyzing it in terms of the framing analysis, it can be labeled as negative towards the political discourse of Imran Khan and PTI as there are 16 frames against the PTI stance in the news, however, the news lacks the frames or words against the PDM government political discourse, making it more critical towards PDM.

Analysis on daily *The Guardian*

Following pages contain the framing analysis of the sample news items selected from daily *The Guardian* during the time period under study.

First news item among the sample selected from daily *The Guardian* containing headline; "Imran Khan's alleged threat to establish martial law", was published on Sunday, April 10, 2022. This news discusses the removal of Mr. Imran Khan as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and provides a detailed account of his efforts to maintain his position, which reportedly involved making threats to impose martial law and interfering with the military. The news examines the no-confidence vote, Khan's unwillingness to resign, his alleged attempts to hinder the vote, and his subsequent ousting from office. Additionally, it discusses the military's participation, the responses from the opposition, and the imminent inauguration of Shehbaz Sharif as the next prime minister. The phrase "Shehbaz Sharif, the leader of the opposition coalition" suggests that Pakistan's political environment is stable and consistent. Imran Khan's

description as a "Hugely popular former cricketer" probably conveys his charisma and broad popularity.
The words "threatened to implement martial law" suggest an authoritarian and anti-democratic measure. The phrase "frustrated by the supreme court" describes the problems that Khan has encountered in trying to hold on to power. An accusation like "Khan wanted to create a huge crisis to remain in power" betrays Khan's authoritarian and bad objectives. The phrase "no-confidence vote" is a neutral way to refer to a democratic procedure. The phrase "resigned en masse" refers to a formal action that has no underlying positive or negative meaning.
As a whole, the news tone is primarily negative towards Mr. Imrana Khan and emphasizes Pakistan's unstable political environment. Allegations of the former prime minister's autocratic behavior and meddling in democratic procedures are made.
Second news item selected from daily *The Guardian* with headline; "What does political upheaval in Pakistan mean for the world?" was published on April 10, 2022. This news examines the political turmoil in Pakistan that ensued when Prime Minister Imran Khan was removed from office through a vote of no confidence. This analysis explores the possible consequences of the leadership transition on Pakistan's diplomatic ties with neighboring nations such as India, Afghanistan, and China, as well as its influence on major world powers like the United States. The news examines Khan's foreign policy positions, namely his alignment with China and Russia, and discusses the potential impact of his ouster on Pakistan's diplomatic engagements. Furthermore, it emphasizes the significance of Pakistan's military in shaping foreign and defense policy and offers perspectives from specialists on the regional and global consequences of the political turmoil.
In this news the phrase "Emphasis on China's positive role in Pakistan" expresses a positive perspective on the relations between China and Pakistan. Similarly, the phrase "Successful ceasefire in Kashmir" denotes a favorable advancement in the bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan. Similarly, the term "Dovish overtures towards India" indicates a positive and proactive attitude towards enhancing the relationship with India. The frame "ousted from office" is a bad sign and has negativity. "Khan's extreme criticism of India's prime minister" exemplifies the tense relationship between Pakistan and India. "Khan's visit to Moscow had been a 'disaster'" suggests that Khan's foreign policy actions were viewed negatively. "Political crisis" characterizes the current bad state of affairs and political and social unrest and crisis in Pakistan. "Deep mistrust on various matters" signifies a pessimistic and negative assessment of the India-Pakistan relationship. The term "no-confidence vote" refers to a procedural element inside Pakistan's political system devoid of any inherent positive or negative implications.
The news's tone might be characterized as informational and analytical, with a specific focus on the potential consequences of Khan's resignation from office for Pakistan's international relations and global dynamics.

Analysis on daily *Hindustan Times*

Following pages contain the framing analysis of the sample news items selected from daily *Hindustan Times* during the time period under study.
Drawing on the framing analysis the researchers have found out that in terms of supporting the PTI political discourse or PDM government the newspaper has not employed any words in the headline. As far as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, the newspaper has employed frames such as; "No-trust vote against Imran Khan 'important milestone' for Pakistan" a statement of Shahbaz Sharif.
In terms of framing analysis, the researchers have found out that the intro of the news story does not contain frames in favor of the political discourse of the PTI government and Imran Khan. In terms of supporting the PDM political discourse, the newspaper has not employed any words. As far as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, the newspaper has employed frames such as; "described the impending vote against the premier", "his likely successor and leader of the Opposition, Shehbaz Sharif".
By analyzing the content of the second paragraph of the news article, it is found out that there are no words or frames in support of political discourse of both the PDM government and PTI. As far as the words against the PTI and PDM discourse is

concerned, the newspaper has not employed any frame in the PTI and PDM political discourse. The researchers have found the second paragraph neutral because factual information is stated and the neutral frame is; "said in a tweet". In terms of supporting the PTI political discourse or PDM government the newspaper has not employed any words. In conclusion, considering the framing analysis findings of this second paragraph can be coded as neutral as it only states the statement of Shahbaz Sharif and describes the event and context without bias providing factual information.

The researchers have found the third paragraph of the news neutral because only factual information is stated containing the neutral frame is; "the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) chief further said". In terms of supporting the PTI political discourse or PDM government, the newspaper has not employed any words. In summary, considering the framing analysis findings, this third paragraph can be coded as neutral as it only states the statement of Shahbaz Sharif and describes the event and context without bias providing factual information. The frames used are neutral without any favoritism towards any political discourse.

Through framing analysis of the next paragraph of the news, the researchers have found the paragraph contains frames in favor of the political discourse of the PDM government. The frame used by the newspaper in favor of PDM is; "double blow to the former cricketer-turned-politician". In terms of supporting the PTI political discourse, the newspaper has not employed any words. As far as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, the newspaper has employed frames such as; unanimously overturned, "former cricketer-turned-politician, President Arif Alvi's order, to dissolve the provincial assemblies and the National Assembly, also reversed".

Overall, considering both the framing analysis findings of this paragraph can be coded as negative towards the political discourse of PTI i.e. "regime change". The term "double blow" suggests a significant setback or adverse development for the individual in question However, the fifth paragraph remains mostly neutral as it describes the event and context without bias providing factual information. Drawing on the framing analysis the researchers have found out that this news does not favor any of the political discourses. The tone appears more analytical and descriptive in nature, mostly stating the facts. So, it could be coded as neutral but the news is slightly negative towards Khan's stance as there are not any frames against the PDM government.

Second news story among the sample selected from the *Hindustan Times* was published with headline "Imran Khan says unhappy with Pak SC order a day ahead of no-trust vote". Employing the farming analysis, the researchers have found that the headline does not explicitly align with any political discourse. The language remains neutral and balanced.

Employing the framing analysis on the intro paragraph of this news story, the researchers have found the content to be largely neutral and factual. It states Imran Khan's disappointment with the SC ruling, which is a personal frame rather than a party statement. There are no words or terms that support the PDM discourse. The excerpt seems to state court's ruling factually rather than indicating any bias. The overall tone seems more factual and neutral.

Through the framing analysis of the next paragraph, the researchers have found the paragraph to be overall neutral as it only aims to state facts. The frame "Pakistan was being turned into a banana republic" is a statement of the leader's opinion but does not favor any specific political narrative. There are no explicit frames or words supporting the PDM political discourse. The overall tone of the statement is neutral, focusing on conveying the leader's statement without promoting a particular viewpoint. From the framing analysis point of view, the news story used frames such as "entire drama", "ready to fall in line", "media was also bought", and "supports his fall" which are only used to narrate Khan's feelings. However, most of the news has negative frames stating Khan's perspective without explicitly siding with anyone. The lack of direct reference to PDM sustains the neutrality of the news. Considering the framing analysis, the news is found to be more of a neutral nature which only narrates Khan's perspective without using biased frames or tone.

Keeping in view the framing analysis findings of this news, the researchers code it in the content category labeled as neutral. It only states the statement of

Imran Khan and describes the event and context without bias providing factual information. Overall, the news is fair and balanced without using biased frames toward any specific political discourse.

Analysis on the *Daily Sabah*

Following pages contain the framing analysis of the sample news items selected from the *Daily Sabah* during the time period under study.

First news item selected from *Daily Sabah* as sample was published on April 10, 2022 with headline; "Sharif set to become next Pakistan PM after parliament ousts Khan". The news discusses the political unrest in Pakistan, including the removal of Prime Minister Imran Khan and the selection of Shahbaz Sharif as his replacement. The news presents a combination of positive, negative and neutral statements, offering a comprehensive summary of the ongoing developments in Pakistan's political arena. "Pakistan Muslim League Chief Shahbaz Sharif already anointed to lead" is a statement that emphasizes how much people are looking forward to Sharif taking the helm and how ready he is for the post. The phrase "good man sent home" conveys both appreciation and pity for Imran Khan. "High hopes for Khan when he was elected" expresses the optimism around Khan's selection as the nation's prime minister. Shehbaz Sharif's affirmative pledge to mend the nation's wounds and confront its issues, "We will put a balm on the wounds of this nation," suggests a dedication to progress and reconciliation.

"Disgraced three-time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif" is a derogatory term that suggests there was a scandal during Nawaz Sharif's time in office. "Sad day for Pakistan" is a phrase that expresses regret and dissatisfaction about what is happening in Pakistan and implies that it will have a bad effect on the country. "Struggled to maintain support" highlights the difficulties Khan has had keeping the public's support and presents a poor picture of his leadership. "Drama right up until the midnight deadline" conveys an unpleasant vibe about the political process. A regular phenomenon in Pakistani politics, "New Pakistan governments frequently have a reckoning with those they replace" suggests a routine element of governance transitions. "The vote was finally held" denotes the conclusion of the voting procedure and specifies a procedural step. "Mass protests" is a term that highlights the prospect of public demonstrations and defines a possible path of action without placing a positive or negative value on it.

Keeping the framing analysis findings i.e. the analysis of the frames used in this news story, the researchers found that the *Daily Sabah* has supported Imran Khan and PTI and somehow their political discourse of 'regime change'. The news's overall tone is conflicted, with parts of it expressing hope for Sharif's leadership, sympathy for Khan, and recognition of Pakistan's political unrest and difficulties.

Second news story selected as sample from the *Daily Sabah* containing headline "Sharif takes oath as Pakistan's new PM after Khan ousted" was published on Monday, April 11, 2022. This news presents a comprehensive analysis of the political events in Pakistan, with a specific emphasis on Shahbaz Sharif's rise to the prime ministerial role subsequent to the removal of Imran Khan. The words "Shahbaz Sharif as the country's new prime minister" denote stability and leadership. The statement "Shahbaz Sharif, leader of the centrist Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N)" draws attention to Sharif's stance on politics. The statement "Shahbaz Sharif's first task will be to form a Cabinet" denotes the prime minister's initial duties. "Known as a tough administrator" is a compliment to Sharif's skills and abilities. "Seasoned politician" highlights Sharif's extensive background and knowledge in politics.

"Ousted premier Imran Khan" refers to Khan's removal from the prime minister ship. "Won't guarantee a peaceful path forward" suggests that there may be difficulties and uncertainties in the future. The nation's economic difficulties are highlighted by "economic problems, including high inflation and a soaring energy crisis". "Hard-line group in neighboring Afghanistan" suggests that there are stability issues in the area. "Already speculating the latter may soon return from exile" raises the possibility of political unrest and insecurity. "Mired in graft proceedings" suggests that Sharif may have been involved in claims of wrongdoing. The phrase "Defeat not taken well" alludes to Khan's response upon being fired. The statement "seems to want to... pursue a kind of a policy of trying to sort

of rebel rather (than) make things better" alludes to disapproval of Khan's actions following his departure. The statement "Military appears to be keeping out of the current fray" raises possible questions regarding military involvement in elected office.

Considering the framing analysis findings of this news story, the researchers have coded this story into the neutral content category. The news's overall tone is analytical and informational, containing both positive and negative statements. It discusses Pakistan's political transition while emphasizing the difficulties and uncertainties brought on by the shift in power.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

At the outset of the study, the researchers devised a research question; how did the selected newspapers from the USA, UK, India and Turkey portray the 'regime change' in Pakistan in their news coverage during April 10, 2022 to May 10, 2022? Similarly, the objectives set at the beginning of the study were; to explore the news coverage of the 'regime change' (2022) in The New York Times, *The Guardian*, *Hindustan Times*, and *Daily Sabah* during April 10, 2022 to May 10, 2022. And, to find out the ways and specific issues used by the newspapers to evaluate and comment on the political scenario understudy. Finally, to determine which of the political discourses (success of 'no-confidence motion' or 'regime change') received more prominence in the news of the selected newspapers.

So, to answer this research question and to achieve the research objectives, the researchers adopted census sampling, employed data cleansing, and finally selected final sample by applying convenient sampling. As for the data analysis, the researchers used framing analysis to explore and analyze frames used by the selected newspapers in their news coverage of the 'regime change' (2022) in Pakistan.

Overall, the news coverage by all the four newspapers is found to be neutral, balanced and without taking side of any of the political discourses of the PTI/Mr. Imran Khan and of the PDM government; the subsequent government of 13 political parties' alliance against Mr. Imran Khan after the no-confidence motion. The newspapers, predominantly, portrayed the removal of Mr. Imran Khan from the PM office as a political process which resulted in political chaos. However, The New York Times and *The Guardian*, at a significant level, portrayed the change of government as an end of political chaos in Pakistan. The findings showed that the *Hindustan Times* emphasized on the 'political unrest' in Pakistan while covering the whole issue. However, the Turkish newspaper *Daily Sabah*, at a significant level, supported the political discourse of the PTI/Mr. Imran Khan i.e. 'regime change' in the aftermaths of a 'foreign conspiracy'. And, the newspaper supported Mr. Imran Khan by labeling him as a "good man" and portraying the whole process as "good man sent home".

All newspapers remained neutral and reported on the issue with a balance giving factual reporting. Most of the times the newspapers gave space to the voices from both sides. However, for the sake of analysis and to determine the discourses produced by the newspapers, it can be concluded that The New York Times and *The Guardian* remained more critical towards Mr. Imran Khan. These newspapers gave more space to the 'smooth' change of government as a result of 'success of the no-confidence motion'. These two newspapers did not support the discourse of 'regime change', 'foreign conspiracy' as claimed by the ousted PM Mr. Imran Khan.

As for the news coverage of the issue given by *Hindustan Times* is concerned, the researchers have concluded that the main discourse that the newspaper produced was 'political instability'. Because, the frames employed by the newspaper to report on the issue suggest that the focus of the newspaper was on 'political turmoil' instead of 'regime change', 'foreign conspiracy' as claimed by the ousted PM Mr. Imran Khan or on 'success of no-confidence motion'.

However, half of the news coverage given by the *Daily Sabah* was dedicated to the discourse produced by the PTI and Mr. Khan. The newspaper criticized the PDM political alliance and supported Mr. Imran Khan by labelling the 'regime change' as "good man sent home". Nonetheless, the remaining half news coverage remained neutral towards the whole issue.

So, overall, none of the newspapers has supported the discourse of 'regime change', and 'foreign conspiracy' as claimed by the ousted PM Mr. Imran Khan. However, there is evidence that all the newspapers have described the change of

government as a result of the 'success of no-confidence motion'.

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