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Paper

Radicalization and Media

Who influences whom and how in Pakistan?

Paper

Radicalization and Media

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Radicalism is one of the major issues confronting the state and society in Pakistan. Its roots can be traced long before Pakistan came into being in 1947. It has been spreading deeper and farther throughout the country's history. Various actors and factors have played their role in this spread. The Pakistani media, which has recently acquired a certain level of vibrancy, has always been a factor in the radicalization of individuals, groups and organizations. But, ironically, it has also been a victim of the radicalized segments of society. The phenomenon of radicalization and the media in Pakistan have been influencing each other. This study has been conducted to find out the manner of such influence -- the degree to which the media is under pressure from radical groups, and, the extent of our media's to the process of radicalization.

It seems appropriate to begin with the point that successive governments as well as the media have failed to formulate an effective policy to maintain a balance in programs and coverage. The result is that rigid militant and radical forces have acquired a dominating position in society.¹

Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in the research for this paper. The research work consisted of three phases; data collection, analysis, and report writing. Data was collected through a survey, media monitoring, and interviews. A questionnaire was designed for a survey to collect responses of journalists and media persons. A three-member team conducted the survey from July 1 to September 10, 2008. The responses were used to measure the impact of radicalization on the media, and vice versa. Newspapers and magazines, both from the mainstream and radical media, were monitored for one month. The monitoring was meant to find out: (a) the media's attitude towards the phenomenon, and (b) the difference between the treatment of the issue by the mainstream and radical media.

Sixteen journalists and media persons, including editors of newspapers and magazines, were interviewed. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The responses and data collected through the questionnaire were codified, tabulated, and analyzed.

The questions which have been addressed in this paper include:

- (i) How does the phenomenon of radicalization impact the media?
- (ii) How do radical groups and organizations pressurize the media?
- (iii) What kind of threats do radicals use against the media?
- (iv) Does the media glorify radicals? If so, how?
- (v) What are the media's weaknesses in covering and reporting about radicals and related events?
- (vi) Does the radical media influence the mainstream or is influenced by it?
- (vii) What are the problems faced by the media in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and in the NWFP?

The media has been involved in the process of radicalization in Pakistan from the very beginning. In the early 1950s, the government of Punjab used the media to promote and propagate radical views. The government's Directorate of Information funneled money to the newspapers that campaigned against Ahmadis. The matter was disclosed to an inquiry committee and Hameed Nizami of the *Nawa-e-Waqt* Group also confirmed it.²

The policies of Pakistani newspapers range from one extreme to the other. For example, *Daily Times* has an anti-radicalization policy. Other newspapers have a very pro-radicalization policy, for example, Urdu daily *Nawa-e-Waqt*. The paper has assigned a full page to Taliban's coverage. It identifies Taliban and terrorists as 'militants'. Similarly, another Urdu daily newspaper's chief editor attends the congregations organized by the Jamaat ud-Da'awa and Tablighi Jamaat, as a keynote speaker.³ While every newspaper has its own policy, the media cannot be isolated from other segments of society. Social factors do influence it.⁴

During General Zia-ul-Haq's regime, it was planned to influence the media, states Mubashir Bokhari, an experienced journalist presently working as a director with GEO English, a private TV channel. He says that since the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) was very close to General Zia and the General used it in the Afghan War; many of JI's people penetrated the media.⁵ "Almost all of the *Al-Hilal* staff comes from the Jamaat-i-Islami," says Hussein Naqi.⁶ Bokhari further adds:

"Founders of the Punjab Union of Journalists (Dastur) were from the JI. Currently, the Union has around 300 members. That means that at least 300 people in our media have been promoted and supported by the religious parties. Later on, people from the Sipah-i-Sahaba and Sipah-e-Muhammad also joined the media. These were militant groups, taking people's lives in the name of their respective ideologies. Their people infiltrated the media. They also hired people and used them to their own ends. These people do not influence the policy directly. However, if a person sitting in a newsroom or a reporting section is working with a certain frame of mind, he has the opportunity to overplay or underplay a certain piece of news."⁷

In the words of Rauf Sheikh,⁸ radical groups have 'planted' their people in the media. They have placed them there to change the whole thinking, he asserts. To a large extent, their thought has changed many newspapers' policy. They do not report social activities. "They had the kite flying festival of Basant, Punjab's greatest festival, banned," says Sheikh. The Pakistani media encourages radicals indirectly. For example, its coverage of the Lal Masjid standoff in 2007 was one-sided. Similarly, other issues were reported in a biased manner.⁹ News regarding the stance of banned militant and religious organizations are reported frequently. All they do is add the word 'banned' before mentioning their names. "Such organizations are getting full-fledged coverage; their statements appear in the media; they are being projected either by design or by default," observes Professor Mehdi Hassan, who heads the Department of Mass Communication of Beaconhouse University, Lahore.

Because of the competition among newspapers and TV channels, radical issues get more coverage than they deserve. Minute events are exaggerated. Even if a firecracker goes off somewhere, the media reports a bomb explosion and states the police were trying to identify the location. Radicals are encouraged by this. Spokesmen for the Taliban get extensive coverage in the media. Groups sitting in Bajaur or elsewhere, who are not involved in such activities, sometimes claim responsibility for bomb

explosions. In fact, they feel pride in it. Four or five people get together and form a group under an Islamic or *jihadi* name¹⁰ and start boasting about committing such awful actions.

However, some journalists believe that radical groups only get partial coverage. Statements by only one or two people from the Tehrik-e-Taliban are published or broadcast.¹¹ Radicals do not even have access to the media.¹²

The institution of gatekeeper is missing in our media, says Professor Mehdi Hassan. A media person should act as a gatekeeper. A news reporter or editor has to decide that if certain news will do more harm than good then they should not be released. The gatekeeper is absent in the print and electronic media.

The media is coerced. It gets into trouble for not giving 'proper space' to these people, remarks Khalid Farooqi, editor of Urdu daily *Awaz*, Lahore.¹³ Another problem, he comments, is that the Pakistani electronic media has emerged recently and its workforce lacks proper training. "That is a big problem," he says. When journalists in the print media write something they have some time, hence, a degree of control over what goes to the press. Subsequent review and editing of their writings also incorporates controls. But this process is missing in the electronic media. That is one of the factors for radical issues being frequently mishandled by Pakistani TV channels. The electronic media reporter has too much room. Also, the Pakistani print media also has the experience of around one and a half century, something the electronic media lacks.¹⁴

Urdu daily *Aajkal* published a cartoon depicting Umm-e-Hisaan (Lal Masjid cleric Abdul Aziz Ghazi's wife) who was one of the three prominent figures during the Lal Masjid standoff with government troops. The newspaper was openly threatened to prepare for the consequences of publishing the cartoon. Elements from Lal Masjid raised slogans against the newspaper after Friday prayers. They accused the newspaper of being anti-jihad and threatened to "teach them a lesson". Threats were also made over the editorial policy of the newspaper. Media representative bodies, including the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) condemned the threats by Lal Masjid clerics over the newspaper's views about radicalization in the country. The PFUJ called the threats an attempt to silence the voice of dissent. The CPNE also condemned the threats. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expressed its concern.¹⁵ The clerics' reaction and threats were despite the fact that a PFUJ member, Javed Khan, had died while covering the military operation at the mosque in July 2007. Another journalist was seriously injured.

Pakistani newspapers and TV channels have suffered 163 attacks since 1977. At least 28 journalists have been killed, all by these people.¹⁶ Radicals are a constant source of pressure for the media. Though the threat is much higher in the NWFP and FATA than elsewhere in the country, Khawar Naeem Hashmi, whose association with journalism began in 1970, observes that the level of pressure on a journalist sitting in a city like Lahore or Karachi, is no less than that his colleagues face in FATA.¹⁷ The media is not reporting freely and perhaps cannot do so.¹⁸ The media is blamed for publishing 'anti-Islamic' material if something is published against radicals.¹⁹ "Nothing can be published against them," says Khaled Ahmed of Daily Times.²⁰

If someone is among the exceptions of a suicide attacker, he would like to remain among the exceptions, argues Khaled Ahmed. He would talk, he explains further, in compliance with the suicide attacker's opinion. It explains the media's attitude and behavior. It wants to be among the exceptions of the would-be suicide attacker by championing the cause of freedom of expression.²¹ Pakistani journalists are free to criticize the government but cannot do so with respect to religious fanatics.²²

The media is not a homogenous entity in Pakistan. I.A. Rahman divides it into two categories, the English and Urdu media.²³ Both differ in significant aspects, including the extent and style of their coverage. "From the very beginning, the Urdu media has believed that most of the Pakistani people are conservative and caters to their conservatism," says I.A. Rahman. The media strengthens their conservatism rather than helping its audience get rid of it. In this way, our media promotes militancy, consciously or unconsciously.²⁴ The Urdu media encourages radicals because that has commercial value. It does so to increase newspapers' circulation and popularity. Sometimes, state or non-state agencies get them to create a certain impression or hype.²⁵ Sympathy for militants and radicals is found in the Urdu media in one form or the other, whereas the English media in Pakistan has shown maturity of sorts.²⁶

The media needs its audience, that is why no newspaper or magazine is free of radical content, asserts Naqi. Only a small section of the media has an enlightened point of view. Many of them "are just investors. Some of them are smugglers - heroine smugglers, gold smugglers, even arms smugglers. They have entered the media industry. They have mostly influenced the Urdu press, which seems to be completely in their grip."²⁷

Asked whether radical organizations pressurize the media, Naqi responded: "Indeed they do. They even tell the newspapers what the headline will be, how much display a certain news will have, and, further, they threaten them that the paper can only be published if their demands are complied with. Otherwise they will be destroyed. They cannot dare to go against radicals' demands."

Our society is paternalistic. To beat or kill someone is taken as a symbol of courage. Such acts are presented by the media in a manner that encourages people to commit similar acts.²⁸ "I believe the media has played a major role in promoting violence in Pakistan, the Urdu media in particular, and the English media to a lesser extent," asserts I.A. Rahman.

The media sees the phenomenon of radicalization as a source of hot news. The media focuses on an ongoing conflict. It presents radicals as heroes, thus becoming an instrument for them. Particularly, during the Lal Masjid standoff, the media oscillated like a pendulum. First, it raised the civil society's voice that the state must establish its writ. When action was taken, the media blamed the state. The media is not analyzing things sensibly and critically. It is adding to instability, perhaps because the freedom enjoyed by the media is somewhat new. There is no guideline. If there is any, it is very populist -- that the channel will become popular, regardless of the possibility that it will harm the survivability of freedom of expression in future. This is a very dangerous trend.²⁹

Some experts object to the use of the term 'radicalization'. Mayed Ali is one of them. It has been "coined by the West, I don't agree with it," he said.³⁰ I.A. Rahman, also disagrees with the term 'radicalization' and calls it 'militant sectarianism'. He observes that the Pakistani media is promoting this phenomenon.

In fact, the media benefits from it and promotes it because, in its opinion, conservatives are in majority in the society and this majority likes these things, argues I.A. Rahman.

An element of fear has permeated our society. And, that is affecting our media as well. Presently, things are being reported in an environment of fear, says Waseem Ahmed Shah, resident editor of English daily *Dawn* in Peshawar.³¹ Because of this fear, media representatives and reporters are not reporting the things they know. Readers and viewers are not getting appropriate information. Reporters feel an increased fear while covering big incidents. For example, if a militant commander is killed the reporters covering the incident and the burial ceremony are not sure how the militants will react to the coverage.³²

Radical organizations want coverage because they want to spread their message. The media is aware of that and is giving them extensive coverage to please them. Though many articles have been produced against the Taliban, an element of sympathy for them exists.³³

Although, most of the journalists believe that the phenomenon of radicalization has negatively influenced the media, exceptions exist. "There is no negative impact of the phenomenon on the media as such," says Mayed Ali. They do not exert any pressure, asserts Asim Hussein.³⁴ But, the media, says Hussein, has to report the continuing violence on a daily basis and while doing that it also has to give the background that these people are Taliban.³⁵ This view is held by a small minority, but it does exist. According to this view, the government is trying to stop the media's interaction with these people, so that the government can brand them as it likes. It says the language being used by the government is influenced by the West. The liaison between the journalist and the community is missing. The information is very sketchy and is coming from untrained journalists.³⁶

How do radicals pressurize the media? Methods, tools and techniques:

According to many journalists and media persons, radicals use all kinds of tactics, "whatever they have",³⁷ to pressurize the media. Sometimes radicals threaten the newspapers, journalists and TV channels openly and sometimes the threats are veiled. They write anonymous letters, make phone calls, or send emails. They also bribe the media.³⁸ News editors and reporters are scared of writing against radicals. This way, the threats become successful and radicals achieve their objective.³⁹ "We often have to call for police protection to go home," said a leading Lahore-based journalist of the threats.

In 1981, Urdu daily *Jang* published a news item against the Islami Jamiat Talaba, a student organization. Students in two buses arrived at the newspaper's office and set it on fire. No news has appeared in the paper against the organization since then.⁴⁰

Some radical groups want to maintain their interaction with the media. They demand that their view should be published and broadcast more and more. Some journalists write against them but still enjoy a good relationship with them; basically because they are not being professionally dishonest. Radical groups probably also recognize or acknowledge that. However, they create problems when they suspect a journalist is working for a government agency.⁴¹

Sometimes radicals ask journalists to resign if they want to live. One can imagine the severity of problems the media community faces in a country where radical groups threaten journalists to quit their

jobs to save their lives, says Hashmi. The Pakistani journalist, he says, is courageous and, the media is representative of the people. He asserts that the Pakistani media is playing its role against extremism and extremists.

Khaled Ahmed is a leading writer on radicalization in Pakistan. In an interview with this writer, he said, "We are under threat from the Lal Masjid. We have stopped everything. We have stopped writing (against them). We have become apologetic. They say, 'We will bomb you the next time you write against us'."

Radicals threaten to kidnap or physically harm journalists' children on their way to or from school. Not only do they threaten reporters and commentators they also threaten newspaper and TV channel owners and entire media organizations. They exert their pressure from the bottom to the top.⁴² Naqi named a leading critic of radicals, who, he said, has to get the support of one of the groups or pay money to certain groups for protection. Most of the newspapers, he adds, have to pay protection money and provide 'protection jobs'.

"The media has come under immense pressure because of radicalization," says Imtiaz Alam, "it has imposed self-censorship." Journalists prefer to write on issues like the economic situation, or produce reports or commentaries on international issues but do not discuss the phenomenon of radicalization much.⁴³

A minority among journalists says that radicals do not threaten the media at all. Hussein observes:⁴⁴ "The middle and lower parts of the country are totally free from their influence. Only in Peshawar, you can say that the newspapers or bureaus might be feeling their influence because of physical proximity. Otherwise there is nothing like that."

Is our media not writing for fear of radicals? "No, no. Not at all. Rather our media is condemning them. It is not addressing the real issue. Our media is influenced by Western media and tows their line," adds Hussein.

Glorification of radicals by the media

"Our media is inadvertently glorifying militants," said Waseem Ahmed Shah, speaking at a media workshop on the subject held by Pak Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) in Peshawar on August 21, 2008. The reason is that journalists are mostly untrained. They have not been educated on working in a hostile environment amid a full-scale militancy. They are not trained on how not to glorify terrorists and militants while reporting. Waseem said that there is a very thin line between reporting militancy- and terrorism-related issues and glorifying militants and terrorists. "It's not just our national media organizations glorifying them. International media entities like BBC's Urdu and Pashto services are glorifying them even more."⁴⁵ All of the news channels feel privileged broadcasting footage of statements from Taliban leaders and spokesmen, he said.

Use of terms

According to I.A. Rahman, using words like *jihad* or *shaheed* (martyr) is the highest form of propaganda. Radical groups, organizations, and their leaders are very conscious of that. They notice it seriously. Khaled Ahmed thinks that they might mind if someone calls them extremists. But, they may be less angry if they are called militants or warriors. Sometimes, media organizations receive anonymous calls asking why a certain person was referred to as 'killed' and not 'martyred'. "There is a headline in today's *Nawa-e-Waqt* that such and such Taliban were 'martyred,' says Imtiaz Alam. "All of the newspapers," he says, "write 'Shuhada-e-Lal Masjid' (martyrs of the Red Mosque). If someone does not write that he will come under pressure, he says. "If all newspapers refer to them as 'martyrs,' then anyone not mention them as such will be pinpointed and receive threatening phone calls," remarks Imtiaz. "They seriously object to these things," says Sheikh. Offices of two newspapers were burnt in Waziristan because they were accused of not using 'appropriate words' for Taliban casualties.⁴⁶

Shaheen Bunerri shares a personal account: "I was reporting from Swat and militants used to call me, asking why I had written that their people had been 'killed'. 'They were not killed, they were martyred', they would say. We also faced pressure from state agencies. They used to say, 'Our soldiers have been martyred'. Sometimes, it gets very difficult for a journalist."⁴⁷

Some journalists disagree that radicals attach much significance to the terminology used by the media. Mazhar Abbas, deputy director of ARY News channel and secretary general of Pakistan Union of Journalists, commented that radicals do not take the terminology very seriously. However, it does happen at a certain level, he said.⁴⁸

Radical Media's Impact on Mainstream Media

The radical media does not influence Pakistan's mainstream media as such. In certain cases, however, people from the former join the latter. These people then go back to work for their own radical papers. Thus, radical groups use the mainstream media as a 'training sanctuary'.⁴⁹ While they work for the mainstream media, they manage to get favorable coverage for their groups. Some journalists believe that the radical media does not influence the mainstream media directly but through society.⁵⁰

Media and Radicals in NWFP and FATA

FATA and parts of NWFP are hard-hit by militancy and violence. The media is under immense pressure in these areas. Six journalists have been kidnapped and killed in FATA in the last two and a half years. Others have been severely injured. "A few days ago, one of our colleagues escaped an abduction attempt but received three bullet wounds," said Sailab Mehsud, chief editor of weekly *Karwan-e-Qabail*. Another colleague remained unaccounted for for around six months. He then fled captivity and was shot and injured while trying to get back home. Tribal Union of Journalists vice president Abdullah was killed in a bomb blast. Another journalist, Naseer Afridi, was killed in crossfire between two groups. Tribal journalism is at the mercy of militancy and radicals. Threatening letters have been sent to Sailab Mehsud himself. He was warned of being kidnapped and killed if he did not quit journalism. Dozens of journalists from FATA, particularly, from South Waziristan Agency, have been forced to migrate to other parts of the country.⁵¹

Working as a journalist in FATA is not an easy task. Difficulties faced by journalists in the area “are unparalleled all over the world”. Truth cannot be reported at all. Only those reporters who enjoy a position of influence in the area can dare to do so. In the prevailing circumstances, journalists cannot perform their duties as they should. If a journalist writes something against the Taliban, he is scared of being kidnapped and killed. A tribal journalist was fined Rs. 150,000 for reporting a piece of news. Later, Rs. 50,000 were waived off and he paid the rest of the ‘fine’.⁵² Some journalists have received letters demanding that the death of any foreigner in the tribal belt should not be reported.⁵³

Journalists do not even carry their media organizations’ cards with them for fear of being beaten, kidnapped or killed. Religious organizations and Taliban see journalists as American agents. “However, Baitullah Mehsud announced in a press conference that they respected journalists and that he had told his men that they were responsible for journalists’ safety,” said Sailab Mehsud. He said the situation was much better than before in areas controlled by Baitullah. But he admitted that it could not be said that the tribal journalist is safe and secure. A journalist working in FATA can be beaten, kidnapped or killed for any reason, he said.

Following a recent media report that some Taliban had joined another group in Bajuar Agency, a cleric announced on FM radio that all journalists must be killed. The situation became very alarming for the media community in the area. Jirgas were called and efforts made to convince clerics that newspapers have their own policies and journalists cannot be held responsible for everything and should be forgiven.⁵⁴ The writ of the state does not exist in certain areas of Bajuar and Mohmand agencies. In fact, Taliban groups are running affairs of the state there. Reporting from there is very difficult.⁵⁵

Media monitoring: Newspapers and magazines representing radical groups and organizations are referred to as *radical* media in this paper. Representative newspapers and magazines from both the radical and mainstream media were monitored for one month – July 2008 – to gauge radical content in their coverage. For the sake of analysis, items related to the subject were divided into three categories, (a) highlighted issues (headlines), (b) organizational activities (headlines), and (c) articles and editorials (titles of articles and editorials).

Fourteen papers – eleven dailies⁵⁶ and three weeklies⁵⁷ – were monitored from the mainstream media. Twenty-eight items were tabulated from the papers in total. Out of these, 21 were related to the category of ‘highlighted issues’, one to ‘organizational activities’ and six to the ‘articles and editorials’ category.

Headlines included Hanif Qureshi’s⁵⁸ statement that an onslaught of western and Indian culture against Muslim culture was going on;⁵⁹ a statement by Lashkar-e-Islam’s spokesperson that the group’s chief Mangal Bagh would not leave the area and that they were working for the implementation of *Shariah*;⁶⁰ Mangal Bagh’s statement that he will continue his fight appeared in Urdu daily *Khabrain*;⁶¹ another statement quoted him that the Lashkar-e-Islam will not end patrols in Bara.⁶² Hizbul Mujahideen’s resolve to fight against the US and NATO in Afghanistan made a headline in English daily *The Post*.⁶³ A cleric, Zaman Chishti’s statement appeared in Urdu daily *Mashriq* that any plot to harm madrassas (seminaries) will be resisted.⁶⁴ Madrassas, he said, wage a jihad against social evils. On July 18, many of the papers carried a statement by Baitullah Mehsud – in which he threatened the NWFP government to resign within five days – as the lead story.

The only significant event reported during the month in the mainstream media was the Shuhada-e-Lal Masjid Conference. Articles and editorials included Sultan Siddiqui's 'Rumours and atmosphere of terror in NWFP',⁶⁵ Sajjad Satti's 'If death sentence is abolished, pray for killers',⁶⁶ 'Will fate of NWFP not change?'⁶⁷ by Asif Nisar Ghayathi, Zahid-ur-Rashidi's 'Successfully held Shuhada-e-Lal Masjid Conference and new challenges',⁶⁸ Hashmat Habib's 'Markaz Ghazi Shaheed'⁶⁹ and 'A new hype of talibanization in Karachi' by Abdul Qasim Siddiqui.⁷⁰

In his article, 'Markaz Ghazi Shaheed', Hashmat Habib sympathized with the Lal Masjid administration and madrassa students. He criticized the government and likened the operation at Lal Masjid to the Battle of Karbla, a battle fought between Imam Hussein⁷¹ and the forces of Yazid. The writer also criticized the political parties which used the Lal Masjid issue as a slogan in their electoral campaigns but did nothing after the elections to condemn the operation. He also criticized NGOs for not assisting with the rehabilitation of those affected by the operation.

Though a section of the mainstream Pakistani media apparently strives for impartiality, it consciously or unconsciously favors and glorifies radical groups, individuals and their activities.

Radical Media: Four newspapers and magazines were monitored from the *radical* Pakistani media.⁷² Fifty-nine items were tabulated in all. Thirty-eight out of 59 were related to 'highlighted issues', nine to 'organizational activities' and 12 to the 'articles and editorials' category. Out of 38 items in the first category, nine (almost one-fourth) focused on Afghanistan. Kashmir was the subject of six items. Eight items were against the US, India, Israel and Qadyanis; five about jihad, jihadis and jihadi organizations; another five about Lal Masjid, Jamia Hafsa and madrassas; and two about the Islamic political system. Un-Islamic practices, Pakistan's foreign policy and Pak-Iran trade featured in one item each.

Nine items in the 'organizational activities' category covered seminars, conferences, and conventions (4 items), fundraising (2 items) and a training workshop. Training courses included an 'Islamic Training Course' and an 'Arabic and English Language Course'. Twelve articles and editorials discussed issues like US domination, Lal Masjid, tributes to Maqsood Shaheed (a former *jihadi*), glorification of jihad and Mujahideen, American conspiracies against Islam and Muslims, blasphemous caricatures published in the West, and abolition of the death penalty. They condemned the Lal Masjid operation and publication of blasphemous caricatures. In one of the articles, Maulana Mansoor argued that the government was using the Taliban issue and madrassas for financial gains from western countries.⁷³

Comparing Mainstream and Radical Media: With 28 items in 14 mainstream papers and 59 items in just four radical papers, it is clear that there is no comparison between the extent of radical coverage by the two media categories. The language used by the radical media is also far more extreme and full of rhetoric than that of the mainstream media. The most fundamental difference between the two, however, is their choice of terminology. Terms like *jihadi*, militant, killed, martyred have very strong connotations. Their use completely alters the impression conveyed by a report or article. Militants who die are called 'martyrs' by the radical media. Soldiers who lose their lives fighting radicals are regarded as 'martyrs' by the government. The mainstream media is caught in a dilemma. Who is 'martyred' and who is 'killed.' If the media regards a soldier as 'martyred' radical groups get angry and pressurize the media. This gives a glimpse of the immense pressure the mainstream media works under.

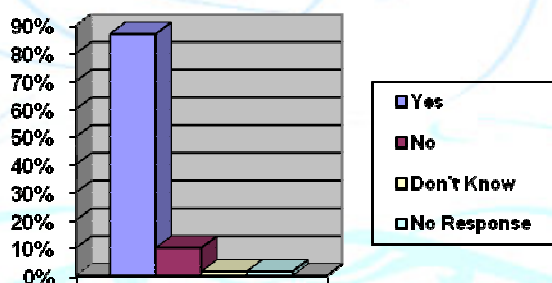
Survey Analysis

The survey was conducted to gather responses of 68 journalists to 13 questions. Out of the 68 respondents, 39 were from FATA and the NWFP, 11 from Rawalpindi and Islamabad, 10 from Lahore and eight from Azad Jammu and Kashmir. An effort was made to maintain a gender balance but female representation is visibly low in Pakistani media. Moreover, few female journalists have an understanding of the subject, because they mainly cover subjects like women rights, sports and culture, etc. Among the respondents, 59 (87%) were male and nine (13%) female. An analysis of the collected responses is furnished in the following lines.

The following table shows that an overwhelming majority (87%) of Pakistani journalists responded positively when asked if radicalization is having an effect on Pakistani media. An analysis of the questions asked and the responses received follows.

Q. 1. Do you think that the phenomenon of radicalization is making some impact on Pakistani media?

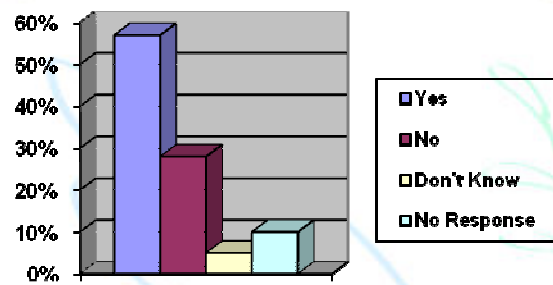
Responses	Percentage
Yes	87%
No	10%
Don't Know	1.5%
No Response	1.5%



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Q. 2. Is our media concealing the facts regarding the phenomenon of radicalization?

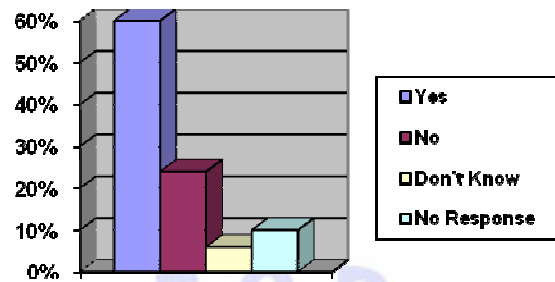
Responses	Percentage
Yes	57%
No	28%
Don't Know	5%
No Response	10%



Q. 3. Other important issues are not being covered properly because too much space is occupied by radicalism and related issues and incidents.

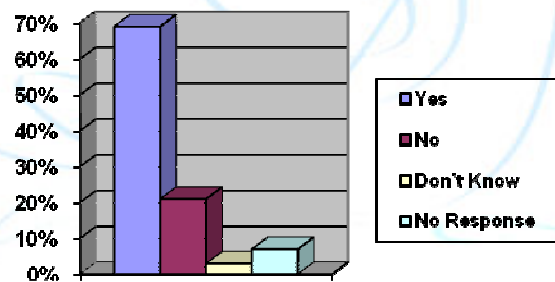
Responses	Percentage
Yes	60%
No	24%
Don't Know	6%
No Response	10%

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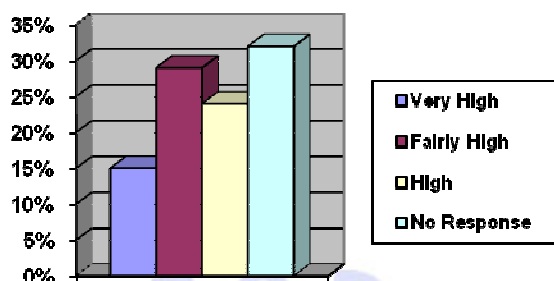
Q. 4. Radicalization is hindering freedom of expression.

Responses	Percentage
Yes	69%
No	21%
Don't Know	3%
No Response	7%



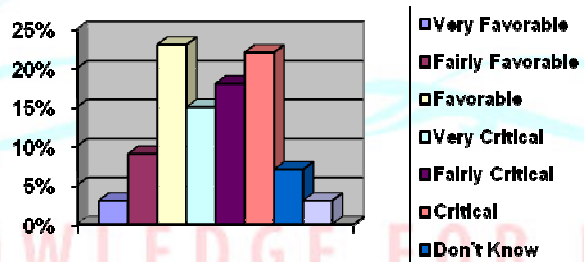
Q.5. The level of hindrance in the way of freedom of expression because of radicalization is:

Responses	Percentage
Very High	15%
Fairly High	29%
High	24%
No Response	32%



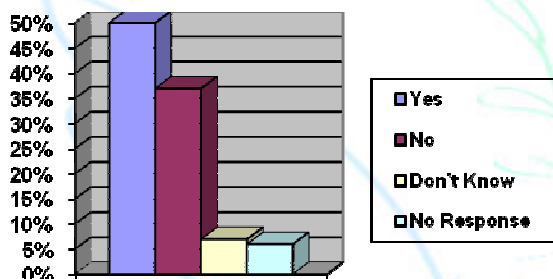
Q. 6. The media's attitude towards radicals is:

Responses	Percentage
Very Favorable	3%
Fairly Favorable	9%
Favorable	23%
Very Critical	15%
Fairly Critical	18%
Critical	22%
Don't Know	7%
No Response	3%



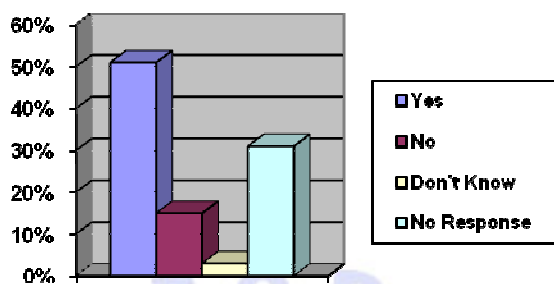
Q. 7. Is there any impact of radical media on the mainstream media?

Responses	Percentage
Yes	50%
No	37%
Don't Know	7%
No Response	6%



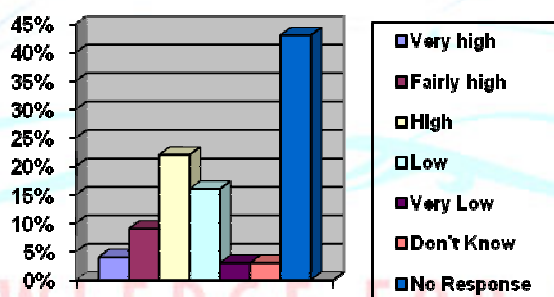
Q.8. Radical media causes sympathy among people in the mainstream media towards radicals.

Responses	Percentage
Yes	51%
No	15%
Don't Know	3%
No Response	31%



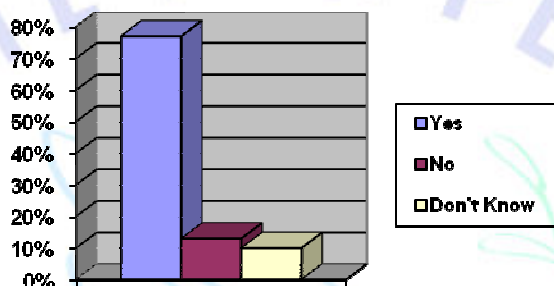
Q.9. The level of sympathy among people in the mainstream media towards radicals is:

Responses	Percentage
Very high	4%
Fairly high	9%
High	22%
Low	16%
Very Low	3%
Don't Know	3%
No Response	43%



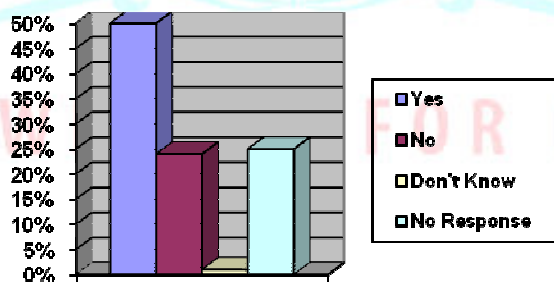
Q.10. Is there any pressure on the media from radical groups?

Responses	Percentage
Yes	77%
No	13%
Don't Know	10%



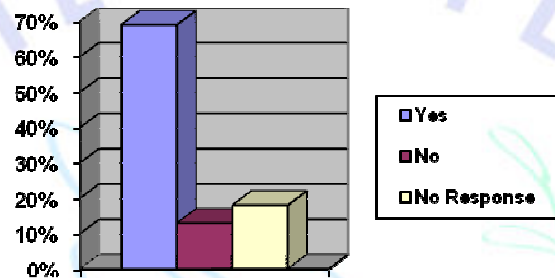
Q.11. Radicals demand more media coverage.

Responses	Percentage
Yes	50%
No	24%
Don't Know	1%
No Response	25%



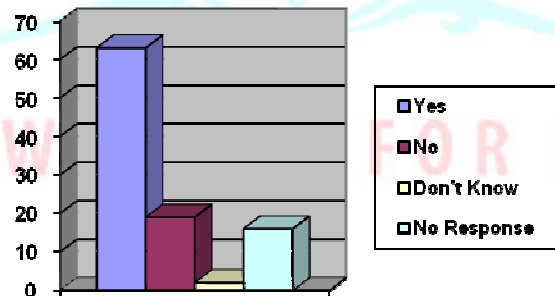
Q.12. They press for favorable coverage.

Responses	Percentage
Yes	69%
No	13%
No Response	18%



Q.13. Radicals pressurize the media regarding the use of words like *shaheed* (martyr), killed, militant, extremist, terrorist, *jihadi*, etc.

Responses	Percentage
Yes	63
No	19
Don't Know	2
No Response	16



Conclusion: Although most of the journalists questioned believe that radicalization has negatively affected the media, there are some exceptions as well. Since the beginning, the media has been involved in radicalization in Pakistan. Different governments, at different points in time, have used the media to spread radicalism in the society to achieve their goals. Because of competition, radical issues get more coverage than their new worthiness would suggest.

The media is inadvertently glorifying the militants. Though a section of the mainstream Pakistani media strives to be neutral or impartial, it generally is not. Consciously or unconsciously, it favors and glorifies radical groups, individuals and activities. An element of sympathy for radicals exists in the media. English and Urdu media, however, are different to a large extent. The Urdu media is generally believed to be more pro-radical. Another, though very limited, view suggests that the government is trying to stop the media's interaction with radicals. According to this view, radicals do not threaten the media at all.

According to many journalists and media persons, radicals use an array of tactics to pressurize journalists, media persons and media organizations and associations. Radicals are a constant source of pressure for the media. The media is not reporting freely. Pakistani newspapers and TV channels have faced 163 attacks since 1977. At least 28 journalists have been killed, all by such forces.

Radical groups, organizations, and their leaders are very conscious of the use of words like *jihad*, *shaheed*, militant/s or terrorist/s by the media. FATA and parts of NWFP are hard-hit by militancy and violence. The media community is under immense pressure in these areas. The *mainstream* media is much less radical in its content and coverage compared to the *radical* media. Furthermore, the language used by the latter is far more extreme and full of rhetoric than that of the *mainstream*.

The survey shows that an overwhelming majority (87%) of journalists interviewed acknowledge that radicalization is having some impact on Pakistani media. The majority (57%) also believes that the media is concealing the facts regarding radicalization. Sixty percent of the media community thinks that other important issues are not being covered properly because radicalism and related issues take too much space; and, 69% say that the phenomenon is hindering freedom of expression in the country. Seventy-seven percent responded positively when asked if there was any pressure on the media from radical groups.



KNOWLEDGE FOR PEACE

Notes:

- ¹ Khalid Farooqi, editor daily *Awaz*, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 14, 2008.
- ² Hussein Naqi, National Coordinator for HRCP Core Groups. Interview by the author, July 15, 2008.
- ³ Mubashir Bokhari, Senior Correspondent GEO Television Network, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 15, 2008.
- ⁴ Saif-ul-Islam Saifi, Bureau Chief TV One, Peshawar, also associated with Al-Jazeera TV. Interview by the author, August 21, 2008.
- ⁵ Bokhari.
- ⁶ Naqi.
- ⁷ Bokhari.
- ⁸ Rauf Sheikh, News Editor *The News*, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 15, 2008.
- ⁹ Mehdi Hassan, Head Department of Mass Communication, Beaconhouse University, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 14, 2008.
- ¹⁰ Shaheen Buneri, Web Editor, Khyber News TV, Peshawar. Interview by the author, August 21, 2008.
- ¹¹ Mayed Ali, Chief Reporter, daily *The News*, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 15, 2008.
- ¹² Asim Hussein, Reporter, daily *The News*, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 15, 2008.
- ¹³ Farooqi.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ *Dawn*, July 13, 2008
- ¹⁶ Mehdi Hassan.
- ¹⁷ Khawar Naeem Hashmi, Bureau Chief, GEO TV, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 14, 2008.
- ¹⁸ Mazhar Abbas, Secretary General Pakistan Union of Journalists and Deputy Director ARY News, Islamabad. Interview by the author, July 22, 2008.
- ¹⁹ Hashmi.
- ²⁰ Khaled Ahmed, Consultant Editor *Daily Tim & Friday Times*, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 15, 2008.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Khaled Ahmed, 'Adm-erawadari aur Zaraae Ablagh,' (Intolerance and the Media), in Hasan Abidi, *Pakistani Moashra aur Adm-erawadari* (Pakistani Society and Intolerance), (Lahore: Mashal, 1997), p. 44.
- ²³ I.A. Rahman, Secretary General, HRCP, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 15, 2008.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Buneri.
- ²⁶ Farooqi.
- ²⁷ Naqi.
- ²⁸ Rahman.
- ²⁹ Imtiaz Alam, Secretary General, SAFMA, Lahore. Interview by the author, July 14, 2008.
- ³⁰ Mayed.
- ³¹ Wasim Ahmed Shah, Bureau Chief daily *Dawn*, Peshawar. Interview by the author, August 21, 2008.
- ³² Abbas.
- ³³ Alam.
- ³⁴ Asim.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Mayed.
- ³⁷ Rauf.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Mehdi Hassan.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Abbas.
- ⁴² Rauf.
- ⁴³ Alam.

-
- 44 Asim.
45 Wasim.
46 Ibid.
47 Beneri.
48 Abbas.
49 Bokhari.
50 Naqi.
51 Sailab Mehsud, Chief Editor weekly *Karwan-e-Qabail* and founder president Tribal Union of Journalists. Interview by the author, August 21, 2008.
52 Ibid.
53 Beneri.
54 Wasim.
55 Ibid.
56 *Ummat, Nawa-e-Waqt, Islam, Jinnah, Aaj, Mashriq, The News, Khabrain, The Post, Daily Times, and Express.*
57 *Akhbar-e-Jehan, Takbeer and Friday Times.*
58 Hanif Qureshi is leader of Shabab-e-Islami Pakistan.
59 *Nawa-e-Waqt*, Islamabad, July 11, 2008.
60 *Aaj*, Peshawar, July 12, 2008.
61 *Khabrain*, Islamabad, July 13, 2008.
62 *The News*, July 15, 2008.
63 *The Post*, July 15, 2008.
64 *Mashriq*, July 16, 2008.
65 *Akhbar-e-Jehan*, July 7-13.
66 *Islam*, July 11, 2008.
67 *Mashriq*, July 12, 2008.
68 *Islam*, July 12, 2008.
69 *Jinnah*, July 14, 2008.
70 *Friday Special*, Karachi, June 27-July 3, 2008.
71 Imam Hussein was the Holy Prophet Muhammad's grandson and was martyred along with his family by Yazid's forces in the Battle of Karbla.
72 *Zarb-e-Momin, al-Qalam, Ghazwa, and al-Jamiah.*
73 *Zarb-e-Momin*, Jul. 11-17.

About Institute

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