



RESEARCH PAPER

Journalism a Tool of ‘Civil Repair’ or ‘Othering’ in a Society: A Comparative Study of the ‘Christchurch Mosques Shootings’ and the ‘Easter Bombings’ in Sri Lanka

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: February 25, 2022</p> <p>Accepted: June 07, 2022</p> <p>Online: June 09, 2022</p> <p>Keywords: Christchurch Mosques Shootings, Civil Repair, Civil Sphere Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideological Square, Lexicalization, Orientalism, Othering Discourse, Solidarity Discourse, Sri Lankan Easter Bombings</p> <p>*Corresponding Author: muhammad.junaid@iiu.edu.pk</p>	<p>The world witnessed two horrific and the deadliest days for the mankind during March and April of 2019 when more than 321 innocent lives of Muslim and Christian worshipers were lost to the hands of religious extremists. Both the Muslims and the Christian were attacked while busy in their worships on their respective religious sacred days. The attacks contained clear intentions of exacerbating religious polarization in both the societies. The media around the globe vigorously and meticulously reported and commented on the incidents and produced a variety of discourses ranging from the ‘white supremacy’ to the ‘Islamist terrorism’ to the ‘polarization’ and to the need of ‘social solidarity’. Mass Media researchers around the globe have explored and analyzed these discourses and have determined the role of media in these critical times. This study is an attempt to find out whether and to what extent the New Zealand and the Sri Lankan media have performed the role of ‘civil repair’ by producing the ‘solidarity discourse’ as proposed by Jeffery Charles Alexander. Or, they have produced the ‘othering discourse’ as argued by Edward Wadie Said. Commissioning the ‘lexicalization’ and the ‘ideological square’ techniques from the Critical Discourse Analysis proposed by Teun Adrianus van Dijk the researcher has examined the editorials and the op-eds from the selected New Zealand and Sri Lankan newspapers. The findings are interesting in a sense that in case of the Christchurch shootings the ‘civil repair’ function of journalism is proved. While, in case of the Easter Sunday shootings in Sri Lanka the ‘othering’ is the predominant discourse.</p>

Introduction

Our world had to live through yet another two horrible days in 2019 when on March 15 and on April 21 more than 321 innocent people were brutally killed and hundreds of others were seriously injured while they were busy in their worships. A 28 years old terrorist in a live streaming opened fire and killed 51 Muslim worshippers during the Friday prayers inside the Al Noor Mosque and near the Linwood Islamic Centre of Christchurch, New Zealand. Just over a month later on April 21 reportedly eight terrorists carried out suicide attacks on three Churches and three luxury hotels in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo. The devastating attacks claimed 270 innocent lives and left around 500

injured including women and children worshippers. Muslims all around the world offer their prayers five times a day while Friday is the most significant and worshipful day among them as they gather in their mosques for the Friday prayer (Jumma Prayer) during mid-day (The New York Times, 17 March 2019).

On March 15, 2019, a heart clenching incident took place in Christchurch, New Zealand where Muslims were attacked by a gunman during their Jumma Prayer inside the Al Noor Mosque and near the Linwood Islamic Centre of Christchurch, New Zealand. Brenton Harrison Tarrant from Grafton, New South Wales, Australia who was living in Andersons Bay in Dunedin since 2017 in New Zealand, stormed into the mosques and started shooting at the worshippers while live streaming the whole incident on social media. He was planning this terrorist attack for the previous two years before the attack and chose the location three months before the attack. While he was going towards first mosque in his vehicle before the attack he was listening songs like Remove Kebab, a Serb nationalist and anti-Muslim songs and traditional military marching song. He entered the Al Noor Mosque, where 190 people, aging 03 to 77 years old including women, were attending Jumma Prayer. It was 1:40 p.m. when he started shooting at the people and killed 44 innocent people at the spot and 35 got injured. It showed his hatred towards Muslims he even didn't care about the children out there (Radio New Zealand, 17 March 2019).

After his brutal attack he rushed towards his second target which was Linwood Islamic Center, 5 kilometer away from Al Noor Mosque, where 100 people were offering the Jumma Prayer. According to the eye-witness Tarrant was unable to find the front door so he started firing outside and through the window which alerted the people inside the mosque. He killed 4 people outside the mosque. A worshipper Abdul Aziz Wahabzada ran out of the mosque to stop Tarrant who at that moment was picking another gun from his car. Despite of the resistance put up by Abdul Aziz the terrorist entered the mosque and killed 3 more people (AP News. 17 March 2019). After leaving the mosque at 1:55 pm Tarrant drove his car towards his third target in Ash Burton, 90 kilometers southwest of Christchurch. Fortunately, the terrorist was arrested at Brougham Street in Sydenham at 1:59 pm by a police unit. The whole scenes were being streamed live on Facebook for 17 minutes. Police found six guns two AR-15 style rifles, two 12-gauge shotguns and two other rifles from his car. They also confiscated two improvised explosive devices attached to his car which were later defused by the New Zealand defense force (nzherald.co.nz, 24 August 2020).

Tarrant was found to be the author of a 74 page manifesto titled 'The Great Replacement'. In his manifesto lot of anti-immigrants feelings and ideas were expressed. He argued that there should be no non-European immigrants in the Europe and that they (the immigrants especially the Muslims) didn't have right to live in the European society because they had invaded 'his' land and that they should be removed from 'his' society. On the March 26th of 2020, Tarrant found guilty and in August he was sentenced life imprisonment in New Zealand (The Atlantic, 15 March 2019).

On April 21, 2019 on the eve of the Easter Sunday another heart wrenching incident took place, this time, in Sri Lanka where three Churches, three five star hotels and housing complexes were attacked by eight suicide bombers. More than 269 innocent people including 45 foreign nationals and 3 policemen were killed in the horrified brutal attacks while 500 others were injured. The death toll increased to 270 afterwards (BBC, 21 April 2020). According to the Sri Lankan government officials all eight bombers were Sri Lankan citizens who were associated with a local Islamic militant group 'National Thowheeth Jamaaath'. Defense Minister Ruwan Wijewardena in the parliament session said that the incident was the reaction for the Christchurch Mosque Shootings on March 15, 2019 (Reuters, 24 April 2019).

Christian worshippers were attending Easter Sunday services when the first blast took place. More than 50 people were killed in first bombing attack at Shrine of St. Anthony, a historic catholic church in the capital Colombo at 8:25 am. The second attack was carried out in St. Sebastian's Church at 8:45 am in the Christian majority suburb of Negombo in which more than 100 people were killed. Fifteen minutes after the second attack 30 people were killed in the third attack at Zio Church. According to the Sri Lanka news media 93 people were killed at Sebastian's attack, In October 2019 BBC stated that 115 people died in Sebastian's attack in which 27 were children. BBC News claimed that the attackers were trying to film the attacks but due to the signal issues they failed to do that (BBC, 21 October 2019).

At the same time when the churches were being bombed, five-star hotels including the Shangri-La Hotel, the Cinnamon Grand Colombo, Tropical Inn in Dehiwala and the Kingsbury were also attacked by the terrorists. At 8:57 am bombers exploded themselves in the Shangri-La Hotel which was full of tourists at that moment. Later that day two more attacks occurred at 2:00 pm and 2:15 pm, one in the Tropical Inn and one in the Housing complex in Dematagoda. Two people were killed in the Tropical Inn and 3 police officers and 4 others including the bomber who was a pregnant woman were killed in Dematagoda (The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 April 2019).

Both the incidents had a serious and dreadful potential of creating polarization and chaos in both the societies. There is a plethora of research available which indicates that the media within the boundaries of a country and beyond play a role which cause a further polarization and create *us versus them* dichotomy (Abadi, 2017; Abadi et al., 2016; Celermajer, 2007; Colic-Peisker, 2016; Ghauri, 2019a; 2019b; Ibrahim, 2010; Jahedi et al., 2014; Jensen, 2011; Poole, 2016; Said, 1997; 2003; Umber, Ghauri & Haq, 2021). Sometimes these polarization and *us versus them* discourses are produced on the bases of race (Alsultany, 2012; Hall, 1992; Kabir, 2005; Sabido, 2015; van Dijk, 1992), sometimes on the bases of sex and gender (Beauvoir, 1997), sometimes on the bases of religion (Baker et al., 2012; Cesari, 2010; Creutz-Kämppi, 2008; d'Haenens & Bink, 2007; Esposito, 1992; Ghauri et al., 2020; Hafez, 2015; Mertens, 2016; Mertens & Smaele, 2016; Said, 1981), and sometimes on the bases of geography (Spivak, 1985). So, over the period of time the researcher around the globe have established that the media somehow become the source of exacerbating the already precarious situations like the Christchurch Mosques Shootings and the Easter Bombings in Sri Lanka.

Edward Said (2003) argued in his landmark work *Orientalism* that the West has a long understanding of self-superior aptitude over the 'inferior' *other* in the East i.e. the *orient* (also cited in Ghauri & Umber, 2019; Ghauri, 2017; Umber, Ghauri & Haq, 2021). Said's notion of orientalism revolves around the idea that the *other* was represented as freeze in time, exotic, primitive, misogynist, poor, backward, and dangerous as compared to the West i.e. the *occident* (Said, 1978/2003 also cited in Ghauri, 2017; Roy, 2009; Wadumestri, 2010). Simply saying the *other* means something separate and different from someone's self in the imperial and/or powerful (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013). The *othering* is also a deliberate effort to create one's own other in a 'marginalized', 'mastered', and 'excluded' way for the purpose of 'consolidating the self' (Spivak, 1985).

Similarly, Elisabeth Poole explored and pointed out that the UK press banked on and emphasized on the *othering, decontextualization, and categorization* as the predominant strategies while portraying Islam and Muslims in their news contents (Poole, 2016; 2002). Ghauri (2017) and Umber, Ghauri & Haq (2021) argued that the Australian newspapers contained a significant division and dichotomy in their editorial contents while covering Islam and Muslims during 2017 and 2017. The researchers found out a predominant discourse of *us versus them* wherein *them* i.e. Islam and Muslims were

marginalized and portrayed as economic burden, misogynist and threat to the Australian society. Ghauri, Haq & Alam (2021) also found out the Australian newspapers portrayed Islam and Muslims within and outside the Australian boundaries in a different way. The researchers argued that the discourse produced by the press regarding the Islam and Muslims within the boundaries of Australia i.e. the *National Islam/Internal Islam* contained positive, supportive and inclusive coverage as compared the Islam and Muslims outside the Australian boundaries i.e. the *Foreign Islam/External Islam*.

However, recent research findings have evidenced that apart from the typical *us* versus *them* and *in-group* versus *out-group* dichotomy and categorization there is a clear shift in the discourses regarding Islam and Muslims from the 'exotic Islam to the threatening Islam' (Mertens and Smaele, 2016). This transformation and shift in the discourse has been labelled as *securitization of Islam and Muslims* (Ghauri, 2019a; Ghauri, Umber & Warrich, 2020; Tsagarousianou, 2016; Umber & Ghauri, 2020). Roza Tsagarousianou (2016) argued that the discourse regarding Islam and Muslims in the European press had transformed from 'exotic Islam to the threatening Islam' wherein the Islam and Muslims had been portrayed as threatening to the European culture and security. Similarly, Ghauri (2019), Ghauri, Umber & Warrich (2020) and Umber & Ghauri (2020) pointed out the same shift in the discourses produced by the Australian newspapers in their editorials regarding Islam and Muslims in 2016-2017 wherein the Muslims, especially within the Australian boundaries, were portrayed as a threat to the Australian way of life and security.

However, apart from this negative role, the media do play a constructive role of bridging the gap between the conflicting poles in a society by producing the 'solidarity discourse' (Alexander, 2016; 2006; 1997; Forde, 2015; Friedland, 2007; Ghauri, Haq & Alam, 2022; Khan, Ghauri & Alam, 2021; Khan, Ghauri & Alam, 2021; Luengo, & Ihlebaek, 2019).

Jeffery C. Alexander (2016; 2006; 1997) argued that media was a 'communicative institution' in a society and just like other 'civil sphere' institutions the media also played the role of 'civil repair'. While there are various 'non-civil' and 'anti-civil' institutions the media assumed the place in a society as a 'vital center' by producing the 'solidarity discourse' and by mitigating and/or playing down the 'anti-civil' and 'non-civil' practices in a society during any conflict (2016). Drawing on the theoretical foundations provided by the *Civil Sphere Theory* proposed by Jeffery Charles Alexander (2006), Maria Luengo and Karoline Andrea Ihlebaek (2019) explored the communicative performative role of the journalism in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo case. The researchers explored if and how the newspapers in Norway, Spain and in the United Kingdom performed the 'vital center' role in the 'civil sphere' in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attack on January 07, 2015. Their findings evidenced that the newspapers constructed the *in-group* versus *out-group* patterns in a careful manner to avoid and minimize the 'polarization' between 'ordinary Muslims' and the mainstream society in the West. Most of the newspapers tried to construct the idealized 'civil sphere' beyond religion, race or nationality. The researchers concluded that the editorial discourse of most of the newspapers highlighting the attack as a radical act against the European 'core values' helped them to interpret the media discourses as a 'performative act' of restoring the 'vital center' in the 'civil sphere' (Luengo & Ihlebaek, 2019).

Similarly, drawing on the notion of the *Civil Sphere Theory*, Muhammad Junaid Ghauri, Amrat Haq and Riffat Alam (2022) tried to explore the existence and extent of the 'solidarity discourse' regarding Islam and Muslims in the Australian newspapers during January 01, 2016 to March 31, 2017. The researchers found out that the editorial contents of the *The Age*, a left wing and liberal newspaper, tried to emphasize on the 'cohesion', 'we-

ness' and 'understanding' with special reference to Islam and Muslims in Australia thus produced the 'solidarity discourse'. On the other hand, the findings revealed another significant aspect that *The Australian*, a right wing and conservative newspaper, did contain even a hint of the 'solidarity discourse' regarding Islam and Muslims during January 01, 2016 to March 31, 2017. Rather, the editorial contents of the newspaper portrayed Islam and Muslims as 'other' in the Australian society. So, the researcher came up with an interesting conclusion that the performative act of journalism is dependent on the ideological lines of the newspapers (Ghauri, Haq & Alam, 2022).

So, considering the literature reviewed and its findings it is pertinent to explore whether and to what extent the New Zealand and the Sri Lankan newspapers have performed the role of 'civil repair' by producing the 'solidarity discourse' as proposed by Jeffery Charles Alexander. Or, they have produced the 'othering discourse' as argued by Edward Wadie Said in the *Orientalism*. For this purpose two newspapers; *The New Zealand Herald* from New Zealand and *The Daily Mirror* from Sri Lanka have been selected. So, the study at hand is based on following objectives;

- To explore the editorial discourses produced by *The New Zealand Herald* and *The Daily Mirror* in the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosques Shootings and the Easter Sunday Bombings.
- To determine whether and to what extent the selected newspapers produced the 'solidarity discourse' and/or the 'othering' discourse in the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosques Shootings and the Easter Sunday Bombings.

Material and Methods

Data Collection, Sampling and Data Analysis

Both the newspapers; *The New Zealand Herald* and *The Daily Mirror* have been selected on the bases of high amount of circulation and readership in their respective countries. The focus of this study is on the editorial discourses because of the fact that the editorials are considered as the true reflection of the newspaper's policy. Also because the editorial contents truly serve the purpose of this study. As for as time period is concerned this study has focused on the two months' time after each incident i.e. March 16, 2019 to May 16, 2019 with respect to the Christchurch Mosques Shootings and April 22, 2019 to June 22, 2019 after the Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka. During the two month time period in both the dailies there were 11 and 08 editorials respectively published by the selected newspapers? Since the number editorials were not equal and were large in number so a sample of two editorials from each newspaper was selected. Following the census sampling approach, at the first stage, all the editorials were studied carefully and then a list of the most relevant editorials was prepared. Out of total editorials in both the list two editorials were selected as a sample from each newspaper. To select the desired sample size the lottery method in the non-probability sampling technique was employed. As a result following two editorials as a sample from each newspaper were selected;

The New Zealand Herald		
Sr #	Date	Headline
1	March 21, 2019	Hindsight is a poor guide to preventing terrorism
2	March 22, 2019	NZ's peaceful Muslim immigrants have earned our respect

Editorials selected from *The Daily Mirror*;

The Daily Mirror from Sri Lanka		
Sr #	Date	Headline
1	May 08, 2019	Terrorism, tourism and failed leaders
2	June 15, 2019	This Poison let us focus on other centeredness

Keeping in view the scope and objectives of this study the 'ideological square' and the 'lexicalization' approaches proposed by Tuen A. van Dijk (1998) from the premises of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have been employed to analyze the editorial contents of both the newspapers.

Van Dijk's (1998) approach of the 'ideological square' to examine the text is quiet relevant to the scope of this study in a sense that the approach helps the researchers to dig out *us versus them* ideology hidden in the text. The ideological square approach helps to determine the positive attributes attached with *us* and negative attributes attached with *them*. Similarly, van Dijk argued that the ideological square is all about highlighting *our* good, emphasizing on *their* bad, mitigating *our* bad and downplaying *their* good (Kuo & Nakamura, 2005).

On the other hand, the lexicalization is a technique engaged to discover and examine the use of the lexis for the sake of polarization in a discourse and/or text. Lexicalization is applied to examine the meanings and contexts of the text including all words and sentences. This technique of lexicalization is employed using lexical choices for instance employing positive and negative assertions within a text to construct *us/in-group* in favorable way and *them/out-group* in an unfavorable way (Umber & Ghauri, 2020).

So, to analyze the editorial contents of the selected newspapers, both the strategies have been employed relying on their suitability and appropriateness with the objectives of this study.

Results and Discussion

Following pages contain the analysis on the editorials published by *The New Zealand Herald* and *The daily Mirror*;

Analysis on The New Zealand Herald	
Date	Headline
March 21, 2019	Hindsight is a poor guide to preventing terrorism

The New Zealand Herald has shown us the expanding picture of the failure of New Zealand security agencies by using lexical items in a headline such as "Hindsight, poor guide, preventing terrorism" which indicates that merely watching is not the duty of security agencies, their duty is to take timely action to prevent these deadly incidents. This lexis also says that merely watching and spying on attackers will not stop these terrorist attacks it will happen more, and this is the failure of security agencies. The literal meaning of Terrorism is negative but lexically the word terrorism used in the headline gives positive meaning.

The first paragraph contains lexical items such as "Islamist New Zealander, terrorist of Islamic Kiwis, views online, amassing, cache, weapons, practicing shooting, gun club, unfair judge, poor teacher, how you might, averted, disaster, not how to prevent the next one" shows that security agencies failed in their duty to protect Muslim community because security agencies were merely watching attacker and his terrorist aims.

The lexis chosen by a newspaper in next paragraph such as “massacre, an intelligence failure, one extreme, political spectrum, Islamic community, about threats from anti-immigrant, racism, hails from Australia, intelligence agencies did not take immigrants warnings seriously, monitoring Islamophobic” is the continuation of the first paragraph which shows lexically that state, government and security agencies failed in the protection of their Muslim community because security agencies did not take warning of Muslim community seriously by an extreme-right terrorist. The Muslim community has been receiving threats from attackers.

This paragraph chose lexical items such as “examined, promised, failure, antagonism, threatens, lives, health or safety, seldom be explicit, anger and hatred, trite, complacency, civil liberties” shows that this newspaper has critically analyzed the Christchurch Mosque shootings and in result security agencies and state declared responsible and accountable for their failure. They failed to give protection to the people living in New Zealand. The attacker lives in New Zealand with his weapons, threatens ideas, and is practicing his shootings in the gun club but the security agencies and state failure to save the Muslim community from the attacker.

In term of Ideological Square, the newspaper has chosen lexical items such as “Now the question has to be asked, should the agencies have been watching him?... Ever since the massacre in the Christchurch mosques, commentators wise after the event have been calling it "an intelligence failure", which of course it was... Iranian-born Green MP Golriz Ghahraman told says the racism she hears has been rising in recent years... Defenders of civil liberties will need to watch the inquiry closely... Mass murder can happen here” contains that security agencies in New Zealand failed and there is rising racism in New Zealand about the immigrants. This newspaper has solidarity discourse that supports the civil repair and harmony among the communities in New Zealand. This discourse negates the ideology of ‘us’.

The Overall, the editorial has used lexis such as “terrorism, Islamist New Zealander, weapons, antagonism, Mass murder” literal meanings are negative but lexically these are used on the positive side to support the solidarity discourse which contains ‘civil repair’, ‘harmony’, ‘we-ness’, and ‘unity’ in the society. This newspaper supports the out-group and negates the concept of in-group.

Date	Headline
March 22, 2019, Friday	NZ's peaceful Muslim immigrants have earned our respect

The lexical items chosen in the headline such as “peaceful, Muslim immigrants, earned, respect” represent that there is space and respect for the Muslim community in New Zealand. The New Zealanders are accepting them as themselves and give them respect. lexis “peaceful” is used for the Muslim community of New Zealand and the Muslim community of New Zealand earned the respect of other non-Muslim communities of New Zealand.

The Lexical choices opted in the lead paragraph such as “shaken, eight years ago” contain that the Christchurch Mosque Shootings shaken and shocked the whole of New Zealand, from last eight years they never seen such a dreadful incident. “Shock, not seismic, human cause, members, the religious community gathered for prayer” shows that this shock was different from the eight years old because that was natural. This incident was caused by humans and the target was members of the peaceful religious community, who gathered for prayer. Lexis such as “Retrospect, how vulnerable they were, peaceful and safe place, they thought” shows that only survey can tell us how Muslim community was on target and Muslims are peaceful and they thought the same in New Zealand before Christchurch Mosque Shootings.

In the next paragraph, lexical items such as “They deserve... warmth, support, received, rest of New Zealand” contains huge respect and support to the wounded Muslim community of New Zealand. The lexis used “New Zealanders have been.... praised, world, embrace, Muslim compatriots, positive impact, political discussion, Western democracies” supported Muslims around the world, the support of New Zealanders to Muslim Community shows it to the world they should embrace them, they are peaceful. The rest of the world also praised this act of New Zealander and along with that brings a new chapter to the politics in western democracies. Because lexically “our Muslim community deserves” in West.

The third paragraph contains lexical items such as “This tragedy, helped us, know one of the world’s great religions” solidarity discourse and works for the ‘we-ness’ furthermore, lexis such as “Some Non-Muslim women, headscarves, solidarity, grief and, sadly, terror” shows that Muslim Community is practically supported by the New Zealanders in this sad, grief and terror time. More lexical items such as “no denying, Muslim community, not feel, safe, last Friday morning” shows that the Muslim community still live in fear and terror after the Christchurch mosque shootings and the people of New Zealand will support them to dispose of their fear. This discourse support ‘harmony’ and ‘we-ness’.

The last paragraph of the newspaper has chosen lexical items such as “detestable livestream video, exposed, shamed, hateful posts, perilous, reputation of Kiwis, Kiwis have done, extend to the Muslim community, respect, week of grief” disowned the attacker and his hateful Livestream video. This discourse also asked police to expose those who were supporting the motives of the attacker and shame them in public. According to this discourse after the attack on Muslims in Christchurch bring a bad image to the kiwis and kiwis won’t tolerate it as a result they started supporting Muslims and giving them respect.

According to Ideological Square, this newspaper contains lexis such as “The afternoon, though, was shaken by news from Christchurch, bringing back to mind that February afternoon eight years ago... The victims were members of a religious community gathered for prayer... New Zealanders have been widely praised around the world for their embrace of their Muslim compatriots” which shows that this discourse supports ‘Harmony’, ‘we-ness’ and works for ‘cohesion’ among the communities living in New Zealand. This discourse is inclusive, it also supports “them” over “us” and this discourse works for ‘Civil repair’.

Overall this newspaper contains the discourse of ‘solidarity’, ‘civil repair’, ‘harmony’, ‘we-ness’, and ‘cohesion’ and this discourse negates the negativity and division among the society of New Zealand. This discourse lies in the out-group and negates the in-group.

Analysis on The Daily Mirror

Date	Headline
May 08, 2019	Terrorism, tourism and failed leaders

The lexis used in editorial’s headline are *Terrorism, tourism* and *failed leaders* specify the failure of the political leaders in Sri Lanka after Easter Sunday bombings because there are almost no tourists after bombings and the country’s economy is based on number two on tourism and the political leaders are failed to convince the tourists from all over the world that Sri Lanka is now safe for tourism.

In the leading passage of the editorial the lexical items used such as Frustration, fallout, Easter Sunday, bombings, foreign-trained, jihadist group, point out, political drama,

fears, stranger, time bounded, action plans, Easter Sunday show that this discourse supports polarization and division among the different communities and religious followers in Sri Lanka where masses are already divided in ethnic and religious groups because of the link of the Easter Sunday attackers with a specific religion and in the same paragraph the editorial used some lexis for the solidarity and connectivity of the people who are divided in different groups in Sri Lanka the lexis used in editorial are *Tourism, contest, revived, representation, expressed, track record, stakeholders*.

In the second paragraph the editorial used lexis again in a very negative way but as compared to the first paragraph of the editorial the positive lexis are more than negative lexis such as *tourist hotels, western support, cause, clearly indicated, coordinated strategy, effort, better time, temporarily overlook, one voice, situation, satisfied, assurance of safety* produce solidarity discourse in the society as well as play the role of civil repair but on the other side the editorial used some lexis such as *three-decade-old war, LTTE terrorists, guerrillas, never attacked, differences, security measures, crisis situation, lack of trust* backing negativity, separations and polarization among the groups of various religions after Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka.

There is no single positive lexis used in the third paragraph of the editorial for the role of Civil repair and connectivity among religions and people effected by Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka the lexis items used in editorial are *Massacre, 250 innocent people, cold-blooded attacks, extremist Islamic organization, responsible, heinous crime, face covering, social divider, threat to national security*.

In the last paragraph of the editorial many lexis are used for Polarization, division, dichotomy and negativity such as *Attacks, security forces, explosives, weapons, future attacks, intelligence agencies, ongoing investigations, terrorists, which fought a 30-year-old war, national security, paying a hefty price, vacuum for extremist, Attacks, security forces, explosives, weapons, future attacks, risking, religious extremism, terrorism* after Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka in a very critical situation where masses are missing their love ones and feel terror about more attacks in the country, the editorial used some positive lexis as well but less than negative ones in the paragraph the such as *Reconciliation, peaceful and safe Sri Lanka, fully restored*.

The Ideological route of the editorial supports negativity more than positivity in the society and tried to make and forward people’s opinion against Muslims and blame Islam as a religion for the Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka by using the lexical items such as *The government took nearly a week to proscribe the extremist Islamic organization responsible for this heinous crime, which has been identified as a social divider and a threat to national security by many countries world over, Let us all rally behind our virulent security forces to wipe out the menace of religious extremism*.

Overall them of the editorial produced polarization and negativity by using the selected lexes and sentences in a particular mode for the particular belief in the backing of out-group which is opposition, polarization and divisions in the society even though editorial used many lexes and sentences for cohesion, solidarity and Civil repair but negativity for specific religion is highlighted more than positivity and solidarity in the society.

Date	Headline
June 15,, 2019	This Poison let us focus on other centeredness

The lexical items used in editorial headline such as *Poison, focus, centeredness* show that the Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka was like a toxin for the country’s peace and stability, Sri Lanka should learn from this kind of attacks and focus on mistakes done by the

intelligence agencies and the other concern authorities during Easter Sunday and this kind of attacks tell us to focus and stop anymore in future.

In the first paragraph of the editorial the lexis are used on both sides positively and negative but most of the lexis used are on the side of negativity and division among the people living in Sri Lanka such as *Conflict, terror attacks, attacks are known, small Islamic groups linked, international terror group, Islamic State, mainstream Muslims claim, brutal violence, no connection with Islam* on the other hand few lexis are used by the editorial in first paragraph for the role of civil repair, solidarity and connectivity in the society, the lexis items used are *thousands of devotees, religious, Non-violence, open-minded, sustainable way, among religions, , the April 21 Easter Sunday, churches, five star hotels.*

In the second paragraph of the editorial the lexis items used such as *Easter Sunday bombings, intelligence reports, killing of more than 260 people, human beings are often selfish* show again polarization, division among people of different groups of religions living in a critical time after Easter Sunday bombing where people lost their love ones and blaming each other for the attackers support and on the other side the lexis used are *Compromise, spiritual principle, preached by most, major religions, effective dialogue, selflessly and sacrificially, all religions could work together* in the second paragraph these lexis items are one the positive side and playing the role of civil repair and solidarity in difficult time after Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka.

In terms of the Ideological line the editorial supports and produces polarization, division, dichotomy in the society by mentioning the name of Islamic groups in the country and showing links of that groups with international terrorists groups and as well as tried to make and forward people's opinion against Muslims and blame Islam as a religion for the Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka by using the lexical items such as *The attacks ... carried out by small Islamic groups linked to the international terror group known as the Islamic State... mainstream Muslims claim that such brutal violence has no connection with Islam. Buddhism and other major religions tell us that human beings are often selfish or self-centered and seek personal gain or glory, We hope Poison produces such liberation whereby all religions could work together on poverty alleviation.*

Overall theme of the editorial is based on one side against Muslims and Islam as well as showing Islamic groups as a terrorists groups and linking them with the international terrorists groups in a very critical situation after Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka so we can say this editorial played the role of negativity and division among people.

Conclusion

At the outset of the study it was intended to explore the editorial discourses produced by *The New Zealand Herald* and *The Daily Mirror* in the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosques Shootings and the Easter Sunday Bombings in Sri Lanka. It was also proposed to determine whether and to what extent the selected newspapers produced the 'solidarity discourse' and/or the 'othering' discourse in the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosques Shootings and the Easter Sunday Bombings in Sri Lanka. The results of the study are very interesting. In the aftermath of the Christchurch mosques shootings it is evident from the findings that the selected newspapers explicitly performed the role of 'civil repair' by assuming the position of the 'vital center'. *The New Zealand Herald* assumed its place in the society as a 'vital center' by producing the 'solidarity discourse' and by mitigating and/or playing down the 'anti-civil' and 'non-civil' practices in the society in the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosques Shootings. The findings of this study have evidenced that the newspaper constructed the *in-group* versus *out-group* patterns in a careful manner to avoid

and minimize the 'polarization' between 'Muslims' and the mainstream society in New Zealand. The newspaper tried to construct the idealized 'civil sphere' beyond religion, race or nationality. So, in terms of the discourses produced by *The New Zealand Herald*, it can be concluded that the editorial discourse highlighted the attacks as a radical act against the 'core values' of the New Zealand society. Therefore, the editorial discourses in *The New Zealand Herald* can be interpreted as a 'performative act' of restoring the 'vital center' in the 'civil sphere'.

On the other hand, the findings from the editorial contents of *The Daily Mirror* show that the 'civil repair' role proposed by the *Civil Sphere Theory* is evidently absent in the aftermath of the Sri Lankan Easter Sunday Bombings. Rather, the predominant discourse in the newspaper's editorial contents is the 'othering' wherein the Muslims have been collectivized and the religion of Islam has been maligned in the wake of terrorist attacks carried out by the perpetrators associated with a local Islamist terrorist group. Here, the notion of 'othering' and 'securitization' of Islam is established in a way that an act of a group has been conflated with the Islamic ideology and Muslims as a whole. The newspaper did not particularly incriminate all the Muslims nor the whole Islamic ideology as a religion but the words, adjectives and the overall theme it produces regarding Islam and Muslims give an impression as if the root cause behind the terrorist attack was the Islamic ideology. If we compare the commentary on both the incidents i.e. the Christchurch mosques shootings and the Sri Lankan Easter Bombings, one can easily find out that in former case the responsibility has been fixed on the individual while in the latter case the perpetrators' ideology has been maligned.

So, in nutshell it can be concluded that in case of the Christchurch terrorist attack the journalism performative role of 'civil repair' is proved. While in case of the Sri Lankan Easter Sunday bombings the 'othering' discourse has been proved. In this case the 'civil repair' role was not performed by the newspaper. In this case the newspaper's editorial discourse actually fanned the fire light by the 'anti-civil' and 'non-civil' actors and caused a further polarization in the society.

There could be multiple reasons and explanations to this trend including the fact that in case of the New Zealand incident the core values of the majority were at stake. The perpetrator of the terrorist act was from the mainstream and majority of the society. And, that the trend of 'othering' is only associated with Islam and Muslims by the global media all around the world. Hence, the newspaper could afford to perform the idealized role of the 'civil repair' which is, by all means, a fruitful trend for the society. While, in case of the Sri Lankan incident the perpetrators of the terrorism were from the minority and associated with an ideology which was already the target of the 'othering', 'securitization', and 'exclusion'. It was easy to produce the stereotypical discourse which cannot be taken as beneficial for the society by any means. According to the *Civil Sphere Theory* proposed by Jeffery C. Alexander the media being 'vital center' in a society can enhance 'civil solidarity' only by encouraging the 'civil sphere' and by discouraging the 'anti-civil' and 'non-civil' actors in the society.

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