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Using Frame Analysis to Operationalize Discourse Theory for Critical News Media Research

Abstract

A main tenet of discourse theory, as derived from the original scholarship of Laclau and Mouffe, is that any social order is the contingent outcome of a political project. Such project is itself a consequence of material discursive practice, the pervasiveness of which is measurable in part by the extent to which its verbal articulations get disseminated with the help of news media. Thus, investigating news media agents which initiate, further, counter and discontinue the discursive process can be effective in mapping the political constitution of the social. But the question is: how to operationalize discourse theory for in-depth analysis of news media artifacts? Glynos and Howarth's (2007) logics approach is a major step forward, but their account is too generalized to pass as an instructive account of their method. Others who have attempted to operationalize this approach have also left data analysis underspecified, particularly regarding the method of identifying the self-interpretations of social actors, on which the uncovering of logics initially depends. This article offers a more comprehensive methodological account. Through a sample analysis of one news report, we demonstrate that discourse theory's analytical resources can be bolstered by subjecting the textual data to an approach derived from the literature on frame analysis. In the course of this illustration, we additionally hope to contribute to framing theory's analytical repertoire.

Keywords: discourse theory, framing, journalism, media studies, media theory

1. Introduction

Researchers operating from a post-foundationalist position – i.e. from recognition that any given social order lacks ultimate grounding in some extra-discursive reality – agree that a discourse theoretical inquiry targets practices of articulation as the starting point for ontic or empirical analysis. 'Articulation' refers to 'the political construction of meaning' (Marchart, 2011, p. 72). It encompasses the view that all actions, including verbal ones, are, through

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their combination, reproduction and repetition, routinized or ‘sedimented’ into a commonsense part of everyday life, into a social practice or discourse. Since it is a set or regime of reproducible articulations which undergird that politically constructed meaning or discourse, we can call them practices of articulation. Some examples of practices of articulation could be each iteration of commuting to work, dining in a restaurant, attending a concert, sitting an exam, writing an essay, ‘in which each repetition of a practice discloses (however marginally) the possibility of its alteration, and in which each practice involves the linking together of heterogeneous elements’ (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 165).

In the logics approach of Glynos and Howarth (2007), this initial, empirical, analysis of data is geared towards identifying invested actors’ self-interpretations, or own understandings, of their actions and purposes that researchers can subject to a process of cross-referencing and broader social and political contextualization, thus equipping them with the insights necessary to be able to dig out a more objectivized understanding of the socialized patterns of conduct, or logics, implicated in their discourses understood broadly as social practices or forms of life. This entire process presents a difficult challenge for new and emerging researchers who are faced with the challenge of operationalizing discourse theory in line with their research objectives. The problem gets complicated when we find that existing research offers very little in the way of methodological explication for such an analysis which, in our view, should broadly be sequenced within a research design as follows:

Data → empirical analysis → contextualized self-interpretations → identification of logics

Our primary objective in this article is to provide a solution to this problem by making the case for adopting frame analysis as a useful analytical tool for comprehensively operationalizing discourse theory (i.e. conducting analysis of practices of articulation in a way which will help evidentially develop contextualized self-interpretations and subsequently logics). In doing so, we also seek to augment the analytical resources of frame analysis theory, both at the textual-linguistic level and at the level of potential for socio-political explanation. Before laying out our case, in the next section, we briefly introduce discourse theory and then provide an overview of the attempts which have been made thus far to operationalize the theory.

2. Theoretical overview

Discourse theory ‘offers a theoretical account of how social practices are constituted through political practices’ (Phelan & Dahlberg, 2011, p. 3). In other words, the theory helps provide an explanation of how social subjects engage in (de)rationalizing the meaningfulness of sedimented (routinized) social objects, norms, practices, subject positions and roles, institutions and the currently hegemonic social order through their practices of articulation. Since, according to the theory, the foundations of the social world as discursive are ‘contingent, contested and temporary’ (p. 15), i.e. never completely closed to the (re)surfacing of conflicting ontological commitments or antagonisms, they keep on being modified/redefined through changes in practice or counter-hegemonic action, which is reflected in the continuous modification of the limits of their supporting discourses (realized through changes in the practices of articulation constitutive of those discourses) over a period of time (Marttila, 2016, p. 45). Thus, even the most sedimented or hegemonic discourses remain open to reactivation of their underlying antagonisms, modification and/or replacement (Marttila, 2016).

It is important to clarify that the understanding of ‘discourse’ in discourse theory is distinctly different from superficially similar definitions commonly used in approaches to critical discourse analysis and other interpretive traditions, which typically use a formula in which discourse constitutes, and is in turn constituted by, social reality; a dialectical notion which in the last analysis upholds an ontological separation between discourse and reality, thereby preserving rather than problematizing subject–object distinctions, among other questionable consequences. Discourse theory takes ‘reality’ to be encountered *only as it has been arranged* within practices of meaning production, i.e. when ‘practices of articulation . . . are constrained by discourses that have been sedimented in the form of objectivated sets of meaning, subject roles and associated identities, as well as in the institutions and social authorities supporting these’ (Marttila, 2016, p. 61). The assumption in some other traditions as well as commonly held in society at large of a non-discursive reality arises from prolonged sedimentation bringing about the ‘forgetting of socially meaningful objects’ discursive origins’ (ibid., p. 63), which, as contingent, are necessarily shaped by contestation and therefore an underlying antagonism at the core of society.

Practitioners of discourse theory agree that discourse theory, notwithstanding its comprehensively theorized ontological basis, is still underdeveloped in terms of the method of its operationalization (see, for example, Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Phelan & Dahlberg, 2011; Griggs & Howarth, 2013; Remling, 2018). Recognizing this challenge early on, the main pioneer of the theory, Ernesto Laclau, argues that discourse theory ‘is not a closed system which has already defined all its rules and categories, but an open-ended programme of research whose contours and aims are still very much in the making’ (Laclau, 2000, p. xi). Given this, some researchers have attempted to come up with different solutions (analytical strategies/models) in accordance with their stated aim of operationalizing discourse theory. The most notable of those attempts, to date, has been made by Glynos and Howarth (2007) in the form of their logics approach (hereafter LA) which uses contextualized self-interpretations in order to dig out the underlying social, political, and fantasmatic logics underpinning a discourse.

According to Glynos and Howarth (2007), *Social logics* ‘comprise the substantive grammar or rules of a practice or regime, which enable us to distil their purpose, form and content’ (p. 106). In simple words, social logics help us to characterize a practice, i.e., what could be the idea(s) (assumptions, rationales, norms) forming, and implicitly justifying, it. Take the example of washing oneself. A regime of practices in which washing is included could be characterized in terms of a logic of ‘hygiene’, which would also apply to related practices such as food storage and preparation.

Political logics, on the other hand, are conceived as helping us to understand how a particular social practice or regime, whether hegemonic or counter hegemonic, was instituted or contested. In other words, political logics offer an approach to identifying the ways in which social practices and their ordering regimes are introduced and sought to be normalized in the social arena.

In more detail, if the aim of a political project is to disrupt the hegemonized social by awakening its suppressed antagonisms through a moment of dislocation, then its ensuing political logic will likely be to seek to unite disparate group identities by positing a common negative outside, a radically different grouping perceived as an enemy (*logic of equivalence*). The aligning groups, although distinctly different from each other, thus form a chain of equivalence through their common opposition, often supplemented by incorporating into their prac-

tices of articulation a signification broad enough to represent a collectively agreed position or demand (referred to in discourse theory as ‘an empty signifier’).

On the other hand, if any existing social order anticipates or experiences the formation of an alliance which challenges its hegemony (and the existing social structure of power), it may attempt to divide or nullify the challenge by appealing to individual differences of identity within the emerging alliance (*a logic of difference*), for example through remedial measures that address the grievances of some of them.

For any discursive practice or regime to be able to gain traction (i.e. to appear as solid reality), it needs to incorporate an element which appeals to the affective investments of its targeted audience. This appealing element reveals itself in the form of a myth (Marttila, 2016) or as Glynos and Howarth (2007) call it, a fantasy. Fantasy according to Glynos and Howarth does not just refer to pleasure but also its opposite, fear of losing that pleasure, or sometimes even the loss of pleasure itself if an object responsible for that loss can be identified and vilified so as to provide a substitute enjoyment associated with directing hatred or resentment towards the presumed thief of the initial enjoyment. It also includes guilt ‘which may accompany the transgression of an officially affirmed ideal’ (p. 107).

This aspect of discourse is referred to in the LA with the term *fantasmatic logics*, which can take the form of either envisioning something beatific (e.g. appealing to utopian desires) or alternatively horrific (e.g. invoking fears of catastrophe). Fantasmatic logics point to the resources employed by a discourse enabling it to capture social subjects’ attention to such an extent that they resultantly start identifying themselves with it. Derived from Lacanian ontology of *enjoyment*, fantasmatic logics help ‘account for the *grip* of an existing or anticipated social practice or regime’ (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 107, italics in the original).

At the analytical level, identification of contextualized self-interpretations – which, as pointed out by Glynos and Howarth, is held sufficient in some scholarly traditions to provide an explanatory account of a practice – serves in Glynos and Howarth’s framework as a means to enable and substantiate more deep-cutting claims about the characteristics of the logics underpinning the practices of articulation informing a social practice or discourse. Self-interpretations are those elements of a social actor’s articulatory practice, including what might be discerned as missing from their explicit articulations, which reveal how the actor makes sense of what they are doing in a particular social practice or domain, including their ideological commitments, and which once identified by some method of analysis, can be contextualized by the analyst – i.e. brought into relation with the analyst/researcher’s growing understanding of their research object as a whole – in order to provide some broader and more comprehensive, but still underdeveloped, account of the practice in question.

Glynos and Howarth’s (2007) analytical approach to identifying self-interpretations, notwithstanding the relative systematicity it has brought to post-foundational discourse analysis, is too generalized, especially for future and emerging researchers. To explain their analytical approach, Glynos and Howarth (2007, pp. 168-177) have provided a sample demonstration for arriving at contextualized self-interpretations and subsequently identifying the underlying logics of a practice. However, they have failed to specify in any useful detail the procedure for analysis of textual data. In their example of the higher education reforms in the UK in the 1990s, they have quoted from articles produced by academics themselves to identify these social actors’ interpretations of the origins and meanings of the changes imposed upon them, but the selection procedures for this evidence and its linguistic status as self-interpretations are not fully elaborated. Elsewhere, Glynos and Howarth refer to interview ma-

terial as sources for identifying self-interpretations. But even here, the researchers' analytical operations in moving from the interviewee's verbatim responses to the interviewer-researcher's formulation of the interviewee's self-interpretation is opaque. Therefore, their framework leaves the process of empirical analysis of data effectively for other researchers to chalk out. At least two researchers to date have taken up the challenge.

First, building on Glynos and Howarth's (2007) work, Zienkowski (2014 and elsewhere) has attempted to operationalize discourse theory by using a combination of Glynos and Howarth's (2007) logics framework and analysis of 'metalinguistic markers and strategies', such as signalling of reported speech and hedging, to arrive at self-interpretations in interview material with a political activist (p. 289), thereby teasing out an insightful claim about the social logic of integration in Belgium, namely that this previously recognized social dynamic is actually comprised of two sub-logics. And second, Remling (2018), drawing on the discourse analytical approach of Norman Fairclough, has employed linguistic phenomena of 'assumptions and genre chains' for concrete textual analysis of policy documents to arrive at identification of logics operating in EU climate adaptation policy. Interestingly, she has done so without ever mentioning contextualized self-interpretations, probably because she doesn't see written policy material as a minable source of social actors' self-conceptions of what they are doing and how they see things, but more as a source of general assumptions operating within a policy field. On the contrary, we think that identifying presuppositions in a relatively impersonal written text is one useful and perfectly legitimate method of identifying self-interpretations, but in not dwelling on the identification and contextualization aspects of the process and seemingly extrapolating directly to identification of social logics from predetermined linguistic markers of assumption or presupposition spotted in the text under analysis, Remling might have limited the depth of her analysis.

We want to hold on to Glynos and Howarth's stipulation that the road to identification of explanatory logics must proceed through the identification and contextualization of actors' self-interpretations. Through this article, we attempt to further this aim by providing a practical example of textual analysis using the techniques of frame analysis to arrive at identification of the self-interpretations of social actors. It may be mentioned here that while we are providing a demonstrative example of this method designed specifically for print news media as data, we argue that it is fit for adaptation to other practices of articulation. In the next section, we provide a specific rationale for investigating news media discourse using discourse theory, as well as link our approach to a theorization of news media.

3. News media discourse

Hegemony is a core concept in mass media theory, as it is in discourse theory. News media's existence and extent of influence is directly proportional to the degree of sedimentation of their hegemonic articulations amongst the wider public. This means that a possibility of investigating mass news media using the ontology proposed by discourse theory can be explored (Dahlberg & Phelan, 2011). The reason: given that news media contribute in large part to construction of the social fabric through their articulations – something which overlaps with discourse theory's contention that the social is discursively constituted – discourse theory seeks to map the social through deconstruction of those constitutive discourses. In the process, discourse theorists also seek to highlight the blind spots which the mass media cov-

er over or omit from their construction owing to their hegemonic preferences. This section discusses these insights from the vantage points of discourse theory and media theory.

According to Allan (2010), journalists shape and reinforce and even disrupt our perceptions of the world in decisive ways. We make sense of the world, know things and develop our beliefs through the news media. News media articulations help ‘to *naturalize* a cultural politics of legitimacy so as to lend justification to modern society’s distribution of power and influence’ (p. 94; original italics). Through the discourses they contribute to, news media shape, influence and organize not only our actions but also sediment ‘a hierarchical series of normative rules by which social life is to be understood’ (p. 95; see also Torfing, 1999).

Expanding on this, Marchart (2011) says that the news media ‘[a]s *signifying institutions*,...provide the contemporary means that allow social groups and classes to construct an image of values, opinions and practices, concerning both their own position and the position of other groups and classes’ (Marchart, 2011, p. 73, italics in the original). This means that news media do not merely reflect and reproduce the sedimented practices, they also (re)articulate them. In that sense, they can be thought of as ‘apparatuses for the manufacturing of consent’ (ibid.). Therefore, in order to study and analyze the process of social transformation we need to investigate how the social relations of power are hegemonically articulated by and with the help of news media. As fundamentally a theory of hegemony, discourse theory is particularly well suited to meet this need, and in the process to offer one way of addressing the call for framing research to pay more attention to the question of social and political power in news production (Carragee and Roefs, 2004; Carragee, 2019). We should add in this context that discourse theory’s commitment to contingency and antagonism, discussed earlier, aligns it with Carragee’s related call ‘to abandon the strong hegemony model’ (2019, p. 372) on the basis that it overplays the difficulty of providing resistance to media power.

Our contention, one with continuing currency amongst media scholars, is that news media construct frames in order to represent an issue of the day, or to construct reality. From news report to features, editorials, columns and opinion pieces, each news article is a product of certain ‘framing devices’, i.e. a combination of lexical, text-organizational, and source-representational choices, to be elaborated in the next section.

4. Framing theory and frames

Schmidt (2014) calls a frame ‘a selective and somewhat bordered view of the world’ (p. 97). Similarly, Entman understands framing as ‘selecting aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating context, 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, p. 52). Both these definitions point to the central role of frames in guiding a perception of reality. Frames are generally associated with cognitively developed expectations which come into being on the basis of pre-existing mental images, or schemata (derived from prior knowledge, experiences, personal predisposition, values, specific context, and sense of identification) structured together as a reality. A founding figure in framing theory, Erving Goffman, describes such frameworks as ‘schemata of interpretation’ (1974, p. 21). On their own, frames cannot always achieve much unless they draw on prevailing public schemata (see Johnson-Cartee, 2004; Schmidt, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, news media organizations, because they have the power to influence public opinion, seek to regulate the public through normative, discursive constructions. This becomes possible because journalists are constantly exposed to the dominant schemata in public discourse. It enables them to 'activate and employ very elaborated and interrelated schemata' (Schmidt, 2014, p. 104) while disseminating information. In simple words, news media personnel (which includes journalists as well) make use of the dominant schemata in public discourse to stitch together otherwise potentially isolated incidents into a coherent frame in order to produce certain effects. (This resembles, in discourse theoretical terms, the arrangement of disparate elements into a chain of equivalence under a master signifier or nodal point.) Media framing is thus a schematically structured, contingent presentation which resonates with the audience, as providing an authoritative account of events.

However, for our purposes here, we are not concerned with audience effects, or trying to determine what might resonate with the audience. Our focus at this point is to examine the ways in which an emerging issue is initially framed within the textual products of news reporting. The focus here is therefore on the framing devices utilized in the text under analysis. The framing choices exposed by this analysis will in theory provide us with access, by association, to (some of) the mental images or schemata that the news reporter or commentator is drawing on in order to make the selection choices apparent in the text. In as much as these schemata shape the reporter's practices of articulation, they may give an indication of what he or she understands themselves (consciously or unconsciously) to be doing in their composing practice, i.e. of his or her self-interpretations. This evident cross-over between self-interpretations and 'schemata of interpretation', to use Goffman's terminology, shows why framing analysis potentially promises much as a technique for accurately identifying the self-interpretations of social actors.

In pursuing the path just described, it will be apparent that, as far as the field of framing theory as a whole is concerned, our contribution belongs within the further development of qualitative approaches to frame analysis methodology, which in comparison with quantitative approaches continue to receive less attention. Andrew Rojecki (2005, p. 66) references Gamson in describing the field of frame analysis 'as more of an assemblage of exemplars rather than a unified paradigm'. He adds: 'The complexity arises from shifts in analytical emphasis as scholars turn their attention from the study of the production and reproduction of frames to analysis of frames in text and the interaction of frames and audiences.' At the risk of simply adding to the assemblage, we hope we can contribute to the development of the research strand 'analysis of frames in text', but our larger aim is firmly fixed on what we see as the potential of frame analysis for the operationalisation of discourse theoretical research, within news media in the first instance.

Based, then, on several important discussions and illustrations of frame analysis in the literature (especially Entman, 1991; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; D'Angelo, 2002; Kuypers, 2002), and our own trial analyses, we have consolidated into an integrated framework the key linguistic and textual features that function as framing devices within a news report. It is our contention that best analytical purchase will result from exploring the extent to which these devices are operating in combination within a given text.

Table 1. Linguistic and textual frame signification devices

<i>Device</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Who or what receives primary topicalization or thematic emphasis? – What is the sequential arrangement of actors and events in the course of the text? – What provides the closing focus?
Characterization	This category refers to the journalist's lexical choices towards key actors and events – in particular, descriptive adjectives and adverbs, qualifying phrases, as well as position designators applied to key figures and their actions
Reiteration	Comparison of direct quotation and reported speech, with particular reference to synonyms, when a source's verbatim remark is reproduced via paraphrase within the same article
Perspectivization	Refers to the range of sources drawn upon in the article, with regard both to political positioning and office-holding, and the comparative weight given to each point of view in terms of coverage
Figuration	Figures of speech that the author makes use of, e.g. metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, often indicators of rhetorical effort on the part of the author

It is important to emphasize that the version of the framework above is designed specifically for the newspaper sub-genre of news reports. Work to date on our larger project (see section 5.1) has made clear that it is necessary to adjust the categories of the analytical framework to take account of the particular rhetorical purposes embedded in each newspaper genre. So, for example, we do not include in this version of the framework a category referring to analysis of explicit argumentation, since that is a text characteristic that is avoided – or suppressed – in a news report (unlike in, say, editorials or opinion pieces). Consequently, we do not draw here on an otherwise valuable article using frame analysis, Cârlan and Ciocea (2014), since its analytical focus is specifically on the argumentation strategies of opinion pieces. On the other hand, the version we have fashioned for analysis of a news report focuses heavily on the selection and treatment of sources, matters of high prominence and importance in the reporting of news, but much less salient in the sub-genres overtly concerned with the expression of opinion.

We now turn to the primary aim of this article in the next section, namely, to demonstrably show the effectiveness of adopting the frame analysis technique as described above for operationalizing discourse theory as a way to facilitate the identification of self-interpretations. This sample textual analysis shall also make less ambiguous the task of subsequent contextualization that leads ultimately to identification of the logics underpinning a domain of discourse.

5. Methodology and data

Discourse theorists like Phelan and Dahlberg (2011) and Glynos and Howarth (2007) have emphasized the importance and inevitability of bringing analytical approaches from other disciplines with the aim to conduct exhaustive social inquiry. They qualify this argument with the contention that there is no standardized approach for conducting social research. Moving forward with this approach, we employ frame analysis in a three-stage process as a tool for

conducting textual analysis which in turn shall help arrive at contextualized self-interpretations, the precursor to identification of discursive logics. While we are not the first researchers to combine discourse theory and framing theory, the analytical apparatus we have developed has not previously been employed in discourse theory. The approach taken by Juhan Saharov (2021) draws on a combination of social movement framing theory and Laclauian discourse theory in an insightful analysis that does not, however, refer to the more recent theoretical and empirical developments we are exploring here (i.e. the logics approach augmenting discourse theory pioneered by Glynos and Howarth), and nor does it rely on the kind of close linguistic and textual analysis emerging in some branches of frame analysis methodology, as outlined above.

5.1. Stage I: Data selection

The analysis we provide below for the purpose of demonstrating our analytical framework draws from a larger study in progress that examines the interrelations among the primary sub-genres of newspaper production in the course of reporting and constructing a singular phenomenon (the emergence of the Lawyers' Movement in Pakistan beginning in 2007).

The specific data focus for this article is one news report (Anon, 2007) from the English language edition of the newspaper *Nawa-i-Waqt*, one of the two largest selling national newspapers in Pakistan, namely *The Nation*. The article was published on 11 March 2007, two days after the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, was removed from office by the president, General Musharraf, and placed under house arrest for alleged misdemeanours, linked by some commentators to Court decisions interpreted by the president as challenging his authority. This event was the main catalyst in the mobilization of the country's lawyers. Access to the article was provided by the database Factiva available through the library of Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

5.2. Stage II: Empirical analysis

We subjected the selected news report to frame analysis in two sequenced steps.

Step 1: Initial textual analysis

In the first step, we applied the set of framing devices outlined above (Table 1) to arrive at some preliminary indications of the framing structure of the article in question.

Step 2: Identification of blind spots

Blind spots generally result from omission (whether conscious or unconscious) of certain additional or alternative events and interpretations. Identifying blind spots is crucial to draw the contours of a potentially equally viable, different social order, the possibility of which may have been suppressed as a moment of political turmoil is followed by the institution or restoration of a particular hegemonic order. The framing made apparent by the initial textual analysis, in association with extensive contextualization drawing on the wider study of which this analysis is part, was key to identifying omissions or blind spots.

5.3. Stage III: Contextualized self-interpretations

The findings of textual analysis, along with the additional contextualization, were used to identify the self-interpretations apparently operating in the reporting practice informing the

writing of the news article. These contextualized self-interpretations were then subjected to further consideration with a view to identifying evidence of social, political, or fantasmatic patterns or dynamics ('logics') that could be informing the practice(s) in question.

6. Frame analysis

6.1. Composition

The article presents the suspended Chief Justice Chaudhry (abbreviated below to CJ) as the primary topic, but notably there are two distinct aspects to this topicalization:

1. The fact that Chaudhry wants an open trial regarding the charges against him. This is the focus of both the headline and the lead (opening sentence(s)), which is where readers of English-language news reports conventionally expect primary topicalization to be signalled, and furthermore to be maintained through the article, with ensuing paragraphs 'all provid[ing] specifications and information in relation to the headline and lead nucleus' (Makki & White, 2018, p.55).

2. But in a departure from the topic or news angle signalled by the headline and lead, the article in question accords considerable space to the nature of the CJ's confinement and the efforts of various parties to visit him; in discourse theory terms, articulating a chain of equivalence between the matter of the chief justice's response to charges against him and the related but separable issue of the nature of his confinement and treatment. This departure from English-language convention does not appear to be a standard feature of the *Nation's* reporting style, confirming its significance in this instance.

Consequently, the body of the report is ordered in such a way as to give primacy to opposition political parties' accounts of mistreatment and relegate the perspective of the government as a primary player in the events to near invisibility. The report then concludes on a sinister note with reporting the visit of an alleged 'senior intelligence' official of high rank, who the CJ reportedly refused to see. References to 'by almost midnight', 'a black Corona car' and even detail of the car's number plate, combine to arguably create an air of foreboding at the close of the article.

6.2. Characterization

What stands out most significantly in this category is the journalist's choice of the phrase 'principled stand' applied to the CJ's apparent determination to face trial rather than countenance any other possibility of resolving the situation. This descriptive phrase, given that it is unsupported by quotation or attribution to a source, is clear evidence of a sympathetic view of the CJ on the part of the reporter. The reporter has, in Theo van Leeuwen's (2008, p. 110) terms, introduced a moral evaluation into the account, with the implicature of according legitimization to Chaudhry. This small adjectival phrase is a key moment in the text.

6.3. Reiteration

We found that at places within the news report, there was a difference between what was directly quoted from the source(s) and what was repeated in the form of paraphrase. The most salient example is that the article lead paraphrases the CJ's call for an open trial as a 'demand', despite the fact that the source providing this information is subsequently quoted as saying the CJ 'has sought' an open trial. Notably, the sub-editor presumably responsible for the headline has also chosen a more neutral option: 'wants'. These lexical alternatives available within the article offer clear evidence that the reporter's choice for the lead, 'demand', was deliberate and specifically motivated by him/her.

6.4. Perspectivization

Our findings suggest the journalist has treated the sources unequally by diminishing and negativizing the government's part in the event, thereby weakening the government's standing and contributing to making its intent appear mala fide. In addition, the four fellow Supreme Court judges permitted to see the CJ have been indirectly aligned with the government. For example, the government receives only one explicit reference in the report, juxtaposed with an account of the justices' visit. Specifically, after reporting that the justices 'were allowed' to see the CJ, the report proceeds immediately to say that 'government sources claimed that the justices had tried to find a way out of the crisis', then follows this up with the statement that the justices 'remained totally tight-lipped over the objective and outcome of their meeting'. The proximity of these references conceivably implies, by association, the impression that the judges might have been directed by the government, rather than acting on their own initiative. This is by no means certain, as discussed further in section 7.

Only one source, the journalist's main informant, Air Marshall Khan, is directly quoted in the article. It is notable, however, that leaders of the PML-N party who also attempted to visit Chaudhry are also extensively reported but only in the form of paraphrase. The actual source of this indirectly reported information is not made clear, but it serves a significant function in extending the reach of the story into accounts of alleged mistreatment of the CJ and his family. This includes the rather gratuitous detail – given the second-hand nature of the material – that the PML-N leaders presented 'flower bouquets' for members of the CJ's family. Such details are arguably overt markers of invoking sympathy.

6.5. Figuration

Certain choices of word and phrase suggest rhetorical effort on the part of the writer to intensify the conflict and drama in the situation being reported. In the quotation below, the use of the word 'struggle' seems hyperbolic, and the phrase 'managed to meet' somewhat tautological:

Tehrik-i-Istiqal Chief Air Marshall (ret'd) Asghar Khan... managed to meet him at his residence this evening after a struggle of 48 hours.

Both elements could function, if absorbed uncritically by a reader, to amplify the difficulty encountered by Khan by accentuating the impression of bodily engagement. We see the same sort of tautological effort for rhetorical effect in the phrase 'totally tight-lipped' where a more economical 'tight-lipped' would be semantically adequate.

6.6. Primary framing

Our highlighting of salient linguistic choices suggests that the journalist has used a series of visits made to the CJ's home, and the remarks made by some of those who have visited – details which are additional to the initial announced topic of the article – to construct a frame which not only performs the function of foregrounding and positively projecting Chaudhry, but also of backgrounding and negativizing, even vilifying, the government, through evoking a schema of unjust treatment by providing an accumulation of details of deprivation.

The pattern of implicature that characterizes the report is that the suspended CJ Chaudhry is an honourable man. As a notable example, 'the suspended Chief Justice was not ready to change his principled stand.' The phrases 'not ready' and 'principled stand' suggest the activation of a schema of the resolute figure determined to stick to his high professional and personal values. At another place, Chaudhry is reported to be 'fully confident to face charges' which have been 'levelled against him by the President.' The implication is that the suspended CJ is a brave man who is challenging the President of the country (who also happens to be the sitting Chief of Army Staff). The concluding piece of information regarding Chaudhry's refusal to see the 'unknown' guest reaffirms Chaudhry's image as a brave man who is firm in his resolve and determined to take on the government despite himself and his family being subjected to harsh treatment by the latter.

6.7. Blind spots and omissions

The findings of our analysis suggest that there are many blind spots in this news report. To begin with, it is significant that the journalist has not used any additional qualifying phrase to characterize Chaudhry's determination to be publicly tried. This is in marked contrast to what the journalist has been doing elsewhere in the report, namely using figures of speech to add dramatic effect. This omission is especially significant because conventionally justices conduct themselves in a manner which far removes them from the limelight. Generally, it is political actors, groups and institutions who compete for the limelight, not justices. Therefore, Chaudhry's preference for an open trial could just as well have been reported/interpreted as an attempt to engage in a pitched political battle, something contrary to the conventional conduct of justices. However, the fact that the journalist either chose to ignore the significance of Chaudhry's preference or did not deem it important enough to be drawn attention to seems to be in line with the journalist's preferred framing. In addition, there is no information on the purpose of any of the visits of the various political figures reported in the article. Therefore, the journalist's choice to not attach contextual significance to Chaudhry's request and the visits of politicians to his home is worth noticing. It becomes even more significant once the contextual background of the reported events is brought into account, including the fact that one of those visitors, the delegation led by Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, belongs to a political party (the Pakistan Muslim League-N) whose chief leaders were concurrently facing high-profile cases in the Supreme Court (Kalhan, 2013). In the recognized interests of full and fair reporting, that party's visit to Chaudhry should have been subject to journalistic interrogation. Another significant omission is the lack of any contextual reference to the charges against Chaudhry.

Flowing from the latter omission, since the news consumer will have had little understanding of the merits or otherwise of the charges, is the marked absence of any brief on Chaudhry's 'principled stand', i.e., any information about what exactly Chaudhry was stand-

ing for, although by making such a judgment, the journalist implies possession of details he/she is choosing not to share with readers. It is also left unknown as to what are the ‘facts’ that Chaudhry wants the masses to know, as relayed by the reporter’s chief informant, who could therefore be expected to have some insight but who, it appears, was not asked to elaborate, or whose elaboration has been omitted.

7. Contextualized self-interpretations

We are giving primacy to the self-interpretations of the journalist because in our view it is the journalist, the author of this news report, rather than any source, who is the key actor framing this novel event for the public. In our view, the journalist is seeing themselves as not just a watchdog, a disseminator of important public information, but also as a social jurist who is bringing their own beliefs to bear on the unfolding events. Such a self-perception of their role means that the reporter is not reporting the events in the conventional ‘reporter voice’, in which personal emotional response is absent, character judgements of those featured in the story are very rare, and assessments of situations and events uncommon (Makki & White, 2018, p. 58), but, rather, interpreting their role to include depicting the situation as one of simple conflict, a naked contest of power between a positive force (CJ Chaudhry) and a negative force (the government headed by President General Pervez Musharraf), and furthermore to be rendering this conflict as vividly as possible.

The possibility that this (possibly unconscious) self-interpretation of the situation (as one of two-sided conflict in which there is a hero and a villain) is one that is or was shared widely within the journalistic profession in Pakistan is tellingly exposed by the reporter’s account of one Supreme Court Justice, as he emerged from meeting the CJ, being ‘repeatedly asked’ whether he was ‘on the side of President Musharraf or the chief justice’s side’. In framing the situation as one of two sides without any apparent recognition of the possibility of intermediate positions, the question is clearly undermining the feasible position of the delegation of justices, namely, to be seeking some mediated resolution. So, it is not surprising that the justices should respond to being set up in this way with a refusal to comment, thus putting their ‘totally tight-lipped’ conduct reported earlier in the article in a rather different light. We must reserve judgment for now on whether the question was purely mischievous, or confirmative of a deeply engrained ‘common sense’ schema concerning the nature of social and political life amongst the journalists involved.

Because the journalist sees himself/herself as exposing the negative side of the government, they use every reported attempt to visit the CJ as an opportunity to make this point. The reference to an unknown senior intelligence official, whose identity is based on an unknown source, coming at ‘close to midnight’, provides evidence of the journalist’s preferred style of construction and representation.

At another level, the news report indicates that there is plenty of convergence between the journalist and their sources as far as their views on the event of Chaudhry’s suspension is concerned. The journalist does not appear to be out of sympathy in any measure with the suspended CJ and the political figures representing the parties from the opposition, especially the PML-N. Our analysis suggests that those political parties’ representations have been unproblematically received and spared interrogation. This is an important finding as journalists are expected to parse utterances for their apparent meaning as well as implicature. For exam-

ple, where Chaudhry Nisar has been reported as describing the plight of CJ Chaudhry's family, there has been no attempt to interrogate him for the source of his convictions, given especially that he had been prevented from meeting the CJ. Further, it is possible that the PML-N's would not be the only delegation which brought flowers for Chaudhry and his family but the journalist's choice to portray it as such points to a potentially present convergence between this news media outlet and the PML-N. In addition to that, the apparent ease with which the journalist reproduces their source who reported on the intelligence official's visit and Chaudhry's handling of that visit also indicates their (the journalist's and the source's) convergence.

Having developed contextualized self-interpretations and shown how our frame analysis contributes to the task of identifying self-interpretations, which has been our primary objective in this article, we think it is useful to take a step further and show briefly how our analytical process is designed to play out in subsequent analysis even though our conclusions must necessarily be somewhat underdeveloped. So, we now turn to what our analysis suggests are the logics informing the writing of the news article in question, i.e. digging deeper into the analytical findings in order to attempt to recognize particular patterns or dynamics of conduct in the actions and interactions of the actors concerned. Given a basis of just one article, we will be mainly concerned with the identification of social logics underpinning reporting practice as exemplified in the article. Political and fantasmatic logics are less readily apparent within such a restricted sample of data, but there are some suggestive hints in this article that we will briefly mention.

8. Identification of logics

In the particular case of a *communications medium* like news reporting, we believe it is useful to start by thinking of social logics in two aspects: (1) the logic through which the communication practice in question appears to work; and (2) the logic which the communicator perceives to be activating the social domain that is being communicated about.

The findings produced by our analytical framework as reported above suggest that the logic driving the construction of the news report is one that we could call dramatization. This contrasts with what is broadly agreed within the journalistic field to be the logic informing the compositional practice of the news reporter, i.e. a logic of fairness in which the declared or claimed emphasis is on the accurate presentation of facts, in which all relevant viewpoints or interests are expected to be represented through direct quotation, and the reporter refrains from any suggestion of partisan judgment (Witschge, 2012, p. 107). We have seen that the writer of the article we have been studying employs numerous strategies to build a dramatic and indeed exaggerated sense of conflict out of the events being reported on. Lexical choices have been made in paraphrasing what is elsewhere quoted that reveal an upscaling of the force of the original utterance. Sources are disproportionately deployed to reinforce a particular perspective to the detriment of another. Gratuitous details with emotional resonance have been added, and recourse has been made to various figures of speech associated with exaggeration (hyperbole, tautology).

Iyenger's (1991) formal distinction between episodic (events-focused) and thematic (ideas-focused) frames should be acknowledged. An episodic structure, standard for a news article focused on reporting of events (compare a feature or background article delving more deeply into

ideas and perspectives), will tend of itself to produce a comparatively dramatic structure. However, we argue that the article in question has well exceeded the intrinsic demands of the genre.

As regards the more general logic of the social invoked by the reporter, the overall frame we have identified in the article of the chief justice being the victim of unjust treatment points to a privileging of a certain logic operating within the justice domain, specifically an adversarial paradigm that can be contrasted with other possible approaches to settling disputes – for example, restorative or mediated approaches.

In following an adversarial logic, the news report constructs the subject positions of aggressor and aggressee. The whole exercise seems to be an attempt to induce the readers into identifying with the aggressee, given the emphasis on compiling a list of the deprivations to which the CJ has been subjected, evident from constructions such as keeping Chaudhry ‘under house arrest for a consecutive third day’; letting Asghar Khan meet Chaudhry only ‘after a struggle of 48 hours’; ‘not allow[ing]’ the PML-N delegation to meet Chaudhry; getting the CJ’s ‘connections...cut off’; making sure that the suspended CJ is ‘having no contact with anyone’; his movement being confined to his house which is ‘being guarded with extensive security presence’, so much so that ‘he [i.e., Chaudhry] could [not] move out of his residence’; a visitor was ‘intercepted’; another one was ‘stopped’, because the security personnel deployed around the suspended CJ’s house had ‘order[s] not to allow anybody to visit’; his ‘communication facilities...disconnected’; his ‘children not allowed to go to school’; the latter’s ‘private tutor...not permitted to go inside the house’; and ‘not permit[ting]’ the Federal Tax Ombudsman to meet Chaudhry. Meanwhile there is no apparent attempt on the part of the journalist to give the aggressor an opportunity to provide a justification of the oppressive actions.

In as much as the chief justice can justifiably be attributed with the conceptions and desires reported of him, it is also highly significant that in calling for an open trial and possibly rebuffing attempts to mediate the situation, the chief justice is seemingly willing, and perhaps even actively seeking, to play the heroic role assigned to him in this news report.

Our findings suggest that this news report, by using the social logics of adversarialism and journalistic dramatization, goes about constructing both the government and the suspended CJ in a relational arrangement whereby both these entities acquire meanings in relation to each other (political logics). There is a clear sense that in parcelling out an account of the chief justice’s adversity among the representatives of political parties, the reporter has – willingly or unknowingly – proposed a logic of equivalence, i.e. the potential alignment of an oppositional force against the prevailing hegemonic order. The frontier thus constructed between those sympathetic to the chief justice, on the one hand, and the government and perhaps the four delegated Supreme Court justices, on the other, is accompanied by the glimmerings of a fantastic logic of intrigue, with potential horrific undertones of the exercise of totalitarian power, fuelled by sources who are either unnamed or silent, and by reference to mysterious midnight visits, serving not only to grip the reader to the unfolding story but to reinforce the social and political logics activated in the course of the article.

9. Conclusion

Through this article, we have demonstrated that discourse theory can be operationalized for news media research using an approach derived from frame analysis. The findings testi-

fy to our assertion that the staged approach of frame analysis we have developed is helpful for conducting a systematic and concrete textual analysis that preserves Glynos and Howarth's (2007) insistence on arriving at comprehensive explanations of social phenomena only by way of passing through identification of actors' self-interpretations.

Although our main purpose in this article has been to demonstrate a method for identifying self-interpretations in those practices of articulation – such as in this case news reporting – which tend to avoid overt authorial self-referencing, we have also sought to provide some preliminary account of the analytical movement from self-interpretations to logics by way of distinct phases of contextualization: first to situate self-interpretations within the articulation practices they contribute to, and then to extrapolate beyond this to posit the logics propelling the discourse/practice as a whole.

Finally, we hope to have also made a contribution to the field of frame analysis and theory by describing and demonstrating the use of a comprehensive explanatory paradigm for communicational phenomena – the 'logics' approach within discourse theory – that has not yet been fully explored within the field, and which we believe has the potential to add significantly to the repertoire of approaches for understanding socio-political power and media hegemony.

In closing, we would like to re-emphasize the rhetorical specificity of our text-analytical framework. The instantiation of the model here is adapted to news reports. Future work will be geared towards adjusting the framework for application to other news genres, with the eventual aim of investigating how the various genres interact in the process of news production and positioning.

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