

The Kashmir Tinderbox: International Media Coverage of the Revocation of Article 370

Ravale Mohyidin, TRT World Research Centre

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Abstract

International media has a pivotal role to play in the course of any conflict, and the Kashmir dispute is no different. Building on the limited number of previous Kashmir-related studies, this article illustrates the differences in conflict frames used by American (CNN) and Turkish (TRT World) news outlets in regard to media coverage concerning the revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, arguably a key turning point in the trajectory of the Kashmir dispute. I will uncover factors underpinning the clash of frames including geopolitical priorities, news outlets' political-economic organization and the global communications environment. Setting this research against previous studies allows one to explain the distinctiveness of the coverage across channels and within the same news outlets over time, i.e., before and after the revocation of Article 370. Ultimately, the article seeks to uncover the role of international media in positioning and packaging the Kashmir dispute and explores the potential consequences of this for conflict resolution.

The Kashmir conflict has been one of the most protracted in modern history. Its origins predate the births of modern India and Pakistan. These nations have fought three wars over the territory. This article underscores the role of international media in documenting and communicating the dynamics of the Kashmir dispute, a purpose which is directly linked to the prospects for conflict resolution. This purpose links with the two objectives of this study: firstly, to illustrate differences in terms of clashing frames when it comes to international media coverage of the revocation of the Indian Constitution's Article 370; and secondly, to uncover the reasons behind those differences in regard to geopolitical priorities, news outlets' political-economic organization and the positioning of the dispute within the international media environment.

Findings from a limited number of previous studies on the topic demonstrated that international media coverage within national settings tends to align with the foreign policy objectives of the host countries. This article will examine the Kashmir dispute by focusing on specific key events concerning the revocation of Article 370. The amount of airtime allocated to this issue, as well as the nature of the commentary will be revealed.

After a brief historical overview of the Kashmir dispute, I will consider the related concepts of agenda-setting and media framing while delineating the political-economic factors behind clashing conflict frames. These are often detectable during media events and have been described as “high holidays of communication” (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 1). I will then discuss the revocation of Article 370 by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in August 2019, arguably a key turning point in the trajectory of the Kashmir dispute as a bona fide media event. After summarizing the findings of previous studies concerning foreign media coverage of the Kashmir dispute, I employ agenda setting and media framing analysis to contrast media coverage of the revocation of Article 370 in terms of conflict frames by US and Turkish digital news outlets, namely CNN and TRT World, respectively. In this context, previous routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute by the same news outlets is considered. Output will be compared between news outlets and within the same news outlets over time. Doing so will help uncover the role of language in the transmission of knowledge about the international mediation of the Kashmir dispute. It is also important here to acknowledge differing political-economic structures of CNN and TRT World.

The Kashmir Dispute: Historical Overview

The year 1947 witnessed two nations—India and Pakistan—gaining independence from the British Raj. The nascent countries’ borders were not demarcated, and some are still disputed, including the one involved in the Kashmir dispute. The seeming fluidity of boundaries is linked to the fact that “few historians of the Raj have an accurate idea of where its borders and frontiers really lay or how far its political reach actually extended” (Onley, 2009: 44). The Raj is said to have comprised both the “formal empire” also known as “British India”, i.e., colonies under direct Imperial rule headed by a British government or military officer, and the “informal empire” also known as “Princely India”. Protectorates under indirect imperial rule were “comprised of over 600 ‘native states’ and tribal territories, each with its own ruler or chief overseen by a British resident or agent” (Onley, 2009: 44).

The mechanism by which British India as well as the Indian princely states would choose whether to join India or Pakistan was considered inadequate (Cohen, 1995). Each of the provinces’ or princely states’ rulers had to accede to either country based on the needs and interests of their populations, but the mechanism did not account for unreasonable or unfair decision making on the part of the rulers (Cohen, 1995). Vast tracts of land, in what is known as present-day India, were loosely self-governed and only informally part of the British Raj. The foreign policies of some neighbouring states were being controlled by the British. This created the blurred boundaries that were inherited once the British Raj ended.

This arrangement left open the temptation to opt for independence from both India and Pakistan (Cohen, 1995). At the time of Independence, the princely state of Kashmir had a Hindu ruler—Maharaja Hari Singh—and a Muslim population. Maharaja Hari Singh had to choose either India or Pakistan, but was contemplating independence instead (Cohen, 1995). Faced with an internal rebellion in October 1947 (Lamb, 1991), Maharaja Hari Singh panicked and signed the Instrument

of Accession in exchange for Indian military support. As part of the Instrument of Accession, he stated the wish that the people of Kashmir should decide their future (Birdwood, 1956). There is conflicting evidence as to whether the Instrument of Accession was genuine or not as the Indian Army was already being posted in Kashmir (Lamb, 1991). This was the initial basis for international mediation.

Britain suggested a United Nations (UN) sponsored plebiscite which was rejected by Muhammad Ali Jinnah [1]. He put forward a plan whereby India and Pakistan would take matters into their own hands by calling for a ceasefire, establishing peace and organizing a plebiscite (Birdwood, 1956). Interestingly, the Jawaharlal Nehru [2] -led Indian government originally rejected this: “we are prepared when peace and law and order have been established to have a referendum in Kashmir under some such international auspices as that of the UN” (Birdwood, 1956). Indian conditions for law and order, i.e., reducing Pakistani troops in the region before the referendum was to be held, were not acceptable to Pakistan. As the fighting continued, India sought a multilateral UN solution.

The UN has attempted to mediate between India and Pakistan on numerous occasions, starting with the McNaughton Proposals of 1950. They included provisions for a plebiscite so that Kashmiris could decide whether they wanted to be a part of Pakistan or India. One of these attempts at mediation included the establishment of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to observe and report violations of the ceasefire agreed upon by Pakistan and India in 1951. This ceasefire line is regularly violated, resulting in civilian casualties and injuries on both sides (Jaffrelot, 2018). Against this background, India now calls the issue a “bilateral” one (UN News, 2019), to be resolved between the two countries without the need for mediation. Pakistan seeks international mediation, believing that bilateral dialogue has clearly failed (UN News, 2019). In their view “the Indian government seems to have closed off options for a negotiated settlement” (Jacob, 2020).

The flawed mechanism by which formal and informal parts of the British Raj were to choose either India or Pakistan led to much human suffering and a constant border dispute whereby two nuclear-armed nations, have gone to war three times in 1948, 1965 and 1971. While the Kashmir dispute is of long-standing between India and Pakistan, developments over the last two decades has complicated the issue. The US “War on Terror” and its impact on regional security overlaps with the growing importance of China-Pakistan relations in regard to Indian “regional hegemony” (Alizada, 2019) in South Asia. More recently, the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Narendra Modi won the 2014 Indian general election. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a hard-line Hindu nationalist organization is said to have “umbilical ties to the BJP” (BBC News, 2018). The BJP is considered as the RSS’ “political wing” (Frayer and Khan, 2019). Hindu nationalists belonging to the RSS and BJP hold the ideological belief that India should be a “unitary and centralised Hindu nation-state”. They denounce Article 370 as exemplifying the “appeasement” of India's only Muslim-majority state since 1947 (Bose, 2019). Thus, when the BJP came to power with a large electoral mandate in 2014, its “brute majority in Parliament” (Tripathi, 2019) allowed the party, led by long-time RSS member Narendra Modi, to “repay its debt to its ideological parent” (Tripathi, 2019). Article 370 of the Indian Constitution was revoked in August 2019. This removed the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir, declaring them Indian territories and prevented the possibility of the long-promised UN-sanctioned plebiscite in Kashmir. Many experts thereby speculated whether Kashmir had been pushed to the “point of no return” (Bose, 2019). The article guaranteed Kashmiris living in Indian-administered Kashmir, special rights. These included

autonomy over their own constitution, a separate flag and freedom to make all laws. They were linked to permanent residency, ownership of property and fundamental rights, except those pertaining to foreign affairs, defence and communications, which remained the preserve of the central government (BBC News, 2019). The article had previously barred non-Kashmiris from settling permanently in the Kashmir Valley or buying property there (BBC News, 2019). For some experts, “Kashmir’s new status could bring demographic change, drawing comparisons to the West Bank” (Parker, 2019).

As India imposed a security lockdown in Kashmir that included the detention of hundreds of people and a communication blackout (Kugelman, 2019), international news outlets documented significant violations of UN-guaranteed human rights (Mohyidin, 2020). Pakistan argued that India’s move violated international law (UN News, 2019) and considered it a hostile act. The following weeks and months saw many Indian officials planning to reclaim Pakistan administered Kashmir (Kugelman, 2019). Tensions between India and Pakistan remained high throughout 2020, with significant ceasefire violations resulting in loss of life and property on both sides of the border. Experts warn of an increased threat of a nuclear fall-out risking the lives of at least 125 million people (Farmer, 2019). The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) discussed the Kashmir dispute multiple times after the revocation of Article 370, having not touched upon it since 1965 (UN News, 2019). This signalled recognition of the danger of the dispute spiralling out of control.

Mediatized Conflict

Mediatized conflict is a term which describes “how media do things with conflicts” (Cottle, 2006: 9), such as in the Kashmir dispute. Specifically, some media activities work to “define, frame, narrate, evaluate, contest, promote and perform conflict” (Cottle, 2006, cited in Vukasovich, 2012: 27). Mediatized conflict is a paradigm that outlines the ways by which the media engages with conflicts (Vukasovich, 2012). It is “performative, complex and active, and represents a constitutive role within conflicts” (Cottle, 2006; Cottle, 2004, cited in Vukasovich, 2012: 27). Therefore, “war is produced and immersed in a new ecology of media and diffused through a complex and interconnected web of everyday media” (Hoskins and O’Loughlin, 2010; Cottle, 2006, cited in Vukasovich, 2012: 28).

Hoskins and O’Loughlin (2010) explored the relationship between media and warfare. They analysed the patterns of so-called traditional warfare and how it has become affected by the availability and connectivity of electronic and digital media in shaping public opinion. According to Knightley (2003), one common tactic is to limit reporters’ access to the battlefield. Reporters would only be allowed coverage if they were aligned with the government’s theses, and/or were embedded within the military. As such, they would not report critically. Such tactics highlight the seemingly symbiotic relationship between mainstream media and the government-military apparatus, which became evident during the 2003 Iraq War (DiMaggio, 2010; Entman et al., 2009, cited in Culloty, 2014).

The relationship between media and warfare is based on the management of perceptions (Hoskins and O’Loughlin, 2010). The agenda-setting approach (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), while less aggressive than censorship and obstruction, for example, is also a method of perception management. McCombs and Shaw studied the 1968 US presidential election and found a strong positive correlation between what voters thought was the most important issue and what local and national news channels reported to be the most important issue. They then famously introduced

agenda-setting by quoting Cohen's (1963) epigram: "The press 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". They underscored the media's potential to sway public opinion and to transfer the salience of particular events by providing coverage for them. It is assumed in agenda-setting research that the news is filtered and shaped by the media, and that increased news coverage of an item makes it more salient (Webb, 2018).

The second level of agenda-setting, as McCombs (2004) observed, focuses on the related question of how an issue is framed (Scheufele, 1999) and which attributes of the issue are emphasized (Chong and Druckman, 2007; Entman, 1993). The "major premise of framing theory is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives" (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 104). As information processing is never without context, and that context is subjective, Entman (1993) emphasizes that framing is "selecting aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993: 52). Frames are also defined as interpretation patterns (Scheufele, 2003, cited in Schmidt, 2014: 98) and as products of the activity of framing.

The framing of issues occurs at different levels in terms of abstraction (Dahinden, 2006, cited in Schmidt, 2014). Toward the higher levels of abstraction are meta-level ideological frames (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr, 2009, cited in Schmidt, 2014: 117), and these are related to moral or political conflict. At lower levels of abstraction are micro-frames or particular issue frames (Allen et al., 1994: 266-267, cited in Schmidt, 2014: 117). These comprise "smaller units of categorization by relying on a very theme-specific interpretation" (Schmidt, 2014: 117). Ideological and issue frames interact, as more than one frame can be in operation at the same time (Scheufele, 1999, cited in Schmidt, 2014: 117). Ideological frames operate at a "discursive level" and issue frames function at a "textual level" (Schmidt, 2014: 117).

Media frames refer to the "words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker (e.g., a politician, a media outlet) uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience" (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987, 1989, cited in Druckman, 2007: 100). In terms of thought, frames refer to the media consumers' "cognitive understanding of a given situation" (Goffman, 1974, cited in Druckman, 2007: 101). The first definition focuses on what the media outlets deem as important while the second focuses on what the individual consuming the news sees as important. Under the first definition of the term, according to Scheufele (1999) framing research looks at a process known as "frame building" which "focuses on the dynamics of how speakers, such as media outlets, choose specific frames in communication" (Druckman, 2007: 100).

In the media coverage of foreign conflicts, the successful promotion of certain news items or particular aspects of a specific news event may highlight specific issues or viewpoints. This may result in "improved public opinion perceptions, and potential influence on foreign elites" (Sheafer and Shenhav, 2010, cited in Golan, 2014: 420). The successful promotion of particular frames can arise from the way journalists select and promote aspects of a conflict in their coverage. According to Gans (1979), journalists select stories based on availability as well as suitability from a cultural standpoint. However, "all journalists unconsciously reflect personal and cultural values in selecting their content (or framing their stories)" (Howard, 2002: 9). As is well known, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *In Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (2002) contend that the news media tend to act in the interests of ruling powers. In their paradigm, they identify five filters that contribute to this, including ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak, and

finally ideology. In the first introduction of their argument, anti-communism was the main ideological stance. However, as the War on Terror (Kalehn, 2009) commenced from September 2001, prejudice against Islam rather than communism appears to have filled the slot of otherness (Sciolino, 1996).

Additionally, when covering foreign conflicts, journalists tend to rely on government sources, as that may be their only form of access to international news. Therefore, the way a government frames an issue influences the way the media frame foreign policy coverage. A study by Sheaffer (2014) revealed that the more aligned the political objectives were between Israel and a foreign country, the higher the acceptance of that country's views in Israeli media, and vice versa. The same findings in regard to the Kashmir dispute could explain why certain frames are utilized by foreign countries' media coverage (Mohyidin, 2020). Other relevant and influential factors for frame building include trade relations and the economic and political power of the country which promotes the frame (Wu, 2000; Chang, 1998, cited in Sheaffer, 2014).

At the same time, the "global communications network has become more important for the conduct of diplomacy than traditional cables and emissaries" (Hoffman, 1991, cited in Gilboa, 2005), since the media enables constant connectivity. Different flows of foreign news can converge across different countries due to a variety of factors including "a shared belief system in historically associated countries" (Curran et al., 2015, cited in Lück et al., 2016: 6). This was confirmed in a study by Melki (2014) that compared news frames in an international context by studying Arab, American and Israeli media coverage of the 2006 Lebanon–Israel war. A strong correlation was found between Israeli and US news framing. This was expected (Melki, 2014) not only because US foreign policy and US media have supported Israel for decades, but also because US media networks "may additionally be connected to the powerful pro-Israel lobby in the US" (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007, cited in Melki, 2014: 178). On the other hand, Le Porte and Azpiroz (2009) found that media framing by assorted international print media outlets about a particular concept, such as the "clash of civilizations", can depend on global leaders' political framing of it. This research highlights how "cultural conflict is expressed in the political discourse, and how this is then reflected in the major world media" (Le Porte and Azpiroz, 2009: 20). How global leaders viewed the concept of the clash of civilizations in terms of security was exemplified by US President George W. Bush who chose to posit "the schema of a confrontation between civilizations... [to be] fighting a war on 'those who spread terror', and not against Islamic civilization" (Le Porte and Azpiroz, 2009: 20). Moreover, an analysis of Turkish and Saudi news agencies' media coverage of the murder of Jamal Khashoggi underscored Turkish and Saudi governments' divergent security and foreign policy priorities as reflected in both the extent of conflict coverage as well as the frames utilized by both (Cherkaoui and Mohyidin, 2020).

Furthermore, in terms of conflicting new frames, Alitavoli (2019) found that mainstream media outlets such as *cnn.com* are more likely to provide security-oriented media coverage of the Syrian Civil War focusing on the US' foreign policy priorities and security concerns while alternative media outlets such as *antiwar.com* were more likely to highlight the "the failures of similar past wars such as the Iraq War and its negative consequences" (Alitavoli, 2019, abstract). Thus, conflict can be amplified by modulations between security and insecurity, or it can be contained, by packaging it in a certain way (Hoskins and O'Loughlin, 2010). Constant connectivity, in terms of how modern media consumption is taking place, is essentially the mechanism by which the media is weaponized (Vukasovich, 2012). It becomes a battleground for influence and support for or against parties in conflict.

When it comes to the Kashmir dispute, the revocation of Article 370 in the Indian Constitution was considered a “turning point” (Kapur, 2020) for both India and Pakistan. This “media event” (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 1) created news headlines globally and was contested in terms of meaning, significance and explanation by both India and Pakistan. Media events, defined as “high holidays of mass communication” (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 1) can be outlined on syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 9-14, cited in Hepp and Couldry, 2010, p. 3):

On the syntactic level, media events are “interruptions of routine”; they monopolize media communication across different channels and programs. They are broadcast live and are also pre-planned and organized outside the media. On the semantic level, media events are staged as “historic” occasions with ceremonial reverence and the message of reconciliation. On the pragmatic level, media events enthrall very large audiences who may view them in a festive style. The main point of these criteria is that each of them as a single attribute can also be found in other forms of media communication. However, when they come together, they constitute the distinctive “genre” of media events (Couldry and Hepp, 2012: 3)

The revocation of Article 370 can be certainly considered as a media event. The Pakistani government as well as the Chinese government (China also claims territory in Indian-Administered Kashmir) strongly objected to the revocation of Article 370, leading to a discussion on the topic in the UNSC for the first time in decades (Niazi, 2019). Syntactically speaking, the revocation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, was an “interruption of routine” when it came to media reporting. The special rights for Kashmiris had been in place since 1954, and so their revocation led to an international outcry over the legality and morality of the move. Semantically, it was an “historic occasion”, as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed in a televised address. The revocation of the Kashmiris’ special rights would supposedly advance development and inclusion in the region. Modi claimed that the Kashmiris’ “dreams will be fulfilled” since the Kashmiri state would reconcile with the Indian Federation (Economic Times, 2019). In terms of pragmatism, the revocation of Article 370 was celebrated by many Indians (Qasim, 2019). Hence, the revocation of Article 370 met all of the media event conditions (syntactic, semantic and pragmatic) outlined by Dayan and Katz (1992). As a major historical event within the Kashmir dispute, the contestations of meaning, significance and explanation by India and Pakistan were bound to influence media coverage by international media outlets from outside countries, with or without cultural links to the region.

Mediations of the Kashmir Dispute: Clashing Frames

As noted, the occurrence of different conflict frames about the same issue can be expected from media outlets in countries that are not “historically associated” with the conflict in question. In the past, as one would expect, Indian and Pakistani media coverage of the Kashmir dispute strongly reflected the countries’ respective stances concerning the conflict (Sreedharan, 2009). Pakistani coverage highlights Islamabad’s official stance that the Kashmir dispute must be settled in light of UN resolutions, without which there can be no progress in India-Pakistan relations. On the other hand, India coverage echoes New Delhi’s standpoint, namely that Kashmir’s accession to India is final. On this view, “[there] is no dispute to settle. The armed violence in Kashmir is a law-and-order problem (Sreedharan, 2009: 100), and the unrest is purely a conflict between the Indian state and Pakistan-sponsored terrorists (Joseph, 2000, cited in Sreedharan, 2009). Ali and Perveen (2015) found similarly clashing conflict frames when studying *Dawn* in Pakistan and *The Tribune* in India

in regard to media coverage of the Kashmir dispute. Each of these publications supported the positions of their own governments.

As mentioned, clashing political discourse is reflected in the major world media (Cherkaoui and Mohyidin, 2020; Le Porte and Azpiroz, 2009). Historically, both India and Pakistan have relied on foreign support for their respective positions on Kashmir (Cohen, 1995). Thus, it makes sense to analyse international media coverage to understand the impact of international relations on the coverage of the Kashmir dispute. From the limited number of studies that have looked at such coverage, a clash of conflict frames has been identified. According to Ray (2004), who studied *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*, US media echoed Indian media coverage of the Kashmir dispute, particularly after 1999. Dominant frames in the coverage of the Kashmir dispute by US news outlets included “outside interference”, “violent neighbour”, “foreign fighters” and “militant extremists” (Ray, 2004). Moreover, as Zia and Syedah (2015) observed, even though the US had assumed the arbitrator's role in the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan, *The New York Times* coverage of the Kashmir dispute tended to reflect India's security-oriented viewpoint.

A study examining media coverage of the Kashmir dispute by CNN and TRT World's digital outlets (Mohyidin, 2020) found that the former was almost twice as likely as the latter to employ India's security frame in their coverage of the Kashmir dispute. This security frame included references to Indian violent behaviour in self-defence, attacks on Indian soldiers or security personnel, descriptions of “militant” organizations as well as references to India and Pakistan being nuclear powers (Mohyidin, 2020). CNN, in fact, referred to India and Pakistan having nuclear arms four times more than TRT World (Mohyidin, 2020). Confirming previous researchers' findings on US media coverage of the Kashmir dispute, CNN was more likely to reflect the Indian stance than TRT World by including references to Pakistan supporting terrorism in Indian administered Kashmir, and Kashmiris and Pakistanis being designated as terrorists. Overall, violence towards the Indian state was emphasized (Mohyidin, 2020). Furthermore, keyword analysis also revealed that CNN used the label “terrorists”, while TRT World used the terms “rebels” and “protestors”.

TRT World, on the other hand, was more likely to employ the humanitarian frame than CNN. This frame included references to the Indian Army blinding protestors in Indian administered Kashmir by using pellet guns, the unfairness of legal systems in Indian administered Kashmir, civilians traumatized by human rights abuses as well as journalists being in danger (Mohyidin, 2020). TRT World was more likely to reflect the Pakistani stance including references to Kashmiris being resentful, Kashmiris not wanting to be a part of India and the continual nature of anti-India protests (Mohyidin, 2020).

It must be noted that the study by Mohyidin (2020) was an examination of routine media coverage, which reflected the effects of past engagement and expectations of future cooperation rather than the impact of media events (Dayan and Katz, 1992). In contrast, the revocation of Article 370 was, arguably, the biggest interruption of routine in the past few decades in terms of international media coverage of the Kashmir dispute and is likely to affect it.

Research Design

The objectives of this study are, first, to illustrate differences in international media coverage of the revocation of Article 370 compared to previous routine coverage and, second, to uncover reasons for those differences in regard to the political economy of communication associated with Cable

News Network (CNN) and TRT World. CNN and TRT World are well-known sources of American and Turkish English-language news outlets, respectively. They both offer an excellent opportunity to capture how foreign policy priorities and other political economy of communication factors impact upon news coverage of the Kashmir dispute in terms of clashing conflict frames.

CNN, headquartered in Atlanta, US, came into existence on 1 June 1980 under founder Ted Turner and his company Turner Broadcasting (Auletta, 2001). Turner Broadcasting was sold to Time Warner in 1996, which was acquired by AT&T in June 2018 (Chmielewski, 2018). The amalgamated entity is now known as WarnerMedia. CNN broadcasts worldwide with CNN International, CNN Philippines, CNN Türk and CNN-News 18 in India, to name a few. CNN considers itself an international organization, but it is viewed as an American news outlet abroad (Natarajan and Xiaoming, 2003, cited in Groshek, 2008). As mentioned previously, CNN media echoes the Indian media coverage of the Kashmir dispute. This is primarily due to geopolitics and media ownership.

In terms of geopolitics, CNN became a significant actor in international relations during the 1991 Gulf War due to the supposed “CNN effect” whereby the news media influences or determines what governments do (Hoskins and O’Loughlin, 2010; Cottle, 2006; Robinson, 1999). More specifically, CNN’s influence exemplified “the ability of real-time communications technology, via the news media, to provoke major responses from domestic audiences and political elites to both global and national events” (Robinson, 2002; 2). According to some researchers, however, the “much-vaunted ‘CNN effect’ is largely wishful thinking” as various media and conflict studies indicate that American news coverage of conflicts tends to propagate the policy of the US administration (especially in conflicts involving American troops) (Seib, 2002, cited in Cherkaoui, 2017: 77). This “tendency reflects journalistic dependence on official sources” (Cherkaoui, 2017: 77). Thus, CNN is the channel most likely to be utilized by the US administration in public diplomacy efforts as the “news media is mobilized (manipulated even) to support government policy” (Robinson, 1999, p. 301). Notwithstanding allegations of CNN being biased against President Trump (Parke, 2020), researchers agree that CNN does tend to reflect the official narrative when it comes to US’ geopolitical and foreign policy priorities, particularly since the 9/11 attacks and the War on Terror. In this context, there have been ideological constraints on U.S. journalism and “accelerated attempts by [the] government to manage the information environment” (Robinson, 2006: 347). With that said, the US considers India strategically important in the larger Indo-Pacific region (Pant, 2015). According to a Pentagon report, “there is a broad consensus within Washington and Delhi that each depends on the other” to counter growing Chinese influence (Daggett, S., Library of Congress., & Federation of American Scientists, 2010: 65). Consequently, the US can be seen as lending its own global influence to support and legitimize the Indian stance on the Kashmir issue and is likely to echo the US state’s narrative, reflecting the Indian stance on it.

This proposition is consolidated by the fact that CNN’s parent company AT&T has been active in the Indian economy over previous decades. In the 1990s, AT&T invested in the Indian company Grasim Industries (part of the Birla Group) to form Birla AT&T Communications and exited the venture in 2005 (Kakkar, 2013). In 2013, AT&T considered “buying a 25 percent stake in Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd, a telecommunications venture controlled by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, for 3.5 billion USD” (FP Staff, 2013). It was noted that when PM Narendra Modi was sworn in for a second term in 2019, “Ambani—whom Forbes magazine has listed as Asia’s richest man—was seated in the front row” (Krishnan, 2013). AT&T became an integral part of the Indian market by

signing a multi-year agreement with the Indian company Tech Mahindra Ltd in 2019. Their CEO declared this to be an elevation of “Tech Mahindra’s long standing strategic relationship with AT&T” (AT&T, 2019). It can be assumed that Indian corporates, in deference to the prime minister and through their engagement with AT&T and thus CNN, support the Modi-led BJP government in the revocation of Article 370.

TRT World is also an international broadcaster. In 2017, the news channel signed an agreement with 11 satellite providers to stream into 190 countries worldwide (n.a., 2017). This is a Turkish English-language 24-hour news channel, which was launched in 2015 as part of the country’s public broadcaster, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). Since its inception, TRT World has been shaping its own news agenda: the channel reports contain minimally loaded language, and they utilize credible sources (Media Bias/Fact Check, 2018-a). However, there is a strong likelihood that the network’s views will not be contradicting the Turkish government’s foreign policy. With that said, when it comes to geopolitics affecting TRT World’s coverage of the Kashmir dispute, Turkey and Pakistan enjoy historical ties, dating back to when the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent supported the Ottoman Empire (Pay, 2015). Consequently, Turkey receives present-day support from Pakistan on multiple fronts (Akan, 2017). Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was one of the few international leaders who highlighted the plight of the Kashmiri Muslims living in Indian Administered Kashmir and called for a resolution of the Kashmir dispute at the 2019 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (Yuruk, 2019). He called this a “burning issue” at the 2020 UNGA (Lakshman, 2020), a view which aligns with the Pakistani stance on the matter. He has been thanked by the Pakistani PM Imran Khan for his support (Yuruk, 2019).

Moreover, though TRT World is a public broadcaster and has no private or commercial source of funding, its coverage appears to be aligned with Turkey’s foreign policy principles (Kalın, 2012), with its focus on “humanitarian diplomacy” (Hasimi, 2014). The founding CEO of TRT World stated, “humanitarian understanding” would be at the core of its news channel as well as being the “voice of the voiceless” (Ünal, 2016). In this respect, prior to the revocation of Article 370, President Erdoğan called for efforts to reduce the suffering of Kashmiris in a 2017 visit to New Delhi, much to India’s irritation (Krishnan, 2017). This is likely to be reflected in TRT World coverage of the Kashmir dispute. Indeed, as mentioned, Mohyidin (2020) found that TRT World employed the humanitarian frame three times more than CNN.

According to *Projections of Power* (2004) by Robert Entman, news agendas and story angles originate at the top with the executive (the White House), then flow downward, to the network of non-administration elites, then on to news organizations, before finally reaching the public. As part of a feedback loop from lower to higher levels, the way the public reacts to those frames may lead to frame adjustments. In this system, as Entman suggested, US presidents (and their counterparts in other countries) enjoy enormous power in framing public debate, while the media disseminate the dominant discourse, with little chance for non-elites to contest or even influence dominant frames. Given that this article seeks to uncover the role of international media in positioning and packaging the Kashmir dispute, and that news agendas and story angles originate at the top with the executive, then flow downward, via the non-administration elites to the news organizations (Entman, 2004), then CNN and TRT World are excellent case studies. Their reach and operations allow us to study how foreign policy priorities and political economy of communication factors impact upon their news coverage of the Kashmir dispute.

Digital news outlets were selected for study as incoming traffic to media organizations’ own news websites is one of the most important sources for online news consumption (Deloitte, 2017).

Considering that the study is based on framing analysis concerning news discourse, using online written content is preferable. Even though Entman's (2004) work was produced before social media became widespread, it is evident that the internet and social media networks (Facebook, Google and Twitter) profoundly influence political communication in the sense that they can be tightly regulated by authoritarian regimes (Morozov, 2011; Hung, 2010, cited in Cherkaoui and Mohyidin, 2020). The content of such networks reflect mainstream established media content rather than alternative, perhaps more democratic, news outlets (Graber and Dunaway, 2017, cited in Mohyidin, 2020; Robinson, 2014, Woolley et al., 2010, cited in Cherkaoui and Mohyidin, 2020). Social media posts "tend to duplicate the output of mainstream media, thus repeating similar frames and reiterating the same news agenda" (Meraz, 2011; Ragas and Kioussis, 2010, cited in Cherkaoui and Mohyidin, 2020: 32). Hence, Entman's model is still relevant because it can accommodate digital and social media as part of the media ecosystem.

In terms of operating the framing analysis, the first phase of this study used a sequential multimethod approach (Dreissneck, Sousa and Mendes, 2007) to qualitatively select, explore and map news frames (Vukasowich, 2012). Once the frames were identified, the second phase of the study used quantitative analysis to compare the selected frames. This allowed for rigorous and reliable comparison of the news frames employed by TRT World and CNN when it came to the Kashmir dispute.

All TRT World and CNN online news articles using the term "Article 370" from 5 August 2019 until 5 March 2020 were located and selected to be a part of the study. This period reflects media coverage of the revocation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019, a bona fide media event which played out in the Kashmir Valley, India, Pakistan and the rest of the world for the next eight months. The period was selected to consider TRT World and CNN media coverage of the Kashmir dispute in relation to the revocation of Article 370 and its effects. This offers a direct comparison between TRT World and CNN's routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute during the same length of time (Mohyidin, 2020).

The following frames were identified and compared across CNN and TRT World coverage of the revocation of Article 370, with news articles being the unit of analysis:

- Humanitarian frame. Relevant news articles refer to human rights violations, including violations of the right to life, property, assembly and freedom of expression, as well as disruption of normal life for ordinary citizens. Such articles would also include first-person accounts and provide voice to Kashmiris living in Indian administered Kashmir.
- Security frame. Relevant news articles refer to increased threat of nuclear war between India and Pakistan and Pakistan supporting terrorism in Indian administered Kashmir. The revocation of Article 370 is seen to promote the security of the Kashmiris themselves.
- Illegality frame. Relevant news articles refer to the existence of UNSC resolutions on the Kashmir dispute as well as their lack of implementation. Historical accounts of the issue include India and Pakistan's stances on it. The revocation of Article 370 is depicted as illegal and as a violation of the Indian Constitution itself.

- Democracy frame. Relevant news articles refer to India being a functional democracy with a robust democratic culture. The revocation of Article 370 is positioned as a fulfilment of BJP's campaign promises and as a justifiable initiative from a democratically elected government.

Comparing frames sheds light on what was highlighted by CNN and TRT World in their coverage of the revocation of Article 370.

In comparing CNN and TRT World's routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute (and its underlying geopolitical dynamics) with coverage associated with the revocation of Article 370 as a media event, the following questions are posed:

- (1) What aspects of the revocation of Article 370 did TRT World and CNN choose to highlight?
- (2) How much did TRT World and CNN differ in terms of highlighting various aspects of the revocation of Article 370, if at all?
- (3) Did TRT World and CNN differ, in terms of aspects highlighted, between their own respective coverage of the revocation of Article 370 and routine coverage of the Kashmir dispute?

To answer questions 1 and 2, the following hypotheses are identified:

- H1:** TRT World will have more articles with humanitarian framing than CNN
- H2:** TRT World will have fewer articles with security framing than CNN
- H3:** TRT World will have more articles with illegality framing than CNN.
- H4:** TRT World will have fewer articles with democracy framing than CNN

In regard to question 3, the following hypotheses will guide my analysis:

- H5:** TRT World will have the same number of articles with humanitarian framing while covering the revocation of Article 370 as in its routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute.
- H6:** CNN will have the same number of articles with humanitarian framing while covering the revocation of Article 370 as in its routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute.
- H7:** CNN will have the same number of articles with security framing while covering the revocation of Article 370 as in its routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute.
- H8:** TRT World will have the same number of articles with security framing while covering the revocation of Article 370 as in its routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute.

Research Findings

CNN coverage of the Kashmir dispute consisted of 23 articles during the period of study, while TRT World had 26 news articles on the revocation of Article 370. It must be noted that the study sample was restricted to news articles and did not include other media output such as infographics, videos and images in the study sample. This is by design, as the research methodology was based on text analysis. As the number of CNN and TRT World articles were not equal in number, the percentage of articles with a particular frame was determined for analytical purposes.

The first hypothesis was confirmed: analysis [3] revealed that TRT World had, statistically, significantly more articles promoting the humanitarian frame than CNN, i.e., TRT World was more likely to provide coverage of human rights violations, including violations of the right to life, property, assembly and freedom of expression, as well as disruption of normal life for ordinary citizens. Though CNN articles also highlighted humanitarian concerns, they tended to focus mostly on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, although they also referred to the communication blackout in the Kashmir Valley after 5 August 2019.

Confirming the second hypothesis, TRT World had, statistically, significantly [4] fewer articles promoting the security frame compared to CNN, i.e., TRT World was less likely than CNN to have as themes the threat of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan, Pakistan supporting terrorism in Indian administered Kashmir or the revocation of Article 370 as being for the betterment and security of the Kashmiris themselves. Also evident in the security frame was the theme that India was not alone in acting this way (in this case, CNN included multiple references to Chinese politics).

Confirming the third hypothesis, TRT World had, statistically, significantly [5], more articles promoting the illegality frame than CNN, i.e., compared to CNN, TRT World was more likely to include references to UNSC resolutions and historical accounts of the issue. TRT World was more likely to question whether the BJP's advancement of the revocation was legal and to mention that the revocation of Article 370 might not survive legal scrutiny. Objections by the Pakistani and Chinese governments were also more likely to be covered on TRT World.

Confirming the fourth hypothesis, TRT World had, statistically, significantly [6] fewer articles promoting the democracy frame than CNN, i.e., CNN coverage was more likely than TRT World coverage to refer to India as a functional democracy with a strong democratic tradition. Correspondingly, CNN was also most likely to mention the revocation of Article 370 being a fulfilment of BJP's campaign promises.

In regard to hypotheses 5 and 6, both CNN and TRT World had, statistically, significantly [7] more articles promoting the humanitarian frame while covering the revocation of Article 370 compared with previous routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute. However, CNN referred to humanitarian concerns during and after the revocation of Article 320 four times more than in previous routine coverage (focusing mostly on freedoms of opinion and expression as well as the communication blackout in the Kashmir Valley since 5 August 2019). In contrast, TRT World's Article 370 coverage referred to humanitarian concerns almost two times more than during routine media coverage (focusing mostly on the communication blackout as well a right to life, property and assembly). TRT World was also more likely than CNN to include stories of everyday Kashmiris facing disruptions in their daily lives.

Confirming hypotheses 7 and 8, both CNN and TRT World had, statistically, significantly [8] more articles promoting the security frame while covering the revocation of Article 370 compared

with routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute. However, CNN referred to security concerns from an Indian government perspective almost four times more. In contrast, TRT World stories referring to security concerns were almost double those that were evident during routine coverage of the dispute. The preceding findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of research findings

Media Frame Promotion	Media Outlet	
Significant promotion of the humanitarian frame in media coverage of revocation of Article 370	TRT World**	CNN
Significant promotion of the security frame in media coverage of revocation of Article 370	TRT World	CNN***
Significant promotion of the illegality frame in media coverage of revocation of Article 370	TRT World***	CNN
Significant promotion of the democracy frame in media coverage of revocation of Article 370	TRT World	CNN***
The difference in the promotion of humanitarian frame in routine media coverage of Kashmir dispute compared with revocation of Article 370	TRT World***	CNN***
The difference in the promotion of security frame in routine media coverage of Kashmir dispute compared with revocation of Article 370	TRT World**	CNN***

* p <0.05

** p <0.01

*** p <0.001

Discussion

Unlike routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute, CNN and TRT World appear to have a similar number of news articles on the revocation of Article 370. It also appears that the broader stories told by CNN and TRT World concerning the Kashmir dispute, while divergent from one other, remained mostly constant, with no major changes, regardless of how momentous the revocation of Article 370 was deemed to be.

According to Bahador (2011), the US media (including CNN) is less likely to cover an issue that does not directly involve Westerners or their military forces. According to Halton (2001), if a foreign story does not involve bombs, natural disasters or financial calamity, it has little chance of entering the American consciousness. Concerning routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute, past studies (Moyhidin, 2020; Zia and Syedah, 2015) have also found that US media provided sparse coverage. However, as evidenced by the research findings of this study, the revocation of Article 370 was covered a lot more extensively, potentially due to an escalation of the perceived threat arising from the heightened possibility of conflict between two nuclear powers and the tendency of US media coverage to be security oriented when it comes to Kashmir (Ray, 2004). It should be

mentioned, though, that Ray found a significant jump in the coverage of the Kashmir dispute in the US media during the Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan in 1998-1999. Zia and Syedah (2015) asserted that the limited US coverage of the Kashmir dispute was generally more negative and security oriented. An increase in CNN coverage while reporting the revocation of Article 370 may have supported the existence of the CNN effect (whereby humanitarian responses are generated by the reportage). In this context, it was evident that Kashmiris living in Indian-administered Kashmir had experienced a communication blackout and other curbs on freedom. However, CNN was significantly more likely to promote the security frame during the revocation of Article 370 than TRT World (even in comparison to routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute).

As noted, CNN's intense focus on security should be considered in relation to its investments in the Indian economy and partnerships with Indian corporates who have openly praised PM Modi on multiple occasions (Chakravarty, 2020). Of course, US geopolitical interests in the region are also important. Many US officials have been unsupportive of Pakistan's role in the US war in Afghanistan, accusing the country of facilitating terrorists (Mangaldas, 2018). In previous analyses (Mohyidin, 2020), the American government-military apparatus' frustration with Pakistan has been detectable. In fact, Pakistan's role in Kashmir was described in the same terms as its role in Afghanistan. In both situations, the need to confront "terrorists" and "militants" accorded with the "attempt to develop a 'case' for American efforts being thwarted by Pakistan" (Mohyidin, 2020: 20). Relatedly, when it comes to reporting on Muslims and Muslim causes or conflicts primarily affecting Muslims, such as the Kashmir dispute, research has confirmed a standard pattern: Islam and Muslims receive negative reporting from Western media outlets (Hassan and Omar, 2017). As part of the hegemonic discourse on security and terrorism, researchers found that "the association of Islam with terrorism and violence has come to be accepted, to the extent that terms such as 'Muslim' and 'terrorist' have become almost synonymous" (Cherkaoui, 2017). This is also aligned with the news domestication theory (Cassara, 1993, cited in Taradai, 2014), which highlights the domestication of international news. It is "a process of presenting distant events as relevant to a domestic audience and constructing them as compatible with the culture and dominant ideology of the country of broadcast" (Gurevitch et al., 1991, cited in Taradai, 2014: 68). The fact that CNN was significantly more likely to promote the security frame compared to TRT World even as reports of significant human rights violations flooded in confirms that CNN is inclined to be uncritical of the US government and its security-oriented foreign policy (Media Tenor, 2004; Rendall and Broughnel, 2003, cited in Groshek, 2008). Reporting on the official designation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, CNN, for example, reported that:

The unprecedented move comes nearly three months after the government launched a security crackdown in Indian-controlled Kashmir, suspending all communications initially, and placing heavy restrictions on movement and public gatherings...The creation of the two new territories coincides with National Unity Day and the 144th birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who is seen as the architect of incorporating more than 560 of colonial India's princely states into a single union (CNN, 2019 October 31).

The use of the word "unprecedented" gives resonance to the potency and decisiveness of the Modi led-BJP government's attempt to finally "fix the past". Their supporters saw the revocation of Article 370 as just one of many long-standing problems threatening national unity and security

(Reddy, 2020). Using the term “security crackdown” highlights the need for actions that may violate human rights for the greater cause of protecting both life and property. This has been the modus operandi for much of post 9/11 media coverage of the US War on Terror (Robinson, 2006). Additionally, by highlighting the date of National Unity Day and the 144th birthday of Sardar Patel, CNN communicated the BJP’s narrative that Article 370 was an abomination in terms of national security and unity in the first place. In this respect, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel [9] is considered a nationalist icon by the BJP because he was allegedly opposed to Article 370 when it was drafted and would have “secured the whole of Jammu and Kashmir” (Roy, 2019) had he been the prime minister instead of Jawaharlal Nehru of the opposing Indian National Congress (Roy, 2019). There is no mention of the UN or the human cost of heavy restrictions on communications, movement or assembly. It is very much aligned with the US media coverage of the War on Terror in Afghanistan in which the primary lens was “Washington D.C. decisions on Afghanistan” (Jawad, 2013: 43).

Speaking of the war on terror in Afghanistan, the revocation of Article 370 took place a few days after an arguably successful meeting (Kocis, 2019) between Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and US President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C. Although the focus of the July 2019 visit was meant to be the Afghan Peace Process (Hashim, 2019), President Donald Trump voiced his desire to mediate on the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan. This essentially gave new life to an otherwise dormant conflict, at least in terms of international news discourse. This was termed a significant diplomatic victory for Pakistan, as it was able to “successfully internationalize the issue” (Sharma, 2019). President Donald Trump announced a new Afghan War strategy in 2017 [10] and reiterated US accusations about Pakistan’s allegedly negative role in Afghanistan. India was urged to help with economic development in Afghanistan. Yet, Pakistan was apparently still considered important in the US strategy for Afghanistan due to its perceived influence over the Taliban (Felbab-Brown, 2018). Thus, the US offer to mediate in the Kashmir dispute may have been the proverbial carrot to the Pakistani government. This helps to explain the fact that CNN did promote the humanitarian frame while reporting on the revocation of Article 370. It appeared that CNN was acknowledging and perhaps even endorsing Pakistan’s stance on the Kashmir dispute. However, CNN’s increased likelihood of promoting the humanitarian frame after the revocation of Article 370, compared to during routine media coverage, may have simply reflected nuances within the US’ own security priorities as delineated previously.

CNN was significantly less likely to promote the illegality frame than TRT World, since the former is aligned with the Indian stance of the revocation being a legal move. Only four percent of CNN articles promoted this frame. This is aligned with findings from earlier studies (Mohyidin, 2020; Zia and Syedah, 2015; Ray, 2004), which found that CNN was more likely to reflect the Indian stance during routine media coverage. That seems to be the case in the coverage of revocation of Article 370 revocation as well. From a geopolitical perspective, as noted (Pant, 2015; Daggett, S., Library of Congress., and Federation of American Scientists, 2010), the US considers India strategically important, especially against the backdrop of strained US-China relations. It would therefore be reasonable to expect CNN not to support objections by the Chinese government to any Indian move, legal or otherwise. American support for India has been evident in border clashes on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between China and India [11] in May-June 2020 (Shapoo, 2020). The US also supported India in its acknowledgement that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) [12] passes through the disputed territory of Kashmir (Iqbal, 2017). Denoting India’s growing geopolitical importance for the US, it should be noted that the term “Indo-Pacific” is replacing “Asia-Pacific” as a framework for regional order (Medcalf, 2018). The

new term has “strategic consequences in managing China’s rise while also incorporating the United States into an inclusive region” (Medcalf, 2018, Abstract). In a policy paper published by the Brookings Institute, Dhruva Jaishankar captured the mood when he stated that “Washington now tilts in India’s favour” (Jaishankar, 2017). Thus, CNN articles were more likely than TRT World to highlight India as a functional democracy with a robust legal framework. As indicated, the revocation of Article 370 was often positioned as a fulfilment of the ruling BJP’s campaign promises. In regard to the 2019 Indian general election that the BJP won resoundingly, the revocation of Article 370 was depicted as a democratic move: “Revoking it was one of the BJP’s promises in the recently concluded Indian general elections” (CNN, 2019 August 5).

US foreign policy activities have long included “supporting fair elections abroad, strengthening civil society, promoting the rule of law and human rights, or other aspects of democracy promotion” (Lawson and Epstein, 2019, Introduction, para 1). The US even sets aside foreign aid specifically for democracy promotion and may focus on electoral democracy, emphasizing mostly free and fair elections. Reflection upon the liberal concept of democracy includes “support for fundamental rights and standards that some argue make democracy meaningful” (Lawson and Epstein, 2019: 1). Considering the US foreign policy objective of democracy promotion, one would expect CNN, given its propensity to echo US official narratives (Cherkaoui, 2017), to promote the democracy frame. However, by focusing mostly on the clampdown on freedom of expression and the media blackout, it downplays other violations of human rights, such as the right to life and property, assembly and movement. When one considers the economic and geostrategic priorities influencing CNN coverage, it appears that US promotion of democracy is selective (Lawson and Epstein, 2019, Introduction, para 1). Such a principle may even be discarded when deemed inconvenient to larger political schemes.

In a similar pattern to routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute (Moyhidin, 2020), TRT World was significantly more likely to report on human rights violations than CNN during the revocation of Article 370. CNN and TRT World also differed on the type of human rights violations that were reported. Out of the CNN articles that highlighted human rights violations in Indian-administered Kashmir, most were likely to focus on freedom of speech and expression, referring extensively to the media blackout [13]. TRT World, on the other hand, besides the media blackout, highlighted threats to life and property, violence, forced kidnapping, and loss of agency experienced by Kashmiris. The disruption to normal routines, curfews and even the consequences of the revocation of Article 370 on the mental health of Kashmiri Muslims were mentioned:

The crisis, which pitted Kashmiris seeking independence against the Indian state, has resulted in a litany of psychological ailments, exacerbated by recent developments, such as a lockdown on communications in Indian-administered Kashmir that has left the people of the region isolated from goings on both locally and internationally...One psychiatrist...who did not wish to be named due to possible repercussions, said the communication blockade and curfews were making it impossible to offer psychiatric services (TRT World, 2019 November 25).

Post-2015, Turkey’s foreign policy has been characterized by “moral realism” (Fuat, 2016). This combines hard power-based military assertiveness with humanitarian norms and the claim to exhibit moral responsibility to protect human lives (Keyman, 2016). In the last decade alone, Turkey has expanded its foreign policy tools, and humanitarian organizations are central to them (Özcan, 2017). As noted, Turkey has focused on “humanitarian diplomacy” (Hasimi, 2014), expanding both

development assistance and humanitarian aid with respect to geographic location as well as the scope of activity. This humanitarian focus does not appear entirely aligned with religion alone (Tabak, 2017). Previously, Muslim communities were almost the sole beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance, but in the Justice and Development Party (JDP) era, deprived communities of all beliefs (Muslims and non-Muslims) in zones of conflict, war and poverty have been extended a helping hand (Tabak, 2017: 90). Although TRT World has its own news agenda and priorities, it is part of the country's public broadcasting system and is likely to use the humanitarian lens when it comes to news reporting (TRT World, n.d.). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect TRT World to underscore human rights abuses in Muslim Kashmir more than CNN.

TRT World coverage was nine times more likely than CNN to include references to the following matters: UNSC resolutions; historical accounts of the issue; the alleged illegality of how the BJP government led the revocation of Article 370, how the revocation of Article 370 may not survive legal scrutiny; and objections by the Pakistani and Chinese governments. An example can be found in an article that links the revocation to the Israel-Palestine dispute:

As Hafsa Kanjwal writing for the *Washington Post* notes, the cancellation of Article 370 is considered an illegal move by many scholars. "Article 370 is the only legal link between India and the disputed state," she points out. "For it to be revoked, it has to be approved concurrently by the Jammu and Kashmir constituent assembly, which was dissolved in 1956...The issue brings to mind many parallels with the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine (TRT World, 2019 August 6).

Kashmir and Palestine have been termed "South Asian Palestine" and "Middle Eastern Kashmir", respectively (Ali and Kitchlew, 2019). This positions the "states of India and Israel as part of a contemporary geocolonial formation" (Osuri and Zia, 2020). The president of Pakistani-administered Kashmir went on to say that Palestinians and Kashmiris are "being persecuted because they are Muslims" (Khaliq, 2020). Indeed, President Erdoğan has admonished both India and Israel together at multilateral platforms for their actions in Kashmir and Palestine respectively (Eurasian Times, 2020). Given that the UAE and Bahrain have normalized ties with Israel, Muslim countries such as Turkey have called for pan-Islamic solidarity" (Bohl, 2020). Turkey also co-hosted the Kuala Lumpur Summit in December 2019 to discuss the "state of affairs of the Muslim *Ummah*" (The New Arab, 2019). This led a right-wing Israeli think-tank to fear that pro-Palestinian positions could be established (The New Arab, 2019).

The promotion of the illegality frame is also aligned with the view of Turkish leadership that "the current global order has to be based on principles of justice and equality as a precondition to finding sustainable long-term solutions to current conflicts" (Kalin, 2012: 14). This reflects the Pakistani stance on the matter as well as to TRT's routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute (Moyhidin, 2020). The fact that TRT World carried an opinion piece penned by the Pakistani ambassador to Turkey on the revocation of Article 370 (Qazi, 2019) confirms this. This was an unsurprising development considering Pakistan and Turkey's significant past alignments.

TRT World was more likely to promote the security frame while covering the revocation of Article 370 compared to during routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute. Crucially, though, the intensity with which TRT promoted the security frame during the revocation period was less in comparison to CNN's coverage for the same period. This can be explained by the fact that the Turkish foreign policy objectives of economic development through trade and investment (Kalin, 2012) and perhaps expectations of future engagement with both India and Pakistan [14] were

supported by TRT World's coverage of different viewpoints on the Kashmir dispute. The usage of terms such as "Indian-administered Kashmir" or "Pakistani-administered Kashmir" [15] competes with "Turkey's self-attained responsibility towards Muslim communities on the basis of the *ummah*...in the form of solidarity with the deprived and conflicting Muslim countries and communities" (Tabak, 2017: 87).

It appears that media framing of the revocation of Article 370 from both CNN and TRT World tended to correspond with their routine media coverages of the Kashmir dispute. They differed only when it came to the intensity of promotion concerning the same clashing frames. Even though TRT World was more likely to focus on individual stories about affected Kashmiri locals, both networks used a thematic framing (Iyengar, 1991) approach to coverage (recognizing of course that these thematic frames reflected the geostrategic priorities of US and Turkish foreign policy). The broader stories told by CNN and TRT World when it came to the Kashmir dispute, while characterized by divergent and clashing frames, remained mostly constant, with no major changes, regardless of how momentous the revocation of Article 370 was deemed to be.

International media coverage of the Kashmir dispute, as well as the geopolitics surrounding it, is not oriented towards the principle of sustainable peace. "Peace journalism" is, by definition, conflict oriented (instead of violence-oriented) and solution-oriented (instead of victory-oriented) (Lynch, 2007: 7). This definition is based on the difference between violence and conflict. Conflict, essentially an incompatibility of goals, may or may not include violence but violence cannot exist outside of conflict (Bratic, 2008, cited in Lynch, 2007). Media coverage that focuses on conflict, or an incompatibility of goals, instead of violent conflict can be considered peace journalism. While peace journalism is thought of as not being violence oriented, in the case of Kashmir dispute, accurately depicting the story on the ground (by, for example, prioritizing and investing in journalists that are actually based in Indian-administered Kashmir) would require reporting on the violence that has, in fact, occurred. However, such coverage could contribute to building towards peace by potentially activating the agency of the international community. Media coverage of the Kashmir dispute ought to include all three news sources (and thus, viewpoints): Kashmiri, Pakistani and Indian and, it must be solution-oriented instead of victory-oriented (Lynch, 2007). For example, highlighting the fact that the revocation of Article 370 is the fulfilment of a long-held dream of the BJP and its supporters may be inflammatory and cannot be packaged as a part of a solution to the conflict. Finally, while international media coverage cannot reasonably be held responsible for directly causing a peaceful resolution for any international conflict, it can (and should) be held accountable for playing a part in encouraging this process. Journalists as well as newsroom editors would do well to remember that.

Conclusion

By uncovering the dynamics associated with reporting on the revocation of Article 370 and the Kashmir issue in general, this study provides a nuanced view of how security and foreign policy priorities affect the media framing of conflicts. It considers the geopolitical objectives of Pakistan and India as well as the political-economic factors associated with international media organizations themselves. In this context, an examination of foreign routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute has been compared with foreign media coverage concerning the revocation of Article 370 as a media event.

TRT World and CNN did indeed employ conflicting frames during both routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute as well as the revocation of Article 370. These clashing conflict frames have largely reflected divergent Turkish and American security concerns and foreign policy priorities. The clashing frames also reflect each news outlet's political-economic organization and their positionings in the global communications environment during routine media coverage of the Kashmir dispute and after the revocation of Article 370 took place. Here, TRT World was more likely than CNN to highlight humanitarian concerns such as threat to life and property after the revocation of Article 370 than it was during routine media coverage. CNN was more likely to refer to security concerns such as the threat of terrorism and nuclear war than TRT World. This was the case after the revocation of Article 370 and during routine media coverage. In terms of conflict frames specifically related to the revocation of Article 370, TRT World, in comparison to CNN, focused more on the illegality of the revocation act itself (in terms of its likely violation of international law and non-implementation of the UN-sanctioned plebiscite). CNN, in comparison to TRT World, was more likely to refer to the revocation as a form of democracy promotion, i.e., the act was a direct result of Indian democracy itself, with the Indian government fulfilling its mandate. When one considers the US security-oriented foreign policy, as well as its economic and geostrategic ties with India, this makes sense. On the other hand, Turkey's moral realism when it comes to foreign policy, its position in the Muslim world, historical ties with Pakistan along with TRT World's editorial house style contribute to its framing of the Kashmir dispute, both prior to and after the revocation of Article 370 took place. Even though CNN and TRT World media coverage of the revocation of Article 370 mirrored opposing lenses through which the media event itself could be viewed, the same clashing frames that were used during routine media coverage remained consistent not only across the respective news outlets, but also across time, i.e., before and after the revocation of Article 370. That points towards the largely invariant nature of security and foreign policy objectives that underly conflict framing in the news.

This article has attempted to illustrate the role of language in the transmission knowledge as well as the pervasiveness and efficacy of discourses that can potentially be linked to the perpetuation of conflict and oppression. While media coverage is never without political context, and coverage of the Kashmir dispute is no exception, the role of the media in the course of long-standing international conflicts, such as the one in Kashmir, is critical. Such media coverage can outline and even activate the agency of the international community when bilateral dialogue has clearly failed. However, if international media coverage aligns itself with the agenda of any country, which may not prove to be peace-oriented, this can obfuscate reality on the ground and potentially perpetuate conflict and consequently human suffering. This concern is magnified as digital news outlets and social media dominate public discourse while becoming a battleground for conflicting narratives.

Author Bio

Ravale Mohyidin is a researcher at TRT World Research Centre. With graduate degrees from Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania, her research interests include the political economy of media, strategic communications, public diplomacy, political effects of entertainment media, conflict media coverage as well as South Asian politics and society.

Endnotes

- [1] Founder of Pakistan, known as *Quaid-e-Azam* in the country, who served as the first Governor-General of Pakistan.
- [2] The first Prime Minister of India.
- [3] As per a chi-square goodness of fit analysis ($\chi^2=3.88$, $p<.05$). 100 per cent of TRT World articles promoted the humanitarian frame compared with 74 per cent of CNN articles.
- [4] As per a chi-square goodness of fit analysis ($\chi^2=56.81$, $p<.001$). Only 12 per cent of TRT World articles promoted the security frame compared with 87 per cent of CNN articles
- [5] As per a chi-square goodness of fit analysis ($\chi^2=24.61$, $p<.001$). Thirty-five per cent of TRT World articles promoted the illegality frame compared with 4 per cent of CNN articles.
- [6] As per a chi-square goodness of fit analysis ($\chi^2=83$, $p<.001$). None of the TRT World articles promoted the democracy frame compared with 83 per cent of CNN articles.
- [7] As per a chi-square goodness of fit analyses ($\chi^2=13.74$, $p<.001$ and $\chi^2=31.02$, $p<.001$, respectively).
- [8] As per a chi-square goodness of fit analyses ($\chi^2=11.57$, $p<.001$ and $\chi^2=8.17$, $p<.001$, respectively).
- [9] First Deputy Prime Minister of India.
- [10] Experts suggest that the inclusion of India in the Afghanistan strategy may be the US employing a carrot and stick approach with Pakistan, conditioning its support on critical issues such as Kashmir in exchange for help in Afghanistan (Felbab-Brown, 2018).
- [11] In a major escalation of a weeks-long standoff, at least 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a clash with Chinese forces over a disputed border area called Ladakh in Indian Administered Kashmir, according to the Indian army (Al Jazeera, 2020).
- [12] CPEC is said to be instrumental for the consolidation of Chinese influence in the region, which is not ideal for the US.
- [13] The Internet was cut off for Kashmiris in Indian Administered Kashmir for seven months after the imposition of a communications and media blackout by the Indian government in early August 2019. Service was partially restored in

March, to allow for 2G on post-paid mobile connections only (Mohammad, 2020).

- [14] Given Turkey's interest in joining BRICS (Korybko, 2018), Turkey and India may seek greater cooperation in the future. With that come expectations of support on critical issues, which has not been forthcoming in the past. For example, India maintains friendly relations with Greek Cyprus (High Commission of India Nicosia Cyprus, 2018).
- [15] Terms used by the UN itself rather than 'Jammu and Kashmir' (used by CNN and Indian news outlets) or 'Azad or Indian Occupied Kashmir' (used by Pakistani news outlets).

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