



Individualland
Where the individual counts

**ENGLISH MEDIA
ANALYSIS
FROM A
CONSUMER'S
PERSPECTIVE**



Supported by

Friedrich Naumann **FÜR DIE FREIHEIT** STIFTUNG

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SECTION : A Introduction

Journalism can be defined as the emergence of the professional identity of journalists.¹ In democratic societies journalism flourishes, because people are mostly aware of their rights and need a source of information, mainly regarding current events, trends, issues and people. The field of journalism is a vast one. On a broader scale, journalism can be categorized into² three namely reporting, editing with design and photojournalism.

There are different types of journalists, depending upon the nature of their work, and the spheres of activity they cover; traditional 'newspaper' or print media reporters, photo-journalists, broadcasters, podcasters, web-journalists, and between them they cover fields ranging from political and social and economic developments to crime, sports, art, science and technology, locally, regionally, nationally or globally.³

News-oriented journalism, often described as the 'first rough draft of history', given that it is the first to cover important events in the life of bodies politic as they unfold⁴ is one of the most common forms of journalism.

With the emergence of electronic media which can spread news about such happenings in real time, and by common citizens, the importance accorded to the professional, objective journalist has taken a huge hit. Objectivity is the core of journalism. While commenting on the importance of objectivity in journalism, Richard F. Taflinger⁵ has argued that: "the oft-stated and highly desired goal of journalism is objectivity, the detached and unprejudiced gathering and dissemination of news and information. Such objectivity can allow people to arrive at decisions about the world and events occurring in it without the journalist's subjective views influencing the acceptance or rejection of information."⁶

The functions and responsibilities of a journalist play a vital role in the society. The primary role of a journalist is to provide information, which is unbiased and neutral and at the same time instigates a thought process in the public, so readers can draw their own conclusions. Journalistic ethics demand accurate portrayal of incidents, as they happen and where they happen. One of the aims of journalism is also to promote informed citizenship by supporting public participation in democratic discourse and the most important duty is correct reporting by staying unbiased. In a similar analysis of Urdu media

¹ Mark Deuze. "What is Journalism: Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered". Journalism: November, 2005, Volume 6, 442.

² "About Journalism in Singapore: Recommended paths". Available from: <http://journalism.sg/wsci/>. Accessed: 29 June, 2011.

³ Tosev Trajan. "Want to work as journalist, consider this". Pro-journalist blog: news for news makers. Available from http://projournalist.org/2011/06/17/journalism_branches-2/. Accessed: 29 June, 2011.

⁴ Philip Graham. Speech to Newsweek correspondents, 1963. Available from <http://gigaom.com/2011/05/06/how-social-media-creates-a-rough-draft-of-history/>, Accessed 06 June 2011.

⁵ Richard F. Taflinger. "The myth of objectivity in journalism: A commentary". May 29, 1996. Available from <http://public.wsu.edu/~taflinge/mythobj.html>, Accessed 29 June 2011.

⁶ Richard F. Taflinger. "The myth of objectivity in journalism: A commentary". May 29, 1996. Available from <http://public.wsu.edu/~taflinge/mythobj.html>, Accessed 29 June 2011.

in Pakistan, it has been stressed that "Consumers of news have now started to realize that media content is largely driven by market forces and commercial pressure; through intervention of state agencies and militant groups."⁷ Still, a lack of media literacy in Pakistan remains a limiting factor in the role of a consumer in deciding their preference regarding news.

This is an effort by Individualland (IL) Pakistan to analyse the English language print media in Pakistan. The English media analysis has not been conducted from an expert's point of view but from a consumer's perspective, so that the lacunae that are observed by readers and consumers of the media can be highlighted. An Urdu media analysis⁸ has already been conducted that identifies common lacunae in Urdu language print media of Pakistan.

Consumers and Media Literacy

The rationale behind the analysis of English language print media, particularly from a consumer (reader, viewer, listener)'s perspective is to point out those constraints and issues that render the news content biased and opinionated. So, this analysis focuses on promoting media literacy not only in consumers, but also in people working with media in different capacities. The following definition of media literacy was developed by the Trent Think Tank during a 1989 global symposium for media educators sponsored by the Canadian Association for Media Literacy:⁹

"The goal of the media literacy curriculum must be to develop a literate person who is able to read, analyze, evaluate and produce communications in a variety of media (print, TV, computers, the arts, etc.)."

Media literacy thus promotes critical thinking and analytical reasoning in consumers. This particular study undertakes content analysis of English language print media, specifically of Dawn, The News, The Nation and Daily Times. Additionally, in order to understand the inclination and tilt of each newspaper, the editorial content and opinion editorial (Op-ed) sections of these newspapers have also been analysed.

Justifying Analysis

Newspapers are the medium through which information, largely about events, but also about ideas, is shared with local information retailers and their customers. However, such dissemination is not the preserve of a single newspaper, or even a single publishing house; in Pakistan, many newspapers with varying ideologies and viewpoints, com-

⁷ Gulmina B. Ahmed. : "Urdu media analysis from a consumer's perspective". Individualland, Pakistan, November, 2010, . 5.

⁸ ibid.

⁹ "What is media literacy?" Youth media defined. Adobe Youth Voices. Available from <http://essentials.youthvoices.adobe.com/our-philosophy/youth-media-defined.aspx>, Accessed 30 June 2011.

pete for the reader's attention. It is vital to understand, then, that such competition between newspapers is different than which exists between TV channels. In electronic media, the person or channel reporting an event for the first time takes the lead. However, print media is different in a way that it doesn't have to race against time, and usually has more time before the final copy is printed. Reporters, editors, subeditors and other members of media groups convert events into news and present them to the public. The inaccuracies that have been identified and presented here are not result of mistakes made by reporters only, but also by those who have a role in changing the message, thus vitiating its objectivity.

For instance, irresponsible behavior of an editor can have serious consequences. Mr. Chisti Mujahid, a journalist based in Baluchistan, received several telephonic threats after reporting the killing of Baluch leader Balach Marri. This incident took place in November 2007. The story was edited and published in such a manner that it seemed as though Mr. Mujahid was writing against the Baluch Liberation Army (BLA). Mr. Mujahid had himself claimed that his story was not edited correctly. However, his protests were not heeded to and as a consequence, he was killed. Later, a spokesman for the banned insurgent group claimed responsibility for the murder¹⁰. The incident clearly reflects how a mistake by a newspaper editor can have serious consequences.

It is thus imperative for the editor to edit news stories in such a way that the reporter is given maximum protection and truth is least compromised. Many news organizations feel proud about holding the government authorities and institutions accountable to the public, but they also have a duty to ensure that their reporters are given full support as they go about their work.

As mentioned above, for this study, four leading English daily newspapers have been selected on the basis of their circulation in Pakistan. These are The Nation, The News, Dawn and Daily Times. Low literacy rates, urban oriented reporting and the high price of newspapers are considered primary factors contributing to the low circulation rates of English language newspapers. The News is apparently the top daily newspaper with a nationwide circulation of 120,000 followed by Dawn (109,000).¹¹ These newspapers have been monitored on a daily basis for over a period of 120 days by a team of four researchers.

Editorials are particularly important when it comes to analyzing the reportage put out by a newspaper, because they reflect the principles on which a newspaper group functions. It is also imperative to state that our project team approached the newspaper offices on numerous occasions to clarify the editorial policy of the paper. However, we were told that such policies do not always exist in writing. However, there are newspapers that have a particular approach towards the presentation of news. This trend is identified in the monitoring period of one hundred and twenty days. The analysis will be supported with snap shot evidences.

¹⁰ Mujahid Chisti. "Committee to protect journalists: defending journalists worldwide." Akbar-e-Jahan, 09 February 2008. Available from <http://www.cpj.org/killed/2008/chishti-mujahid.php>, Accessed 30 June 2011.

¹¹ "Pakistan". Available from www.pressreference.com, Accessed 14 February 2010.

It may be said that presently the media enjoys more freedom compared to previous eras. For instance, in the Zia regime there used to be portions in a newspaper that were marked black. The content that was meant to be published was never approved by the military and therefore the newspaper just left it black as a sign of journalistic independence.

The Time Frame

The monitoring period of this analysis is from February to May 2011. It is also important to mention here that the series of events taking place during this time period also dominates the selected examples/news stories for the analysis.

Late Governor of Punjab, Mr. Salman Taseer, who appeared to be a liberal voice in Pakistan, was killed on January 4, 2011. This particular incident remained in the limelight for a long time. The killing of Shahbaz Bhatti, the Federal Minister for Minorities, further contributed to political instability and as a result news and views kept revolving around this incident for a long time. A few weeks after this murder, a ban was placed on transmission of Geo Super along with AAG TV, both channels belonging to the Jang Group. This incident also remained in the mainstream media for a long time. These events dominated the analysis period.

Our Approach

Every news report has been examined for inaccuracies regarding the facts and the use of sources by the reporter. It is a common practice not to mention the source of news and to keep it anonymous, which has been pointed out in a number of examples.

Headline, sub-headline and content of a particular news report were monitored and after identifying the inaccuracy of facts, bias or partiality, or unfairness, we gave our comments. In addition to this, editorials and opinion articles were also monitored during this period.

Defining Standards

While analyzing the content, it is imperative to select a standard benchmark. We keep in view international recognized standards and ethics of journalism as a barometer.¹² In any given profession, a set of codes and ethics are followed. Journalism is also a profession where certain codes and ethics have been codified so as to maintain the integrity of the profession.

¹² "Press freedom barometer 2011: Pakistan". Reporters without borders for press freedom. Available from <http://en.rsf.org/report-pakistan,74.html>, Accessed 05 July 2011.

In Pakistan, a Press Code of Conduct was adopted by the General Assembly of the Committee of the press in 1972. Similarly a code of ethics was again adopted by the Council of Pakistan Newspapers' Editors (CPNE) in 1993. In October, 2002 the military government issued a new code as a part of the "Press Council of Pakistan Ordinance", creating a supposedly independent body (headed by a government appointee), to resolve complaints of and about press.¹³

Individualland Pakistan has worked for the advocacy of the concept of Free, Independent and Responsible Media (FIRM). All the activities conducted in this connection along with the description of the principles underlying this concept have been described in detail in a publication titled "Handbook on and for FIRM." The basic aim of this publication is to integrate the efforts of various journalists and media persons working for the promotion of responsible journalism. The codes and principles have been standardized for the ease of understanding and have been used in our publication 'Urdu Media Analysis from a Consumer's perspective' as well.

These principles are:

- Objectivity
- Fairness
- Public accountability
- Truthfulness
- Accuracy

Besides the above mentioned principles, Individualland (IL) has evaluated news stories, editorial scribes and opinion-editorial articles on the principle of 'limitation of harm'. This often involves the withholding of certain details from reports which might harm someone's reputation. The analysis has been done from the consumer's point of view. Every possible effort has been made to remain unbiased while analyzing the content of news reports. We have tried to keep in mind the elements of newsworthiness¹⁴ of any given story which are:

- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Impact
- Currency
- Oddity
- Prominence
- Controversy

¹³ Gulmina B. Ahmad. "Regulation of Media". *Handbook on and for FIRM*. Individualland Pakistan: Supported by Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNF), November 2010. 59-65.

¹⁴ L.M. Zoch and D. Supa. . "Dictating the news: Understanding newsworthiness from a journalistic perspective". Paper presented at the annual conference of the *Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication*, San Antonio. 2005.

Categorizing the Content

Newspapers these days carry a great deal of information classified under many and diverse heads. So as to be able to analyse this information in comprehensible chunks, we have divided the content published in four sections. The front and back pages are like a cover of the newspaper that a consumer skims initially. They must contain the most important news. The title of the most important news is printed in bold letters. It is called a banner. This page is skimmed through for important headlines by the reader. The back page also has the latest news reports and updates. The news on front and back page of the newspaper has been monitored and inaccuracies identified for the purpose of this research. It is important to note that at times opinionated stories are also printed on these pages which mislead the reader.

Section two of the publication discusses the editorials of the newspapers. These have been monitored on a daily basis for one hundred and twenty days. Newspaper editorials reflect the opinions of those who publish them. They are usually written by the senior editorial staff or publishers of a newspaper. Editorials do not have a name at the end of the piece and reflect the newspaper's thinking. Editorials of a newspaper reflect its ideological stance, particularly while focusing on national issues such as terrorism or international assistance and aid. After monitoring we attained a pool of four hundred and eighty editorials from the four monitored news papers.

In the next section, opinion editorial (op-ed) articles have been analyzed. Op-ed is a newspaper article that states the opinions of the writer. This writer is not usually from the editorial board and is thus different from an editorial. The op-ed is written by a range of writers who vary in profession and thinking. However, a continuous repetition of names has been identified in the four monitored newspapers that moreover continue to write along the same lines as the editorials. The op-ed portion traditionally was meant to be assigned for writers and their opinions even if they did not align with the newspaper's philosophy. However, the op-ed articles monitored for the four newspapers echo the newspaper's philosophy.

It has been observed from our limited consumer's perspective that an op-ed article which is very conservative in its language and promotes religious sentiments will have a hard time being accepted by the editor of Daily Times or Dawn. This is the case with other newspapers as well. A very liberal or pro-American write up, however, will have a very hard time being printed in The Nation. We will discuss the examples of this later in the publication.

Validation of the evidence

As described in the approach, the content from all four newspapers was analysed and inaccuracies identified. Additionally, general comments were generated for each and every news story. Maximum efforts were made to generate such comments in simple

and plain language, so that a reader might understand the underlying principles with ease. It is also important to mention here once again that this analysis is a reflection of how a reader perceives and understands news. Cuttings of each and every news story and other content are attached in Annexure A, as supporting evidence for the analysis. A Free, Independent and Responsible Media (FIRM) blog has also been initiated on the official website of Individualland Pakistan, which is being used to present non-FIRM (not aligned with the concept of FIRM) examples of the selected English newspapers, so that citizens can also understand the rationale behind this analysis.¹⁵ This interactive blog provides an opportunity for people to engage in a discussion regarding each and every example presented on the blog, on a daily basis. The feedback from the discussion provides useful reference material for the research team and is reflected in the analysis.

All evidence that has been extracted in the monitoring period (February – May 2011) was secured following content identification, cutting, pasting and filing, content monitoring and comment generation, after which the final report, was compiled.

After monitoring the front and back pages of the four daily English newspapers for four months, various inaccuracies were identified. These inaccuracies were later segregated under six broad categories for the ease of understanding. These six categories, which had already been employed in the “Urdu Media Analysis from a consumer’s perspective” report, were:

- Violation of Privacy
- No Attribution
- Non professional attitude
- Irresponsible Reporting
- Angling and
- Labeling.

Violation of Privacy

Article 14 of the Constitution of Pakistan states “The dignity of man and, subject to law, the privacy of home, shall be inviolable.” Similarly, Article 15 states that “every person shall have the right to remain in, and, subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest, enter and move freely throughout Pakistan and to reside and settle in part thereof.”

These two Articles come under the broader category of Fundamental rights, described in Chapter 1 of the Constitution of Pakistan. These two Articles clearly define the boundaries of private and personal lives of citizens of the state. There has been a long process

¹⁵ URL of the blog is <http://individualland.com/firm-blog/>

of debate over ways to reconcile freedom of expression by the media and privacy of a citizen. This is essential in a free and democratic society. Privacy helps individuals maintain their autonomy and individuality.¹⁶

However, during our analysis we have experienced that newspapers violate the privacy of individuals. Violation of privacy is not only a serious setback to the individual but might also contribute towards their defamation. Therefore it is imperative for newspapers to keep this constitutional right in mind while reporting.

There have been many news reports in which privacy of citizens have been violated. Let us now discuss two examples to substantiate this claim.

A report published in *The News* during the month of March 2011 titled 'Nawaz flies to UAE, London, maybe Zurich.'¹⁷ The report stated that the "Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Nawaz Sharif arrived in Switzerland on an important but closely guarded visit". However, a PML-N spokesman in Lahore said he had gone only to London with his wife for her medical checkup. The report is a clear violation of privacy of a senior political leader. The details of a personal visit should not be printed in a news story. It is also important to observe that the word 'maybe' is used in the headline. The reporter himself is not sure of the authenticity of the news.

Let us now discuss another example in which privacy of a citizen was allegedly violated by a newspaper. The report was extracted from *The News* during the month of February 2011.¹⁸ The report talked about a practicing surgeon, named Dr. Tanveer Zamimi, who was also an activist of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the United States (USA), along with Farahnaz Ispahani, a Member of National Assembly (MNA) and also a close aide of President. According to the news report the two personalities named above commented on different online blogs referring to the possibility that Mr Zardari might have secretly married again.

This report is a clear attack on the personal life of the Head of the State. Marriage is the personal choice of every individual. Giving the personal telephone numbers and e-mail address of the individual in the print version of the news story is encroaching on the privacy of the person under discussion. The contact numbers must never be made public. Moreover, the report was solely based on blog posts and hearsay; no concrete proof was produced to substantiate the claim. Such news may be reported, but in a more responsible manner where the message is conveyed that such report is yet to be confirmed.

¹⁶ "Privacy and media intrusion: fifth report of session 2002-03". House of Commons: Culture, Media and Sports committee. Volume 1. 16 June 16 2003. 3.

¹⁷ "Nawaz flies to UAE, London maybe Zurich". *The News*. 08 March 2011. Report obtained from Murtaza Ali Shah, 08 June 2011.

¹⁸ *The News*, 04 February 2011.

No Attribution

News story is an account of what is happening around citizens. It may involve current events, new initiatives or ongoing projects or issues. It is important that a news story should not be biased towards a personality and must always report facts. One of the duties of the news reporter envisages referring to the source from where the news is being accessed. Citizens have the right to know the source, so that they are sure about the authenticity of that news. 'Classified' or 'hidden' sources complicate the news and kill the purpose of fair news reporting. However, it has become the norm to discuss crucial subjects on the basis of 'unnamed sources'. This is misleading for the reader as it is imperative to post the source. This lack of attribution has become a common practice in the monitored newspapers and examples have been identified and presented in this section. It is obvious that a reporter can easily put in an unattributed opinion. This is also an easy way to publish opinionated pieces as news stories.

Journalists who utilize multiple sources for their stories tend to show more responsibility. This presents the viewpoint of more than one individual to the reader which authenticates it.

Let us now discuss an example of a subject in the monitoring period of Raymond Davis, a US citizen who was involved in the killing of two Pakistanis. This incident was of a sensitive nature and irresponsible reporting caused a strain in Pak-U.S. relations.

A new story titled "Killer of third Pakistani may have fled Pakistan" was published in *The News* on February 3, 2011.¹⁹ The report discussed the incident in which a US national was involved and casualties were incurred by Pakistani citizens. The way this incident was depicted in the news was alarming and was bound to outrage citizens. At that time, the facts had not yet been released but the story drew its own conclusions and added opinions in the news story. Not even a single source was mentioned to assure the readers of the authenticity of the news.

It is to be noted that in such cases it is hard to establish the difference between an opinion piece and a news story. It is quite likely that the reporter might have posted a personal opinion in the report and attributed it to the government. It is the right of the reader to at least know of one reliable source so that the news can be authenticated.

Let us now discuss another example with a similar inaccuracy. In this example the news reporter once again failed to list a source for a news report²⁰ published in *Dawn*. The report discussed President Asif Ali Zardari who asked Abdul Qadir Gilani, son of the Prime Minister, to resign from the chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee of the Punjab Assembly.

The news report did not mention the name or status of the source. It just stated that this news had been received from a so called "source." If source of the news can be stated or at least hinted at, then a reader can decide the authenticity of the news.

¹⁹ "Killer of third Pakistani may have fled Pakistan." *The News*, 03February 2011, .1.

²⁰ "Zardari asks Gilani's son to quit PA committee post". *Dawn*. 03 February 2011, 1.

Lack of professionalism

Efforts to professionalize journalism began early in the twentieth century as a response to the hyper commercialization of newspapers and the 'anything goes' approach to news that emerged in the late nineteenth century. This was a means of increasing street sales through sensationalism, twisting the truth, and outright lies. The impetus for journalistic professionalism originated among publishers who wished to counter the trend and it gained support of journalists who saw it as a means of improving their working conditions and social standing.²¹

We will now discuss an example where lack of professionalism can be identified in the news. This lack in professionalism can lead to unsubstantiated reporting, because the reporters seldom pay heed to the basics of journalism. Such inaccuracy has the potential to mislead the reader and can result in building misconceptions about a particular event or personality.

A report titled "Killer freed on benefit of doubt"²² published in *The Nation* on February 8, 2011 is a good example for differentiating between responsible and irresponsible reporting. It talked about a citizen who was freed after allegedly killing a family member. The report also mentioned the name of the judge who gave the verdict.

The reporter has used the word 'killer' in the headlines. The court had not given its verdict at the time of filing of the report. He was a suspect and the media had no right to label him a killer before the completion of trial.

A report titled "US consulate delivers Davis menu"²³ was printed in *The Nation* on February 13, 2011. The news story mentioned how Raymond Davis, who killed two Pakistanis, but still managed to spend a relaxed first day in the Kot Lakhpat Jail. The report contained nothing that would justify an appearance on the main page of the newspaper. It only focused on the daily routine of the accused and then linked it with problems faced by other inmates. The report is opinionated and full of anti-US sentiments. This is evident by phrases such as 'Knowing his masters have thrown full weight behind him' and 'enjoying the protocol befitting a president. No names or designations of any of the sources have been mentioned.

Irresponsible reporting

It is vital that a reporter should not be biased while reporting and filing a news story. His/her own opinion should not be reflected in the news. Biased reporting can influence the authenticity of the news story. It is unethical and due to this, the scope of a news story can be changed. Biased or irresponsible reporting can potentially create hatred against a specific group and occasionally also results in promotion of extremist agenda.

²¹ Robert G. Picard. "The biggest mistake of journalism professionalism". the Media business blog. Available from <http://themediabusiness.com>, accessed 28 February 2011.

²² "Killer Freed on benefit of doubt". *The Nation*, 08 February 2011., 8.

²³ "US Consulate delivers Davis menu". *The Nation*, 13 February 2011, 1.

Let us now discuss a news story regarding irresponsible reporting. “Mullah Omar denies destroying public places”.²⁴ This news report was published on March 28, 2011 in The Nation.

It reported that the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar completely rejected allegations of the Taliban torching schools in Afghanistan. Mullah Omar claimed that the Taliban were not involved in such activities that would hurt the women or children of Pakistan.

The newspaper printed the story on the front page, giving maximum coverage to a militant outfit. The television channel which covered this news has not been named. The news story did not report facts. It read more like a press release of the Taliban.

Another example of irresponsible reporting is a photo that appeared on March 26, 2011 in The Nation.



LAHORE: Activists of Jamaat ud-Daawa chant slogans against the US pastor at Faisal Chowk.-Staff photo

As the caption reads, the rally is being held by Jamaat ud-Dawa. This is a banned organization. The newspaper is promoting a banned outfit by giving them space with snapshots. Such photographs glorifying banned outfits can also contribute towards destabilizing the country further. This can be categorized as irresponsible reporting which contributes to the promoting of an extremist agenda.

²⁴ “Mullah Omar denies destroying public places”. *The Nation*. 28 March 2011, 1.

Angling of News Story

Angling entails identifying and taking account of all the relevant reliable evidence in favor of a specific ideological tilt. The concept of angling in news stories defeats the purpose of reporting. Let us discuss an example which will explain angling and is to be found on the main page of The Nation. This news story, titled "Sell-out"²⁵ was published during the month of March, 2011.

This news story is highly opinionated and aims at inciting sentiments of the people on the front page. The use of words 'Sell-out' and 'Killer Rambo' in large headlines depicts biased reporting by the reporter, which is angling towards an extremist ideology.

Let us discuss another story, "CIA killer walks free"²⁶ from The News. It was published during the month of March, 2011, on the main page of the newspaper. This news story highlights the case of Raymond Davis and the controversy surrounding the incident that took place in Lahore. The report also describes how two victims accepted blood money of Rs200 million under the Qisas and Diyat law and pardoned the killer. The scribe also termed the court verdict in the case 'soft'; clearly this would further inflame the anti American and anti establishment sentiment already prevalent amongst the citizenry.

Labeling in a News Story

Labeling is conferring a title on someone or some event due to some rationale. For instance, there has been a rally that has to be reported in the news story. The rally is called 'historic' in the report. This is categorized as labeling.

Let us now discuss a news story titled "Geo News programme Awam Ki Adalat"²⁷. It states that "72 percent audience claim pulpit has failed to reform society". Labeling is prominent in this news story. This was printed on the back page of The News. The news story was published during the month of April 2011. It discussed a TV program, Awam ki Adalat, that appeared on Geo TV, which incidentally is owned by the newspaper group. The news story mentioned that seventy two percent of the participants of the TV program claimed that pulpit has failed to reform the society.

The program is labeled as presenting the opinion of the masses, without giving any proof. This is a description of the television program and cannot be classified as a news story. There is no description of how the percentage was determined.

This section identified and discussed inaccuracies present in the news stories of the monitored newspapers. It is hoped that the discussion so far has been useful for the reader and media personnel, and has helped them in understanding the rationale of this analysis. The next section will shed light on the editorial section of newspapers and will try to categorize editorials on the basis of selected criteria.

²⁵ "Sell-out". *The Nation*, 17 March 2011, 1.

²⁶ "CIA killer walks free". *The News*, 17 March 2011, 1.

²⁷ "72pc audience claim pulpit has failed to reform society". *The News*. 05April 2011, 8.

SECTION : B What is an Editorial?

Editorials reflect the stance of a newspaper. It can be defined as ‘an article that presents the newspaper's opinion on an issue.’²⁸ It is here that the opinions of the newspaper’s editorial board are put forth. Readers are allowed to express opinion via letters to the editor, also reproduced in the editorial section. The editorial page thus provides a forum for the opinions of readers and editorial staff in order:

- to provoke thought and discussion amongst the reader,
- influence the actions of public officials,
- provide background and analyze events,
- serve as voice of the community.

How did we analyse?

As mentioned earlier, the editorials of the newspaper reflects the views of the editorial staff. These mainly focus on current affairs, certain issues and events. For the purpose of this analysis, editorials from The News, Dawn, The Nation and Daily Times were analyzed during the monitoring period (February – May 2011). In total, four hundred and eighty editorials were analysed.

A framework was defined for the analysis of editorials. Four categories were defined namely:

- Labeling
- Angling
- Balanced
- Anti-government

During the analysis of editorials different questions have also been raised, such as, what is the main idea of the editorial? Some sections from the editorial are then selected and comments are generated. Questions regarding the usefulness of presented information and the overall balance have also been raised. The four categories mentioned are the basis on which the editorials have been analysed. Out of these analyzed editorials, some shall be commented on and can be found in the media journal at the end of this section.

About the Editorial Analysis Chart (EAC)

Let us now discuss the Editorial Analysis Chart (EAC) given below. A total of 480 editorials (120 from each newspaper) have been analyzed from four newspapers.

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²⁸ Weintraut Alan. Tutorial: Writing an editorial. Annandale High School. Annandale, VA 22312. Accessed from: <http://www.geneseo.edu/~bennett/EdWrite.htm> Accessed date: September 6, 2011.

It can be observed that out of the monitored editorials of Dawn newspaper, 120 were categorized as balanced. In the column of The News, it can be seen that there were 32 editorials categorized under labeling and 16 under the category of angling. Similarly, 28 editorials from The Nation were categorized under labeling and 64 under angling. In Daily Times 2 were categorized under labeling and 118 were categorized under balanced. In this way the EAC gives a comprehensive snapshot of the editorial analysis of four newspapers.

Category	Dawn	The News	The Nation	Daily Times
Labeling	-	32	28	1
Angling	-	16	64	-
Balanced	120	3	3	119
Anti-Government	-	69	25	-

Labeling

It is vital to understand that the definitions of the categories set out in the EAC are solely for the purpose of this analysis. Labeling is the first category and it refers to branding a particular event or person through specific words and phrases. While labeling you are essentially putting someone or some event into a specific category and tagging them. Let us revisit the earlier example of a rally conducted by a political party that is reported in newspaper. Instead of reporting facts about the rally, the newspaper will title it as 'Historic rally'. The word 'historic' is considered labeling the rally of the political party. Events as well as people can be labeled for glorification or similar purposes.

Angling

Angling was detected in the monitored editorials of newspapers. As the term suggests, it involves slanting of an editorial. For instance, an editorial that talks about sentiments against the US aid being provided to the country. Additionally, if the editorial is only trying to highlight negative aspects of the aid with no regard to positive aspects, then this shall be termed as angling. When there is angling, balance is automatically lost.

Balanced

The category of balance includes the editorials that are not angled. The term balance for the purpose of this analysis has been used in the context where the editorial takes into consideration all the different viewpoints regarding the matter. The aim behind inclusion of different viewpoints is to let the reader decide about what actually is the truth. It is not the duty of the editorial staff to influence opinions of the public by pre-

senting their analyses on the negative and positive aspects of the matter under discussion. Their only duty is to create a balanced editorial and let the public make their own decisions.

Anti-government

The editorial staff composes such editorials that lack viewpoint of the government, which in this case is necessary, if the editor wants readers to understand the matter and make a decision on their own.

Let us now discuss the monitored editorials of each newspaper separately and comment on them briefly.

Dawn Editorial Analysis

Category	No. of Editorials in the category
Labeling	-
Angling	-
Balanced	120
Anti-Government	-

The newspaper enjoys a nation-wide influence with a weekday circulation of over 138,000. The estimated sum reader base of the newspaper is in excess of 759,000.²⁹

The number of balanced editorials in the Dawn newspaper was the highest as compared to the three other newspapers. Most of the editorials that get printed in Dawn are research oriented. The editorial staff presents the viewpoints of both sides, thus enabling readers to draw their own (informed) conclusions.

Let us now discuss two examples of balanced editorials from this newspaper.

The first editorial that will be discussed was published on 06 April 2011 and was titled 'Housing Census'. This editorial highlighted the steps taken by the government to initiate census across the country. Additionally, problems faced by the government and the census enumerators were also discussed and due credit was given to the efforts expended by the government to overcome the obstacles. In the end, the editor discussed steps towards improvement of the census taking procedure.

²⁹ Dawn Archives online. Available from <http://archives.dawn.com/fixe d/group/publicat.htm>, accessed 09 May 2011.

Let us discuss another example of a balanced editorial from Dawn. This editorial was also published on 06 April 2011 with the title 'Mass transit gap'. This editorial highlighted the problems faced by commuters in Karachi. Facts pertaining to local transport in Karachi were presented and no political party or group was named or blamed for these problems. The decisive element of a balanced editorial is actually the presentation of facts to the reader, so that they can then make an informed decision with the help of the facts supplied.

It is vital to mention that the editor of Dawn is not the owner of the newspaper. In most newspaper groups, owners usually assume the position of editors, which seriously affects the quality of news content and editorials. Due to a competitive news market, an owner-editor may be tempted to deviate from ethical codes of conduct so as to be able to focus more on profits, advertisements or readership.

The News Editorial Analysis

Category	No. of Editorials in the category
Labeling	32
Angling	16
Balanced	3
Anti-Government	69

The examples of editorials included here will describe labeling and angling in detail. They are based on assumptions. 69 of the editorials blame the government for the current situation of country. These editorials do not include the point of view of the government and are predominantly one-sided.

Media certainly has a role in ensuring the accountability of the sitting government, but it doesn't mean at all that it should blame and defame the government for every action. A number of these editorials blamed the government for releasing Raymond Davis. Apart from being anti-government, some of these editorials also put forth anti-US sentiments. Additionally, the cold war between Inter-services Intelligence (ISI) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was given much focus and was presented as though it were a movie script.

The editorials in the newspaper have also focused on issues related to local politics and geo-political developments. Examples cited below will discuss the deteriorating economic conditions, which the government has been blamed for without describing the context.

Let us discuss the first editorial that has labeling.

In the editorial “Rot spreads” published on 23 May 2011, the proposal to restructure the civil service has been commented upon. From the onset, the editorial has labeled the proposal as an “attempt to get civil servants into political pockets.” The government and especially the ruling party have been severely criticized. This is evident as the editorial states, “A proposal emanating from the PPP to restructure the civil service is unlikely to do anything other than institutionalize political preferment...” The proposal has been termed as “turmoil”, which will destabilize the civil service. The editorial has completely rejected the proposal, on the grounds that it would promote favoritism and politicization.

Let us now discuss examples that involve angling in it. This editorial was titled “The times change” and was published on 26 February 2011. It talked about the prevalent political uncertainty in Punjab province. The editorial commented on parting of the coalition government of Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (N) in Punjab. It has been purposely angled towards an anti-PPP posture. On the other hand, the views of Mian Nawaz Sharif, (PML-N Chief) have been accommodated. The editor quotes “Mian Nawaz Sharif, has narrated how, since 2008, he has repeatedly been deceived by President Zardari and his team...” The editorial has tilted allegiance towards a certain party and has made assumptions such as, “...the PML-N will be able to lead the country out of its condition of crisis more successfully than the PPP.”

The editorial “Feel the pain” published on 17 May 2011 discussed the visit of Senator John Kerry to Pakistan and his meetings with senior officials at the time. It is to be noted that the visit was at a time when there had been tensions between Pakistan and U.S. over the Abbottabad operation on 02 May 2011. The editorial depicted a picture of the tension accompanying the meetings, while criticizing the US for its policies, and even pillorying the aid given to Pakistan. The editorial endorsed and applauded the statement of Punjab Chief Minister, Shahbaz Sharif to reject any foreign aid, and proclaimed that, “More than the exchanges with leaders in Islamabad, the stand taken by Mian Shahbaz Sharif should help drive home to Mr. Kerry and the US how sentiment is shaping up in Pakistan. The views of Mr. Sharif are shared by many.” The editorial also took to task the Federal Government for not doing enough and stated, “The fact that the federal government apparently made only a lackluster attempt to make Mr. Kerry realize...”

An editorial titled “All the President’s men” was published on 12 February 2011. The editorial commenced by calling a recently sworn in cabinet “a meaningless exercise”. The terming of new cabinet members as “President’s personal musketeers” was meant to insinuate that the President exercised total influence over them. The editorial thus angled towards a certain viewpoint. The editorial commented on how the new cabinet had been handpicked by the President. The editor also suggested that this step aims to weaken the Prime Minister. The editorial claims that the previous Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi was a “casualty” of the differences on this issue along with Qamar Zaman Qaira, a former Minister of Information and party bearer of Pakistan People’s Party (PPP). The editorial then blamed the government for having mishandled

the case. All in all, the editorial resonated with anti-government sentiments while depicting differences within the ruling party. The editorial while referring to the cabinet change stated, "The Finance Minister has not been touched and the policy of seeking International Monetary Fund (IMF) approval will thus be pursued despite the serious setbacks on the RGST in recent months... Over all the cabinet offers little hope of any meaningful change in the performance and quality of governance..."

Another editorial titled "Open-door folly" was published on 04 February 2011. This editorial focused on the US citizen Raymond Allen Davis's case. The editorial criticized the government for relaxing the visa policies for US nationals in Pakistan. The editorial explained that these men work for private security companies and spy agencies. The editorial also resorted to US bashing while urging the government to change its diplomatic position. The information put forward in it had been appearing in various newspapers through anonymous sources, and had yet to be proven as a fact. The editorial was based on anti-US sentiments, with expressions such as "Americans need to quit whining". The editorial throughout its length resonated with anti-US and anti-Government sentiments.

The ruling government blocked the transmission of the TV channel Geo Super on April 6, 2011. The News and Geo Super are both part of the same media group. Apart from political discussion in editorials, this issue of blocking the transmission was highlighted more than ten times during the monitoring period. These editorials contained content that was anti-government and also bashed the opposition parties for their perceived non-committal stance on private television channel ban.

Let us discuss the editorial example titled "Punishing Geo" published on, 20 March 2011. It took the issue of row between the cable operators and Geo group, over the airing of Cricket World Cup matches, while blaming the government for the prevalent situation. The editorial emphasized the Sindh High Court's judgment over this issue supporting the newsgroup's position. Since Geo Super, as well as The News is owned by the Jang group, the issue affects the interests of the group, hence the reason for the editorial. The editorial accused the government of conspiring against the Jang group to hurt its interests. The displeasure of the government with the editorial policy of the newsgroup is cited as the main reason for the row. The editorial alleged that the government had no intention of complying with the Court's orders. The editorial was based the observations on assumptions while providing no proof for the allegations.

The Nation Editorial Analysis

Category	No. of Editorials in the category
Labeling	28
Angling	64
Balanced	3
Anti-Government	25

The Nation is part of the Nawa-e Waqt group. An editorial titled “Not our war on terror!” was published on 07 February 2011. The editorial commented on statements made by the Governor of Punjab, Sardar Latif Khosa. The editorial criticized the government for aligning with the West. It has been argued that by allowing US logistical support, Pakistan has not taken the right step. It has been termed as a “mistake” committed by Pakistan. The editorial then stated, “There were options available but the military regime bent before the US only to get its blessings for its rule...” Repetition of this presents angling of editorial to a certain point of view and against a specific country. The War on Terror has been depicted in the editorial as a war imposed by the US on Pakistan. The editor has used statements such as, “What our President and Prime Minister have done is to tell the Americans not to bother about any protest inside and outside the Parliament.”

Let us now discuss an example of angling in the editorial “Drones Again” published on 22 February 2011. Its main focus was a drone attack in South Waziristan. Drones were termed as “ruthless killing machines.” Furthermore, it was urged that the Federal Government should take action against drone attacks. The government has been labeled “weak”. This editorial is totally based on assumptions such as: “it was generally thought that drone attacks had come to an end since he [a reference to Raymond Davis] used to provide target intelligence to operational headquarters.” Sources have also been quoted in the piece, such as “...ISI had categorically told The Nation that it had never been instrumental in providing intelligence to Americans...”

Let us discuss another example of angling in the editorials of The Nation. The emergent situation in Libya was discussed in the editorial “NATO’s threat” published on 12 March 2011. This piece termed NATO’s response to Gaddafi’s activities as “aggression” and part of the policy of “world domination”. Angling against the western world is more than obvious in this piece. Statements such as “...the ploy to keep the Muslim world from getting on the path to progress...” have been used to incite hatred against the West. Additionally, the article purposely tried to shift the blame faced every ill faced by Muslims onto the West. Libya has been called another Iraq, i.e., due to Western military intervention. The Libyan revolution was supported, but at the same time the editor abstained from outright condemnation of the Libyan leader for using harsh methods to curb the revolt. Instead, the editorial condemned the involvement of Western nations in the conflict. It also did not include western point of view on the subject and thus remained one-sided.

The issue of the US citizen, Raymond Allen Davis overshadowed other issues during the monitoring period. The editorials regarding this issue were anti-government and also included anti-US sentiments. Most of the editorials urged Pakistan to break its ties with the US and pull out of the War on Terror.

Let us now discuss a few editorial examples that involve anti-government elements. An editorial entitled “It’s payback time” was published on 08 February 2011. The editor discussed the suicide of Shamila Anjum, widow of Fahim, one of the deceased in the Lahore incident involving Raymond Allen Davis. The editorial criticized the US as well as the Pakistani government by beginning the editorial with the words, “sordid act has now directly claimed another life”. It further brought in the issue of drone attacks. Fur-

thermore, said that “a government that is complicit with the US in massacre of its own citizens in FATA could after all be expected to compromise on a few more lives.” In the end the editor added that “the Americans must now be paid back in their own coin”, which clearly demonstrates anti-US sentiments. The newspaper also supported opposition party's stand on the issue, while criticizing the Government for its diplomatic approach. Such editorials totaled up to twenty-five in this newspaper.

In the editorial “Attack on naval airbase” published on 24 May 2011, the incident of terrorism at Mehran Naval Base was discussed. From the onset, it hinted at a conspiracy trying to destabilizing Pakistan's security establishment. It further compared and connected the Bin Laden operation in Abbotabad, with the attack on PNS Mehran, openly alleging the involvement of “foreign hands”. India and U.S. have been openly blamed in this editorial, while vague assumptions have been made to prove the connection. The government has also been criticized for its role and it has been alleged that it is blaming terrorists for the event, “in an attempt to curry favor with the USA, and win its sympathy.” At the conclusion of the editorial a policy statement has been given, as “Pakistan should immediately cease to have any further alliance with the USA in its War on Terror, and the government should pay more attention to protecting its own citizens than pleasing a foreign government.”

Let us now discuss the editorial “PM's crucial China visit” published on 19 May 2011, in which Prime Minister Gilani's visit to China has been discussed. The discussion was in the backdrop of the U.S. operation on 02 May 2011 that killed Osama Bin Laden. China was praised in this piece and a lot of importance had been attached to Chino-Pak friendship, while alleging that the U.S. along with India was trying to destabilize Pakistan. Open accusations were directed at foreign intelligence agencies and security contractors for the deteriorating condition of security in the country. The editorial draws out a situation where, “the picture is complete that badly exposes the truth behind the US overtures of “abiding friendship” with Pakistan. On the other hand, when a sincere friend like China makes an overture of “unswervingly” supporting Pakistan it carries the stamp of genuineness, also underlined by its help in infrastructure, defense and a host of other fields.”

The subject of drone attacks and the War on Terror have come under criticism with almost seventeen editorials. The government is blamed for its flawed policies and its association in the war on terror with the US. These editorials are then again injected with angling against a specific country. They also depict a viewpoint in favor of the opposition parties, especially right wing political parties, and PML-N. The development works and standing of the above mentioned political parties have also been highlighted in the editorials.

Daily Times Editorial Analysis

Category	No. of Editorials in the category
Labeling	1
Angling	-
Balanced	119
Anti-Government	-

The EAC of Daily Times shows that editorials of the newspaper are categorized mainly under two categories. One was categorized under labeling whereas the rest were categorized under the balanced category. An overall snapshot of the newspaper indicates neutral positioning of the content in editorial section. Following examples would elaborate more and help in developing an understanding of how the editorials were categorized.

An editorial printed in the 14 March 2011 edition of Daily Times, titled “Saying no to lotacracy” started by describing the anatomy of a “*lota*” and how the *lotas* used in the past were different from those currently used. The aim of the editor in giving this account was to compare the round bottomed (old fashioned) *lotas* and today’s politicians. The particular case under discussion was of the opposition leader Raja Riaz in Punjab Assembly, who joined PML-Q on the opposition benches. The editor described the happenings of a particular day in the following words “After these unedifying shenanigans, our political representatives hitched things up another ludicrous notch by partaking in a *lota* football match outside the house. Although one does not typically get to see political personalities indulging in such buffoonery, we really can do without these sorts of stunts.” The editorial finished in the following fashion:

“The verdict is still out on the fate of the PML-Q Unification Group and its merger with the PML-N as the Election Commission has yet to address the issue. Our assembly members should get on with their job and find solutions for the state of the country instead of the distraction of playing political football with each other.” This editorial thus tried to label the opposition members in Punjab Assembly *lotas*, which is not desirable from a newspaper of mostly neutral reputation.

SECTION : C

Opinions

Standard editorial pages have been printed by newspapers for many centuries. The op-ed concept was developed in 1921. This was done by Herbert Bayard Swope of , The New York Evening World. The rationale behind it was that the editor realized that the page opposite the editorials was a catchall for book reviews. The editor was quoted as writing:

"It occurred to me that nothing is more interesting than opinion when opinion is interesting, so I devised a method of cleaning off the page opposite the editorial, which became the most important in America ... and thereon I decided to print opinions, ignoring facts."³⁰

Initially, the opinions expressed in the op-ed section were limited to the staff of the newspaper. The modern opinion editorial (op-ed) page is aimed at contributions from outside the newspaper. In other words, an op-ed is basically a newspaper article that expresses the opinions of various columnists. These columnists are not supposed to be associated with the newspaper. The op-ed is different from the editorials of the newspaper which was discussed in Section B. The op-ed, unlike the editorials, is published under the name of the columnist.

Course of Action

This section will focus on the columnists who contributed regularly for the newspapers during the monitoring period. It has also been identified during the analysis that a majority of columnists tend to write according to the same viewpoint of the newspaper they are writing for. In addition, the following points were also observed while conducting the analysis:

- Some of the columnists write frequently on a single theme, while others write on a variety of issues. For instance, one columnist might write solely on international relations, while another might be more diverse.
- Columnists focus on topics according to their area of expertise. For example, an economist might be expected to present views on an issue which has an economic perspective.
- It has also been observed that at times columnists, due to their previous or current affiliations with an organization tend to promote a viewpoint which may be beneficial for, or at least endorse, that organization.
- Fundamentally any person can contribute in the op-ed section, but the newspapers rely on in-house columnists and seldom accommodate anyone else.

³⁰ H.B. Swope, H. B. in Meyer, K. *Pundits, poets, and wits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), xxxvii.

Columnists

In a newspaper, there is space for four op-eds on average. While analyzing the op-ed portion of the four newspapers, we observed that the columnists were contributing on weekly basis. The columnists appeared in the newspaper on a specific day with opinion closely aligned with the ideology of the newspaper itself.

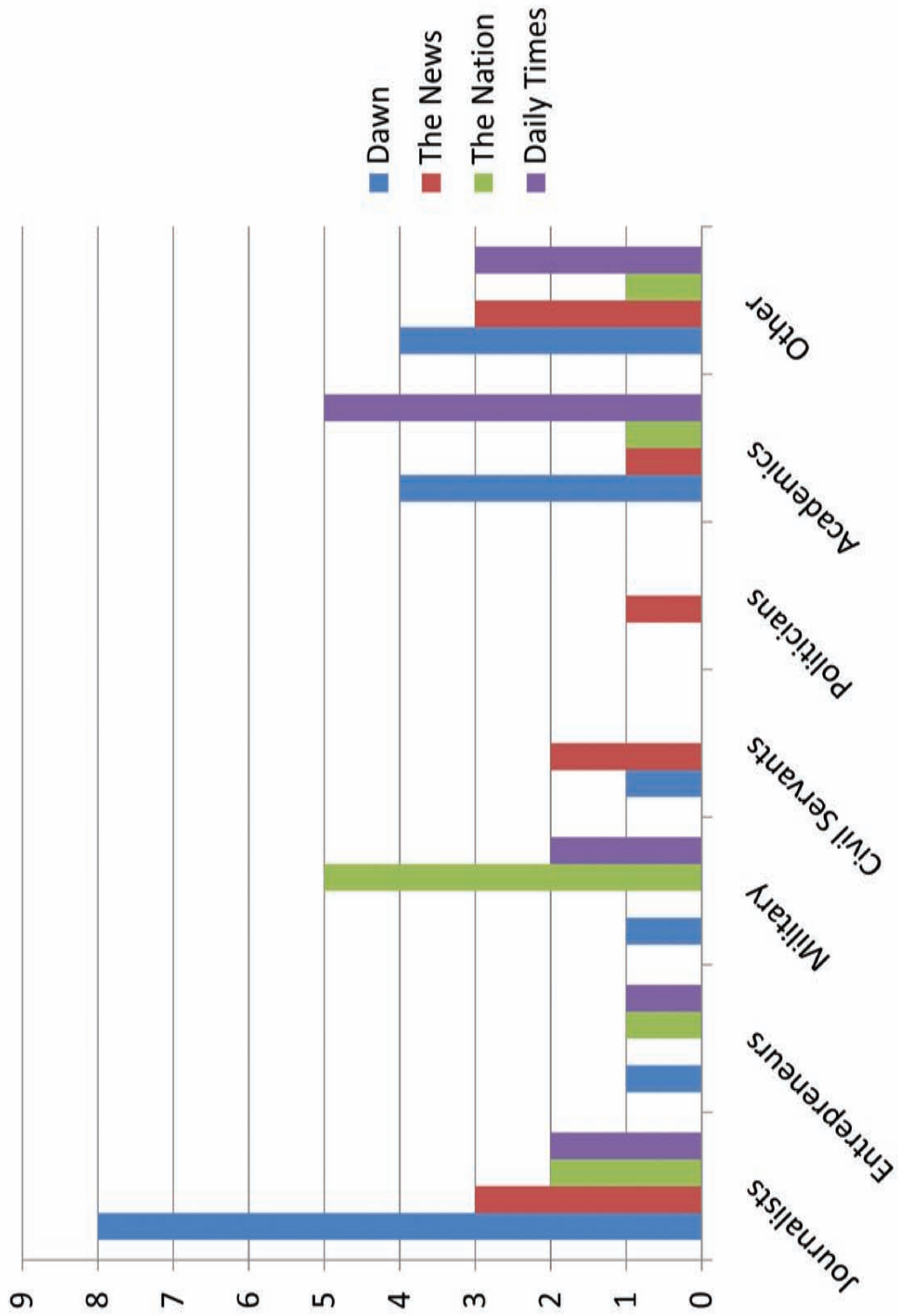
After analyzing the op-eds a table has been compiled that provides the names of the newspapers and the regular columnists appearing in it. The table also provides a brief professional summary of the columnist that helps in understanding their background and perceptions.

DAWN	
COLUMNIST	BACKGROUND/PROFESSION
Ardeshir Cowasjee	Businessman
M.J. Akbar	Editor of Sunday Guardian & Editorial Director of India Today and Headlines Today
A.H. Nayyar	Academic and Journalist
Moeed Yusuf	Academic and Journalist
Jawed Naqvi	Journalist
Syed Talat Hussain	Senior Journalist
Hajrah Mumtaz	Member of editorial staff
A.G. Noorani	Worked at Hindustan Times and Frontline. Lawyer and journalist.
Abbas Nasir	Former Editor of Dawn
I.A. Rehman	Journalist
Kamran Shafi	Retired Military Officer
Rafiz Zakria	US based attorney teaching philosophy
Tayyab Safdar	Academic
Rabea Malik	Academic
Khalid Aziz	Retired civil servant
Sakib Sherani	Economist
Cyril Almedia	Member of Editorial Staff & Journalist
S Akbar Zaidi	Political Economist
Irfan Hussain	Author and lawyer

THE NEWS	
COLUMNIST	BACKGROUND/PROFESSION
Rahimullah Yusufzai	Journalist and resident editor of The News at Peshawar
Ayaz Amir	Elected Member of Parliament
Kamila Hyat	Freelance columnist and a former newspaper editor
Asif Ezdi	Retired civil servant
Dr. Farrukh Saleem	Executive Director of a think-tank Center for Research and Security studies
Babar Sattar	Advocate in High Court
Shafqat Mahmood	Former Civil Service Official
Harris Khaliq	Public policy specialist
Ghazi Salahuddin	Journalist working for Jang group and also former president of Karachi Press Club
Adiah Afraz	Academic at Lahore University of Management and Sciences

THE NATION	
COLUMNIST	BACKGROUND/PROFESSION
General (Rtd.) Mirza Aslam Baig	Former Army Chief
Zahrah Nasir	Freelance columnist and journalist
Samson Simon Sharaf	Retired Military Officer
S.M. Hali	Retired Military Officer
Atle Hetland	Norwegian social scientist based in Islamabad
M.A. Niazi	Executive Editor, The Nation
Dr. Kamal Monno	Entrepreneur and economic analyst
Ikram-Ullah	Retired Military Officer
Khalid Iqbal	Retired Military Officer
Dr. Haider Mehdi	Journalist, political analyst and conflict resolution expert

DAILY TIMES	
COLUMNIST	BACKGROUND/PROFESSION
Shahzad Chaudhry	Retired Military Officer
Dr. Syed Mansoor Hussain	Has taught medicine in the Unites States
Anwar Syed	Visiting professor at Lahore School of Economics
Muhammad Jamil	Freelance columnist
Saroop Ijaz	Lawyer
Munir Ataullah	Entrepreneur/Businessman
Tammy Swofford	Military Officer
Harlan Ullman	Chairman of the Killowen Group that advises leaders of government and business
Dr. Muhammad Taqi	Journalist at Daily Times
Marvi Sirmed	Freelance columnist
Farhat Taj	Academic PhD Research Fellow at the Center for Gender Research, University of Oslo.
Naeem Tahir	Culture and media management specialist
Lal Khan	Political Activist and journalist for Daily Times



Analysis

As per the tables and graph, comprised of regular columnists in the four newspapers, it is evident that the writers are from various sections of society. Every section has a different perspective, which can also be associated with the individual's affiliation with a certain organization or issue. The main categories of the columnists are as following:

i. Journalists

The journalists, who are accommodated by newspapers, are either previous or currently affiliates of the newspaper. Syed Talat Hussain, Hajrah Mumtaz, Cyril Almedia and Abbas Nasir are working or have worked for Dawn in various capacities. Similarly The News has Rahimullah Yusufzai and Ghazi Salahuddin while, The Nation has M. A. Niazi. As evident from the above graph, this is also the case with Dawn.

ii. Entrepreneurs

As per the tables, it is clear that every newspaper also has businessmen or entrepreneurs as their regular columnists. These include Ardeshir Cowasjee (Dawn), who has a merchant shipping business; Munir Ataullah (Daily Times), Dr. Kamal Monno (The Nation) and numerous others such as Samson Simon Sharaf (The Nation), who besides being a retired military officer is CEO at the water treatment company, WaterTech Pvt Ltd, Pakistan – EcoTech Internatinal, USA. Similarly, Dr. Farrukh Saleem (The News) is the CEO of a financial institution, Dominion Stock Fund Limited. The entrepreneurs or business persons are thus well represented in each newspaper.

iii. Military

A considerable portion of retired military officers has been observed contributing to the opinion columns of the four newspapers. These include Kamran Shafi for Dawn, Mirza Aslam Baig, Samson Simon Sharaf, S. M. Hali, Ikram-Ullah and Khalid Iqbal for The Nation and Shahzad Chaudhry for the Daily Times. The topics chosen by these columnists mostly relate to geopolitics, or defense related subjects. Retired military officers mostly contribute and are published in The Nation, as evident from the previous graph.

iv. Civil Servants

Retired civil servants and bureaucrats also contribute in the opinion editorial sections as regular columnists. The subjects they comment on range from international affairs, politics, economy and governance. Khalid Aziz (Dawn), Asif Ezdi and Shafqat Mahmood (The News) are some of the prominent names. These civil servants are mainly published in The News.

v. Politicians

Current or former party functionaries are also regular columnists. Their tone and demeanour vary depending on their political ideology and affiliations. Ayaz Amir is a Member of the National Assembly (MNA) elected on the ticket of PML-N. Shafqat Mahmood has remained a minister and a senator on a PPP ticket, while Dr. Farrukh Saleem has also contested for the senate on a PPP platform.

vi. Academics

Individuals associated with educational institutions or education sector also contribute as regular columnists in newspapers. Academics are mostly published in the Daily Times and Dawn. Their topics of discussion generally range from geopolitics, economy, and local politics.

Voice of the Citizen

Letters to the Editor is a concept which has gained wide currency in English newspapers. Despite its popularity, however, very few Urdu newspapers contain this section. It is one place in the entire newspaper where the opinions of every quarter of society are accommodated. These letters are concise and comprehensive at the same time, clearly presenting the opinion of a writer on an issue. Despite the specific tilt or ideology of the newspaper, all kinds of opinions are presented. This is perhaps the most balanced and constructive section of any newspaper. During our analysis of this section it was observed that in this section the citizens have also engaged in dialogue. They respond to each other and sometimes also comment on the opinion editorials and specific news stories.

It is also sometimes observed that one person is accommodated on routine basis and in numerous newspapers. This is a good development as there is an exchange of views and ideas. Despite the policy of the newspaper, opinions belonging to various schools of thought are accommodated. The letters are also a medium for the reader or consumer to present their opinions to the publishers. The letters contain critique or praise over a certain news story or article, while sometimes the letter also consolidates on a certain news item. The writers are mostly average consumers of the media, though at times even columnists, not to speak of subject experts, have been found exchanging ideas in this section. For example a critique on a column might force the columnist to respond through a letter, or the columnists might use this section to clarify any ambiguity in their columns.

Most of the letters published pertain to issues which are at the forefront in the news at the time. Letters related to a recent terrorist event or a political development will be published, as they depict the feelings of the populace on the issue. Letters to the editor represent the views from not only within the country, but also of readers from outside the country as well. Here, citizens can voice their concerns without adhering to the policy of the news group.

Individualland (IL) is an active non-partisan and a not for profit liberal civil society group. It has worked on governance, rule of law, strengthening civil society and democratic development. Individualland has a demonstrated track of working with legislators and civil society organisations engaged in advocacy work. Hence, it has a strong national footprint and has the experience of implementing initiatives aimed at strengthening and institutionalizing interaction between the civil society and parliamentary committees. IL's world view is based on liberal values. It believes firstly in the individual, secondly in individual freedom and then consequently social responsibility but from the reference point of the individuals. Individualland is a space for liberal, secular individuals who believe that the state is for the individual and not vice versa, minimum government is more than enough, private entrepreneurship is the vehicle and root of creativity and progress and market need to be open and globalisation to be embraced.

<http://individualland.com/firm-blog/>