

# Militarizing Malala: Global Media and Local Struggle

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## Abstract

*Media coverage of militancy in Swat valley, Pakistan, promotes the use of militarization as the “only” means to dismantle the Taliban, ignoring the local civil society and its struggle for change. As journalists and participant observers in this struggle, we examine the portrayal of Malala Yousafzai, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, in two leading English dailies, The New York Times of the U.S., and daily Dawn of Pakistan. We explore how was Malala’s struggle for women education in Swat reflected in the editorial text of the two dailies and how did this coverage relate to the overall civil society movement against militancy in Swat? Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study finds that both the newspapers make a strong case for militarization and associate Swat with the Taliban only, thus making invisible the role of the local anti-Taliban struggle. We argue that the way media pick a few successful people to present them out of context as role models for others to follow, have significant consequences in areas of militarized imperialist conflicts, where resistance to organized violence, be it state-sponsored or by the Taliban, is rooted in communal traditions and collective approaches.*

**Keywords:** Organized Violence, Malala, Terrorism, Taliban.

## Introduction

In this paper, we examine Malala’s portrayal in two leading English dailies, *The New York Times* of the U.S., and daily *Dawn* of Pakistan to find out the following. How was Malala’s extraordinary struggle reflected in the editorial text, and how did this coverage relate to the overall local civil society movement? This study, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), finds that the two dailies romanticize Malala’s image to make a strong case for militarization and associate Swat with the Taliban only, thus rendering invisible the local civil society’s significant role in resisting militancy and religious extremism. This discursive construction makes Malala one of ‘them’ as against one

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of 'us.' We argue that this media approach of picking a few successful people to present them out of context as role models for others to follow has significant consequences in areas of militarized imperialist conflicts, where resistance to organized violence, be it state-sponsored or by the Taliban, is rooted in communal traditions and collective approaches.

### **Swat: What really was Militancy?**

In 2005, a cleric named Fazlullah rose to fame in Swat valley. Riding on horseback, the cleric led a small band of militants that carried out roadside vandalism, burnt TV sets (calling media an 'evil') and openly abhorred democracy, wanting to replace it with sharia. Fazlullah was not the only product of the radical transformation caused by militarization of the region following the U.S. attack on Afghanistan in 2001. Militant uprisings had already started on the northwestern borders in reaction to Pakistan's support for the U.S.-led "war on terror." But Fazlullah was unique: he was the first to radicalize mainland Pakistan, using technology for his hate speech. Delivering his sermons through illegal FM transmitters, he gradually became a regular feature of the local gossip mills. Inciting people to raise arms against President Pervez Musharraf (then military dictator) for supporting U.S. imperialism in the region, he gradually became an icon for reactionary, jobless youth from the surrounding villages, who thronged his madrassa in Imam Dheri situated on the outskirts of Mingora where Malala lived with her parents and two siblings.

### **Political inaction and social outcry**

Initially, the state apparatus seemed less attentive towards Swat, a four-hour drive from the federal capital. Another reason for inaction, we suggest, carries ideological underpinnings: a military dictator was in power and he did not seem to be on good terms with Muttahida Majlis Amal (MMA), a radical alliance ruling the Pakhtunkhwa province. Fair and Chalk (2006) argue, "The MMA through its various activities, has helped spawn a radical environment that espouses policies fundamentally at odds with Musharraf's aim of progressively modernizing and moderating the country's domestic arena".<sup>1</sup> The Swat Taliban were aware of these political and ideological fault lines. Friendly towards the provincial government, they preached hatred against the central government. Before the dictator could send the military to Swat in 2008, life in the valley was virtually paralyzed. At a short walk from Malala's house, militants regularly arranged their macabre ritual at a place called Green Square: after killing local 'dissidents', they would hang their

mutilated bodies for passers-by to see. Later the place was called 'Khoni Chowk' or Bloody Square.

### **Military operations and civil society**

With more people falling victim to the Taliban's rigid code of life, the local civil society started looking for venues to mount active defiance. Teachers, elders, heads of transport and business associations, and farmers took to Swat streets. Ziauddin was a vocal feature of such gatherings, which were held either in the local press club or school buildings. Things started apparently changing after 2008 when a secular government of the Awami National Party (ANP) came into power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and a liberal government of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) came to power in Islamabad. Soon afterward, a military operation was launched in October 2008, but the Taliban repulsed the security forces in initial fights. The situation forced the ANP leadership to initiate peace talks with militants. Emboldened by their mounting force, Fazlullah in his radio sermons warned girl students to stay home or face the consequences. This ban affected about one hundred thousand students in the valley, including Malala, who was about to be promoted to the 6<sup>th</sup> class. Civil society in Swat, including Ziauddin as its vocal member, cautiously made their presence felt through arranging meetings, including behind the scene measures, i.e., writing anonymous newspaper articles, to connect with the outside world and reveal the identity of civil servants, who misuse their official power extending militants local support.<sup>2</sup>

After her first short appearance in a few TV news packages and gatherings in mid-2008, Malala became an active participant of protests in 2009. For many, it was surprising to see the teenaged girl addressing an assembly of men telling them what to do next. She, however, impressed everyone with the clarity of her vision. By March 2009, the state announced evacuation of the valley's population to make sure that militants could be defeated this time. Over two million people were displaced. Malala had to live a nomadic life with her family. For over three months the family was shifting from one town to another until finally, they came back to Swat in August 2009 when the Pakistan army announced victory. In these three months, one of the authors of this article was constantly in touch with the family and often visited them along with the NYT team to make a second documentary on Malala.<sup>3</sup> The corporate media coverage of Malala was not without its political meanings in local and global contexts, a probe we launch invoking Critical Discourse Analysis.<sup>4</sup>

### Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), according to Fairclough (2013), is a methodological tool that examines text to trace power misuse in the construction of social reality.<sup>5</sup> Since text is never neutral, actors in a text are embedded either as agents, activists, beneficiaries, enemies, etc., or disguised, collectively or individually, as ingroup ('we') or outgroup members ('they'). In news text, some characters, roles, names, social practices, or social struggles are played out as extraordinary, but at the same time others are played down or ignored as ordinary. Important here are metaphors as rhetorical figures with high communicative impact as they transfer meaning from less known contexts to more familiar ones. The use of metaphors contributes to emphasize 'our' positive deeds, or, as the case might be, 'their' bad actions.<sup>6</sup> We are interested in finding out whether the editorial text reproduces the identity of Malala in a context other than the one in which she actually launched her struggle in Swat. Using presence-absence lens, we examine the use of metaphor and their connections to actors and phenomenon ideologically identifying the ingroup or outgroup.

### Methodology

We selected *The New York Times* and English daily *Dawn* for examining discursive construction of reality in Swat. The former is internationally called a "paper of record," while the latter is known in Pakistan for 'serious' and 'in-depth' analysis. In one of her interviews, Malala said: "If there were no BBC, no *New York Times* and no channels, then my voice would not have reached the people".<sup>7</sup>

The data sample for this study ranges from October 9, 2012, to October 10, 2014, which covers two main events of Malala's story—Taliban's attack and winning the Nobel Prize. In a Lexis Nexis search of "Malala Yousafzai," 376 items were collected, 56 of them op-ed pieces. We narrowed down the sample to editorials only because of our interest in investigating ideological bent of the two newspapers. Revealing a level of tolerance, an editorial also exposes itself to taking sides. Out of a total of 10 editorials (1 in *NYT* and 9 in *Dawn*) published, eight were exclusively about Malala. Editorial is the guiding element of the medium's ideological position. We divided the eight editorials into two parts based on two discrete but related events—attack on Malala and receiving Nobel Award. In the analysis, we first investigated global structure—headlines and themes in the introductory editorial sentences. Then we connected the main theme of each editorial to its body text and

analyzed micro meanings with a focus on the global structure of the editorials.

Structurally, we use capital D as a code for *Dawn* and capital N for the *NYT*. In the case of main theme or global meanings, we mark with Arabic numerals all nine editorials of *Dawn* (D1, D2, D3...D9) and one editorial of *NYT* (N1). In the case of local meanings, we added small English alphabet to mention the editorial code (D or N) and its chronological date of appearance (1, 2, 3...); we also marked their in-text paras. For example, D1a means the first paragraph of the first *Dawn* article.

### Malala's Coverage: A Critical Overview

The editorial coverage remained relatively high in October right after the militants' attack on Malala in 2012. *Dawn* published five editorials in the next 11 days of the Taliban attempt. *The New York Times* published only one editorial (N1). Though Malala-specific blogs and columns on op-ed pages of *NYT* are fairly high in October (N= 25), which is outside the domain of this study.

Table 1: Total editorial coverage of Malala in *Dawn* and *NYT*.

S. No	Date	Title	Code
1	Oct. 11, 2012	Malala Yousafzai's courage	N1
2	Oct. 11, 2012	Moment of truth	D1
3	Oct. 12, 2012	Policy on militancy	D2
4	Oct. 16, 2012	Skewed narrative	D3
5	Oct. 20, 2012	In the doldrums	D4
6	Oct. 22, 2012	Who will go first?	D5
7	Oct. 9, 2013	Malala and the TTP: A staggering contrast	D6
8	Jan. 10, 2014	Courage personified	D7
9	Jan. 29, 2014	Book launch thwarted	D8
10	Oct. 11, 2014	Pakistan's braveheart	D9

### Global structure: Main Themes

Critical analysis of the headlines and introductory sentence in *Dawn* and *NYT* reveal the following major themes.

N1: "If Pakistan has a future, it is embodied in Malala Yousafzai."

D1: "Pakistanis appear to have woken up to the consequences of the extremism that has been allowed to take roots in our country."

D2: "STRONG words from the army at a time of intense emotions over the attack on...Malala are an important addition to the national revulsion at the Taliban and the way of life they seek to impose on Pakistan."

D3: "LET's get one thing straight about the attack on Malala Yousafzai. It is not comparable to drone strikes ...."

D4: "GIRLS' education in Pakistan...is today symbolized by a teenaged girl hospitalized after a brazen attack on her by the Taliban."

D5: "THE interior minister kicked off the speculation with his assertion that the attack on Malala Yousafzai originated in Afghanistan.

D6: "IT is a year today since Malala Yousafzai was shot, and it is the country's good fortune that she not just survived but is doubly determined to continue to campaign for education."

D7: "AS the militants' war on Pakistan grinds on, new tragedies unfold nearly every day.... Yet once in a while, ordinary citizens demonstrate such courage that it inspires us to stand up to the onslaught of the militants. Malala Yousafzai's defiance of the outlawed TTP is a case in point."

D8: "IT is never advisable for governments to get into the business of banning books .... Official obstructions to prevent the launch of such material (Malala's book "I am Malala") can only be termed utterly appalling."

D9: "COURAGE is not a rare quality in Pakistan ... But Malala Yousafzai is a special case; it's hard to find such courage in a 17-year-old..."

### Main themes analyzed

Progressive activism is what emerges out of the two dailies' editorial coverage, albeit in a different way. *Dawn* portrays Malala as victim of her struggle for demanding her right to education and not the direct casualty of defiance against the Taliban (D3 and D4). "Happen" (D3) here gives an impression of 'chance', showing the way *Dawn* undermines religious seminaries' hatred against women education. *NYT*, instead, adopts a direct, confrontational approach juxtaposing Malala's activism with Taliban's terrorism; representing the latter rooted in the local culture. Hidden in the syntactical sentence structure of *NYT* is the

acerbic and aggressive tone, oversimplifying the complex nature of U.S.-led militarization. *Dawn*, on the contrary, called this militarization “skewed narratives” (D3). Simply put, *NYT* neatly divides its camp into ingroup and outgroup and so does *Dawn* but in a more complex way.

To appeal to its progressive readers, *Dawn* termed attack on Malala a wake-up call—“moment of truth” (D4 and D1). If a verb “appear” (D1) adds uncertainty to the meanings of *Dawn*’s argument, “allowed” is another verb which gives its sentence structure a passive touch, a careful reference to the state apparatus (D1). Lack of subject in a syntax structure always loses touch with semantics. Meaning in this kind of sentence becomes a causality of absence; a floating signifier between ingroup and ‘outgroup. Stylistically, every first word of *Dawn*’s editorial is written in capital letter. This style sets a strong tone for the text. The use of capital letters “STRONG” (D2) is an adjective that fits well into the militarized theme of the editorial’s topic.

#### *Local Meanings*

Possessive pronouns such as “our” create a virtual community of shared interests between a newspaper and its readers. Here we carry out a microanalysis of linguistic elements, beginning with the use of nouns, pronouns, and metaphors to uncover the ideological framework in the discursive construction of reality. *Dawn* calls Pakistan “our” country (D1), which then draws a line between the ingroup and outgroup, urging Pakistani state to take action against the Taliban. By the frequent use of uncountable noun ‘extremism,’ *Dawn* makes an obvious reference to the Taliban, though not necessarily limited to them. For example, within days of the attack on Malala the Pakistan Army chief gave a media statement threatening the Taliban of dire consequences for their attempts to impose a “twisted ideology” on Pakistan. Picking the “twisted ideology,” *Dawn* packaged this loaded expression in quotation marks to maintain editorial distance through performing objectivity and to target the outgroup. “Perpetrators” is a figurative speech that carries a tinge of negative force (D1b). Painting anyone with a wide brush of negativity is effective if the ingroup and outgroup are linked by the thread of collective moral responsibility—a national topos. For *Dawn*, attack on Malala is an appeal to consciousness. Anyone denying this “moment of truth” (D1) qualifies to be called extremist: a threat to “our” (D1) “way of life” (D1c). *Dawn* avoids a clear mention of who in Pakistan institutionally supports extremism and why. This rhetorical strategy continues to echo in *Dawn*’s reference to different “voices” (D1a). But this general noun is so widespread that only regular readers of *Dawn* can

understand that the newspaper is targeting conservative elements for blaming Malala for having caused her own tragedy, and holding United States responsible for dragging Pakistan into its own war.

*Dawn's editorials: Nouns, pronouns, and metaphors*

Table 2: The use of nouns, pronouns, and metaphors in the editorial coverage of Malala in *Dawn*.

D1	D2
a. Voices...link the incident to America's role in Pakistan or Malala's own fault...these have been drowned out by an outpouring of anger in the National Assembly and Senate, the army chief's resolve against the "twisted ideology" of the perpetrators, extensive media coverage...	b. At a meeting ..., the armed forces did try and lay down a marker against the Taliban...it was in keeping with the straight talk of Gen Kayani...and will help dispel...propaganda being spread by those sympathetic to the Taliban...
b. ...threat to Pakistan from the intolerance in its own society, not blaming foreign powers	c. ...the idea that a zero-tolerance towards militancy ... can only come if the military lays down that marker...must make it clear to its civilian counterparts and the public that the stated policy is...the actual policy ... when it comes to rolling back the infrastructure of jihad...
c. It took the...targeting of a particularly brave child to jolt Pakistanis...to the threat that violent extremism poses to our security and way of life.	

*Metaphorical war on extremism*

As a figure of speech, *Dawn* personified Pakistan arguing that attack on Malala has "woken up" the ingroup to a new realization—terrorism is a homegrown phenomenon (D1c). The metaphor of "battle lines" (D3c) refers to this total war in which the newspaper also banks on liberal and secular circles asking them to get united for rooting out militancy. For *Dawn*, the ideological battle lines are clear in which the ingroup is composed of progressive and liberal circles, which remained at the target list of the Taliban before the attack on Malala. *Dawn* uses the verb "terrorize" (D3b) as a qualifier to personify Pakistan 'who' is in the grip of extreme fear and distress. In its absolute ideological stand, the newspaper considers the Taliban or their supporters as the outgroup, not worthy of living in the country. For *Dawn*, however, the defeat of militants in this ideological and physical war is possible only if the ingroup is united.

Civil and military leadership in Pakistan condemns U.S. drone strikes as a violation of the country's sovereignty. These officials, however, have not taken practical measures to challenge the power of drones. *Dawn* refers to this lack of official clarity and the damage it



causes, but takes a clear editorial line through a disclaimer “but” (D3a) that justifies collateral damage

Table 3: The use of nouns, pronouns, and metaphors in the editorial coverage of Malala in Dawn.

D3	D4	D5
<p>a. Drone strikes may be unacceptable in their current form and end up killing innocent children, but doing so is not their intent.</p> <p>b. ...attempts to fudge the truth and make false comparisons indicate that the religious right feels threatened by the public outcry against Malala’s attackers...And while secular political parties have not been as quick to do so, most have shied away from naming the TTP and demonstrating the single-mindedness that is needed to dismantle that organization’s ability to terrorise Pakistan.</p> <p>c. Battle lines have been drawn across the political landscape...as long as political forces hold back; the military will have a reason to hold back too.</p>	<p>a. Like Malala, millions of Pakistani girls face formidable obstacles in their path to acquiring an education...with 25 million children out of school in this country — the second highest number in the world — then the picture for girls is even bleaker.</p> <p>b. While nature’s fury [floods] has been more even-handed, the militancy in the country’s north-west has singled out girls’ education.</p>	<p>a. Maulana Fazlullah’s Swat Taliban are behind the attack ... and they are located in Afghanistan, where they fled after the Swat operation in 2009.</p> <p>b. The Afghans are unlikely to go after Pakistani militants...until Pakistan tackles the Afghan Taliban on this side; President Karzai’s remarks in response to the Malala incident — that “using extremists as a tool against others is not in the interest of Pakistan” — made it clear enough.</p>

*Malala: A medium for regional peace?*

*Dawn* portrays Malala as a medium for communicating ideological and strategic innuendos. The uncertainty of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are visible in the use of adjective “unlikely” which expresses the newspaper’s fear over lasting cooperation in the region (D5b). By linking the attack on Malala to the Swat Taliban and then referring it to the latter’s hideouts in Afghanistan, *Dawn* complicates the nature of regional militancy and calls for a state level cooperation. Here, *Dawn* holds Pakistani military responsible for not taking effective measures in defeating the Taliban.

The critique of the military is carefully embedded in the syntactical structure of *Dawn*’s editorials: No specific subject is mentioned in relating extremism to the problems of education in Pakistan (D4a). In so doing the daily skips the structural nature of the challenge.

For example, the state apparatus's patronage of religious extremists for using them as a foreign policy tool against India and Afghanistan is a structural policy issue. Though *Dawn* cautiously demands "zero-tolerance towards militancy" (D2), which is an indirect reference to past ties of Pakistan military with the Taliban in Afghanistan. But such references do not directly link extremism and intolerance to the state policies. This confusion reveals itself through the metaphor of "marker" (D2b) that *Dawn* uses to demand of the Pakistani military to draw a final line. Using twice the same metaphor in connected paragraphs (D2b and D2c) shows who *Dawn* believes enjoys the real power in Pakistan.

*Dawn and NYT: Looking for the extraordinary*

In this section, we analyze two editorials, one each of *Dawn* and *NYT*. Though written at two different time periods in Malala's life, their similarity, however, begs to be discussed together. The two-year gap—from the attack up to her receiving the Nobel—hardly brought any significant change to the coverage patterns. The only notable change has come in Malala's status from a high-profile terror victim in 2012 to the most distinguished Nobel Laureate in 2014.

Despite different ideological strands, *Dawn* and *NYT* romanticize Malala as an indomitable individual character, using celebratory expressions such as "Malala was no ordinary target," (N11a), "A braveheart," "a young girl," (D6c), "a special case," "Malala's story is inspirational" (D6e), a "17-year-old coupled with a clarity of thought and an eloquence that can make cynics catch their breath and the world sit up and take notice."

Table 3: The use of nouns, pronouns, and metaphors in the editorial coverage of Malala in Dawn.

N 11	D 6
a. Malala was no ordinary target....	a. Yesterday, Pakistan's brave heart won the Nobel Peace Prize...
b. Malala "has become a symbol of Western culture in the area; she was openly propagating it," a [Taliban] spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan, told The Times.	c. From a young girl simply wanting to go to school in Swat Valley during the savage rule of the Pakistani Taliban to a global icon who represents the millions of children out of school in the world, whether for reasons of war, militancy or state neglect — Malala's story is inspirational on many levels.
c. Malala has shown more courage in facing down the Taliban than Pakistan's government and its military leaders.	d. Malala's latest award...should also make us reflect on how the state has failed in its obligations towards the people in many
d. The attack was an embarrassment for the Pakistani Army, which has boasted of pushing the Taliban from Swat.	
e. Words only have meaning if they are	

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 backed up by actions.

ways.

 e. Purveyors of intolerance and bigotry  
 have been tolerated for too long here  
 [Pakistan].
 

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The two dailies, asserting individualist attributes, separate Malala from the ordinary and banal settings of her struggle in the local context and graft her into the form of a celebratory “story” (D6c). This editorial treatment suits her image as a “global icon” (D6c). For *Dawn* anyone denying this story is an act that itself defines extremism. *NYT*’s editorial is focused more on the tangible features of militarization and militancy such as the Taliban, Pakistan military, Malala, etc.

#### *Comparative coverage of Dawn and NYT*

Despite winning accolades abroad, Malala’s visit to her own country has become a public debate in Pakistan. This is reflected in the language of *Dawn*’s editorial published after she won the Nobel. *Dawn* continued to write cautiously about the Pakistan army. Malala’s success abroad, for example, is offered as a grim reminder of Pakistan’s failure to protect its own citizens (D10c). But a reference to the “state” as a noun causes displacement here. The state is a faceless concept. It does not help explaining concrete identity and its related responsibilities.

*NYT* also identifies the lack of protection of civilians’ lives. But it nominates “Pakistan Army” as a responsible party, offering attack on Malala as “embarrassment” and an evidence of Pakistani state’s tolerance for the Taliban (N1d). Both the dailies portray Malala, the individual, as the “embodied” symbol of “uncommon courage.” *NYT* unfolds Malala’s “inspirational” (N1c) and calls the Taliban as “the savages,” while the Pakistan Army is portrayed as “non-serious” in eradicating the Taliban. Portraying Malala as a symbol of enlightenment, her shot to prominence is attributed to Western media’s exposure of her story. It is in this context that we need to understand the uncommon trend of *NYT* making a generous mention of another Western media outlet—the BBC—to let its readers know the British Broadcasting Corporation’s role in bringing Malala to “public attention” (N1a). The use of the pronoun “more” and the comparative preposition “than” (N11c) refers to the daily’s ideological lens working behind the celebratory portrayal of Malala. The “courage” of Malala is measured in relation to three vital structures: the Taliban, the Pakistani government and the Pakistan Army (N1c). The verbs “dislodge” and “pushing” (N1a) explains *NYT*’s lack of trust in the Pakistan military’s claim of defeating the Taliban in 2009.

**Discussion: Militarizing Malala:**

*NYT* and *Dawn* turn Malala's story into a discursive medium, asserting their positions on issues of strategic significance to the militaristic designs of their respective countries. Despite similarities in celebrating Malala's extraordinary role, the decontextualization of her character serves different ends. *NYT* presents Malala as a global enlightenment project against an obscurantist Taliban, a portrayal more in line with U.S. military interests in the region. *Dawn*, on the other hand, sees in Malala's story an opportunity to achieve a national consensus—to bring liberal and secular forces on the same page to make possible the defeat of militants as a physical force and a radical ideology.

Like *NYT*, *Dawn* endorses U.S. militarization, avoiding to critically engage with its immaterial aspects. For example, it is generally believed in Pakistan that drone strikes kill militants, but they fuel militancy. This critical notion identifies the devastating effects of deaths and destruction carried out in such strikes, provoking revenge in the local population. Not only the emergence of the Taliban in Swat is the outcome of this indiscriminate, imperialist violence, but social struggle in Swat itself was the counter current of militancy. Editorial lines of the two dailies, however, do not provide readers any clue about the global context of local violence, and emphasizes, instead, on the use of more military means to defeat militants.

Discursively, *Dawn* brands extremists as an “outgroup,” but do not avoid paying homage to the Taliban chief by prefixing his name with a respectable title of “Maulana” (D5a). Maulana, an Arabic word, is used in Pakistan as a title for a respectable leader or scholar, who, on account of it, derives social recognition from common people. ‘Taliban’ also is Arabic derivative of “Talib,” a substitute for English word “student.” Using respectable and socially revered terminologies for outgroup raises questions about *Dawn*'s discursive strategy and its capacity to understand local dynamics of militancy. The same is true about *NYT*'s projection of militants' identity and rhetoric. Unlike *NYT*, however, *Dawn* is located in the cosmopolitan Karachi city, where the network of Taliban militants conducts regular terror activities. Militants' involvement in the killing of journalists and attacks on media outlets is enough a reason to argue that the editorial line of *Dawn* is conscious of not tempting the wrath of the militants. Convoluted semantic expressions in *Dawn* are emblematic of the careful use of language, which is more evident in the case of the portrayal of the Pakistani military. Another issue is geographical proximity and the complicated local fallouts of global militarization. Writing since 2009 for the op-ed pages of *Dawn*

on issues related to militancy in the bordering areas of Pakistan, we offer here our personal experience to drive home this point. A couple of times the editorial team sought one of us's help before writing on militancy in the Pashtun-dominated bordering areas. Such contacts were carried out mainly because of our physical presence as part of the local community in the conflict-hit areas. It refers to the physical limitations of a cosmopolitan newspaper in Pakistan, which sometimes cannot understand local sensitivities of the complicated **global issues**.<sup>8</sup>

The two dailies analyze Malala and militarization from the position of power, a broad-brush treatment constructing marginalized communities in the image of the Taliban. With reference to the Taliban control in Swat, *Dawn* makes a metaphorical use of three nouns: "savage," "rule" and "environment" (D6c and D6f). If the Taliban were "savage," their "rule" in Swat gives an impression of a 'governing system.' 'Rule' is a noun with imperial underpinning. For the outside world such expressions, words, terminologies show as if people in Swat were consensual partners/subjects of the Taliban 'rule' and "Malala's...struggle was forged in this environment" (D6c). Were the Taliban public representatives? Who tolerated them, state or people? Such questions demand a critical understanding of a geographical and demographical context: critical understanding here means self-awareness of a journalist in relation to the conflict and news making. This kind of reflexivity, however, is at war with "objectivity" which undermines critical reflections promoting 'neutrality' and 'detachment.' "Professionalism overlooks its own contingent, ideological nature, and as such prevents reflection upon its complicity with structures and forms of military power and **interest**".<sup>9</sup> Reporting for metropolitan, national media or elite Western news outlets, journalists are less sensitive towards their contribution to the ideological construction of messages which benefit the larger design of power. The consequences of this approach reveal themselves in an increasing sense of abandonment in local communities. That is why Malala's coverage as a global icon is translated locally as a betrayal. In Swat, angry girls agitated against an official decision of renaming their school after Malala. Living in England it is still a question if Malala will be able to go back home, settle there and contribute to her community as she did before?

### Conclusion

We used CDA to unravel those ideological patterns that work behind the extraordinary celebration of one individual—Malala. Editorial focus on the extraordinary and extreme tendencies not only sees extremism all

over, this ideological representation also ignores the relevance of everyday collective struggle. One extraordinary experience is projected in a way to eclipse thousands of other ordinary and mundane moments of collective life in which struggle for a better world was carried out. Looking through this lens, Malala is the outcome of this collective social struggle, and not the totality of it unto herself. This struggle was the outcome of the state's inaction and apathy of the democratic institutions, a lukewarm response to global militarization, which raised serious questions about the potentialities of the ruling power in late capitalism. Malala's story is not really an individual account of a brave and insightful girl, she also is a social struggle against a predatory political system; a system that preys on marginalized ethnic community: a system in which a powerful military dictator arbitrarily decides to join an imperial alliance without taking into account reactionary backlash costing civilian lives. With reference to *NYT* and *Dawn*, we argue that focusing merely on Malala's ordeal is bound to engage readers deceptively by offering them text, which illuminates existentialist character of an individual identity without contributing in any enlightened way to the social conditions in which the identity is formed. In order to become 'extraordinary' should we expect every child to go through the same dreadful experience Malala and her community went through in Swat?

## Notes & References

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- <sup>3</sup> Irfan, Ashraf., What we wrote in the preceding lines is what the principal author also observed in his reporting on the valley from 2007 to 2010. As a participant in this study not only one of us introduced Malala to the *New York Times* star documentary producer Adam Ellick, but also conceptualized and co-produced the first documentary (*Class dismissed*, 2009) and assisted *The NYT's* crew in the second production (*A Schoolgirls' Odyssey*, 2009).
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., B. Ellick, A. and Irfan, Ashraf. *Class Dismissed: Malala's Story Times Documentaries.* Video Available at; <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/asia/100000001835296/class-dismissed-malala-yousafzais-story.html>, Accessed on October 09, 2012.
- <sup>5</sup> Fairclough, N., *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language:* (Routledge, 2013).
- <sup>6</sup> VAN, D., *Ideology and discourse: a multidisciplinary introduction.* (Barcelona. Ariel, 2003).
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