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RESEARCH ARTICLE



Advocacy journalism and climate justice in a Global Southern country

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ABSTRACT

Being among the world's most affected countries by climate change, Pakistan is facing a variety of cases of climate injustice committed by internal and external drivers. Waisbord's referred "Advocate-journalist" model carries a good potential to advocate these injustices to stimulate democratic dialogue among the audience that eventually pushes leadership to make eco-friendly policies. This study critically analyses advocacy journalism coverage of cases of local and regional climate injustice in the editorial contents of mainstream Pakistani newspapers by using the quantitative content analysis method. Results reveal that selected newspapers gave inappropriate coverage to climate injustice issues both in quantity and quality. Besides muddled local and regional climate injustice issues' priorities, editorialists also excessively recommended dirty energy solutions to the policymakers. The final analysis suggests that the findings of climate and energy-related scientific studies were not being reflected in the advocacy journalism contents as well. This failure of "advocate-journalist" model to perform its normative role of potentially advocating the cases of climate injustice with compelling scientific evidence seems to attribute to the political economy of the press or editorial inattention. As a way out of this journalistic lack, Waisbord's endorsed "civic advocacy" groups must intervene to plug the loopholes.

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Advocacy journalism; climate justice; GHG emissions; climate change policies; civic advocacy; energy crisis; global south

Introduction

During the recent years, public concern over climate change has brought increased focus on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with certain human activities. These climatic changes have generated several issues of justice and ethics, which are generally discussed under the umbrella of climate justice (Jafry 2018). Being a new dimension of climate change, media and climate justice scholarship does not hold a rich research tradition yet. A survey of the print media treatment of climate justice issues reveals that most of such studies have been conducted in the "climate summit journalism" domain, which is confined to analyse newspaper coverage of the so-called Conference of Parties (COP) proceedings exclusively (Das 2019a; Eide and Kunelius 2010; Eide and Ytterstad 2011; Johannessen 2015; Lidberg 2018; Rhaman 2016; Ytterstad and Russell 2012). Although the coverage of such transnational events carries a great potential to put forward the loco-global perspectives (Eide and Ytterstad 2011), yet it is a fact of experience that climate justice is a continuing phenomenon, which is neither time-bound nor event-specific. Moreover, it is observed that the affected societies in the Global South are not only the victims of disproportionate GHG emissions

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from the industrialised western countries but also, they must bear the brunt of several types of climate ethics poor compliance from several surrounding countries in their respective regions. While adding to this perspective, Fuhr (2021) contends:

Similar to the Global North, the Global South's emissions are heavily concentrated: India and China alone account for some 60% and the top 10 countries for some 78% of the group's emissions, while some 120 countries account for only 22%. Without highlighting such differences, it makes little sense to use the term "Global South". Its members are affected differently and contribute differently to global climate change. (para.1)

It is, therefore, important here to expand upon the conventional debates of the nascent term "climate justice" in terms of assigning greater obligations to the Global Northern countries and pay some heed to said poor compliance of climate ethics by Global Southern countries as well.

Besides that, the Global Southern societies are the victims of climate injustice by several actors from within, including religious leaders, timber mafia, cattle ranchers, transporters, industrialists, community malpractices and eco-destructive policymakers. For this reason, there is a dire need to go beyond the classic notion of climate justice that assigns rights and responsibilities only to the nation-states to "either be protected from the effects of climate change, or to take action to reduce emissions or support adaptation" (Bulkeley, Edwards, and Fuller 2014, 31). Hence, we argue that along with sovereign states the role of certain other social institutions including local mass media, politics, economics, religion and various community malpractices should also be analysed and consequently held responsible, if found involved in contributing to local, regional or global GHG emissions.

Being the world's fifth most affected country by climate change, Pakistan (Eckstein et al. 2019) is facing a variety of cases of climate injustice committed by internal and external drivers. Advocacy Journalism carries a great potential to advocate cases of climate injustice to the policymakers. However, between its "advocate-journalist" and "civic-organization" models (Waisbord 2009), the former one has rarely been tested for newspaper editorials (Firmstone 2019) and editorials have barely been studied for advocating environmental issues (Das 2019b).

To address these gaps in existing literature, the present study critically analysed the advocacy journalism coverage of local and regional climate injustice issues (not global ones) for one complete year in the editorial contents of leading Pakistani Urdu and English-language newspapers, as a representative of the Global Southern countries. We aim to contribute to climate journalism research by measuring the extent of editorial coverage given to climate injustice issues versus other issues; by critically evaluating the editorial coverage priorities of both the local and regional climate injustice issues (not global ones); and by critically examining the role of local advocacy journalism practices in advocating both clean and false energy solutions to climate change within the broader framework of Waisbord's (2009) explicated models of advocacy journalism.

Literature review

Advocacy journalism priorities and climate change issues

Advocacy journalism is "a broad church of subjective forms of reporting that promote social issues and causes" (Fisher 2016, 714) and is practiced boosting ordinary public voices in the news media lest the leadership overlook them in policy debate (Stillman et al. 2001); because "policy makers usually respond to popular appeal, to pressure groups, and to their own social network of policy-and decisionmakers" (Servaes 2009, 55). While drawing a distinction, Wallack (1994) asserts that unlike traditional reporting practices that are used to fill the knowledge gap, advocacy journalism bridges the power gap. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that unlike other forms of journalistic content, advocacy journalism is subjective in nature that particularly highlights social issues, typically raises the voice of the voiceless factions of the society and is used to fill the power gap. Moreover, unlike objective news reporting that don't take any position on an issue, advocacy journalism write-ups can be critical, suggestive or supportive of a government policy. As advocate-journalists

represent the public voice in policymaking process, they may criticise or support a policy finding it useful or harmful for the common people.

In this study, we argue that climate justice issues can be best contended by applying the advocate-journalist model of advocacy journalism. Because such issues are usually underrepresented in the mainstream media and need either adequate news coverage or some special journalistic treatment to have a better influence on public policy debates (Kamboh and Yousaf 2020). In this regard, due to its distinctive format and being a prime genre of “advocate-journalist” model, newspaper editorials (Anderson, Downie, and Schudson 2016; Waisbord 2009) are aptly capable of constructing debate in the public sphere in four ways:

(1) as an influence on readers, and/or public opinion; (2) as an influence on the internal news agendas and coverage of newspapers; (3) as an influence on the agendas and coverage in other news media; and (4) as an influence on political or policy agendas. (Firmstone 2019, 2)

Marques, Mont’Alverne, and Mitozo (2021) state that “Editorials – defined as unsigned texts that display a media organization’s opinion (Firmstone 2008) – contribute to the principle of keeping opinion apart from reporting facts” (2817). While highlighting their scope, Firmstone (2019) reveals that:

Editorials are published in the name of the newspaper rather than attributed to individual journalists and are intended to represent the collective opinion or the public voice of a newspaper. Editorials allow newspapers to make allegiances known; support and oppose individuals; speak on behalf of their readers; speak to readers; and speak to politicians, parties, and other organizations. (3)

Editorial journalism has been known for having an uneasy relationship with governments. In a bid to cite different cases where newspaper editorials were subject to influence/interrupt political actors and their agendas, Pimentel and Marques (2021) reported that:

Regarding the importance of opinion texts, Firmstone (2008) sustains that media professionals are aware that political authorities monitor editorials. Some decades ago, Oakes (1964) mentioned different occasions when former US presidents said they were uncomfortable with editorials’ criticisms. In the Brazilian case, Mundim (2012) argues that the news and opinionated coverage influenced the presidential elections of 2002 and 2006. Miola (2012) and Mont’Alverne (2020), in turn, highlight the agenda power that *O Globo* has on the negotiations taking place in Congress. (285)

Universally and in Pakistan, the structure of an editorial is similar to the one as described by Pimentel, Marques, and Santos (2022):

In their first part, editorials briefly describe a particular event or issue so that it can be contextualized. In the second part, the newspaper develops its opinion on the subject to evaluate what is good or bad, wrong, or right, especially concerning the actions of the institutions or agents involved. In this same section, the principles, positions, and ideologies shaping the journalistic organization’s opinion are put into action. The third and last part brings the conclusions, embracing the explanations that form the basis of the editorial opinion and communicating a recommendation or a summon to act. (para. 27)

However, despite being a specific form of advocacy journalism, newspaper editorials are “rarely theorized or empirically researched as such” (Firmstone 2019, 8), and have barely been studied before for advocating environmental issues (Das 2019b, 65).

Recent research reveals that Global Southern “advocate-journalists” have been and are known for giving overwhelming coverage and support to political and authoritarian rulers, while giving insufficient and inadequate coverage to sustainable development and climate change issues (Kamboh and Yousaf 2020; Kamboh, Ittefaq, and Yousaf 2022; Waisbord 2009).

To consider the sufficient coverage of climate-related issues as a yardstick, let us review here the findings of two recently conducted worldwide studies that have aptly presented an international comparison of mainstream newspaper coverage (both advocacy and non-advocacy) of climate change issues. In their inquiry, Schmidt, Ivanova, and Schäfer (2013) found that the newspapers of selected Global Southern countries such as Algeria, Yemen, Jordan, Indonesia, Malaysia,

Brunei and Thailand, which are least responsible for climate change but are bearing its worst consequences, just gave a mere news coverage (non-advocacy content) of 0.36%, 0.07%, 0.07%, 1.64%, 1.15%, 0.39% and 1.85%, respectively. In contrast, the news dailies of those countries that are blamed for more GHG emissions including Australia, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States gave 15.40%, 5.66%, 8.39%, 14.74% and 11.02% similar coverage, respectively. In another attempt, Barkemeyer et al. (2017) reported that selected Chinese, Nepali, Filipino, Thai and Pakistani newspapers scarcely published an average number of 1.01, 0.31, 0.20, 0.54 and 0.16 articles (advocacy writeups) per newspaper issue on climate-related issues, respectively. Contrary to this coverage, selected Australian, Canadian, German, Spanish, and British newspapers accorded a healthy average of 3.90, 2.24, 1.58, 2.19 and 3.0 articles per newspaper issue respectively during the year 2008.

Press and journalists' role conception in Pakistan

Since the start of the twenty-first century, mass media have seen remarkable development in Pakistan. In a bid to review its structure, Ittefaq et al. (2021, 169) stated:

The media industry in Pakistan is diverse in nature. It provides information and entertainment and is a source of livelihood to more than 2.5 million people (Rehmat, 2019). Pakistan has more than 88 television channels, 209 radio stations, and around 1,800 newspapers in 8 different languages (Jamil, 2020a; Rehmat, 2019).

Urdu and English are the two official and most influential languages in Pakistan (Kamboh, Ittefaq, and Yousaf 2022). Owing to this language division, print media is also divided into two ideological domains. Rahman and Ejaz (2014), while highlighting this difference wrote that:

Urdu press is considered to be right of center or conservative (Ahmed, 2012; Shoeb, 2008; Syed, 2008). This could be because there has been a continuous policy of the government to use Urdu language as a tool for national identity to unify the country. However, English papers are considered to be left of center, and liberal in their opinions and are widely read by the policymakers and more educated in the society. (246–247)

Ejaz, Ittefaq, and Arif (2022, 7) have comprehensively underlined few other differences as:

Pakistan's print media can be characterized as competitive and reflects ethnic, linguistic, and class division (Jamil 2020). On the one hand, Urdu print media is popular and enjoys a wide range of readership, especially in the lower middle class of society that has only primary to secondary levels of education. On the other hand, the English press is more liberal and targets policymakers, politicians, the elite class, civil and military bureaucracy, industrialists, professionals, and the educated class. (Kamboh and Ittefaq 2019)

Print media ownership falls into two basic categories, including cross media and corporate ownership. The former is a type in which a single media mogul is owning multiple forms of mass media industry, including newspapers, TV channels and radio stations. Whereas corporate ownership is a type in which large enterprises with no journalism background are expanding their businesses into areas (e.g. mass media) that are different from their prime pursuits. Three of the selected newspapers for this study (namely, *Daily Jang*, *The News* and *Dawn*) are owned by cross media owners, while remaining three (i.e. *Daily Express*, *Daily Dunya* and *The Nation*) are run by corporate owners. As the state runs no newspaper, all mainstream dailies are privately owned.

This highly concentrated ownership in only a few hands has a fraught relationship with the government (Rasul and Proffitt 2013). On the one hand, if government controls the private news media through laws, regulations, licenses and taxes. On the other hand, competing news organisations give extensive positive coverage to every incumbent regime to get more and more advertisements (Akhtar and Pratt 2017). With a very few exceptions, most of media owners are nonpartisan, aiming at getting financial benefits from every ruling party in the country. The political parties are used to use print media as tools to mobilise the common people for pursuing their own political interests and to motivate their electorate during election times (Hussain, Sajid, and Jullandhry 2018).

According to Kamboh and Yousaf (2020, 656), most of print media revenues come from government and private-sector ads followed by minor earnings through readers' subscriptions in Pakistan. This study further reported that:

governments, real estate tycoons and industrialists, being as essential finance controllers, do possess a lot of potential to keep the non-development nature of mainstream media content. They do it by tacitly hindering such content on the need to control price hike in the housing sector, environmental challenges, rapid urbanization, declining food items standards, and expensive private education.

Local journalists' bodies have been drawing attention toward government ads as a tool to exercise control over editorial content and policies of the newspapers ("Media Bodies," 2021).

Contrary to popular belief about social and electronic media as dominant news and information sources, recent studies noted that print media is an equally important news provider in Pakistan (Chaudhary et al. 2021; Kamboh, Ittefaq, and Sahi 2022a). Because, in the face of misinformation on former forms of media, newspapers with their fact-based journalism are considered more relevant than ever today ("The Whole Truth," 2022). Moreover, apart from printed form, web editions of all mainstream newspapers are in an easy access of the readers of contemporary digital age ("Digital Newspapers" 2016). It is to be noted that *Dawn* newspaper has improved its ranking as 10th most accessed news website in Pakistan (Kemp 2022).

Unlike the global trends, new media growth and economic crisis have not led to shutting down any mainstream newspaper in Pakistan. Though TV has caused a big cut in print media earnings, there is little evidence of a fall in circulation ("Digital Newspapers" 2016).

Prior studies suggest that how journalists see themselves shapes how they perform their role in society and profession. According to the findings of Pintak and Nazir (2013), Pakistani journalists see their primary mission as to contributing into societal development. Their findings suggest that 90% journalists said that they "defend Pakistani interest" (648), particularly if it comes to covering some local development issue. Many Pakistani journalists are of the view that their mission is to "educate the public" and "serve as voice for the poor" (649). In addition, the study suggests that journalists in Pakistan want to use news for the social good and transform society to advocate issues related to national development. In the final analysis, Pintak and Nazir (2013) reported that journalists in Pakistan have mixed views of their role conception because sometimes they see themselves as advocate-journalists, i.e. as "an adversary to the government" (649) and sometimes as an obsequious-journalist by supporting an existing political regime in its efforts to bring about human development.

Media coverage of regional and local climate injustice issues

Owing to Pakistan's muddled energy and foreign policies, its citizens are facing a variety of climate injustice from various neighbouring countries in the region. For instance, by reasons of China's climate commitments at the Paris climate conference (COP21), it had subsequently started shutting down coal-based energy projects in the country. However, its companies have diverted to export the said locally abolished dirty energy plants abroad including Pakistan ("Belt and Road" 2019). Moreover, despite signing the Paris Accord to contribute to reducing their GHG emissions, both Qatar and Pakistan inked a multi-billion-dollar LNG deal that would help Pakistan to import natural gas for 16 years to fulfil its energy needs ("Qatar Emerges" 2019). Likewise, being the largest global importer of beef, China has heavily invested in many joint ventures (JVs) with Pakistan in Agri-livestock sector under the CPEC Program signed on 20 April 2015 ("Pakistan For" 2021). Critics have raised questions about these JVs as they "are industrial and export-oriented, despite the fact that industrial food systems are already responsible for over a third of global greenhouse gas emissions" (Grain 2021, para. 10). Similarly, due to burning of crop stubble by farmers, burning coal, petrol, diesel, gas, biomass in industries, and coal power plants and vehicular emissions (Basu 2021), India is reported to be responsible for spreading transboundary smog to the neighbourhood countries including Pakistan (Abas et al. 2019; David and Ravishankara 2019).

On the local front, the findings of many scientific studies inform that the increasing population and poverty rate have greatly contributed to environmental degradation and GHG emissions in Pakistan (Khan et al. 2019; Zaman et al. 2011). However, various Islamist militant groups and conservative religious leaders are one of the main hurdles in the way of population planning and control efforts in the country (“Pakistan Birth” 2017). Similarly, recent studies reveal that air pollution and climate change are closely related (UNECE, n.d., para. 1). It is important to note that air pollution caused the world’s highest number of deaths in Pakistan during the year 2015, while identifying malpractices in transport, industry and agriculture sectors that eventually made them the main contributors to the deteriorating air quality in the country (“FAO Report” 2019). Likewise, data reveal that contrary to India’s 23% forest cover, rapid deforestation in Pakistan has terrifyingly lowered that number to below 2%, fixing timber and land mafias as the main culprit (Faiza et al. 2017). Moreover, Pakistan – despite carrying the seventh largest mangrove forest systems in the world, (Amjad, Kasawani, and Kamaruzaman 2007) – is facing a continuous decline in Indus Delta Mangrove forests. Reasons include the increased marine water pollution from industries, deforestation of mangroves by the local people, sedimentation, population stress and coastal erosion (Mukhtar and Hannan 2012). Furthermore, despite having the second-highest share of agriculture and livestock sector (44.8%) in the national GHG emissions (Mir, Purohit, and Mehmood 2017), authorities are committed to give top priority to the dairy industry in the national development plan (“Government Committed” 2019). According to recent reports, the plastic industry has become the second-largest and fastest-growing source of industrial GHG emissions (Shield 2019). Owing to community malpractices and poor waste management, “Pakistan has the highest percentage of mismanaged plastic in South Asia” that breaks down in landfills and heavily releases methane and nitrous oxide gases (Mukheed and Alisha 2020, 252).

Amid this dismal state of climate injustice at the hands of regional and local actors, the role of media advocacy is well-established “to raise awareness, generate public debate, influence public opinion and key decisionmakers, and promote policy and programmatic changes around specific [climate change related] issues” (Waisbord 2009, 371). However, we could find only such studies in media and climate justice scholarship that highlight the global injustice aspect exclusively. For instance, Caney (2014) while analysing the coverage of COP21 found that majority of newspapers called for either harm avoidance justice or burden-sharing justice by Global Northern countries. Interestingly, no previous study aimed at exploring the editorial priorities of regional and local climate injustice issues of any of the Global Southern country. In fact, any such exploration would help to understand the mainstream newspapers’ climate issues-related advocacy priorities versus the actual contribution of such issues in the climate-change woes of Pakistan.

False energy solutions and climate change

Pakistan had been facing the worst-ever electricity supply shortfall in its history largely due to the poor generation capacity from the year 2007 to 2018 (Nawaz and Alvi 2018). To overcome this crisis, several solutions were worked out and few of them were later enacted by the then government. However, despite having a lot of potential to generate power from eco-friendly renewable sources, unfortunately, the decisionmakers went for investing mostly in oil, gas and coal-fired power plants (“A Bad Mix” 2016). For instance, as per the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) agreement, signed in 2015, a total of 8220 MW coal-fired electricity production projects are currently either operational or still in progress against a mere 1988 MW power generation through renewable sources including hydro, solar and wind energy plants (CPEC–Energy Priority Projects 2017). In another mega-deal worth \$15 billion, Pakistan has committed to buy LNG from Qatar for electricity generation and industrial use (“Pakistan, Qatar Ink” 2016). Moreover, in the light of the U.S. consent to lift sanctions imposed on Iran in 2015 and considering Qatar LNG an expensive option, policymakers seriously reviewed to restore the Pak-Iran gas pipeline project. Yet, due to the American withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal later, the government diverted to a \$10 billion solution, namely the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project to

import natural gas from the energy-rich Central Asian state (“TAPI Construction,” 2015). At that very time, the government also reached an agreement with Russia approving that the state-run Russian firm RT Global would lay a \$2.5 billion pipeline to transmit imported LNG from Karachi to Lahore (“Deal With” 2015).

Given the fact that all these energy solutions were being developed during the selected time-frame of this study; therefore, there must have been published a lot of editorials advocating the merits and demerits of the said projects. So, by reason of the strong influence of such advocacy write-ups on the public policymaking process, it would be interesting to examine the extent of advocacy journalism’s support to either dirty or clean energy solutions. Moreover, keeping in view the general perception that English-language newspapers tend to be more responsible and mature compared to their Urdu contenders (Kamboh and Ittefaq 2019), it further looks meaningful to explore which of the two behaved more responsibly while advocating new energy solutions to policymakers?

Theoretical framework

The theoretical underpinnings of the present study are provided by two popular models of advocacy journalism as explicated by Waisbord (2009). The classic one is the “advocate-journalist” model, which in Janowitz’s (1975) words is a form of advocacy journalism that “assigns journalists the role of active interpreters and participants who ‘speak on behalf’ of certain groups, typically those groups who are denied ‘powerful spokesmen’ (p. 619) in the media” (cited in Waisbord 2009, 371). From this perspective, professional journalists – being primarily the mouthpieces of certain economic and political interests – at times, are inclined to balance power inequalities in society. At this stage, “they are guided by a ‘reformist impulse’ to promote perspectives that are typically under or misrepresented in the media” (Waisbord 2009, 371). However, owing to the prevalence of the journalistic ideal of “objectivity” in the mainstream US press, this model has largely been restricted to the editorial and op-ed pages over there; whereas in Western European and Global Southern countries, it seems to safeguard the interests of official and political actors in connection with the political economy of the press, particularly in case of the latter countries. As a result – with a focus on serving partisan or official interests and following “sacred” professional ideals – global advocate-journalists find a very limited time and space in the mainstream media to work as social mobilisers to advocate social development issues and eventually become a voice for the voiceless factions of the society (Figure 1).

Waisbord (2009) while suggesting a way out to this journalistic lack draws attention to a new civic advocacy journalism model:

Unlike the “journalist” model which expresses the political interests of journalists, the “civic” model represents advocacy efforts by civic groups that promote social change. Because the press contributes to both raising awareness among the public and setting policy priorities, civic actors aim to shape news coverage. (375)

Amidst the litany of justifications for limited news space and resources and pressures not to antagonize governments and sponsors, practicing advocacy journalism is extremely difficult. Journalists’ advocacy networks aim to persuade editors to provide room for social issues, and present alternative news frames. (380)

While highlighting the significance of “civic advocacy” in environmental policymaking process, Safford and Brown (2019) suggest that “Non-profit organizations, industry groups, advocacy organizations and private-sector companies don’t implement public policy as such, but certainly shape the debate” (681). Contemporarily, this model has been proved quite effective to influence news coverage on health issues (Freudenberg, Picard Bradley, and Serrano 2009), tobacco control (Champagne, Sebr  , and Schoj 2010) and environmental policies (Zeng, Dai, and Javed 2019) across the globe.

Both journalist and civic advocacy journalism models are important for this study, particularly, it is imperative to test the advocate-journalist model’s assumption that it is more inclined to safeguard the political interests of power elites than to appropriately covering the issues of voiceless common people in the countries of the Global South (Waisbord 2009). For carrying it out, we decided to

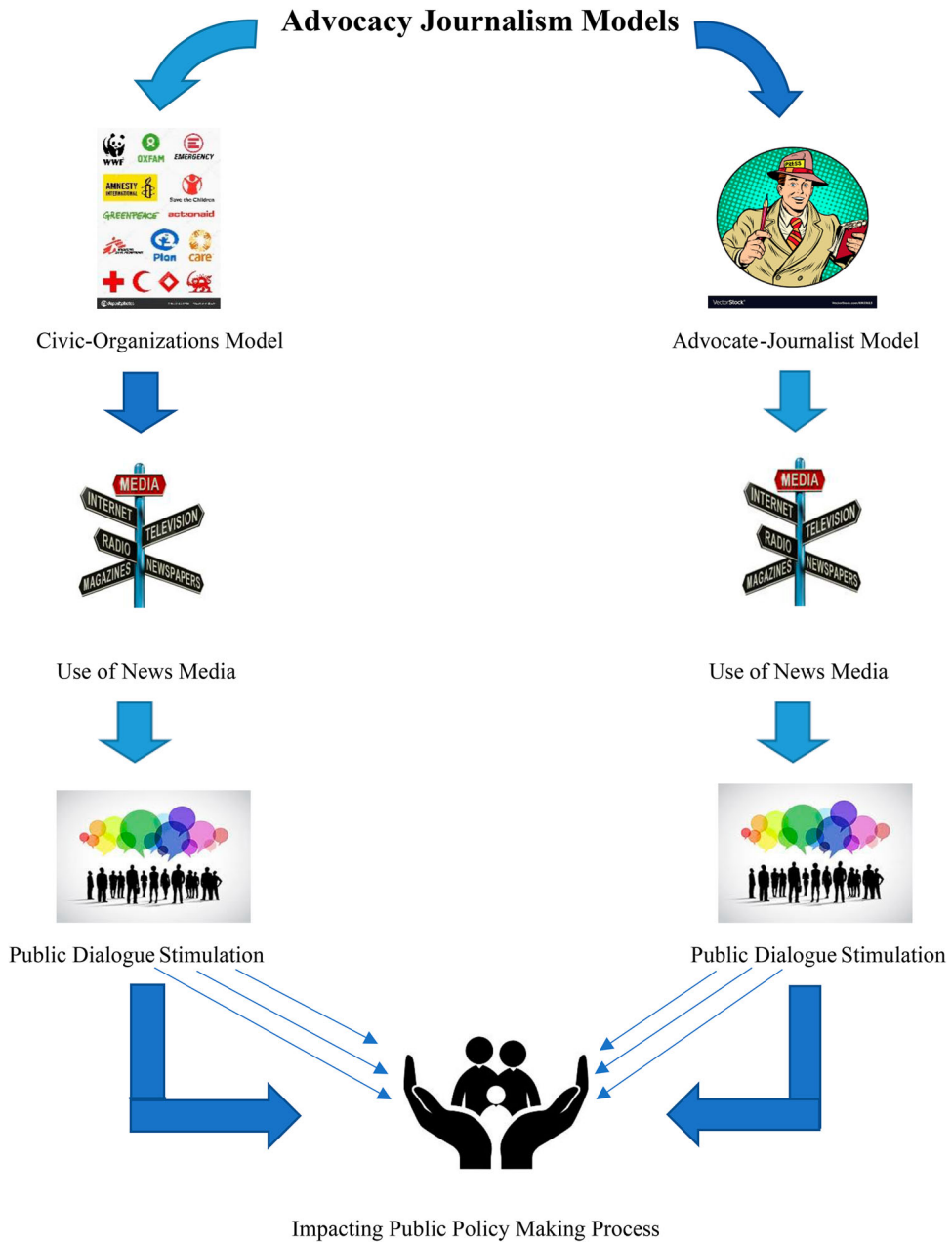


Figure 1. Models of advocacy journalism described by Waisbord (2009).

explore and compare the editorial coverage of regional and local climate justice issues with other issues. The resultant findings could determine the functioning or non-functioning of the “advocate-journalist” model for such issues, hence providing empirical support to the “civic-organizations” model to bridge the gap in the latter case. In the light of literature reviewed and theory related, following research questions are constructed.

1. Was there a difference between editorial coverage of climate justice issues and other issues among Pakistani newspapers?

2. What were the local and regional climate injustice issues' advocacy priorities of selected newspapers?
3. Was there a difference between editorial support for dirty energy versus clean energy solutions by selected newspapers?

Method

We used the quantitative content analysis method to answer all three research questions. In fact, content analysis has long been recommended as a useful approach to measure and compare the frequency of sample content (Neuman 2005). To carry out this method, we followed Wimmer and Dominick's (2014) defined procedures. In the first place, we selected editorial contents of three Urdu language dailies – *Jang*, *Dunya* and *Express* – and three English-language dailies – *Dawn*, *The News* and *The Nation* – as sample content. We chose these dailies because they represent the most influential mainstream Urdu and English newspapers of the country. Although, English dailies carry a much smaller readership than their Urdu counterparts, yet the former possess more influence over the policy agenda (Kamboh and Ittefaq 2019). We counted “one entire write-up” from the editorial page of the selected newspapers as a unit of analysis, published from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. Keeping in mind the importance of editorials as an advocacy platform to raise voice for the issues of voiceless factions of the society, their public opinion-making capability, and their significance to present the official policy of a newspaper, we made this selection. In Pakistan, editorials are published on a specifically devoted space on the editorial page; and are published without the name of the writer/s. While shedding light on the editorial writing practices and routines, S. Warraich¹ argued:

Editorials are usually written by the most experienced journalist/s of the newspaper and approved by the concerned editorial board before publication. Although the chief editors often don't write the editorial themselves, yet they own any oversight and retain responsibility. (Personal communication, 10 June 2021)

We purposively selected this time period for seven major reasons: (1) Pakistan faced the highest death toll in the world due to air pollution in 2015 (“FAO Report” 2019); (2) its largest city, Karachi was hit by the worst-ever heat wave killing around 1300 people (“Deadliest” 2015); (3) the country had suffered from a fifth consecutive year's disastrous flood since 2010; (4) a new climate-change phenomenon, i.e. transboundary winter smog across India and Pakistan had started making human living miserable on both sides; (5) Pakistan started installing dirty energy plants with Chinese and Qatari support; (6) In the name of infrastructural development, the big cities were started to be turned into concrete jungles by removing trees (“Lahore Without” 2016); and (7) UN Climate Change Conference (COP 21) was held in 2015. We then constructed and operationalised the following three major categories and three sub-categories to answer the already developed research questions.

Category A: climate justice issues

The present study is based on the core argument of climate justice, which envisions the greenhouse effect as a root cause to intensify injustice among humans, generations and regions (Jafry 2018). Therefore, any human activity that becomes a reason for emitting GHG and eventually contributing to climate change or global warming was considered as a climate justice issue by this study. To further operationalise the abstract and multidisciplinary concept of climate justice, we divided this category into three sub-categories A1, A2 and A3. Our aim was to place relevant types of issues on “local”, “regional” and “global” dimensions of climate justice, respectively, into each of them. We operationalised these sub-categories as:

A1: local climate injustice

Here all those editorials were placed that discussed the local human-induced threats to climate change, which eventually inflict climate injustice to all, in the country. For instance

1. An editorial reporting the contribution of fossil fuels in the national GHG emissions was tagged as a *fossil fuel consumption threat*.
2. All such editorials were identified as an *Agri-livestock threat*, which highlighted the role of the increased size of livestock or extravagant use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides in domestic GHG emissions and called for the relevant policy change.
3. All those editorials were marked as a *population-climate change threat* that highlighted the population-climate change nexus (Cohen 2010).
4. Such editorials were considered as *deforestation and land-use change and forestry (LUCF) threat* that emphasised on reforestation or afforestation in the country to absorb CO₂ and other gasses from the atmosphere.
5. An editorial advocating to mitigate solid waste and crops residue burning emissions by local communities, ill-maintained public/private transport emissions and industrial emissions, e.g. brick kilns without zigzag technology (Abubakar 2020) – which hinder the availability of fresh air to all and contribute to local GHG emissions as well – was tagged as an *air pollution threat*.
6. Editorials advocating human-triggered abuses to mangrove ecosystem were labelled as *mangrove forests threat*.
7. An editorial highlighting the menace of plastic shopping bags and plastic waste was tagged as *plastic pollution threat*.
8. Any editorial was tagged as an *official inability threat* that had reported the failure of government authorities to implement eco-friendly policies (regarding ban on plastic bags, sustainable transportation, clean energy sources) to ensure climate justice for all.

A2: regional climate injustice

Includes editorials having supportive mentions to advocate various environmental threats to Pakistan from neighbouring or other nearby countries in the region. This sub-category was further expanded to include:

1. Editorials suggesting minimising winter smog between India and Pakistan by establishing regional cooperation were tagged as *transboundary smog threat*.
2. Any editorial that criticised the installation of coal and nuclear power plants under the CPEC agreement was labelled as *CPEC dirty energy plants threat*.
3. Editorials forewarning about the environmental risks of LNG-based power production were marked as *Pak-Qatar LNG deal threat*.
4. An editorial highlighting the associated GHG emissions risks with livestock-related joint ventures between Pakistan and China was labelled as a *Pak-China livestock JVs threat*.

A3: global climate injustice

Includes editorials calling for either harm avoidance justice or burden-sharing justice (Caney 2014) in the shadow of COP21 being held in Paris.

Category B: energy solutions

Contains editorials supporting or suggesting both dirty and clean energy solutions to the policy-makers considering the prevailing power shortage in the country. While acting as mouthpiece of

voiceless people, an editorial writer can support dirty energy solution because many people are suffering from energy shortages, whereas the other one is critical of dirty energy solutions finding it hazardous of public health and well-being.

Category C: others

Includes editorials, which could not fit into any of category A and B.

This operationalisation also helped us to create a comprehensive instrument with three sub-categories, i.e. local, regional and global climate injustice – having within them 12 relevant priority areas (issues) – needed to be voiced up by newspapers to instantly reach climate justice in the country. This purposeful instrument then eventually operated as a coding sheet for the use of two trained coders, who later undertook manifest coding. According to Neuman (2005), putting the observable and countable surface data of the sample content into a relevant category is called manifest coding. In the light of this guideline, each unit of analysis was placed into a relevant category/sub-category by both of the coders. We trained them to place such a unit of analysis that had at least one relevant “sentence” conforming to the operationalised definition of that category/sub-category. For example, an editorial having at least one written line on criticising dirty energy solutions of the government were placed in the category A and sub-category A1. In this connection, we have followed the criteria laid down by previous studies (i.e. Kamboh and Yousaf 2020; Kamboh, Ittefaq, and Yousaf 2022).

In the end, we counted the coded content from all categories/sub-categories and resultant numerical value, by applying descriptive statistics, helped us to answer research questions. To calculate inter-coder reliability, 10% of the sample editorials ($n = 571$) were randomly selected and coded independently by each coder (Riffe et al. 2019). Krippendorff's alpha coefficient was used to calculate an inter-coder reliability score (Hayes and Krippendorff 2007). The inter-coder reliability scores were between .78 and .92, with the following ranges: local climate justice (between .80 and .90); regional climate justice (between .84 and .88), global climate justice (between .81 and .92), and energy solution (between .78 and .88). We used SPSS software (i.e. version 27) to calculate inter-coder reliability as well as to perform the analysis.

Results

To answer RQ1, this study analysed 5712 editorials in the first place. The data in Table 1 indicate that only 101 (1.8%) editorials were published to advocate cases of climate injustice, while 5611 (98.2%) were written on all other types of issues. Both English and Urdu language newspapers gave nearly equal coverage to advocate category A issues by publishing 49 and 52 editorials, respectively.

While answering the first part of RQ2 (local climate injustice issues), the data in Table 2 reveal that of the total 70 editorials published to advocate local threats to climate change; *deforestation*, *official inability*, *mangrove forests* and *air pollution* were the top four most favourite issues among the editorialists, which received 64.3%, 35.7%, 27.1% and 14.3% supportive mentions, respectively. In

Table 1. Comparison between climate justice issues and other issues. (Percentage coverage of all types of issues and the average number of editorials per newspaper issue).

Dailies (Issues) (2015–2016)	A: Climate Justice Issues					Other Issues (B, C)	Total
	Local	Regional	Global	Total	A ed./Is*		
<i>Jang</i>	08	00	03	11(0.19)	0.03	1019(17.8)	1030(18.0)
<i>Express</i>	23	00	09	32(0.56)	0.08	1004(17.6)	1036(18.1)
<i>Dunya</i>	07	00	02	09(0.16)	0.02	710(12.4)	719(12.6)
<i>Nation</i>	10	04	03	17(0.30)	0.05	1060(18.6)	1077(18.9)
<i>News</i>	06	03	05	14(0.25)	0.04	759(13.3)	773(13.5)
<i>Dawn</i>	16	01	01	18(0.32)	0.05	1059(18.5)	1077(18.9)
Total	70	08	23	101(1.8)	0.04	5611(98.2)	5712(100)

*Average No. of editorials per newspaper issue.

Table 2. Frequency of supportive mentions to local injustice issues by selected dailies.

Newspaper	Editorials	Fossil Fuel	Agri-livestock	Population	Deforestation	Air Poll*	Mangrove	Plastic Poll*	Official	Total SM**
<i>Jang</i>	08	01(12.5)***	02(25.0)	03(37.5)	08(100)	02 (25.0)	03(37.5)	01(12.5)	00(00)	20(16.9)
<i>Express</i>	23	02(08.7)	00(00)	01(04.3)	14(60.9)	02(12.5)	04(17.4)	01(04.3)	15(65.2)	39(33.0)
<i>Dunya</i>	07	02(28.6)	01(14.3)	00(00)	06(85.7)	02(28.6)	02(28.6)	00(00)	02(28.6)	15(12.7)
<i>Nation</i>	10	01(10.0)	00(00)	00(00)	04(40.0)	01(10.0)	01(10.0)	02(20.0)	03(30.0)	12(10.2)
<i>News</i>	06	01(16.7)	00(00)	00(00)	06(100)	01(16.7)	04(66.7)	00(00)	01(16.7)	13(11.1)
<i>Dawn</i>	16	01(06.2)	00(00)	00(00)	07(43.7)	02(12.5)	05(31.2)	00(00)	04(25.0)	19(16.1)
Total	70	08(11.4)	03(4.3)	04(5.7)	45(64.3)	10(14.3)	19(27.1)	04(5.7)	25(35.7)	118(100)

*Pollution, **Supportive mentions, ***No. of supportive mentions (percentage).

contrast, the other four types of issues, i.e. *fossil fuel consumption, population-climate change nexus, plastic pollution* and *agri-livestock* threats received the least editorial attention by earning a mere 11.4%, 5.7%, 5.7% and 4.3% supportive mentions, respectively.

To answer the second part of RQ2 (regional climate injustice issues), the data in [Table 3](#) show that the *CPEC dirty energy plants threat* received the highest editorial criticism, i.e. 75%. Astonishingly, editorialists had shown more concern over the installation of nuclear power plants (50%) as compared to coal-based projects (25%) in this sub-category. Moreover, both the *Qatar LNG deal* and *trans-boundary smog threats* were equally ignored by the editorialists that received just 12.5% mentions each, while *Pak-China livestock JVs threat* didn't receive any mention at all.

To answer RQ3, the data in [Table 4](#) illustrate that of the total 120 editorials of major category B issues, 65 were published by Urdu, while 55 were appeared in English newspapers.

In general, the dirty energy solutions were highly endorsed by editorialists that received an average number of 2.00 supportive mentions per editorial compared to the clean energy solutions that received a mere 0.53 similar mentions. Among dirty energy solutions, Pak-Iran gas pipeline, Qatar LNG deal, CPEC coal power plants and TAPI gas pipeline projects had remained as the top four most advocated solutions with 25%, 21.8%, 15.5%, 13.7% supportive mentions, respectively. Contrary to the expectations, of the total 64 supportive mentions for clean energy solutions, Urdu editorialists strongly endorsed the said solutions by giving 84.4% supportive mentions in contrast to 15.6% similar mentions by their English counterparts.

Conclusion, discussion and implications

This study was primarily aimed at measuring the extent of editorial coverage given to advocate climate injustice issues vis-a-vis other issues. The results reveal that the selected newspapers gave insufficient editorial coverage to climate change issues. Additionally, the editorialists had picked out misleading advocacy priorities of local and regional climate injustice issues as well as advocated false energy solutions to climate change. Let us explicate all this evidence by considering the other empirical data to critically analyse the contemporary advocacy journalism practices for their non-compliance to the much-needed eco-friendly normative role.

First evidence: insufficient and inadequate editorial coverage

In the first place, the results of the present study reveal that the Pakistani editorialists inappropriately advocated the climate justice issues. Our findings are in line with the findings of previous studies conducted by Schmidt, Ivanova, and Schäfer (2013) and Barkemeyer et al. (2017). Particularly, these findings make more sense when placed with the findings of the Barkemeyer et al. (2017) who also studied the role of advocacy content (i.e. newspapers articles) in highlighting climate change issues. It is interesting to note that the findings of the present study – with a meagre 1.8% editorial coverage and an average number of 0.04 editorials per newspaper issue on climate

Table 3. Frequency of supportive mentions to regional injustice issues by selected dailies.

Newspaper	Editorials	Transboundary winter smog	CPEC dirty energy			Pak-China livestock JVs	Total
			Nuclear	Coal	Qatar LNG		
<i>Jang</i>	00	00(00)*	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)
<i>Express</i>	00	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)
<i>Dunya</i>	00	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)
<i>Nation</i>	04	00(00)	01(25)	02(50)	01(25)	00(00)	04(50)
<i>News</i>	03	01(33.3)	02(66.6)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	03(37.5)
<i>Dawn</i>	01	00(00)	01(100)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	01(12.5)
Total	08	01(12.5)	04(50)	02(25)	01(12.5)	00(00)	08(100)

*No. of supportive mentions (percentage).

Table 4. Comparison of frequency and average number of supportive mentions to energy solutions by Urdu and English newspapers ($n = 120$).

Solutions		Urdu dailies (N1 = 65)				English dailies (N2 = 55)			Total SM* (Eng.)	Grand total
		Jang	Express	Dunya	Total SM* (Urdu)	Nation	News	Dawn		
Dirty Energy	CPEC Coal	13(5.4)**	11(4.6)	02(0.8)	26(10.9)	03(1.2)	04(1.7)	04(1.7)	11(04.6)	37(15.5)
	Furnace Oil	05(2.1)	03(1.3)	02(0.8)	10(04.2)	01(0.4)	02(0.8)	00(0.0)	03(01.2)	13(05.4)
	Qatar LNG	12(5.0)	04(1.7)	17(7.1)	33(13.8)	05(2.1)	04(1.7)	10(4.2)	19(08.0)	52(21.8)
	Iran Gas	11(4.6)	08(3.3)	12(5.0)	31(12.9)	12(5.0)	09(3.8)	08(3.3)	29(12.1)	60(25.0)
	TAPI Gas	07(2.9)	08(3.3)	08(3.3)	23(09.5)	03(1.3)	05(2.1)	02(0.8)	10(04.2)	33(13.7)
	Russia Gas	07(2.9)	05(2.1)	03(1.2)	15(06.2)	01(0.4)	02(0.8)	02(0.8)	05(02.1)	20(08.4)
	Nuclear	02(0.8)	02(0.8)	04(1.7)	08(03.3)	01(0.4)	01(0.4)	00(0.0)	02(0.8)	10(04.2)
	Local O&G	04(1.7)	05(2.1)	05(2.1)	14(05.9)	00(0.0)	00(0.0)	00(0.0)	00(0.0)	14(05.9)
	Total	61(25.5)	46(19.2)	53(22.2)	160(67)	26(10.9)	27(11.2)	26(10.9)	79(33)	239(100)
	Av.SM/Ed.***	0.51	0.38	0.44	1.33	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.67	2.00
Clean Energy	Wind	11(17.2)	03(4.6)	01(1.6)	15(23.4)	01(1.6)	01(1.6)	01(1.6)	03(04.6)	18(28.0)
	Solar	10(15.6)	04(6.2)	01(1.6)	15(23.4)	01(1.6)	03(4.7)	01(1.6)	05(07.9)	20(31.3)
	Hydro	11(17.2)	07(11)	06(9.4)	24(37.6)	01(1.6)	01(1.6)	00(0.0)	02(03.1)	26(40.7)
	Total	32(50)	14(21.8)	08(12.6)	54(84.4)	03(4.6)	05(7.9)	02(3.1)	10(15.6)	64(100)
	Av.SM/Ed.***	0.27	0.12	0.07	0.46	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.07	0.53

*Supportive mentions, **No. of supportive mentions (percentage), ***Average supportive mentions per editorial.

justice issues (Table 1) – reveal that the situation has not changed too much on the part of a typical Global Southern country's media response despite the global concern on climate-related issues has grown a lot from the year 2008 to 2016.

During the coding process, we noted that the local advocacy journalism practices are not only lacking sufficient (quantity) but also adequate (quality) content to achieve climate justice for the country. In this regard, it seems as if mainstream Pakistani newspaper editorialists are working in complete isolation by not taking any notice of the global perspectives on local issues. For instance, international news media is continuously alarming that the chronic Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan has been turned into a climate change-induced conflict and that needs to be resolved sooner lest the water-stressed nuclear-armed neighbours should fight over Himalayan water share and eventually become a threat to the global security (Lone 2015; Mian 2016). Although, during the coding process for this study, we found many editorials advocating many sides of the Kashmir issue, yet none of them had covered it as a climate-water conflict as being highlighted by the international news media. Similarly, contrary to the contemporary popular global journalism trend that views poverty, food security, urbanisation, overpopulation and public health issues within the framework of rapid climate change, very few editorials were found following this practice while advocating any of the said issues.

Second evidence: misleading advocacy priorities

The results of this study reveal that the editorial priorities of both language newspapers to advocate local threats to climate change are predominantly disordered and are, therefore, giving a misleading impression to the readers. To support this claim, let us compare the sectoral contribution of national GHG emissions with editorial priorities of local climate injustice issues (Table 2). For instance, according to the latest national GHG inventory of Pakistan (Mir, Purohit, and Mehmood 2017), the highest national GHG contributor is the fossil fuel-based energy sector with 45.9% share that conversely received the third least editorial attention; followed by agriculture and livestock sector that accounted for 44.8% GHG share, which astonishingly received the least editorial priority. Contrastingly, deforestation and LUCF issues that have just a 2.6% share, had received the highest number of supportive mentions by the editorialists. Moreover, the dismal state of air pollution that had locally caused the highest death toll in the world in 2015 ("FAO report" 2019) and that kills around 135,000 people annually in Pakistan (Jalil 2019) received almost half of the attention than mangrove forests threat. Likewise, despite having strong scientific evidence regarding the role of rapid population growth in environmental degradation and GHG emissions in the country (Zaman et al. 2011), the population-climate change threat had received almost negligible editorialists' support.

The results further reveal that the advocacy priorities of regional climate injustice issues are also jumbled and flawed. For instance, the cleanest of the dirty energy, i.e. nuclear power projects (Comby 2006) were more criticised than the dirtiest of the dirty coal and LNG-based power projects. Moreover, despite having Agri-livestock sector as the second-highest contributor in national GHG emissions, climate-change risks associated with Pak-China livestock JVs were entirely ignored by the editorialists.

Third evidence: false energy solutions to climate change

The results further certify the editorial inability of mainstream Pakistani newspapers in terms of extravagantly supporting the dirty energy projects contrary to scantily advocating the clean energy solutions. This professional inaptitude can be sensed from the fact that the most suggested and editorially advocated energy solutions were natural gas-based projects, despite the experts' cautions that they are as harmful to the environment as coal (Morton 2019). Additionally, both language newspapers equally went for advocating the dirtiest of the dirty energy solutions (i.e. gas and

coal-based projects), possibly owing to the fact that the then government had given the highest-ever advertisements to the print media during the years 2015–2016 (“PML-N” 2018); and in the light of prevailing energy crisis, most of such advertisements were containing content to highlight the governmental efforts to address the said crisis. The focus of such advertisements was to assure the much-agitated public that their government is making serious efforts to avail all best-suited options (to the government), particularly the CPEC coal energy projects, gas ventures with Iran, Qatar and Turkmenistan. However, this government-media symbiotic relationship had badly exposed the long-run perception that English-language newspapers are more responsible. In fact, by giving comparatively less editorial support to clean energy solutions and by advocating similar dirty energy solutions like Urdu dailies, the English press had proved that it is equally responsible for the contemporary climate change woes of the country.

It is particular to mention here that Pakistan is among the richest countries in the world in terms of having enough solar energy opportunities (Asif 2009). Similarly, Farooq and Kumar (2013) computed the potential for renewable energies in Pakistan and reported an estimated power potential of 169, 15, 13 and 3 Gigawatts (GW) from solar, biomass, wind and small hydro sources, respectively (240). International news media has also been raising questions such as why Pakistan doesn’t avail its renewable energy potential (Ebrahim 2021; Khan 2021).

To sum up this debate, the aforementioned evidence from contemporary print media practices proves a sheer violation of the normative spirit of advocacy journalism, which prescribes that the editorialists – while working as advocate-journalists to represent the voiceless ordinary people – should safeguard the public interest in the first place, instead of giving any preference to the stakes of social, economic and political forces. The findings are further in line with Waisbord’s assumption about “advocate-journalist” model that “As long as [Global Southern] governments and politicians continue to wield substantial power on press economies, news organizations are likely to act as vehicles for promoting their political interests” instead of following the notion of “journalists as social mobilizers” (374). Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest a contrary role conception to Pintak and Nazir (2013), who found that Pakistani journalists see their primary mission as to contributing to the societal development by educating the public and serving as the voice for the poor.

However, it is equally important to mention here that unlike other selected dailies, daily *The Nation* published two critical editorials while raising questions on the installation of dirty energy power plants in the country. In first editorial published on 10 January 2016, it wrote:

This naturally begs the question as to why Pakistan does not realize the extent of the harmful effects on the environment and its people if it commits to such [coal] projects? Is it not ethically questionable that the country [China] that aims to become coal free itself, wants others to utilize the very same fossil fuel? ... It should hold others to the same standards as it holds itself to ensure a more holistic and global impact to address climate change.

In another editorial published on 01 February 2016, *The Nation* again criticised the policymakers for preferring dirty energy (Pak-Qatar LNG deal) over clean energy solutions.

To expedite the deployment of green energy projects in Pakistan, NEPRA started issuing “Upfront Tariffs” in 2015 for solar, wind, and hydro power projects- standardised tariff for every classification and size bracket of renewable energy project. The document that publishes a specific upfront tariff is only deemed legal once the Ministry of Water and Power notifies it in the official gazette. However, they have refused to notify, on the grounds that they are too expensive. In the meantime, the government is shamelessly investing in oil and gas projects- ones that are crippling our economy and destroying the environment.

Both admonishing excerpts from daily *The Nation* indicate that had the other newspapers’ editorialists not put any criticism on the impact of CPEC or Qatar LNG deals on climate change, it would have been due to their own very reasons (e.g. political economy issues).

Besides being a matter of political economy, it equally looks like a case of editorial inattention and incapability. As has been mentioned in the previous text, there exists a bulk of research suggesting

either different eco-friendly energy solutions, or various existing and approaching threats to the local environment of Pakistan (Abas et al. 2019; Ali, Riaz, and Iqbal 2014; Faiza et al. 2017; Khan et al. 2019; Mir, Purohit, and Mehmood 2017; Mukheed and Alisha 2020; Mukhtar and Hannan 2012; Nawaz and Alvi 2018; Zaman et al. 2011). However, the findings of such scientific studies are missing in the contemporary editorial contents of mainstream Pakistani newspapers. In Shanahan's (2006) conception:

Journalists in the developing world face challenges that would keep many of their counterparts in the West from even trying. They are often untrained in both science and journalism, lack support and resources, and have an uneasy relationship with the scientists and officials on whom they rely for news and comment. (392)

Civic advocacy model: a helping hand to empower “advocate journalists”

For strengthening the capacities of “advocate-journalists”, Waisbord (2009) further draws attention to civic advocacy journalism model:

Across the South, a myriad of journalists’ organizations actively try to increase the volume of reporting and widening news perspectives on social issues. These organizations feed information to newsrooms, provide logistical support to facilitate coverage, bring journalists together through virtual networks, form alliances with news organizations, organize training workshops, produce articles and series for publication, and so on. (380)

In Pakistan, many civic advocacy groups are active to undertake training campaigns for journalists including Media Training and Research Center (MTRC), Indus Broadcasting Communication (IBC), Freedom Network, Internews and Group Development Pakistan. Such “civic advocacy” groups can play a vital role in helping to plug policy gaps by (1) perusing scientific studies on environmental issues from the academic community; (2) communicating their findings to the media outlets particularly to the advocate-journalists; (3) organising reporting and editorial staff training workshops on how to use such findings to effectively influence environmental policymaking process; (4) sharing with journalism academic community to ensure necessary amendments in relevant journalism course contents for future journalists (Kamboh 2019), and, above all, (5) persuading editors to provide enough room for climate change issues.

Finally, in the case of Pakistan, our findings suggest that journalists’ role conception is different than media’s role when it comes to covering issues related to climate justice and other development issues. For instance, prior studies note that journalists are eager to play their role as an advocate (Pintak and Nazir 2013), however, by looking at the relationship between media, political parties and influences from other businesses (i.e. Kamboh and Yousaf 2020), they are unable to perform their normative role due to lack of independence. Theoretically speaking, Pakistani journalists’ role performance is different than their role conception. Therefore, we suggest that when applying theoretical concepts such as advocacy model or role conception of journalists, it is important for Global Southern scholars to bring local, cultural, social, political and economic contexts into consideration especially when using Western theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

This study has few limitations. First, it was limited to explore the local and regional climate injustice issues only, future studies should therefore need to consider its global aspect as well (sub-category A3 issues), which may find some interesting facts, e.g. did Pakistani journalists call for using the most of remaining global carbon budget, as it has been demanded by the Indian journalists (Billett 2010)?; or advocated for harm avoidance justice and burden-sharing justice (Caney 2014)? Second, being focused on just a single Global Southern country, the findings of this study are needed to be replicated in other developing countries as well to gain more insight into the effectivity of Waisbord’s suggested advocacy journalism models. Finally, we only examined editorial coverage of newspapers, future studies could use mixed-method approach (e.g. quantitative content analysis and in-depth interviews) with advocate-journalists to make a stronger connection between journalist’s role conception and advocacy journalism in a non-Western perspective to extend this theoretical debate.

Note

1. Mr Suhail Warraich is the senior editor of *The Daily Jang*.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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