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# Media Framing of the July 2024 Uprising in Bangladesh: Testing the Boundaries of Galtung's Peace Journalism Model

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## Abstract

The July 2024 uprising in Bangladesh sparked weeks of unrest and ultimately led to the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This study examines how eight leading English-language newspapers framed the crisis, using Johan Galtung's Peace and War Journalism model as a guiding framework. Relying solely on quantitative content analysis, the research analyses 98 news reports published between 14 July and 14 August 2024. While The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune leaned toward peace journalism, and Daily Sun, The Asian Age, New Age, and The Business Standard reflected war journalism traits, coverage in The Daily Observer and The Bangladesh Today defied clear classification. These two outlets consistently blended elements of both models showing people-centred reporting alongside elite sources, or combining de-escalatory language with victory-oriented framing. This pattern, which the study terms "mixed framing," challenges the dominant binary lens used in peace journalism research, particularly in South Asia. Rather than forcing news coverage into either peace or war categories, the findings point to a hybrid style that reflects the complexity of contemporary reporting during political upheaval. The paper argues for expanding Galtung's model to better account for this emerging middle ground.

**Keywords:** *Peace Journalism, War Journalism, Media Framing, July Uprising 2024, Bangladesh Politics, Comparative Analysis*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2024 stands as a pivotal moment in the political history of Bangladesh, marking a watershed in its democratic trajectory. The July Uprising, driven by widespread public frustration over governance failures, economic instability, quota reform controversies, and prolonged democratic backsliding, triggered a dramatic and largely unforeseen political transition. This upheaval culminated in the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after more than a decade in power. While the political consequences of this event have been widely discussed, its mediation through the press constitutes an equally significant dimension that warrants systematic academic scrutiny.

In contemporary societies, media outlets function not merely as transmitters of information but as active interpreters of political reality. Through processes of selection, emphasis, and framing, journalism plays a decisive role in shaping public understanding and influencing democratic decision-making. During periods of political crisis, this interpretive power becomes particularly pronounced. News coverage may intensify polarization, legitimize elite-centred narratives, and normalize violence, or alternatively, it may promote dialogue, highlight structural causes, and encourage non-violent responses. This dual capacity of journalism was most notably theorized by Johan Galtung in the 1990s through his Peace and War Journalism framework, which distinguishes between conflict-escalatory and conflict-transformative modes of reporting.

However, the media environment in which Galtung formulated this model differs substantially from today's journalistic landscape. Contemporary news production operates under conditions of digital acceleration, algorithmic visibility, commercial pressures, political polarization, and transnational information flows. These structural transformations complicate the application of rigid binary classifications such as "peace" versus "war" journalism. Media narratives increasingly exhibit hybrid characteristics that blur normative boundaries and challenge established theoretical models.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines how leading English-language newspapers in Bangladesh reported on the July Uprising of 2024. Through a systematic content analysis of eight national dailies like *The Daily Star*, *Dhaka Tribune*, *New Age*, *The Business Standard*, *Daily Sun*, *The Asian Age*, *The Daily Observer*, and *The Bangladesh Today*. This research assesses the extent to which their coverage reflected peace-oriented or war-oriented journalistic characteristics. It further investigates whether editorial positions aligned consistently with Galtung's theoretical framework or displayed patterns of mixed framing. Finally, by situating these findings within the broader context of hybrid media practices, the study critically evaluates whether a binary analytical framework remains sufficient or whether theoretical expansion is necessary to capture the complexities of contemporary conflict reporting.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both media studies and peace and conflict scholarship. First, it provides timely and context-specific empirical evidence from Bangladesh, a setting where systematic analyses of media performance during moments of regime transition remain limited. By focusing on journalistic practices during a period of democratic rupture, the study offers insights into how the press negotiates political uncertainty and societal tension. Second, it empirically tests the applicability of Galtung's Peace Journalism model within a fast-evolving and crisis-driven media environment, identifying both its analytical strengths and conceptual limitations. The identification of mixed or hybrid framing practices, in particular, challenges the sufficiency of binary classifications and points toward the need for theoretical refinement.

Third, by concentrating on English-language newspapers that primarily address policymakers, urban elites, diaspora communities, and international audiences, the study highlights the role of elite media in shaping both domestic and global perceptions of political legitimacy, conflict, and democratic norms. Ultimately, this research seeks not only to fill an empirical gap but also to advance critical reflection on how established theories of journalism can adapt to the realities of contemporary media ecosystems during periods of profound political upheaval.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Peace journalism emerges from Johan Galtung's long-standing effort to reorient conflict reporting away from zero-sum, elite-driven narratives toward coverage that foregrounds structural causes, multiple perspectives, and possibilities for de-escalation and social transformation (Galtung, 1998, 2013). Central to this approach is Galtung's "high road/low road" distinction, which contrasts peace journalism—contextual, people-centred, truth-oriented, and solution-focused—with war journalism, characterized by event-driven reporting, elite dominance, violence emphasis, and victory–defeat logic. While the former seeks to render conflict intelligible by examining causes, actors, and alternatives, the latter privileges spectacle, polarization, and strategic outcomes. This conceptual binary has become foundational in peace journalism scholarship and underpins subsequent efforts to operationalize the model for empirical analysis.

Galtung's normative framework was further developed into a more practice-oriented model by *Lynch and McGoldrick (2005)*, whose work translates peace journalism principles into newsroom-relevant tools such as sourcing guidelines, language choices, and framing checklists. Their side-by-side comparison of peace and war journalism has become the most widely used operational template in empirical studies, enabling researchers to convert abstract principles—such as people orientation, attention to structural causes, and solution emphasis—into measurable indicators (Lynch, 2007; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). This codification has made peace journalism analytically tractable and suitable for systematic content analysis across diverse media contexts.

A seminal empirical application of this framework is provided by *Lee and Maslog (2005)*, who analysed 1,338 conflict-related news stories from ten English-language Asian newspapers covering conflicts in South and Southeast Asia (Lee & Maslog, 2005). Their findings revealed a strong dominance of war journalism frames, although the balance varied across countries and media outlets. Importantly, their coding scheme, derived directly from Galtung's matrix, has since become a benchmark for peace journalism research, particularly in South Asian studies. Subsequent research in the region continues to report a prevalence of conflict- and violence-focused framing, even where peace journalism is invoked as a normative ideal.

At the same time, peace journalism has been subject to sustained theoretical and empirical critique. *Shinar (2007, 2009)* situates the paradigm within the political economy of media, arguing that commercial imperatives, state influence, and organizational routines systematically favour dramatic, polarized narratives over reflective and solution-oriented reporting. Even when journalists are aware of peace journalism principles, structural constraints often pull coverage toward elite perspectives and conflict escalation. These findings highlight the limits of voluntaristic assumptions within the peace journalism project.

Further critiques question the normative and professional tensions embedded in the framework. *Hanitzsch (2007)* cautions that peace journalism risks overstating individual journalistic agency while underestimating institutional norms and professional role conceptions. *Kempf (2007)* similarly characterizes peace journalism as a "tightrope walk" between advocacy and professional detachment, warning that prescriptive models may clash with journalistic credibility. More recent scholarship reinforces these concerns, noting that empirical studies rarely observe "pure" peace or war journalism but instead reveal blended or ambiguous framing patterns.

This recognition aligns with broader framing scholarship, which emphasizes that news texts often combine multiple frames rather than reproducing singular, coherent narratives. *D'Angelo and Kuypers (2010)* argue that journalists frequently synthesize elite sources, professional norms, and interpretive judgments, resulting in hybrid or composite frames. Such insights challenge the analytical sufficiency of rigid binaries and suggest that conflict reporting may occupy an intermediate space not fully captured by Galtung's original model.

Research focusing on South Asia and Bangladesh provides further empirical support for this position. Studies on regional conflicts and humanitarian crises demonstrate that newspapers often oscillate between peace and war journalism indicators within the same outlet or event (*Ahmed, 2021; Khan, 2021; Siraj, 2008*). In the Bangladeshi context, *Masud-Un-Nabi's (2021)* analysis of Rohingya crisis coverage shows that local newspapers frequently display mixed framing patterns rather than consistent adherence to either ideal type. Visual framing studies similarly reveal how images can simultaneously evoke empathy, distance, and victimhood, further complicating binary categorization.

Taken together, the literature suggests that while Galtung's peace/war journalism distinction remains a valuable analytical starting point, it is increasingly insufficient for capturing the complexity of contemporary conflict reporting. Empirical evidence from Asia and South Asia consistently points to the dominance of war-oriented frames, yet also reveals persistent hybridization shaped by political context, institutional orientation, and audience considerations. These findings directly inform the conceptual framework of the present study.

Accordingly, this research adopts a refined analytical approach that moves beyond a strict binary. Building on existing critiques and empirical patterns, it operationalizes three framing orientations along a continuum: predominantly war-oriented framing, predominantly peace-oriented framing, and mixed framing, where elements of both coexist in systematic ways. By applying this framework to English-language Bangladeshi newspapers during the July 2024 uprising, the study tests the contemporary relevance of Galtung's model and examines whether mixed framing represents an emerging and structurally conditioned mode of conflict reporting in times of democratic upheaval.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Johan Galtung's peace journalism model, first introduced in the 1970s and elaborated in his "high road/low road" work. It presents a normative approach to conflict reporting that contrasts two ideal types of news coverage (Galtung, 1998, 2006). Peace journalism is defined as contextual, people-oriented, truth-seeking, and solution-focused, whereas war journalism is event-driven, elite-centric, violence-focused, and organized around a logic of victory and defeat (Galtung, 1998, 2006). In this model, the "high road" of peace journalism aims to make conflicts intelligible and human examining causes, goals, and options while acknowledging suffering and agency on all sides while the "low road" of war journalism emphasizes spectacle, polarization, and zero-sum outcomes.

*Lynch and McGoldrick (2005)* translated Galtung's vision into a more operational framework for journalists, offering side-by-side checklists, sourcing guidelines, and language choices that distinguish peace journalism from war journalism in practice. Their work codifies the model into observable indicators that can be used both for training and for content analysis. Building on this tradition, many empirical studies have treated Galtung's categories as a binary coding scheme, asking whether media texts are "more peace" or "more war" oriented overall (*e.g., Lee & Maslog, 2005; Siraj, 2008*).

In line with this literature, the present study takes four commonly used dimensions of Galtung's model as its starting point:

- People- vs. elite-orientation (whose voices and interests are foregrounded),
- Truth- vs. propaganda-orientation (whether multiple perspectives and underlying causes are explored),
- Solution- vs. victory-orientation (whether reporting highlights de-escalation and conflict transformation or winners and losers),
- Context/structural vs. episodic focus (whether structural conditions and history are included or neglected).

Taken together, these dimensions capture the core contrast between peace journalism and war journalism as articulated by *Galtung (1998, 2006)* and operationalized by *Lynch and McGoldrick (2005)* and later studies (*Lee & Maslog, 2005*).

However, as the literature review highlighted, this binary model has also attracted substantial critique. *Hanitzsch (2007)* argues that peace journalism tends to overestimate the autonomy and influence of journalists, underplaying structural constraints and professional routines, and calls for situating peace journalism within broader journalism studies rather than treating it as a stand-alone alternative (*Hanitzsch, 2007*). *Kempf (2007)* describes peace journalism as a “tightrope walk” between advocacy and professional detachment, warning that overly prescriptive frameworks risk being rejected as activism rather than journalism. *Shinar (2007, 2009)* further emphasises that commercial pressures, political interests, and news routines often pull coverage toward dramatic, polarized, war-oriented narratives even when journalists are sympathetic to peace-oriented ideals. These critiques collectively question whether real-world reporting can be neatly sorted into only two stable categories.

Drawing on these debates, this study treats Galtung’s model not only as an analytical tool but also as an object of testing. Rather than assuming that all coverage must fall cleanly into peace journalism or war journalism, the conceptual framework introduces a third pattern: mixed framing. Mixed framing is theorized as an emergent, hybrid mode of conflict reporting in which the four core dimensions of the model are not consistently aligned with either peace or war journalism but are divided between them. In empirical terms, an outlet is understood to exhibit mixed framing when its coverage shows a near-balanced combination of peace- and war-oriented features across the four dimensions—for example, being people-oriented and context-sensitive (peace journalism traits) while simultaneously emphasizing episodic violence and victory/defeat narratives (war journalism traits).

Conceptually, this mixed framing category responds directly to the literature’s observation that many news texts display “shades of grey” rather than pure peace or pure war frames (*Hanitzsch, 2007; Kempf, 2007; Shinar, 2009*). It also aligns with broader framing research, which shows that journalists routinely blend multiple interpretive packages instead of reproducing a single, stable frame (*D’Angelo & Kuypers, 2010*). In the context of the July 2024 uprising, where English-language newspapers in Bangladesh navigate pressures from domestic politics, international audiences, and institutional routines, such hybrid framings are especially plausible.

On this basis, the conceptual framework for the study distinguishes three ideal-typical patterns along a continuum:

- Predominantly war journalism framing – where most indicators across the four dimensions cluster on the war journalism side (elite-oriented, propaganda-prone, victory-focused, episodic/ahistorical).
- Predominantly peace journalism framing where most indicators cluster on the peace journalism side (people-oriented, truth-oriented, solution-focused, contextual/structural).
- Mixed framing – where peace and war journalism indicators are distributed more evenly across the four dimensions, so that the outlet cannot be meaningfully reduced to either category alone.

By explicitly theorising mixed framing and grounding it in both Galtung’s model and its critiques, this framework allows the study to do two things at once: apply the clarity of the peace/war journalism distinction and, at the same time, test its boundaries. The finding that some Bangladeshi newspapers fall into this mixed category rather than clearly peace- or war-oriented suggests that contemporary conflict reporting may be evolving toward more fluid, hybrid patterns that Galtung’s original binary does not fully anticipate. This, in turn, provides the theoretical basis for arguing that peace journalism scholarship needs to move beyond strict dichotomies and take seriously the analytical significance of mixed framing as a third, empirically grounded mode of news coverage

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a Quantitative Content Analysis to measure the frequency of peace-oriented versus war-oriented frames across the eight newspapers.

##### Sample:

- Newspapers: The Daily Star, Dhaka Tribune, New Age, The Business Standard, Daily Sun, The Asian Age, The Daily Observer, The Bangladesh Today.
- Timeframe: The analysis covered a one-month period: July 14 – August 14, 2024, capturing the peak of the protests and their immediate aftermath.
- Sample Size: 98 news articles (13 from The Daily Star and The Business Standard each, 12 from the rest of the papers each. News articles were selected via purposive sampling focusing on front-page and lead political stories)

Newspaper	Total Articles	PJ Articles (%)	WJ Articles (%)
The Daily Star	13	7 (54%)	6 (46%)
Dhaka Tribune	12	7 (58%)	5 (42%)
Daily Sun	12	5 (42%)	7 (58%)
New Age	12	5 (42%)	7 (58%)
The Asian Age	12	5 (42%)	7 (58%)
The Business Standard	13	6 (46%)	7 (54%)
The Daily Observer	12	6 (50%)	6 (50%)
The Bangladesh Today	12	6 (50%)	6 (50%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>47 (48%)</b>	<b>51 (52%)</b>

**Table 1:** Classification of News Articles by Peace Journalism (PJ) and War Journalism (WJ) Frames

Source: Authors compilation, 2025

In summary, we have selected 98 news articles from The Daily Star, Dhaka Tribune, Daily Sun, New Age, The Asian Age, The Business Standard, The Daily Observer, and The Bangladesh Today in which The Daily Star and The Business Standard have 13 news articles respectively, the rest of the newspapers have 12 news articles, respectively. The numbers of articles of all the newspapers that have fallen into peace journalism and war journalism are respectively 47 and 51. We will discuss it through graphs.

This study is based solely on secondary analysis of publicly available newspaper articles and did not involve direct research with human participants, collection of personal data, or any form of intervention. In line with commonly accepted ethical standards for media and communication research, such use of public documents does not normally require formal institutional ethics approval, and no additional approval was sought. Throughout the research, the authors adhered to ethical principles of content analysis by accurately representing the original texts, citing sources appropriately, and avoiding decontextualized or misleading use of quotations. Given the politically sensitive nature of the July 2024 uprising and its associated violence, particular care was taken to describe events in a balanced manner and to avoid language that could stigmatize individuals or groups, incite hostility, or misrepresent the actions of any party.

## 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Describing Frequently Used Terms

**Table 2:** The frequency of Key Terms in the Collected News Articles

Word Angle	The Daily Star	Dhaka Tribune	Daily Sun	New Age	The Asian Age	The Business Standard	The Daily Observer	The Bangladesh Today
Explanation	5	6	0	0	0	0	5	4
Protest	4	3	0	0	4	6	0	0
Casualty	4	3	0	0	0	3	0	0
Violence	0	0	5	3	4	4	0	0
Opinion	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Diplomacy	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Instability	0	0	0	5	4	0	4	5
Opinion	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	0

Source: Authors compilation, 2025

The table shows the word angles that are most frequently used in the news stories from eight different Bangladeshi English newspapers. This examination shows that certain newspapers framed its reporting through different words. For example, The Business Standard is notable for using the word “protest” the most (6 times), indicating that it places a high value on public protests and group action likely framing the event around public dissent and action in its news framing. Similarly, the Dhaka Tribune used the word “Explanation” for 6 times, emphasizing its propensity to give background information and context rather than just conflict, aligning with a peace journalism orientation.

The word “instability” appears five times in several newspapers, including The Bangladesh Today, and New Age. The Daily Observer used it for 4 times indicating a common concern regarding social or political upheaval. Similarly, The Daily Sun and The Daily Star, which each appear five times, emphasize “violence” and “explanation” respectively. It illustrates opposing strategies in which one places more emphasis on confrontation and the other on clarification and analysis, corresponding to war and peace journalism tendencies, respectively.

It is interesting to point out that certain publications, such as The Asian Age, divided their emphasis more equally; the terms “violence”, “instability”, and “protest” each occurred four times, indicating a framing that is balanced but focused on conflict. In contrast, The Daily Observer employs “instability” four times and “explanation” five times, indicating a dual propensity to draw attention to turbulence while simultaneously providing interpretive news stories. The angle “opinion” was depicted several times in Daily Sun, New Age, The Daily Observer, and The Bangladesh Today. In addition, the angle “Casualty” was framed in The Daily Star, Dhaka Tribune, and The Business Standard.

Overall, the graph analysis indicates that while certain publications, including The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune, devote more space to analytical or explanatory reporting, others, especially The Daily Sun and The Business Standard, tend to favour conflict-oriented terminology like “protest” and “violence.” This shows how word angle frames the news articles. This variation illustrates the many editorial approaches to news framing, with some emphasizing storylines that promote peace and others gravitating toward emphasizing disturbance and confrontation.

**Table 3:** Comparative Analyses of Peace Journalism and War Journalism Model

Model Type	The Daily Star	Dhaka Tribune	Daily Sun	New Age	The Asian Age	The Business Standard	The Daily Observer	The Bangladesh Today	Total
<b>Peace Journalism</b>	54%	58%	42%	42%	42%	46%	50%	50%	47%
<b>War Journalism</b>	46%	42%	58%	58%	58%	54%	50%	50%	51%

The representation of peace journalism in the eight chosen newspapers exhibits a mixed tendency, according to the analysis as detailed in Table 1. With 58% of its coverage taking a peace-oriented stance, Dhaka Tribune exhibits the strongest propensity for peace journalism among them. The Daily Star comes in second, with 54% of its articles demonstrating peace journalism techniques. Both The Daily Observer and The Bangladesh Today exhibit a balanced approach, with equal coverage of war and peace journalism, each accounting for 50% of the total. This suggests that these publications continued to take a neutral stance, giving equal weight to frames of peace and conflict. However, the percentage of stories in The Asian Age, New Age, and Daily Sun that are classified as peace journalism is comparatively lower at 42%, indicating a greater predominance of war-oriented news. In a similar vein, 46% of The Business Standard's articles were peace journalism, which suggests a minor bias in favour of war media journalism. All things considered, some publications favoured war-framed reporting, while others tended to promote peace-oriented narratives. This variance draws attention to the variations in editing decisions and framing techniques found in Bangladeshi print media.

This data in Table 3 shows different degrees of variations in practicing war journalism model on eight English newspapers that we have selected for our research. Dhaka Tribune had the lowest percentage of war journalism among them (42%), indicating that the publication gave more weight to reporting that was focused on peace. The Daily Star (46%) similarly maintained a low degree of coverage centred on war, suggesting that its editorial position tended more toward narratives that focused on peace and solutions than on escalating the conflict. On the other hand, the biggest percentage of war journalism was found in three newspapers: The Asian Age, New Age, and Daily Sun (58%). By emphasizing violence, antagonism, and polarizing themes over positive alternatives, this consistency shows a strong editorial predilection for conflict-centred fiction. Compared to the other three, the Business Standard (54%) was less dependent on conflict-driven news, but it still tended toward war journalism. The Daily Observer and The Bangladesh Today, which both displayed a precise 50-50 split between peace and conflict coverage, took a more balanced stance.

These publications used a mixed approach in reporting. This balance points to a neutral editorial strategy that does not prioritize conflict-oriented frameworks or tales about peacebuilding. When combined, the graph data shows that journalistic practices in Bangladeshi publications are not entirely homogeneous. War journalism has been more relevant in Bangladesh. A majority of the studied outlets tended toward war journalism, but others, such as The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune, had a stronger preference for peace media journalism. This trend highlights the continued dominance of conflict-focused reporting in the national press and illustrates the difficulties in advancing peace journalism in the discourse of the mainstream media.

Overall, the data from Table 3 indicates that the distribution of war and peace journalism in the eight English newspapers. We have collected 98 news articles in total. Overall, 52% (51 articles) of the articles are classified as war journalism, while peace journalism makes up 48% (47 articles). This suggests that although both reporting approaches are used, conflict-oriented stories typically receive a little more attention in newspapers.

Dhaka Tribune held the highest proportion of peace journalism (58%) among individual newspapers, indicating a more constructive or solution-oriented style of reporting. The Asian Age, New Age, and Daily Sun, on the other hand, exhibited a greater emphasis on war journalism (58% each), indicating a propensity for narratives that are driven by conflict. These three publications held the largest position in emphasizing war journalism. Newspapers that presented both peace and conflict-related news in a neutral manner, such as The Daily Observer and The Bangladesh Today, maintained a balanced coverage of between fifty percent and fifty percent.

Overall, the data shows that although peace journalism is significantly present, the overall media landscape of the sampled newspapers still favours war journalism slightly more. According to the data, there is a slight preference for war journalism in the media landscape, despite some variation among newspapers. This imbalance indicates how people's views on conflict or peace may influence their perceptions of the situation. Therefore, the findings highlight the need to promote more the practices of peace-oriented reporting in Bangladeshi media to ensure balanced, constructive, and socially responsible journalism.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed three broad trends:

- i. **Peace-Oriented Coverage:** The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune demonstrated consistent emphasis on context, accountability, and structural reforms. For example, an article titled “DU teacher protests attacks on students across Bangladesh” was published on 17th of July 25 in Dhaka Tribune. The Dhaka Tribune’s article about the “Anti- oppression teachers rally” is “peace-oriented” according to Johan Galtung’s paradigm since it talks about peaceful action and positive social involvement. The narrative centres on educators who peacefully resist oppression and call for justice, demonstrating their attempts to resolve issues without resorting to violence. It highlights togetherness, provides voice to underrepresented groups, and presents the occasion as a constructive step in addressing societal problems. The article promotes a narrative that promotes peaceful solutions and social harmony by showcasing community empowerment and nonviolent activity. Another example we can mention is on 16th July 2024, The Daily Observer published the article “DU directs hall authorities to strengthen security on campus”.

The news focuses on preventing violence rather than amplifying tension. It highlights Dhaka University’s proactive steps to strengthen security, ensure teacher presence in halls, and keep outsiders from creating unrest. Instead of framing the situation as a conflict, it emphasizes measures taken to maintain calm, protect students, and avoid confrontation during the quota movement. The report therefore promotes stability and safety rather than escalating fear or hostility.

- ii. **War-Oriented Coverage:** Daily Sun, The Business Standard, New Age and The Asian Age exhibited strong conflict-escalatory tendencies. For example: “PM: Action wherever irregularities are seen” published on 16th of July 2024 in Daily Sun. The news is war-oriented as it frames corruption as a battle, highlights the Prime Minister’s strong stance (propaganda), focuses on elites, and emphasizes victory through enforcement against wrongdoers.

On 31st of July 2024, The Asian Age published the article “Students stage protest against police shootings in Khulna”. This news from ‘The Asian Age’ reflects ‘war journalism’ as it emphasizes ‘violence’ and conflict. It focuses on police shootings, student protests, road blockages, and the potential for further legal action, highlighting confrontation between authorities and civilians. The language, including slogans like “Why did you kill my brothers?”, dramatizes the violence and tension, making the report ‘violence-oriented’ and conflict-centred, a key feature of Galtung’s war journalism model.

- iii. **Mixed/Hybrid Framing:** The Bangladesh Today and The Daily Observer adopted blended approaches, oscillating between peace and war frames depending on political developments. Example: From the Daily Observer, the article titled “Can Bangladesh hurtle towards stability?” published on August 8, 2024, offers a clear example of mixed framing. It blends people-oriented perspectives by highlighting the role of Gen Z protesters and their aspirations for democratic change, with elite-centric reporting that extensively quotes interim government figures, including the army chief. The piece calls for institutional reform, minority protection, and political stability hallmarks of solution-oriented journalism. However, it also frames the uprising as a victorious achievement, praising the protesters for accomplishing their “long-awaited goal” and ending a corrupt regime. This mix of de-escalatory goals and triumphant rhetoric, alongside its combination of grassroots and official voices, situates the article firmly in the middle ground it does not fully follow either peace journalism or war journalism, but instead reflects a hybrid mode of reporting.

Another article from The Daily Observer, titled “People want justice and inclusive democracy” (August 10, 2024), similarly illustrates mixed framing. The report elevates the voices of civil society leaders and student activists calling for accountability and inclusive governance, showing a strong people-oriented and solution-focused approach. Yet it also gives significant space to statements from military spokespeople and political actors, reaffirming institutional control. Furthermore, while the article stresses the importance of free elections and post-crisis healing, it also frames the fall of the Hasina government as a political triumph and a pivotal moment in Bangladesh’s history introducing a tone of victory. This combination of forward-looking peace elements and celebratory overthrow narratives exemplifies a balanced, mixed-framing approach, not reducible to either pole of Galtung’s framework.

From The Bangladesh Today, the article “Sayeed’s father illusively looks for dead son in thousands crowd” (published via BSS in August 2024) is a poignant human-interest story that also exemplifies mixed framing. It centres on the personal grief of Sayeed’s family, vividly portraying their loss and the emotional aftermath of his death in the uprising. This deep people-oriented focus is paired with elite voices, such as national leaders publicly honouring Sayeed’s sacrifice. The article includes verifiable facts about protest deaths and regime collapse, showing a strong truth orientation. At the same time, the language frames Sayeed as a martyr whose death contributed to the “second liberation war” of Bangladesh highlighting victory framing. Coupled with its emotional, episodic storytelling and references to the broader democratic movement, this narrative blends peace and war journalism elements. It stands as a clear example of mixed framing, occupying the space between Galtung’s two categories.

Another article from The Bangladesh Today, “Youth-led protests redraw political map” (August 13, 2024), also adopts a hybrid journalistic stance. It highlights the voices of student organizers and grassroots mobilisers, demonstrating a people-oriented approach, while also covering reactions from top bureaucrats and members of the transitional cabinet, indicating elite engagement. The article outlines the interim government’s steps toward inclusive elections and democratic reform, showcasing solution-focused framing. Yet, it also describes the resignation of longtime leaders as a historic political victory and praises the protesters for toppling a powerful regime, introducing victory-oriented language. These

dual strands uplifting future reforms while marking the uprising as a dramatic triumph; create a mixed journalism pattern that blends both peace and war frame components, without conforming exclusively to either.

While Galtung's framework remains useful for identifying dominant patterns, the findings expose its limitations:

- Fluid Editorial Strategies: Newspapers adapted frames dynamically, defying static classification.
- Hybrid Narratives: Many reports combined peace and war elements within the same article, reflecting real-time complexity rather than fixed paradigms.
- Digital Amplification: social media-driven reporting added layers of immediacy and sensationalism absent from Galtung's original conceptualization.

This study supports earlier critiques, such as those by *Hanitzsch (2007)* and *Kempf (2008)*, that question the strict binary view. The findings suggest that a more nuanced model, such as scoring articles based on multiple peace and war indicators, might better reflect the reality of modern conflict reporting.

## 7. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Journalist Training on Conflict-Sensitive Reporting: The Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) and Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at public universities should develop and regularly deliver short courses on conflict-sensitive and peace-oriented reporting, with modules on context, structural causes, and solution-focused narratives.
- Editorial Policies to Amplify Marginalized Voices: Editorial boards of major English-language newspapers (e.g., The Daily Star, Dhaka Tribune, New Age, The Business Standard) should adopt written editorial guidelines that require reporters to include grassroots participants, affected communities, and marginalized groups alongside elite and official sources when covering protests and political crises.
- Media–Academia Monitoring Partnerships: The Bangladesh Press Council, in collaboration with universities and research centres, should establish a joint monitoring mechanism (e.g., annual content analysis reports) to evaluate framing of political crises and provide feedback to newsrooms on peace, war, and mixed framing patterns.
- In-house Review and Reflection Mechanisms: Newsroom management in major outlets should introduce regular internal review meetings after major crises, where journalists and editors reflect on their coverage using peace/war/mixed framing criteria and identify concrete improvements for future reporting.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

This research affirms the enduring relevance but also the conceptual fragility of Galtung's Peace Journalism model in analysing media coverage of modern political crises. While the framework provides a valuable lens for distinguishing constructive from destructive reporting practices, its binary rigidity underrepresents the complexity of hybrid, digitally mediated news ecosystems.

For the July Uprising, newspapers such as The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune approximated peace journalism ideals, while others like Daily Sun leaned toward conflict-oriented reporting. However, most outlets displayed mixed framings, suggesting that journalistic behaviour in crises is less about ideological purity and more about adaptive pragmatism.

This study, therefore, advances a dual contribution: empirically documenting the editorial responses of Bangladeshi media during a democratic turning point and theoretically prompting a re-evaluation of

peace journalism as an analytical tool. In an era where news narratives shape not only perception but also political trajectories, refining these models is not an academic luxury it is a democratic necessity.

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