Caught between a rock and a hard place?
A case study of how
news media operated in Pakistan's
Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)
during the 'war on terror'

Muhammad Ilyas

PhD

May 2022

Muhammad Ilyas

A thesis submitted in [partial] fulfilment

of the requirements of the

University of Cardiff

for the degree of

PhD

Research undertaken at

School of Journalism, Media and Culture Studies

Submission: May 2022

Supervisors: Prof. Simon Cottle, Jenny Kidd

Cardiff University

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to my supervisors Sir Simon Cottle and Jenny Kidd who have given guidance and feedback, been generous with their time and shown great interest in the last year of my PhD; at times of difficulty for me, they have both put me back on track. I am also very thankful to the School of Journalism as a whole, in particular for agreeing to extensions so that I have been able to complete my PhD. My thanks, too, to my previous supervisors, Kerry Moore and Mike Berry for their considerable help in my initial years, and then to Catherine Walsh, who was very driven in her assistance and support. I have learnt many things from the academic staff and my supervisors, so I dedicate this research to them.

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated, and the views expressed are my own. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references. The thesis has not been edited by a third party beyond what is permitted by Cardiff University's Use of Third Party Editors by Research Degree Students Procedure.

Signed: Muhammad Ilyas

Date: 18/05/2022

Word Count: 68,513

Abstract

This PhD research examines why and how the Taliban and Pakistan military influenced news gathering inside the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016 and what the consequences were for news reporting. The ways by which news making was affected were studied from the sociology of news perspective, with research and analysis designed to update our understanding.

The methodology employed to carry out this research was to use semi-structured interviews and content analysis. It was crucial to talk to the journalists who covered events in the FATA to discover the details of what actually happened in the field. I selected 36 journalists to take part in face-to-face interviews, and prepared open-ended questions to gather evidence and record their views on the research topics. I also analysed 540 articles from *The Express Tribune* and *Dawn* newspapers, published in Pakistan between 1 May and 30 October 2011, to gather in-depth information on news coverage, including news sources, during the conflict.

The research concludes that the ability of journalists to gather facts or verify the accuracy of information was severely impaired. Access to information was primarily through official news sources or the Taliban, with non-journalistic sources being developed to try to fill the gap left by the loss of experienced reporters in the field. The personal consequences for the journalists were severe – participants described abduction, torture, threats, beatings and bomb attacks on their homes, in order to stop them practising independent news reporting.

This research contributes to scholarship and adds to understanding about news gathering during conflict by providing significant information about additional types of pressure such as the Taliban's use of force in certain parts of the world. It demonstrates how power was contested within the public sphere by de-limiting the access of journalists to report the core issues.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Illustrations

Chapter One

Introduction: Context and Overview

Purpose of Research

This study examines the challenges faced by local journalists who were caught between the global 'war on terror' and its local consequences in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in their struggle for independent news reporting. FATA became a contested space in that global conflict, in which the local journalists suffered the consequences. This was because they were looking at the conflict from the vantage point of the approach taken by a democratic society to resolve the issues of the common people through public debate and rational argument. The FATA as a geographical entity has remained among the world's most dangerous places for journalists in the wake of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, due to the high-tech drone attacks waged by NATO forces across bordering Afghanistan, the presence of the Taliban and the impunity of the Pakistan military authorities (Ashraf and Brooten 2017).

The FATA became part of Pakistan in 1947, following the British withdrawal; according to Rabasa et al. (2007), however, the system of governance prevalent in colonial times remained enacted, continuing the lingering effects of oppressive laws that emerged from the nineteenth-century British regime's rivalry with the Russian empire (Rabasa et al. 2007). Eventually, the prime value that the FATA developed in Pakistan's recent strategic ambitions was as a buffer zone (or 'sandbag') to be used for cross-border military adventures, where its ethnic Pashtun population could be treated as war fodder, foot soldiers and collateral damage (Rabasa et al. 2007). Even local Pashtun reporters derive their identity from the colonial legacy of the unending militarisation for control of this strategic border strip with its population of ethnic Pashtuns. Knowing from which direction the ferocious winds of regional wars blow defines the worth of these reporters' bread and butter journalism (Ashraf and Brooten 2017).

My interest in examining the role played by journalists in the conflict zone of the FATA is based on the fact that I hail from that region and I have practised journalism there. I had a chance to see closely, from the perspective of a journalist, the developments in the FATA region in the wake of the NATO invasion in 2001 and the arrival of the Taliban. I found the news media reporting less than ideal; it fell short of the theoretical expectations of what we were taught in the classroom about how news is made and the basic news values that underpin what we understand to be news, as stated in Harcup and O'Neill (2001). For news media scholars, such as Schudson and Anderson (2009), news media is in the forefront of reporting issues in a society so that issues and problems faced by the people are reported in a timely fashion in such a way as best elaborated in Cottle et al. (2016). They outline the Jurgen Habermas iconic theory of the news media as a global Public Sphere (1974) where public opinion about issues is formed in a rational way through dialogue and public debate, ensuring citizens' participation in establishing a democratic culture in a society. However, this research will examine how the journalists' encountered problems in discussing serious issues and in getting access to local people to understand more about their problems and highlight the difficulties that they faced relevant to the crisis in the FATA. It will investigate the problems that the journalists faced while gathering news and how those problems affected the process of news making and the ways the news was reported.

The research will assess the prevalent influences on news media during the crisis of the so-called war on terror in the FATA (2002-2016), taking into account the sociology and political-economy of news perspectives. However, the main focus will be on the two dominant forces – the Taliban and the Pakistan military – because they were the dominant forces physically present in the FATA region during the crisis Gunaratna and Nielsen (2008), which makes it important to examine how they dealt with news media and to identify the consequences of their behaviour for news gathering, the ways news was reported, and how the journalists and news media ownership responded throughout the period of the study.

The questions that I developed as the basis to gather evidence were devised so that they could be analyzed to reach my research conclusions. They can be summarized in three Key Research Questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What techniques, constraints and pressures (intended and unintended) influenced news gathering in the FATA during the so-called war on terror 2002-2016?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What were the consequences of those techniques, constraints and pressures for the ways in which the news media reported issues?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What were the responses of the journalists and news media to these pressures?

These questions were used as the foundations for building a framework of evidence gathering and for the analysis of the findings.

After the arrival of the Taliban, overall FATA society experienced change in the political sphere, in terms of influence and who was calling the shots. The Taliban were found to be sensitive to issues such as human rights, women's education, democracy, citizen participation and equality. The journalists (who were already sceptical because of the inaccessibility of the FATA region, separating it from the mainstream body politic of overall Pakistani society, and because of the specific extra-judicial nature of this region) wanted to observe the changes in society in the wake of the Taliban arrival with their own eyes, and to report on them, but their professional rights to work independently were annulled by the Taliban. There were instances when the journalists were questioned, interrogated, beaten up, tortured, kidnapped or even killed for reporting on issues that the Taliban did not want to become public, or wanted to be reported in a different way. From 2002 onwards, the intervention of the Taliban and the Pakistani authorities in the affairs of news media can be traced to the fear of the Taliban and the Pakistan military, which grew to such an extent that the journalists would show hesitation in reporting matters of a serious nature that could invite Taliban attention or rage. In uncertain times and crisis situations such as these, the public turns towards the elite and news media for their guidance (Cottle 2003); however, due to the absence of viable political and democratic institutions and the lack of public access to the legal system, the journalists in the FATA could not undertake journalistic research to understand the situation (Ashraf and Brooten 2017). The evidence that will be outlined later in this thesis will demonstrate that they were not backed up or supported by the media ownership or the political elite; as a result, they had to compromise on the standard and quality of work by leaving the field to non-professionals.

Five million people survived under Taliban-oppressed rule for almost 15 years during the period 2002-2016 (Ashraf and Brooten 2017). The natives of the FATA had not had access to the legal system even before the arrival of Taliban; the Frontier Crimes Regulation 1973 (FCR) was the sole regulatory framework in place, which turned the FATA into a form of

military cantonment (Rabasa et al. 2007, p. 84). The region of the FATA continued throughout the period of this research with this status, in which local people were denied their political and legal rights.

This situation was exploited by the Pakistani state apparatus because it could strike in the area with impunity anytime it wished, due to the absence of any constitutional protection or citizenship rights (Rabasa et al. 2007). Under the FCR, tribal identity was a substandard existence, with residents neither included in nor excluded from the state; they lived beyond the law, in a precarious relationship to law itself (Mbembe 2006; Mills 2014). This juridical ambiguity defines the ambiguous territorial status of the FATA and reinforces uncertainty as a central characteristic of life. Tribal journalists, for example, had no legal protection against violence, which was often rooted in high-level policy decisions (Siddiqua et al. 2020). Those who dared to raise questions about the state brutality on the natives were put behind bars and not even given the right to appeal or see a charge sheet for several months (Khan 2014). By continuing to treat the FATA as a marginal zone in its efforts to control Afghanistan, the post-colonial state of Pakistan promoted a dictatorial order in the FATA (Baloch and Andresen 2020). Violence and impunity in this marginal zone lead to uncertainty regarding people's rights and responsibilities, resulting in a chaotic environment and, in turn, legitimising further state intervention (Baloch and Andresen 2020).

After the NATO invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, the Taliban arrived in the FATA, and there was an increase in the incidence of militant attacks in the area. The violence spread gradually throughout Pakistan, providing the corporate news media with an opportunity to focus on terrorism, and to join the bandwagon of global news media coverage after the event of 9/11 (Gunaratna and Nielsen 2008). The increased violence gave legitimacy to military operations, which directly forced displacement of the tribal population. The focus of the news media, international and national, remained limited largely to reporting hard news concerning the strategic and ideological nature of the interests of regional power brokers (Ashraf and Brooten 2017). The task of this project is to carry out broader research to establish the facts about what happened to the journalists of the FATA, and what the consequences were for news content, following initial discoveries that suggested that many may have made sacrifices and suffered at the hands of both the Taliban and the Pakistan military in their attempts to report on the experiences of the people of the FATA. My research will look into whether their struggle to make journalistic progress to inform opinion making about events in the FATA could produce any of the desired results, and which factors

influenced this (such as a lack of access, absence of viable democratic state institutions, physical force and so on).

There are a surprisingly high number of private TV channels (news and entertainment) – 90 – and about 150 FM radio services run by the private sector in Pakistan (Pintak and Nazir 2013), but media concentration in large cities has deprived marginalised areas, such as the FATA, of their own means of mediated symbolic representation (Baloch and Andresen 2020). The vacuum was filled by local private radio services launched by the banned Taliban militants (Ali and Khan 2018), which preached the Taliban ideology and its affiliated hate speech. That was one of the negative consequences of the disconnection of the local population from the mainstream news media, about which I will elaborate in Chapter Six. In 2010, the Pakistani authorities in the FATA seized about 180 illegal FM pirate radio stations (Afridi and Gul 2018).

Given that situation, tribal journalists were the only independent information source about the FATA, yet their working conditions were highly problematic. I will gather evidence on how the local power brokers denied local journalists their democratic political rights, including freedom of expression, and reduced them to a role similar to that of mere postman. In the FATA, any local journalist had been considered qualified to report on terrorism and would be expected by the national media to do so, but they could no longer report openly, due to the fear of the Taliban or the Pakistani authorities (Ashraf and Brooten 2017).

This research will investigate how the working conditions for journalists in the FATA changed and what role their employers played when the journalists were struggling to practise independent news reporting in the wake of the Taliban arrival. In a UNESCO-circulated communiqué at a conference held in Helsinki on the safety of journalists in 2016, it was noted that attacks on journalists were well known, but 'less publicized is the fact that local journalists make up the bulk of those who are killed for doing journalism' (UNESCO 2016). The communiqué maintains: 'More than 700 journalists, media workers and social media producers who generate journalism have been killed during the past 10 years.' According to another UNESCO report (2019), 93 per cent of the total of 1,109 journalists killed in the line of duty were local journalists, and 90 per cent of those cases could not be resolved due to insufficient evidence to take the perpetrators to task, an indicator that almost perfect impunity existed in this regard.

I will examine whether large media firms, in Pakistan or the global north were more interested in scoops and flash headlines to feed their 24-hour news media, and whether they had any concern for the fate of the journalists left on the war front. Those journalists were asked to bring news from troubled regions on daily basis, but I will examine whether they were given adequate moral or financial support. This may be one of the main reasons why the journalists in the FATA had to compromise the standard of their work and flee from the area, leaving the field wide open for the Taliban and Pakistan military to operate unchecked. The part of my research that focuses on this specific question will examine the local journalists' work conditions in their reporting of Pakistan's conflict zone (the FATA), and this unexplored issue will also be examined with respect to their contribution to reporting events in the FATA. It appears to have been similar to a situation mentioned by Colleen Murrell (2014) in which news media theorists expect the press to be the fourth estate; in the FATA, it seems that those who had the power in the field – the Taliban and Pakistan military – were in fact in control of the fourth estate.

My approach to the way in which this research project is structured is explained in the following sections. The seven chapters that follow this introductory chapter explore the significance of this research in the context of key concepts and relevant academic literature, outline the methodology selected, detail the findings and then analyse these to draw conclusions and identify further potential future research.

Chapter Two – Theoretical Perspectives on War Reporting: Why this Research Matters

In this chapter, I review studies on post-9/11 journalism, in which the focus of news media scholarship has largely remained centred on terrorism and terror-related events across the troubled regions of the globe (Allan 2004). Keeping in view these developments on a global scale and considering the changing nature of the news media landscape and 24/7 news output, the news reporters have found themselves under more pressure, sometimes lacking the time and space to deal with the complexities of news values and verification of news (Freedman 2014).

I explain the ways in which this research will examine how technological speed, the effects of globalisation and the ideological divide of nation states (global and local, international and national) have impacted news gathering and reporting in inaccessible territories such as that of FATA. My research provides examples of how these factors have

been exploited by the forces on the ground and how coverage of issues may be manipulated due to lack of access to verify the facts. The situation gave rise to the dependency of news media (international and local) on non-professional people, now commonly referred to as 'stringers' or 'news fixers'. But the state and nature of news fixers who were working in FATA during the war on terror (2002-2016) was different than how the term fixer is applied in the academic context. This will be explained in more detail in the later chapters. Scholars have explored whether it is possible to expect news media to fulfil all the obligations that are expected of peacetime coverage (Thussu and Freedman 2003). Irrespective of the nature of what emerges as the evidence and the facts, access to events on the ground is considered to be vital to gather facts and to produce a news report (Schudson 1989) – this research project will establish whether such access happened more than on rare occasions in the FATA (2002-2016), during the period under study.

War journalism research dealing with the pressures upon news media during conflicts has mainly considered official restrictions as the primary force to influence news making and news reporting, but the chapter outlines how war dynamics have recently shifted in favour of non-state actors such as the Taliban, as demonstrated by the role that it played in the FATA. The problems faced by journalists there will be assessed in the context of debates about global trends in news reporting from dangerous zones. I have adopted the source involvement approach towards 'representation', 'social and cultural power' and 'citizenship', as outlined by Simon Cottle (2003).

Chapter Three – Explaining War Reporting: What's Known

Analysis of war/crisis reporting by news media theorists is reviewed in this chapter, highlighting the increased attention from, and debate between, academics around the world. My research tests the contention that the issues highlighted in academic works mainly revolve around the western news media, the journalists working for the international news media or the consequences of crises/wars/conflicts for western journalists. The review suggests that the suffering of FATA journalists has not had the extent of study that it merits until this point, even though they also made sacrifices for the same cause as the journalists in the west (democracy, freedom of speech, participation). This research will elaborate on the contention that, in FATA, there has been a challenge to the concept of international news media as a global public sphere by the Taliban who, during the war on terror 2002-2016 in the FATA, attempted to register themselves for the first time in the public sphere.

The local dimensions of war reporting – the struggles of local reporters for the sake of independent news reporting and the odds they take on as a consequence – have still to be established within the scholarship on news processes. Limited attempts to examine the role of the 'fixer' from the political-economy perspective are referenced in the literature (Murrell 2009; Greenberg 2011; Murrell 2019; Palmer 2019; Pedelty 2020; Ashraf 2021). This project, however, will take such examination a step further; by defining how the journalists were compelled to depart from the field, leaving it to 'news fixers', it will illustrate the circumstances and agents of 'news fixing' in FATA during the conflict of war on terror (2002-2016), consequences for the quality of news, and the struggle by local journalists of the FATA for independent news reporting , and also outline the growth in use of newer technologies as new routes outside traditional media to influence news consumers and decision makers.

Chapter Four – Statement of Aims and Methodology

The purpose of this research project is to examine the types of influences upon journalists when gathering information inside the FATA during 2002-2016, and the consequences of those influences for independent news reporting. This chapter outlines the methodology used to gather information: content analysis of news coverage and interviews to check the experiences of journalists seeking to provide coverage of the FATA conflict. Methods to identify the trends of news story selection are outlined, plus the reasoning behind newspaper selection. The approach to the selection of journalists is detailed, plus decisions on areas of questioning, method of recording and subsequent analysis.

Chapter Five – Content Findings and Analysis

The results of the data search are presented in thematic tables in this chapter, providing evidence to examine the sources of news, where specific news stories originated, who provided information to journalists, who was quoted as sources and the main themes that were identified in news publications.

Chapter Six – Interviews Findings and Analysis

This chapter will provide direct evidence of individual experiences of journalists throughout the period of study 2002-2016, through quotations that illustrate the wide

range of themes that emerged during interviews. I will use thematic content analysis to identify the main factors that influenced the news gathering process, including the 'fear' factor that stopped them from going into the FATA to gather any information, plus common issues that affected the quality of news reports such as procedural routines, lack of resources, procedures used by official authorities, lack of support from media ownership, timeliness and organisational routines.

These are assessed under two broad categories: intended and unintended factors. Intended factors include how the Taliban and Pakistan military directly influenced the process of news gathering and news reporting in the field and also inside the editorial room; the unintended factors include the natural hazards associated with war reporting: lack of safety equipment; logistics issues; lack of financial or insurance support; and lack of moral support.

Chapter Seven – What Does it all Mean: Significance of Findings and Where to Next?

This chapter will draw on this new evidence to discuss the significance of the findings and their implications for the conclusions to be drawn to answer the three key research questions about the main influences on how news was produced during the war on terror 2002-2016 inside the FATA. It will also consider what further research or action may be valuable to protect the opportunity for independent journalism internationally in areas of conflict. Greater clarity about how to make progress on meeting agreed standards of independent news provision around the world is more likely if we develop improved understanding of how to make sure that news media has unhindered access to each nook and cranny of the world. Such understanding is helped by examination of how the lack of access for news media affects people and how their basic human rights can be taken away when they fall victims of oppression, lawlessness and dictatorships. Another area worthy of further future research is the significance of the use of technology and news media channels by non-state actors such as the Taliban.

Chapter Eight – Conclusion

This chapter will apply the key findings identified in Chapter Seven's discussion about answers to the three Key Research Questions to draw the conclusions of the research project. The story of how this has affected the lives of nearly five million people in the

FATA has been detailed in my findings, and it is important that such consequences are not ignored. These conclusions will increase understanding of the specific steps that key institutions, such as the United Nations, could take to protect news media access to help strengthen democracy and institutions working for democracy across the globe. They help to illustrate the types of activity for which people and organisations could be held accountable. More detailed follow-up research could consider how social media groups and news media organisations could be more effective in tightening their monitoring and control. I hope that the findings and conclusions of this research study will encourage further research into the issues to ensure the safety of journalists around the world when they carry on their job to make sure news media has access to the masses. So that their problems may be highlighted through quality news reporting to unearth facts to understand the basic problems of the people and the understanding and the effectiveness of work to maintain and protect the quality of news gathering.

I have provided here in Chapter One an introduction to my research and an overview of the chapters that contain the different stages of my research. The following chapters dig deeper into the problems that were faced by journalists in this far-flung area and how their profession was treated by state and non-state actors. The scholarly literature and information about the context throughout the study period are drawn on to improve our understanding of the core issue of the factors that influenced journalistic attempts to produce quality news reports – and why so often those attempts resulted in failure. In the next chapter, I will provide empirical evidence about why this research is needed and what gaps in academic discourse it set out to fill.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Perspectives on War Reporting:
Why this Research Matters

2.1 Introduction

This chapter and the next outline the conflict journalism literature that is relevant to my area of research, identify key research themes that can help me to fill the gaps that I have identified in the existing news media literature, and form the basis of decisions about the evidence gathering methods needed to reach conclusions about the answers to my Key Research Questions.

The two chapter are divided as follows: this chapter considers the field of news gathering and issues of international news gathering; how news is gathered during conflicts; what kind of pressures journalists in the FATA had to deal with when gathering news; and the prevalent trends in international news reporting. The following chapter examines specifically literature that studies the impact of official restrictions that journalists have to deal with when news reporting and the official involvement of sponsor nations – Pakistan in the case of this study – with the sources of the news.

The theoretical perspective of influences on news gathering – and its consequences for understanding news making in the FATA during the war on terror – requires examination of the role of the global news media in war reporting and the ways in which this has developed our understanding of the pressing issues of terrorism. Critical news media theorists argue that news media has become more of a contested space within the realm of information and that those who have access to resources and power dominate news media representations

to protect their interests (Murrell 2014). By looking at the news media representations from the political-economy perspective, the factors that help to shape news serve the political and economic interest of the respective nations. In this research project, I examine whether there was a relationship between the reasons for the imposition of physical restrictions on news gathering in the FATA and the political, economic, cultural, strategic and ideological interests of the conflicting parties. I will examine whether the field of news gathering was constrained to make news media reports in the way that was most suitable for the power brokers: the Taliban and Pakistani authorities. The contest in the field of news media space in this case was between two conflicting parties: on one side of the seesaw were the Taliban and on the other were the Pakistani authorities, which had both banned the movement of journalists across their territory (FATA) during 2002-2016 to maximise their monopoly of news media space.

News media is usually understood to mean the provision of the latest news and updates about day-to-day happenings, but the demand for more news, speedy updates and information increases during ongoing conflicts from troubled regions (Carruthers 2011; Freedman and Thussu 2011; Kellner 2015). Carruthers (2011) argues that no conflict in the history of the world has attracted so much attention and focus of the news media as the war on terror 2002-2016. But Lewis et al. (2011) questions the increased focus of news media on terrorism-related issues and the argues that the perceived alarming situation described in the news media is based on speculation. For him, the sensitivity of news consumers towards issues of terrorism, which mostly developed after the Twin Towers attacks known as 9/11 and subsequent terrorist events around the world, has been exploited by the political elite to define the issues on their terms. However, Shoemaker and Reese (2013) contend that the news media does not operate in space; it works in a certain environment, where it cannot operate against the trend of politics in any particular society. It cannot resist the views of the majority due to survival issues; it has to accommodate the views of the dominant political elite at that particular time. Hallin (2004) describes how the political elite exerts influence over news media to define issues during conflicts in various ways.

However, this research project will outline information that has been gathered about how the Taliban dealt with the news media and the way they attempted to register themselves in the global news media sphere by a challenge to the traditional norms, and by a determination to develop new ways to undermine the traditional political-economy, sociological and strategic approach. This research project adopts Jurgen Habermas' (1974)

notion of the 'public sphere' by challenging its concept of the news media as a global public sphere as mentioned in Cottle et al. (2016), where it states that news media as a public sphere helps in establishing a civil society. The whole argument is based on the notion that public opinion is formed through debate, rational argumentation and participation in the most democratic way towards a stable society based on the egalitarian principles of equality, justice and democracy. News media is supposed to give power and strength to the idea of a global civil society by mobilising and furthering the agents of change such as women's education and rights, access to justice and equality of opportunity. However, for this research in FATA during the war on terror (2002-2016), the Habermas 'civil sphere' concept did not fully apply here because the Taliban influence on the ground dominated all other parties and paralysed news media activities unless they were adapted. This situation has given rise to parachute journalists and fixers because of the presence of Taliban and their imposed restrictions on the activities of news media. Professional journalists either quit or compromised the quality of their work. The journalists wanted to report the miseries of the people in the wake of ongoing conflict during the war on terror (2002-2016) but they were seen as part of the problem not the solution and that's where they got caught in the middle. The evidence will be analysed to understand more about how the Taliban registered itself as an equally influential entity by using a range of new methods such as the use of physical force, threats and intimidation of journalists. The involvement of the Taliban in the affairs of the news media is evidence of the fact that conflict had become mediatised, by which I mean that whatever we saw through the news media was not in fact the factual news or on-the-ground reality but one side's view in a binary picture of the reality that the conflicting parties wanted to portray through the lens of news media.

For Herman and Chomsky (2010), political-economy and ideology influences, along with multiple set of factors, stand out as dominant influences in making the news media dependent on the elite as sources for information. They apply their theory to both private news media in the western world and state-sponsored media enterprises in third world countries. However, in the case of the FATA, the journalists suffered at the hands of Taliban because they were looking to report issues from the vantage point of a civilised society vying for democratic values, but they were seen as an extension of global corporate news media culture.

Thussu (2009) argues that the introduction of technology into the field of news media has brought landmark developments in international news reporting. With this change, live

reporting of events across the globe has become a reality, which in return has increased the interest of news consumers in the affairs of troubled regions around the globe. Although the 24/7 headlines news may keep news consumer updated, they leave little time to verify facts because of the speed with which they need to be aired to keep news consumers engaged. However, the development (lack of access to facts on ground) also gave the corporate news media an opportunity to exploit the situation. This study examines the evidence about whether what has been reported in the news media were factual accurate reports about issues on ground, taking into account what it shows about the conflict zone of the FATA being inaccessible for journalists. I will draw on the evidence to discuss whether there were no professional journalists on the ground, and whether the information was collected through cheaper paid 'fixers', who were not journalists but instead people such as shopkeepers, taxi drivers and kebab sellers based in the FATA. That approach is also seen by some as a way to minimise expenditure by the business-oriented culture of corporate news media, through hiring 'fixers' rather than permanent employed journalists. Some scholars believe that fixers have no role in the editorial decision making (Pedelty 2020). As a consequence of this approach, anything filed for publishing could not be traced back to the person who actually produced the news report (Murrell 2014). In such a process, editorial decisions gain leeway by not taking full responsibility, and the quality of news is compromised as a result.

Technological developments have brought into homes live news from the far away conflict-ridden parts of the world, to inform the western news consumers about a 'different' parts of the world, which has helped to enhance further their thinking about the distant 'Others' (Thussu and Freedman 2003). These frames of difference have become part of the global news media and are existential in nature. By such practices, the global news media has supported the foreign policies of their respective countries on various occasions by providing a rationale for their interventions, such as the invasion of Afghanistan (2001) and Yugoslavia (1999) (Thussu and Freedman 2003; Macdonald 2006, 2011; Boyd-Barrett 2014). For example, the news media would highlight the issue of hate felt for the west, a question that would often resonate. Among the evidence that this research study gathers is whether this jihadi worldview of the Taliban had a commercial significance for media reporters. The Taliban knew the worth of the conflict situation and their being a party to it. The Taliban would use the attacks of 9/11 as a call for Muslims, warning Muslims globally who their enemies were: the western capitalist countries (Ashraf 2021). The global media focus on this hate speech was enough to amplify radical voices in the evolving scenario, explaining why

the parachuted-in journalists could not separate the ensuing spike in anti-US Taliban protests from their coverage. In the FATA, under those circumstances, the Taliban extended their support to Al-Qaeda, unleashing hate speech against NATO and Pakistan military policies.

The technological advancement in the field of news media in the capitalist west, as compared with the rest of the world, is a considerable ingredient of its power structure, according to Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992) who identified multi-layered connections between political, military and technological power and global business firms. News media has helped imperialist powers to exercise their power (Innis 2007). In the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016, the corporate news media would appreciate scoops about developments from the conflict zone of the FATA and any information that dealt with the Taliban. Irrespective of the nature of the source, it appeared that news report would be filed in the media even before initial investigations were carried out, and my content analysis will check how widespread was such a pattern. The evidence that I will outline from the journalists' conversations will throw new light on whether the facts that were provided were cross-examined or whether the journalists had a chance to see the situation on the ground physically with their own eyes, or whether lack of access prevented that. My evidence includes information about the lack of access for the correspondents of the corporate news media and how the newsgathering process was changed to involve the hired members of the public who I described earlier as 'fixers', who were local people with no journalistic background or professional journalistic training.

Due to the increased focus of the global news media on the representations of Islam, it appeared to be regarded as synonymous with terrorism, fundamentalism and extremism (Esposito 1999). The emergence of Al-Qaeda terror organisations in such countries as Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen demonstrated to policy makers, the mass media and the public the need for a more global perspective on the coverage of international news (Carruthers 2011). The terrorist attacks of 9/11 revealed a web of terror that was spun across many different nations of the world. The global news media, however, continued to focus their coverage of international news events on a limited number of nations and regions (Carruthers 2011). This lack of balance in coverage provided strong support for the new world information order perspective and was likely to impact news consumers' view of the saliency of international events (Wanta et al. 2004). However, the Taliban challenged the status quo in the international flow of news coverage and wanted to convey the message

through the news media their demand for their share of public space. In this tug of war, they used excessive force and the casualty was quality of news.

Since the early days of television news, communication researchers have investigated the role of international news in forming the opinions of news consumers about distant events (Thussu 2007). This is especially true of international news events that take place beyond the direct experience of most news consumers (Boyd-Barrett 2016). Following the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the world entered an era of global economics that would make international events more salient than ever before (Boyd-Barrett 2016). In this new era of globalisation, knowledge about events from around the world became a necessity (Boyd-Barrett 2016). But, as we see in the case of this research project, the FATA became a battlefield for the forces of modernisation, globalisation and civilisation on the one hand and the Taliban on the other. The conflict and crisis that developed as a result in the FATA put the lives of journalists at risk and they have suffered as a result of their struggle to provide independent news gathering and produce quality news reports.

Chang, Pamela and Nancy (1987) contend that news media representations about a foreign country depend upon its importance for other countries' foreign policy and national interests. This has been the driving force in international/foreign reporting in the west (Williams 2003). Various scholars have invested a great deal of effort with regard to international/foreign news reporting from the US and UK, notably Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004) and Benson (2014). Similar examples are Esposito (1999), Hallin (2004), Moore et al. (2008) Richardson (2004), Esser (2009), Gadarian (2010), Hayes and Guardino (2010), Lewis (Lewis 2012), Stafford (2013) and Kundnani (2014). However, there has been a lack of an alternative view of news media representations, to contrast with western news media views about how they see the issues of globalisation, civilisation and modernisation during the war on terror. This study provides an alternative view of how and why the news media public sphere became a competing field in FATA during the war on terror with the victims being journalists and the casualty being the quality of news. As a consequence, as I will provide evidence about later (Chapter Six), the information coming out from the FATA was not authentic or verified from independent sources and the journalists who filed news stories with their bylines had in fact never been inside the FATA as journalists. The evidence describes how they hired local people to bring them information – 'fixers', also known as 'stringers' – and the permanent employees of the global news media who were assigned the task to report about the war on terror could be described as parachute journalists, because

they were not fully experienced in the languages, geography, politics and culture of the conflict region.

News media has played a vibrant role in providing information during all recent major conflicts (McChesney and McChesney 2008): the Cold War, the Gulf Wars (1991 and 2003), the invasion of Afghanistan (2001) and the war on terror 2002-2016 (Zelizer and Allan 2011). The research dealing with conflict journalism confirms the role of the environment in which news media operates (McChesney and Schiller 2003; McChesney and McChesney 2008) . News media access on the ground is vital to observe issues and events independently, but this research seeks to gather and present evidence that the FATA was turned into a no-go area by the Taliban. It seeks to assess the content for analysis and the extent to which the news media had to rely on official sources and publish the official perspective when covering issues during the conflict (Hayes and Guardino 2010). Critical news media theorists consider such an approach to be a deliberate act on the part of the militaries involved, so that the opposition voices in a war do not find space and the media will follow the political elite war rhetoric (Bennett et al. 2008). But, in the meantime, it also shows how news media had to drop in parachute journalists and rely on 'fixers' to do news gathering and reporting. This research project attempts to illustrate the journalistic landscape of FATA during the war on terror (2002-2016) through the dark side of the news fixing. In the following sections, I explain the theoretical constructs of this project.

2.2 Basic theoretical constructs

The theoretical constructs of this project are based on the Habermas concept of 'Public Sphere' and the 'Source Valued theory' in news media (Habermas et al. 1974). This research project seeks to explain the journalistic environment inside FATA during war on terror (2002-2016) and the ensuing crisis that developed in the wake of Taliban treatment of news media and journalists working in that region. This research attempts to look at the field of journalism in FATA by challenging Habermas' concept of the global public sphere (1974) by the Taliban. They see these theories – about who contests the idea of the existence of a global public sphere and a global civil society based on rationality, democracy and participation – as an extension of globalisation and western military intervention by using the pseudonyms of democracy, freedom of expression, participation and women's rights. This is where the journalists in FATA got into trouble with the Taliban and had to suffer because they wanted to reflect on things using an international standard, observe developments through the lens of

21st century standards of democracy and report the miseries and sufferings of the people of FATA as a result of the ongoing crisis. The Taliban, realising the importance of news media and its power to make public opinion, had to impose restrictions on news media and journalists in FATA. Consequently, the Taliban restricted independent news gathering by the journalists and correspondents, both local and foreign. This project takes a step forward from the previous features of the news media global representations such as corporate and cultural aspects of news media, which has remained dominant until this point, and attempts at elaborating the basic causes of conflict and its effects on news media representations, news gathering and journalists themselves.

2.2.1   FATA as a contested space in the Habermas 'Public Sphere'

By looking at the environment surrounding news gathering in the FATA and the level of influences acting upon the journalists, I divide them into three different levels of influences: the first were faced by the journalists individually; the second were on the level of the routine approaches when the whole region was disconnected; and the third was the social and political environment, which was under the control of Taliban, who were working to establish their ideology, culture and political system.

The corporate news media representations lack in-depth analysis and investigation of issues which left the facts buried under the ground – only official versions of events were forwarded (Bowden et al. 2019). I will elaborate on this one-way picture of the cultural process as the main issue causing a grudge between the Taliban and the corporate news media. The Taliban would not allow any news media activity in their territory to challenge their authority and would want news media channels to work for their ideology. This is how and why the journalists of the FATA, who were looking at journalism from the western perspective of a modern democratic culture, became easy targets at the hands of the Taliban.

By looking at the situation at the news media level, the later chapters of this thesis will include evidence to help to understand the situation of journalists in the FATA and the links to the effects of globalisation, which is also regarded by some as an extension of 'media imperialism' (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen 1998a, p. 17) and by others as a situation leading to an emerging, interconnected and 'equitable global sphere' (in the words of Cottle 2009, p. 16).

Global dominance theorists are paradigmatically inclined to investigate the operations of markets and corporate interests in the structural conditioning of today's cultural industries.

Global public sphere theorists, for their part, are disposed to explore the flows of cultural meanings and discourses of identities that circulate around the globe (Cottle 2009, p. 29). Robinson (2011) argues that the orientalist discourses in the global news media are a never-ending process. There is always an instrument of dominance in global news media's representations of the other.

2.2.2 Definitions of the object of study

This study examines the challenges faced by local journalists who were caught between the global 'war on terror' and its local consequences in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in their struggle for independent news reporting. My research study looks at the struggle of journalists who were stuck fighting in a mediatised conflict. The journalists in the FATA suffered because they were looking at things from the democratic point of view of international standard of definitions of journalism and news values, whereas the Taliban took those to be an extension of western hegemony.

2.2.3 Threat and security

To understand the state of the news media in the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016, there is a need to go back into the post-Cold War era, which has given way to the post-9/11 era of global news media reporting of issues from the distant world (McPhail 2010). The American news media hegemony, which had been an off-shoot of the feeling and triumph of political domination, was replaced by uncertainty about the safety of the US population, which led them to think that the rest of the world could not be ignored (Esposito 2010).

This view of politics and globalisation has changed the nature of the conflict and journalism, generating new rivalries that are superseding those of the Cold War (Mowlana 1997; Esposito and Voll 2001; Thussu 2006). The job of the news media in this new situation was to educate the public about the causes and contexts of the conflict as well as its corporate and political dynamics. This is where the global news media now finds itself.

Mertens and de Smaele (2016) demonstrate that news media representations of Muslims in the UK differ from those of foreign Islam. Their analysis is based on two broadsheets that have different ideological underpinnings: *The Times*, a conservative newspaper, and *The Guardian*, a progressive newspaper. Mertens and de Smaele (2016) contend that, in both these broadsheets, foreign Islam is represented as more of a threat than national Islam. They have based their hypothesis on the frames of violence appearing in

relevance to foreign Islam, while cultural issues such as the underrepresentation of females are more pronounced in articles dealing with national Islam (Mertens and de Smaele 2016).

In the same vein, Berbers et al. (2016, p. 17) informs that the representations of Muslims in news media are one-sided, as they are contrasted with the 'liberal and secular minded West'. The study reveals that the increased attention to Muslims and their culture by news media has in fact sharpened the divide of 'us versus them'. The study further informs that the frames used to represent Islam in both these countries are almost uniform and have emphasised violence compared to national Islam (Berbers et al. 2016). In short, Islam is identified as being synonymous with terrorism and the Moroccan community that was the target of this study is represented as criminals.

2.2.4 Islam as threat in news

Edward Said's (2008) work was pioneering in providing insights into the representation of Muslims in western news media. It is the revised version of his earlier work, and the revision was felt to be needed due to the unexpected greatly increased attention of the news media towards Muslims. The study confirms that the news media reports of terrorist events around the world, including the hijackings of planes and threats from hostile and terrorist-sponsoring countries such as Iran and Pakistan, reiterate the thinking that 'we' are in danger from 'them' – 'they' are going to explode our buildings, bomb our airliners and poison our waters. The study identifies how the revival of orientalist ideas, which had gone into hiding, reappeared with a different tone, fixated on Muslims and Islam. As these ideas were attached to Islam in the news media, Islam has emerged as the least acceptable form of culture in the west because of all its negative connotations, its culture, teachings and religion, which have no correlation in any other culture, religion or geographic entity.

Lewis, Moore and Mason (2008) confirm that the number of news stories in the British print media regarding Muslim culture grew considerably in the second half of the first decade of this century, in the period from 2005 to 2008. The study finds that 36% of articles about Muslims link Islam to terrorism, while 22% focus on Islamic culture and another 11% on Islamic extremism. Lewis, Moore and Mason (2008) claim that the news media focuses on sermons and the activities of clerics such as Abu Hamza in an attempt to link Islam with extremist culture. They conclude that print news media stories describing religious and cultural controversies increased from 10% in 2002 to 30% in 2008. The study further states that news stories about Muslims and the religion of Islam are often speculative – Islam is

pitted as an extremist religion susceptible to committing acts of brutality and extremism (Moore et al. 2008).

Powell (2011), analyses the news media coverage of issues relevant to terrorism and how it feeds the culture of fear and threat about Islam. The study informs that the news media follows the pattern of a movie where all the characters – heroes, villain and plot – are available. The study further finds that a clear trend of reporting terror events has recently emerged, in which the authorities name a terror suspect after a terror event occurs and his/her description is assigned to an agent (Powell 2011). The news media talk about the motive behind the act, giving the probability of a future threat, and a portrayal of the victims. Furthermore, terrorists who are Muslims are shown to have international ties. The episodic coverage of acts of terrorism has become so programmatic that it has created a thematic frame of terrorism: war of Islam on the United States (Powell 2011). Because of the limited amount of information most Americans have about Islam and Muslims, terrorism images serve an essentialising function.

Richardson (2004), contends that the exact forms of 'Islamophobic' and racist discourses vary between different reporting contexts and across different reporting topics. However, he identifies four racial frames that appear uniformly across British broadsheets to identify Muslims: 'Muslims: the military threat "They" pose to other countries, the terrorist or extremist threat "They" pose, the threat "They" pose to the democratic stability of "Their" own countries, and the threat "They" pose to women – both Muslim and non-Muslim.' (p. 133).

Although there is a difference in the contexts of these four frames, all of them exist in the mainstream British broadsheets. In the same study, Richardson (2004), the case of Turkey is referenced as an example of how the focus of British broadsheets revolves around the presupposed 'threat' that Islam poses to its democracy. The news reports about the political situation in Turkey would describe half-truths by 'distorting' or 'misrepresenting' facts about various issues, which certainly needs explanation (Richardson 2004, p. 114).

Jahedi and Abdullah (2012) identify the use of specific discourse about Iran to represent it as a 'military threat' to other countries and to western interests across the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. The study reveals that all the problems with Iran have emerged because of its fundamentalist clerical system, which has put on hold the democratic stability of Iran and, to a lesser extent, Iranian gender equality.

Jillian Schwedler (2001) informs that the threat issue in association with the religion of Islam started to become part of western news media discourse after the series of terrorist events that spun across the world, starting with the Iranian revolution. The arguments made in support of this theory declare the assertiveness of the Islamic belief system as the basic problem. The study considers these Islamic attributes to be incompatible with other religions and a challenge to the free world. It is further noted that the adherents of Islam impose their laws forcefully and do not show any tolerance or restraint for other religions.

Fawaz Gerges (2003) analyses the origin of current representations of Islam in western news media – a threat and challenge caused by the foreign policy and political challenges in the third world. The study states that Islam appeared as a challenge to the US and a competitor after the collapse of communism. The representations that used to describe the USSR as a threat were replaced by Islam and, with this change of policy, the security of pro-western Middle Eastern regimes was higher on the US foreign policy agenda than coming to terms with third world nationalisms. America had been a democratic and generous nation until this point, but Americans were shocked to be declared by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini as the 'Great Satan' (Farhang 1993). The study concludes that 'the Iranian experience extremely conditioned US thinking about the violent, anti-American nature of fundamentalist Islam', the logic is that it is not Islam which is hindering democracy in the Middle East but the despotism (Farhang 1993, p. 2). The US government had never been subjected to this type of confrontation, which it deemed uncompromising and 'irrational'. The news media quoted Jimmy Carter, US president at that point, as saying 'We are dealing with a crazy group' (Gerges 2003, p. 5).

2.2.5 Culture of Islam

During the conflict of the war on terror, which started to become the focal point of international news media after 9/11, Islam and its culture were pitted against a modern, secular and forward-looking west, as noted by Simon Cottle (2006) in *Mediatized Conflict*. In a traditional colonial move of manipulation, the global political elite highlighted the sufferings of women and their veiled bodies as a sign of oppression in news media, using this as justification for their invasions abroad (Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003), as argued by Myra Macdonald (2006) in *Muslim women and the veil: Problems of image and voice in media representations*. The study further found that the oppressed status of women in news media is devoid of historical analysis and ignores the role of colonial powers in the graphic

plight of women and children. Freedman and Thussu (2011) describe as hypocrisy concerns about the plight of Afghan women – in the autumn of 2001, Afghanistan's blue *burqa* became a suddenly familiar trope of oppressed womanhood, with only rare questioning of the reasons for its newly pronounced visibility. This prominent attention to the *burqa* was not, however, matched by any equivalent interest in women's rights, as Klaus and Kassel (2005) noted. The study further finds that the unveiled women shown in the news media after the Taliban were ousted were linked to the defeat of the Taliban and victory for the invading armies. However, in fact, veiled bodies still loomed large in Afghanistan even after the Taliban were gone (Fahmy 2004). The veil was just an obsession of the news media to demonstrate the success of western interventionism. The mood of the news media can be judged from an article showing an almost half-page image of a 17-year-old girl without a *burqa*, which appeared on 16 November 2001 in *The Guardian* under the heading, 'Unveiled: the secret life of women'. The *burqa*, said Sediqa Sharifi, was not the point. Three days after the Taliban had left the capital, most women were still too unsure of themselves to remove the head-to-toe tent concealing their bodies and faces when they left the house, but there were more important things about the post-Taliban world *(*Meek 2001*)*.

2.2.6 The spectacle of terror and heavy defence spending

The threat factor posed to the west and its interest around the world has remained the favourite topic for news media, political elite and military planners after 9/11, argues (Lewis 2012). The study further argues that the frames describing the world as dangerous have been used as a justification not only for foreign invasions but also for heavy defence spending. He confirmed that 9/11 began to be represented by the political elite as posing a new constant threat that required a permanent policy, whereas in fact it was a one-off act of terror and the state department itself admitted that globally the number of such acts was in decline. Lewis (2008) claims that the news media discourses and news narratives help the political elites to approve heavy defence budgets that otherwise would be difficult to pass through public debate. For Devarajan and Reinikka (2003), heavy defence spending has affected public spending, diverting funds away from programmes for fighting disease or serious climate issues that need attention. A similar study by Lewis (2008, p. 6) informs us about the reasons for heavy defence expenditures. He states that one of the reasons for the lack of resistance to high defence spending is 'war rhetoric' – a harsh line (you are 'with us' or 'against us') that does not leave space for any alternative ideas.

2.2.7 The political and military link through news media

The importance of news media management during conflicts has been realised after the factual reporting of the Vietnam War brought to the surface the demoralised military invasion by the US, argues (Hallin 2004). The military perspective labelled the critical news reporting of the war as the reason undermining the war effort. However, after the experiences of the Vietnam conflict, the military and governments in the UK and the US realised the importance of supportive news media during conflicts (Thrall et al. 2014). The Gulf Crisis 1990-91 and the 24/7 live coverage of events from the war front increased the concern of the militaries and governments involved about the news media's impact as a foreign policy tool, as noted by Livingston and Eachus (1995). Discussions started to evolve over whether the news media images of the war front helped to shape foreign policy, as in the cases of Saddam Hussein's bombardment of the Kurds, the killings of Bosnians and the civil war in Somalia. It was argued that, in fact, news media images drove foreign policy towards intervention, whether that was humanitarian causes or pulling out of the situation after the intervention had actually occurred (Livingston and Eachus 1995). The discussion of the technological effects of news media has tended to portray news media as having an influence on foreign policy through public opinion (Vos 2019). This can be the external dimension of government-media relations. The news media is seen as deeply entrenched in the policy process because it is an important source of information for the political elite, and acts as a source of communication and mobilisation between them (Kernell 2006).

When political disputes cannot be resolved peacefully, violence is added and they then take on the form of war, argues (Echevarria II 2007). He further states that the purpose of military events can only be understood if seen within the political context. When a conflict develops, its military aspect is only one dimension of a more complex system, subordinated to a comparatively much broader political dimension. The scale of conflict defines the level of interaction of the two (political and military). As Carruthers and Babb (2000) contend, the political debate surrounding the conflict depends upon the level of threat it possesses. We see media as becoming an important component of war with the inclusion of technology, which revolutionised the gathering and reporting of news around the world. The changed news media environment has affected the political context of war. As stated in AbuKhalil (2002), the information coming out of the battlefield demonstrates the interests of different groups. Miller and Yúdice (2002) argue that the responses about the conflict travel back to the commanders, troops and authorities that make the important decisions. All these actions have

policy implications and increase the role of political consequences, which further elevates the role of political elites. While the expansion of the news media environment has increased the flow of information, it has also affected the nature of conflicts and the way they are discussed (McPhail 2010).

In recent conflicts when foreign invasions have been involved, such as Kosovo (1999) and the Afghanistan invasion (2001), there has been greater co-ordination between the military commanders in the field and the political elite, who are mindful of the public's reaction to attacks on high-value targets (Brown 2002). This co-ordination has become possible due to far-reaching command and control systems. The most senior commander present on the ground to steer the Tora Bora operation to capture bin Laden would be a lieutenant colonel, while the next highest level of command would be based in Florida. The absence of senior commanders on the ground illustrates the fact that important decisions about high-value targets with policy ramifications are made away from the battlefield (Brown 2002).

Conclusion

The study reviews and analysis presented in this chapter suggest that, in general, the news reporting of issues during conflicts depends upon the access of news media to those issues. Those who have access to issues have first-hand information about those issues, which can be verified by independent sources and the facts ascertained. This project will demonstrate that the access of news media to verify facts was restricted. In this situation, the only available option was to rely on news fixers, and news media has to depend on non-professional people to report on sensitive issues. From a theoretical perspective, this research is based on Habermas' 'public sphere', where it is mandatory that people have access to the information that is necessary for the emergence of public opinion about issues faced by people in a civil society. This research will elaborate on the evidence provided in Chapters Five and Six that this is not the case in FATA. The first and most basic condition to achieve a global civil society to ensure democratic function of institutions, human rights, equality, basic rights and education is access of the news media. Because news media reports about issues and developments during conflicts and wars can play a part in defining the situation. I have given the generalised view of the news reporting from the perspective of the global news media and applied it to the news media reporting during the war on terror inside FATA as well. Regarding what types of influences affected the independence of the news media and

journalists in the case of FATA, and how this affected the journalists' ability to produce quality news reports during the conflict of war on terror, these questions will be addressed in Chapters Five and Six.

The representations of the news media inform about the political environment and the culture surrounding the conflict situation, which this research elaborates on through outlining details of the presence of the Taliban and their entry into the political sphere. The news media does not simply report events; the way the conflict situation is reported becomes an important part of the conflict, due to the interest of the power brokers involved. The reporting of events not only affects domestic public opinion but gives the chance to criticise third parties. For these reasons, the militaries and the political elite invest a great deal in shaping and controlling news media representations, even though – as this research has highlighted in the case study of the FATA – they are not always in control of the situation.

Chapter Three

Explaining War Reporting: What's Known

3.1 Introduction

I have provided a general overview of the news media literature dealing war reporting in the previous chapter. I will focus more on the official restrictions over news gathering and news reporting in conflicts in this chapter and elaborate on why the journalists have faced resistance inside the FATA during the war on terror and the consequences for news reporting. The purpose of this research is to find out the types and extent of influences that the journalists had to deal with when they were gathering news and how those affected the process of news reporting.

News media plays an important role in people lives by providing information and news updates about developments from the conflict-laden regions of the world (Hanitzsch and Mellado 2011; Andersson 2012; Rodgers 2012). Paul Manning (2001) opines that there is a significant demand for news about distant events, and news media organizations in a bid to remain on top with news consumers and be highly rated, claim to show events in the most factual way. However, he sees news making as a rigorous manufacturing process that is influenced by many factors; it is not just a matter of showing the factual position on the ground. Various social, cultural, ideological, economic and environmental factors compete to influence news media and the struggle intensifies during conflicts due to the interests of all the parties involved (Manning 2001). Even in peacetime, journalists deal with routine pressures, such as timeliness, adequacy of resources, ownership factors and external environmental difficulties, but news reporting during conflicts becomes dangerous because the journalists have to be present physically in the battlefield (Simon 2014). Despite all the

odds, war reporters try their best to share actual facts and figures to keep news consumers informed about developments from the conflict zone (Kim 2010).

There have been numerous studies about the concerns expressed by journalists about the physical challenges that affect their capabilities to gather and report news independently (Armoudian 2016). This may well hold credence in the case of this research about the FATA, when the movement of journalists was severely restricted inside the FATA with regard to gathering news and then reporting it. Kim (2010) highlighted the problems and hardships of journalists in the process of news making during the ethnic crisis that developed between the shia and sunni sects after the invasion of Iraq. Similarly, Cottle and Lester (2011) investigated the infusion of news media into the political process during the Arab uprising. In the same vein, Allan (2013) highlighted the sufferings of journalists during the Libyan crisis. Moore (2013)examined the impact of political and foreign policy priorities on news media coverage of the Libyan crisis and Taylor (2017) studied Islamic extremism and the war for hearts and minds. There have been various studies investigating the state of news media in Pakistan in general such as Nadadur (2007), Mezzerra and Sial (2010), Yusuf (2011), Pintak and Nazir (2013), and Joel Simons (2014). However, all these studies conducted deals with one aspect of either ideological, political or strategic aspect of the concerned parties or forces involved, whereas this research attempts to explain the very basic idea of global public sphere presented by Jurgen Habermas (1974), and takes a step forward by challenging the very idea by questioning the phenomenon of rationality and democratic nature of the global civil sphere on which it is based. The nature of the conflict is global which is fought locally in FATA and may have global repercussions which makes it an important research project. There exists a gap in the literature regarding the challenges to the global civil sphere and why the journalists inside the FATA have suffered, a unique geographic area, within a different power dynamic.

Kim (2010) described the ordeal of journalists in the wake of civilian strife in the post-invasion conflict situation in Iraq. He informed that the post-war conflict situation in Iraq was one of the deadliest for news gathering in the world. He examined in his (2010) study the physical dangers perceived by Iraqi journalists, which came from multiple players: the national or provincial governments, or para-military groups represented by shiite militia, sunni insurgents or terrorists. The study engaged 404 journalists and analysed the dangers faced by journalists that influenced news gathering and news reporting during the civilian unrest that erupted between shia and sunni sects in post-Saddam Iraq. Kim (2010) confirmed

that physical threats were the most serious challenges faced by journalists that hampered them from carrying out their job.

In October 2009, based on available data about the experiences of journalists in the Iraq conflict, the New York based CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists), which gathers data on attacks on journalists and news media issues, listed Iraq as the worst country over the six-year period since the US-led invasion in 2003, topping the list with 193 casualties, the heaviest toll in a single war or conflict. Aday (2010) placed Iraq at the top of the list of 'Fourteen nations where journalists are slain and the killers go free'. Simon (2014) claimed that the same was true for Pakistan, where there have been hardly any convictions for attacks on journalists. Out of all the killings that have occurred (approximately 70), only two or three cases have been prosecuted and the remaining perpetrators have escaped justice due to a lack of evidence and an over-stretched judicial system.

News media scholarship needs to invest a great deal of research in the safety and security of journalists due to the rise in attacks on investigative journalists, as noted by (Simons 2016). He investigated the state of safety and security issues of journalists who covered the Chechnya conflict, after reports of involvement of Russian authorities in crimes came to the surface. The circumstances surrounding news media in Russia can be judged from the fact that news media avoids public debate about security issues, foreign policy and defense spending to avoid the wrath of the authorities. Lipman (2010)'s interest in examining the security perils associated with investigative journalism in Russia developed after the debate that was sparked in the aftermath of the mysterious killing of the investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya, who was working on the human rights abuses and war crimes by the Russian military during the Chechnya conflict. Lipman (2010) confirmed that there have been numerous incidents of violence against journalists in Russia, but very few have been convicted or prosecuted and the perpetrators remain unknown, which further aggravates problems for working journalists. Lipman (2010) also reported that the news media was kept at a distance from the conflict zone and any matters that involved the judiciary, parliament or public policy. He further found that the establishment in Russia makes all policy decisions with regard to public matters and there are hardly any judicial enquiries or prosecutions for corruption by the authorities (Lipman 2010).

Journalists in Pakistan have suffered for their investigative reporting during the recent conflict of the war on terror, as noted by (Simon 2014). News media in Pakistan was caught

in the eye of the storm because it ranked itself with the world community against Al-Qaeda and Taliban. There was a need to investigate the direction of the news media in the wake of the crisis, because journalists suffered at the hands of both parties – the militants and the military – during the war on terror. Pintak and Nazir (2013) in their survey produced information about the news media in Pakistan being caught in the middle; on one hand, they wanted to work in a professional way at a par with the rest of the world, but professional standards to them meant nationalism and safeguarding the state interest. The survey revealed that, for journalists, the image of the US was not as bad as was imagined by the militants (Pintak and Nazir 2013). The analysis informed that this is why the journalists suffered difficulties and challenges at the hands of militants. As part of the analysis, the researchers conducted a survey with 2 per cent of the total journalists' population based in Pakistan and found that 93 per cent of the respondents declared that there was a rising wave of extremism in their society, which was dangerous for the peace and stability of society and also for news media activities.

Despite the fact that the majority of the journalists had religious and nationalist outlooks in their personal lives, they held a unanimous resolve against militancy because of all its negative effects on the state of the news media and the democratic culture of society (Pintak and Nazir 2013). According to the analysis, for journalists in Pakistan, professional standards meant defending national institutions and the national interest. However, the authors concluded that militancy and extremism in society were the biggest threat for the independent working of the news media.

In the same vein, Barker (2012) in her study focused on the impact of cultural forces upon news reporting during the Iraq conflict. The study informed that news media representations are influenced by the culture of the home countries. A case in point is the way in which the Iraqi conflict was represented in two different cultures: the US and Sweden. American news media would show the Iraqi conflict in keeping with its view of their national interests, such as the targets achieved by their military and the peace efforts the US military has put into helping Iraq to recover from the conflict. In short, the US news media would justify the invasion of Iraq in line with its official policy, by highlighting the achievements of the US military, such as the liberation of Iraqi people from a tyrant and a dictator (Barker 2012). On the other hand, the Swedish news media would represent the Iraqi conflict from the international community perspective, with their focus centred on the sufferings of the Iraqi people in the conflict. Barker (2012) further claims that news media do not operate in

spaces or with the full autonomy required for unbiased reporting, therefore this cannot be achieved during conflicts.

A number of studies have focused on different aspects of the conflict situation that are relevant to the news media (Klaus and Kassel 2005; Russell 2007; Pintak 2009; Hanitzsch and Mellado 2011; Zelizer and Allan 2011; Rehman 2013; Simon 2014; Armoudian 2016; Cottle et al. 2016; Seib 2016) . However, this research study is the first attempt to study the challenges in the field faced by Pakistani news media at the hands of the militants and the military during the conflict of the war on terror and to investigate how militants pursued their interests through news media. The militants used technology for their propaganda after they had established their reign of terror in the conflict zone of Pakistan. The earlier information in this literature review that dealt with conflict journalism informs us that, after 9/11, reporting conflict has been an area of research that has recently increased, looking into the spheres of politics and culture that attract audiences around the world. It was outlined in Chapter One how the journalists that are the focus of this research project have suffered at the hands of the militants and the military on account of carrying out their professional duties. The conflict of the war on terror has its own dynamics, and both parties involved – particularly the authorities and the militants – have adopted various methods to keep the news media under their control and keep a hold on what is reported. This study will demonstrate the ways in which the news media was influenced and controlled and how news production was affected by the pressures in the conflict zone of Pakistan. This project will investigate the dynamics of news media challenges during the war on terror and the forces that affected the process of news making inside the conflict zone of Pakistan.

3.2 Physical forms of pressure

One of the key Research Questions that this research seeks to answer lists the different categories of pressure that reporters can face. War reporters working in the conflict zone of Pakistan have had to deal with a new form of pressure – from the invisible militants – which they had never experienced before (Rehmat 2008). He contends in his study that all parties in the conflict soon became aware of the effects of bad public relations (PR). He reports that the militants believed that the media had turned against them and was giving them a bad image. They, thus, became very keen on controlling the news flow. The study further found that people stopped talking to news media, realising the sensitivity of the situation and being

fearful of the militants. Things reached a point where the only available way for journalists to contact sources was by using their cell phones. They could only reach out to people through cell phones because meeting the source of news, seeing the location of the witness and checking the veracity of information were all absent (Rehmat 2008). The journalists complained about failing to be with the camera, and camera operators had to leave the safety of the hotel. Most of the time, the areas they were supposed to go to verify news were distant and dangerous (Rehmat 2008).

Rehmat (2008) further reported that ignoring these guidelines could be fatal. This was evident in the cases of Mosa Khankel, a Geo TV reporter who was killed in the conflict zone by unknown gunmen and Musa Khan, a TV journalist, who was slain while covering the Taliban in Pakistan. The prominent Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir said:

> 'Musa was not only shot but also decapitated. He was continuously facing problems while reporting from the conflict zone. The mood of celebration was converted into mourning (2009).'

The study stated that Musa Khan had received death threats from the local Taliban in the past (Rehmat 2008).

In the words of the prominent investigative reporter Omar Cheema, working for the English language daily *The News:*

> 'Journalists are shot like stray dogs in Pakistan – easily killed because their assassins sit at the pinnacle of power … Journalists have shown resilience, but it is hard to preserve when the state itself becomes complicit in the crime.' – Omar Cheema, *New York Times*, quoted in (Perlez 2010) .

In its annual report for 2011, the CPJ named Pakistan as the deadliest country in the world to be a journalist for the second year in a row, in the wake of the ongoing conflict during the war on terror. According to this report, seven journalists were killed in 2011 and eight in 2010. Yusuf et al. (2013), in her study , states that three more journalists were killed in connection with their work between January and September 2012. These poor rankings reflect the fact that Pakistani journalists faced threats and violence from militants and extremist groups, political parties, the military, intelligence services and criminal gangs, all of which escalated significantly since 2007 (Yusuf et al. 2013). On a day-to-day basis, many

journalists endured physical surveillance, phone tapping, computer hacking, intimidation of their family and friends and threats of losing their jobs. According to a survey of journalists in Pakistan by the media advocacy group Bytes for All, 73.1 per cent of respondents revealed that their work as a journalist or blogger had caused them concern, with 40.7 per cent of respondents asserting that being personally threatened was the biggest threat faced by journalists. The survey further confirmed that few of those who attacked journalists were ever brought to justice, raising suspicions about judicial independence and the extent of the authorities' desire to unearth the truth.

The decline in the security situation has directly affected the performance of journalists in the conflict zone, as noted by Joel Simon (2014) in his study about the challenges faced by front-line journalists in the recent conflict of the war on terror in Pakistan. The state of repression, according to him, is high, but it is concealed under a democratic façade. His study confirmed that the dangers associated with war reporting have diminished the traditional system of news reporting and that now we live an in age when information is provided by a hybrid news media system of both old-school and new technological tools or types of reporting, such as blogs, Twitter, social media and citizen journalism (Simon 2014).

Ricchiardi (2012) informs that, in terms of news media freedom, the working environment in Pakistan was at its most dangerous level for many years during the war on terror, when journalists faced unprecedented levels of violence and threats from a range of sources including the military, the intelligence services and the militants. The constitution of Pakistan and other legislation, such as the Official Secrets Act, authorised the government to curb freedom of speech on several subjects including the constitution, the armed forces, the judiciary and religious sensitivities. The article further found that, on different occasions, the authorities exploited all of these laws and others, such as blasphemy laws, to suppress news media.

3.3 Natural hazards associated with violence

The natural violence associated with conflict has made the conflict zone of Pakistan a difficult area for news media to cover, as noted by Joel Simons while describing the conflict situation in the recent war on terror. He describes the stories of journalists who have covered conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan as gruesome, because of the hostile environment in which

they have to work. The natural problems, other than violence, include no communication systems, the unavailability of power due to breakdowns and the lack of training by employers for journalists about working in challenging situations (Simon 2014). The journalists were regularly abducted by militants for allegedly spying for the authorities, while they were also afraid of being shot at from military check posts. Such was the volatile environment in both conflicts, Iraq and Afghanistan, that the journalists' bodies the CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists) and Human Rights Watch have had to contact the US defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld to improve the checking procedures for journalists.

The journalists in Pakistan were faced with similar situations during the conflict of the war on terror, as noted by Zafar Ulla Khan and Brian Joseph (2008). Their study informs that, at the beginning of the war on terror, the journalists were not aware of the perilous security situation and there was no training or awareness support program provided by the employers. The news media came to know about the gravity of the security situation when the militants started terrorizing not only the journalists in the conflict zones but also their families (Khan and Joseph 2008). The law-and-order situation in the areas adjacent to the conflict zone was equally out of control and journalists were approved arms licenses by the authorities for self-defense. For Ricchiardi (2012), technically, the journalists were supposed to look after themselves due to the highly dilapidated security situation in places adjacent to the conflict zone. There was no guarantee of the safety of journalists outdoors, when they had to go out in the field for news gathering. In the meantime, despite all these challenges, they still had to keep in view the interests of the military, the intelligence authorities and the militants' groups before filing a news story. All the parties mentioned had been reportedly watching news media activities and the movement of journalists' activities very closely.

The terror threat was the main factor to transform the field of news gathering in the conflict zone. Journalists who were afraid of being kidnapped by militants and being shot in the street could not go out to report events. They could not be seen to be too close to any party, the militants or the military, for the fear of the other. The conflict situation in general was full of risks for journalists because of various factors, which we will discuss in the coming sections in detail, one by one.

3.4 The military

The event known as 9/11 has transformed the trend of news journalism with the whole focus diverting towards terrorism and security challenges around the world (Zelizer and Allan 2011). With this change, the security issues from the perspectives of defence and national interest started to appear and dominate in the news media (ibid). Robinson, Goddard and Parry (2009) argue that, in this way, the institutions of journalism – supposed guardians of the truth – have dramatically changed in their functioning, and are made to carry military propaganda and to become key participants in death and destruction. It is further argued that journalists, who are otherwise believed to bear the 'responsibility of conscience' and inform the public, are moving away from their ideals and have become, intentionally or unintentionally, active conduits of governmental lies and half-truths (Robinson et al. 2009). The study further informed that the military version of information had not only overwhelmed the flow of news at the international level but that the military had used all possible means (including physical measures such as unannounced curfews, check posts – more than 600 in FATA alone – and embedding) to influence news making from the battlefield, in particular, the reporting of those news items that are perceived to be against the interest of the military.

In similar vein, Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2014) informed how the Al-Jazeera TV news channel was bombed by the US military in Kabul (Afghanistan) in 2001. It became a target because it was showing the other side of the war, with stories that were the opposite to the claims made by NATO and the US military. The analysis further claimed that the Al-Jazeera studio became the target of shells in NATO military raids because it dared to show the pictures of innocent civilians killed, which included children, women and photos of dead American soldiers. Furthermore, Al-Jazeera TV was the only international news media organisation with access to the Taliban and Al-Qaeda leadership; they were, therefore, able to show interviews with them and to air their counter claims about the conflict situation or any new developments. For almost similar reasons, Al-Jazeera and Abu-Dhabi TV were both bombed by the US military in Baghdad on 8 April 2003, killing three journalists. The attacks were alleged to be deliberate, although the US military denied any involvement. The US military denied allegations of bombing studios to avoid prosecution in war crimes because, under the Geneva Convention, the protection of civilians is the responsibility of occupation forces. However, the British newspaper *The Mirror* later leaked a news report that President Bush had shared his plans to bomb the Al-Jazeera headquarters with Tony Blair, the then

British Prime Minister (Nohrstedt 2009). Joel Simon (2014) informed that, between 1995 and 2007, 1,100 journalists were killed in the line of duty in different conflicts around the world. The responsibility for all these killings lies with both military and the militants, but all of these journalists were killed when they were covering conflicts.

Nohrsedt and Ottosen (2014) informed about the drift of the institution of news media as a whole into the power structure of the state security apparatus. The study considered that the radical changes in the field of conflict reporting had been caused by international politics, which had taken a new direction after the Cold War. The study further informed that the change in news media representations was caused by the internationalisation of news, which reflects more of a nation's security and foreign policy. Due to the institutional embedding of the news media and reporters, military, political and economic power structures exert a great amount of influence on news reporting about armed conflicts. At the same time, media discourses in general, and perhaps war journalism in particular, are embedded in a national foreign policy context (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014).

Miller and Sabir (2012) unearthed the institutional management of news media by the military of the US, UK and Pakistan during the war on terror. The analysis informed that the US military set up an Office of Global Communications (OGC) in 2002. This was an extension of its predecessor, Coalition Information Centres (CIC), set up for the First Gulf War, the Afghanistan invasion (2001) and the Kosovo conflict (1999). The CIC offices were located in Washington, London and Islamabad and were supposed to disseminate war news from Afghanistan, to be further co-ordinated across all the allied nations. With the invasion of Iraq (2003), the status of the CIC was elevated to that of the OGC, to include the news domain of Iraq. The analysis found that the false news about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction were shared by the OGC (Miller and Sabir 2012). The analysis informed that the CIC was also given responsibility for undertaking overt and covert military operations inside Afghanistan during the war on terror. This sphere of operation remained outside public debate, as most of the criticism and focus remained centred on embedded journalists within combat operations (Van Ham 2003). All these efforts were directed towards a distinct need to create and maintain a positive national narrative during the war on terror. The motivation behind the OGC's creation was to task a specific governmental entity with co-ordinating messages concerning the national narrative and the strategic communication approach. This entity had to be situated close to the United States Presidential administration or to the United Kingdom Prime Minister's Office, and it had clear operating

procedures, goals and resources that addressed the identified risks and threats. The highest political backing ensured that it had sufficient clout (Todd et al. 2009).

The news media representations that came into being under official influence would reflect clearly official version of events, as noticed by Pfau et al. (2004) and (Pfau et al. 2005). The studies confirmed that the coverage of events by embedded journalists would use different frames and would prioritise issues keeping in view the concern of the military. Both these studies assert that stories published by embedded journalists are more or less official proclamations and that they lack critical evaluations of coverage, as compared to the news stories produced by non-embedded journalists.

The role of militaries in the decision-making process in certain regions of the world is so obvious that, even if there are no clearly drawn lines, its influence exists and is felt by news media, as analysed by (Nadadur 2007). His analysis of news media and military relations in Pakistan finds that, although the military government of Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008) claims to have lifted official restrictions on news media, the hidden restrictions are still imposed. He claimed to have studied the effects of this during news reporting from the conflict zone. This has taken the form of suppressing criticism of the government's policies about the war on terror and encouraging self-censorship. The study confirmed that the military has specifically focused on preventing and deterring reporters from accessing the conflict zone and the areas that the military finds difficult to govern.

The military in Pakistan have remained involved in exercising influence over the democratic institutions of the country including news media since the beginning, as found by Mezzera and Sial (2010) in the investigation that confirms that the military in Pakistan have kept news media under control through various direct or indirect means. There are different ways of expressing displeasure to the news media to make them realise that there is something wrong with their news reporting. The investigation reveals that the military have cohorts within different news media outlets who openly support military policies in TV talk shows and their columns. In this way, the military propaganda about certain issues becomes internalised during conflicts. In the same vein, the military draws support from their cohorts within news media, when it needs to make decisions in issues related to foreign policy and national security during conflicts and this is claimed to be being done in the best interest of the nation. The investigation informed that the military in Pakistan has been criticised worldwide for its alleged management of news media in the recent conflict of the war on terror (Mezzera and Sial 2010).

The role of the militaries in managing war theatre has always drawn scholarly debate, but the recent conflict of the war on terror has revealed the increased yet controversial role of the militaries in managing the conflict situation. All the main countries involved in the conflict of war on terror 2002-2016 (US, UK and Pakistan) were found to have a well-established news media management system during the war on terror to look after the national strategic and foreign interest (Miller and Sabir 2012). Even in peacetime, the authorities do not compromise over the security policy of the nation state, but their function becomes more pronounced during conflicts (Yusuf et al. 2013). In Pakistan, the military has a permanent news media public relation office which deals with the affairs of news media, known as media wing of the military, the ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations) .

3.4.1 ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations)

The role of the news media wing of Pakistan military, the ISPR, in the affairs of the national news media, has remained the focus of interest for many studies, as examined by (Yusuf et al. 2013). Yusuf, Dragomir, Thompson, Watts, Chan and Nissen informs that news media are denied access to the conflict zone due to physical restrictions put in place by the military authorities. Any news updates or information about any events in the conflict zone are shared with the news media through ISPR.

Sherry Ricchiardi (2012) noted how ISPR came to the surface in the early 1990s; at that time, it provided little information, but its role greatly increased during the war on terror after the US invasion of Afghanistan (2001). It has become more vocal and proactive during the military operations in the conflict zone, the deployment of troops along the Pakistan-Afghan border and Pakistan's changing role in the global war on terror. However, the study found that, despite the news media dependence on the ISPR briefings about updates from the conflict zone, the relationship between news media and the military has remained hostile. This is because of the restrictions imposed on the movement of journalists across the conflict zone, which hindered them from understanding the facts on the ground or unearthing complexities in the war on terror. The military would not allow news media to see locations where events occurred and issued details surrounding that particular event through ISPR. For Yusuf et al. (2013), the military and news media relations remained constrained during conflicts. due to the military necessity to maintain maximum security about the conflict situation. They claim that this was done in the name of national security and interest.

3.4.2 Security agencies

The security authorities in Pakistan have remained historically vigilant about the activities of news media, as noted by Joel Simon (Simon 2014). He examined the circumstances faced by journalists who have covered conflict zones and confirmed that issues related to terrorism were watched and the activities of the journalists monitored by the security authorities of Pakistan, especially the intelligence agencies. Joel Simon (2014) reached the same conclusion when he observed the ordeal of the investigative reporter Saleem Shehzad, who was working for a Hong Kong-based online magazine, *Asia Online*. He reportedly disappeared on 29 May 2011, and his tortured body was found two days later in a suburb of Islamabad. According to Yusuf (2011), he was kidnapped after the publication of the last section of his two-part news story that dealt with the infiltration of Al-Qaeda into the ranks of the Pakistan navy. Before being kidnapped, he had alerted several colleagues about the fact that he had been receiving death threats from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) (Yusuf 2011).

In another similar incident, in September 2010, Umar Cheema, an investigative journalist working for the English broadsheet *The News*, was abducted and assaulted by intelligence officials, but he did not care about the consequences and shared his story on visual news media (Yusuf 2011).

Joel Simon (2014) further asserts that, in the recent conflict of the war on terror, more than 60 journalists have been murdered in Pakistan, but there has been only one conviction so far. Since 2002, the government of Pakistan has commissioned six high-level investigations into the killings of journalists, but only one case has led to a prosecution. In January 2012, the judicial inquiry commission tasked with identifying Mr Shehzad's killers failed to identify those responsible, despite strong indications of ISI involvement in his death (Simon 2014). The commission noted that the police did not adequately question Pakistan's intelligence officials during the criminal investigation into Mr Shehzad's murder. The report concluded that the Pakistani state, militant groups and 'foreign actors' could all have had a motive. Yusuf et al. (2013) added that Human Rights Watch criticised the special investigation, pointing out that the judicial inquiry team failed to interview Mr Cheema, the other journalist who was abducted and tortured by the ISI.

Authorities in Pakistan have kept news media under a tight leash to make it serve their interests (Pintak and Nazir 2013). In doing so, the whole state machinery – the civil authorities, law enforcement agencies, intelligence authorities and the military – have kept

news media off limits from the main issues concerning state policies. Out of all these, the military has been very sensitive about news media affairs (Pintak and Nazir 2013). In the conflict of the war on terror, a new force, the militants, emerged on the scene, who introduced lethal measures to curb news media influence inside the conflict zone on a scale not seen before in Pakistan.

3.4.3 Militants

 The militants and extremist groups in Pakistan have targeted journalists by alleging that the journalists had worked against them, and to avenge the military operations that were targeting their hideouts in the conflict zone of Pakistan (Bhattacharya 2015). Bhattacharya (2015) informed that Pakistan-based extremist and militant groups have taken actions against the news media to force them to publish or broadcast their press releases and statements. Bhattacharya (2015) reports that, in December 2009, three people were killed and 20 wounded when a suicide bomber attacked Peshawar Press Club. At least 12 journalists were killed between 2001 and 2012 in the FATA along the border with Afghanistan, where most militant groups are based. In June 2012, the Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for a gun attack against the Karachi offices of the privately owned Aaj TV channel; a Taliban spokesman explained that the channel was attacked for failing to adequately cover their activities (Bhattacharya 2015).

The working environment for news media has been challenging throughout the conflict zone, but some places were extremely difficult, as noted by (Mezzera and Sial 2010) when they were investigating the security situation for journalists in Pakistan's western province of Baluchistan, where separatist groups have been waging an insurgency since 2006. Baluchistan-based journalists were targeted by separatists and violent sectarian organisations active in the province. As a result, 22 journalists were killed in Baluchistan between 2009 and 2012. Speaking at a media workshop in July 2012, the Quetta Press Club general secretary, Abdul Khaliq Rind, described the province as a 'battleground' and said: 'You cannot look at media's work in isolation. You cannot write about any group' (Kasi 2012).

Joel Simon (2014) added that the state of vulnerability in the conflict zone could be gauged from the fact that journalists preferred to remain silent over such issues and events, for fear of being exposed. Journalists have suffered so much at the hands of militants in the conflict zone in Pakistan that professional journalists have gone into hiding and day-to-day events are covered by personal diaries and blogs. Despite this, journalists are still threatened

by the militants. A case in point is the shooting of the schoolgirl Malala Yusufzai, who was shot by the Taliban for writing a diary for the BBC (Simon 2014).

In the recent conflict of the war on terror, more than 60 journalists have lost their lives in Pakistan 2002-2014 (Simon 2014). He noted that the first victim of militancy was Wall Street reporter Daniel Pearl, and that the militants continued to hunt down journalists but hardly any convictions have taken place. This state of uncertainty has ruined people's trust of the authorities, keeping in view the threats and dangers posed to journalists. The journalists have had to look after themselves, and this could only be done if they stayed out of sight of the militants (Simon 2014).

Extra-judicial killings, disappearances and the torture of journalists present a very bleak picture of the experiences of journalists at the hands of militants, as noted by (Ricchiardi 2012). She says that crimes against news media are widespread. Taliban militants have targeted civilians, journalists, schools and pro-government community leaders, killing hundreds and injuring thousands with bombs, suicide attacks and other forms of violence. Militant and terrorist groups are the main perpetrators of violence, and the number of torture cases has doubled from 2009. Methods of torture included beating with batons and whips, burning with cigarettes, electric shock, denial of food or sleep, and hanging upside down. News media and observers note that these issues are under-reported throughout the country (Ricchiardi 2012).

The militants have a well-planned mechanism to propagate their message to their target population, both domestic and abroad, according to the project to study the modus operandi of militants, a joint venture of the USIP (United States Institute of Peace 2011) and the University of Peshawar (Pakistan) to investigate how the extremists use news media channels to give voice to their propaganda. The report concluded that, 'Young people are especially vulnerable to extremist views, especially in remote regions cut off from the world' (Ricchiardi 2012, p. 33). Furthermore, the main targets of extremists are state schools and madrasas in strife-torn tribal areas of Pakistan, where the militants use news media channels for the indoctrination of their ideology. For Aly et al. (2016), the militants are well informed about the use of technology and have been exploiting social media and the internet for their propaganda. Arguably, technology has helped news media to interconnect the whole globe by bringing news from far-flung areas to each and every household (Thussu 2009). Because of this technological development in communication technologies, online business and trade

have increased profits multiple times, but the literature in this project informs that advancements in the field of news media technologies are being exploited by militants for their own purpose. The platform of the news media has been used by terrorists to communicate between themselves, to gather sympathisers and to convey messages to opposing parties (Aly et al. 2016).

Similarly, the use of news media technology by militants is examined by (Simons 2016). He asserts that the militants force the news media to give them space to counter rival propaganda, on the one hand, and to to attract recruits and funds from within the home audience, on the other. In the meantime, the militants use news media to demonstrate their power and terror over those who are vulnerable; this is often accompanied by political demands. The analysis further asserts that the final target group is heterogenous and consists of an international public who observe the situation from the sidelines. In a similar vein, Klausen (2015) examined the use of social media, in particular Twitter, by the ISIS group in Syria and Iraq, and terrorists affiliated with this group based in the UK used social media network for the planning and execution of their activities (Klausen 2015).

The militants have used brute force to terrorize people as their main tool, informed (Farwell 2014). In a bid to build credibility and establish legitimacy, the group used social media and cyber technology to drive home its messages. The study further pointed out that ISIS is not the only set of violent extremists to use such means. A similar group from Kenya (Al-Shabaab) used Twitter during its September 2013 attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi to intimidate, mock and brag. The Pakistan-based militant outfit, Lashkar-e-Taiba, also made effective use of cyber technologies, such as Google Earth and mobile phones, to gather intelligence and to command and control during its November 2008 assault on Mumbai (Farwell 2014).

The main blow felt by journalists in Pakistan in the recent conflict of the war on terror is physical harm caused by the militants, as highlighted by (Simon 2014). He claims that, of killings reported in the recent conflict of the war on terror in Pakistan, more than 70 per cent have been claimed by the militants. He further states that investigative reporting, factual reporting and movement of journalists are the journalistic activities affected by the approach of militants. Militants know how to use modern technologies and they want their side of the story to be heard. Their restrictive measures over the news media are in fact an effort to limit the official stance, which they call the viral propaganda of rival news media (Simon 2014).

The reasons behind the militants' investment in the use of news media is examined by Greg Simons (Simons 2016). He asserts that militants understand that news media channels are the best tools to reach their target audiences across the world, in particular in the west. He further informs that the militants have forcefully used news media channels for their propaganda to win the hearts and minds of global audiences. For instance, the militants frame their actions as defensive in nature – they are merely defending Muslims from oppression (Simons 2016). These narratives pose challenge to the western governments, which, from a marketing perspective, might be likened to a political challenge to an incumbent power: the west, particularly the US and UK. These claims influence the public's belief in their political and military leadership, as well as their loyalty and will to fight for a political cause, either to support a regime or to overthrow it (Simons 2016).

Similarly, Aly et al. (2016), in their study about how online violent extremism has become an established way of terrorism, contend that the militants attempt to project a manufactured version of reality that is intended to resonate within certain segmented audiences. The changing nature of both the political conflict and armed conflict, especially with the increased application of hybrid warfare, means that actors such as the militants are able to engage the west indirectly with different forms of communication (Aly et al. 2016).

The news media in Pakistan worked under stressful circumstances during the recent conflict of the war on terror. The journalists needed to keep in view the risks posed to them and their families while filing any report about issues or events that had any relevance to the militants. They were faced with threats from all directions. But this was not all; there were soft form of pressures as well, which were not as visible as the intimidation and threats from the militants, but which have also affected the performance of journalists to work along professional lines.

3.4.4 Taliban news media strategies

Since the attacks known as 9/11, the US started the global war on terrorism with the aim to root out terrorism and terrorists' networks anywhere in the world so that the US remains safe in future from any similar attack (Allan and Zellizer 2004). The US news media supported the war on terror project, as we see that this war was fought not only with hard power of the military force but also through news media to promote world-wide democracy and human rights (Nye Jr 2004). The Taliban were shown as opponents because of their different ideology and their treatment of women that was not compatible with 21st century standards,

their views on human rights and democracy, and their hardline version of religion. But, in response, the Taliban did not delay in responding to war on terror and had also developed strategies to deal with the situation and to deal with the news media representations, as this project aims to explore. The Taliban had had a presence in this region since the time of the former USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s (Strick et al. 2011). During the war on terror, the Taliban understood the importance of the news media and had developed techniques to deal with it. This research will provide more details in later chapters (Five and Six), giving concrete evidence of their interaction with news media, but here I give a general overview of how, in response to the US, they attempted to highlight the US as an occupation force. The Taliban had developed contacts with journalists, and they would maintain liaison to share information with the news media. This was aimed at gaining not only support within the news media but also dispelling the information shared by NATO forces from the war theatre.

Because of their close interaction and accessibility, the Taliban are said to have had successful media management, comparatively (Arif et al. 2014). They could contact journalists with much ease and they would be available to comment on events by explaining their position, while the high-ups and top command of NATO would never be available to explain their position in case of any eventuality. A case in point is the killing of bin Laden, where no one within NATO was available to comment or explain the situation and the news media was in state of confusion (Chapter Six). The news media dependency on sources for information has swung the field of news making into Taliban favour; as Gans (1979) stated, the source-journalist relationship is like a dance where news media is dependent on sources. The public diplomacy of Taliban vis-a-vis NATO or the Pakistani military can be said to be more successful during war on terror.

Taliban made use of FM radios to provide information and share their point of view about events and the activities of Pakistan military and NATO forces to win the hearts and minds of the FATA population. Their technique worked, and they succeeded in creating the impression that they were providing resistance against foreign occupation, because they were shown as terrorists and extremists. They tried to cast the image of NATO forces as being the devil and that of Pakistan military as being their puppets (Arif et al. 2014; Rahman Ullah and Khan 2017).

The Taliban also made use of social media platforms to share information about their activities and their ideology through YouTube and Instagram (Rafi 2017).

3.5 Softer forms of pressure

The news media in Pakistan failed to bring facts to the world in the recent conflict of war on terror, due to both physical and legal restrictions (Niazi 1986). Writing about the legal restrictions on the news media in Pakistan, he said that almost all of the existing news media regulations were introduced by the dictatorial or quasi-dictatorial regimes of martial law governments. The promulgations introduced by the military, including PPO (Press and Publications Ordinance, 1964), RPPPO (Registration of Print and Publication Ordinance, 1988) and PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, 2002) are all sections of the respective military governments. The martial law administrators – Ayub Khan (1958-69) and General Zia ul Haq (1977-88) – were very strict with the news media and they severely limited the independent working of news media by direct and indirect means. A case in point is the issue of Progressive Papers Limited, which was banned by the then military government by alleging it had socialist leanings, in the name of national security and national interest. However, in fact, the journalists working in those publications had serious reservations about the foreign policy of the then military government. They were later sold to the pro-government media group and all the staff who were affiliated with that organisation were imprisoned and heavily fined (Niazi 2005).

The problems associated with the free press in Pakistan were further explored by (Nawaz 2008). The press laws in Pakistan promulgated by the military regimes were hardly ever discussed on any parliamentary platforms, even when the country returned to democracy. He alleges that the legislation for print news media in Pakistan dates back to the British colonial era and was traditionally characterised by a tendency to restrain rather than promote freedom of expression. The documented promulgations remained intact, while the authorities have made use of a 'press advice system' to remind journalists time and again to be aware of national priorities and security sensitivities. In addition, the respective governments have kept adding additional regulations with the passage of time, such as the Freedom of Information Ordinance, the Press Council Ordinance, the Defamation Ordinance and the Press, Newspapers, News Agencies and Books Registration Ordinance (Nawaz 2008).

With regard to laws that attempt to control media content, Khan (2011) found that, under the 2004 Defamation Act, offenders can face minimum fines of 100,000 rupees ($1,700) and prison sentences of up to five years. The news media has seen an increase in the use of these laws since 2010. Also, the broadly defined contempt laws have been increasingly used by the judiciary to curb reporting on particular cases, with a number of print and television outlets being threatened with judicial contempt charges over the years. Due to public scrutiny of the malpractices of political actors, government officials, and military and intelligence officers, there are attempts to exert control over media content by issuing unofficial 'guidance' to newspaper editors to place certain stories on front pages and outlining permissible topics of coverage (Khan 2011). For Niazi (2005), due to fear of reprisals, some journalists refrain from being overly critical or to overstep unspoken boundaries, particularly concerning military or intelligence operations. Self-censorship also occurs with regard to the coverage of sensitive social or religious issues. The physical safety of journalists remains a key concern. Intimidation by intelligence agencies and the security forces – including physical attacks and arbitrary, incommunicado detention – continues to take place.

These regulations, along with the 'press advice system', the 'code of ethics/conduct' and the department of ISPR, are documented restrictions on the press, hindering the development of the press in an open environment. For instance, the military operations that were going on in Baluchistan and the FATA were off limits for the print news media. Niazi (2005) asserts that there is no discussion of the business and political role of the Pakistan military in the press.

3.5.1 Advertisements as pressure

The authorities in Pakistan have used both carrot and stick policies over the years to lure the news media to keep away from raising critical issues (Niazi 2005). The soft measures have included licences to news media outlets, favoured import print paper (the newspapers have to import printing paper through a quota which comes through the government permit system; the newspaper feels pressure because if things with the government do not go well, it can be withdrawn or cancelled), personal endowments and business favours other than those directly relevant to journalism, to discourage news media from criticising government policies.

Due to the commercial attractions of news media, many private sector companies have made investments in news media, such as the popular business group, the Century

Publications. The group publishes the Urdu daily *Express*, the English daily *The Express Tribune* and the visual news channel *Express TV* (Nawaz 2008). A major chunk of newspaper advertisements and revenue, argue Mezzera and Sial (2010), has come from state corporations, such as Pakistan Railways, Pakistan steel mills, tourism sectors, mail, major banks and the health sector, to mention a few. There are always favoured newspapers that run pro-government policy stories and publish a substantial share of advertisements from the government. Not only do these papers receive the lion's share of advertisements, but they also obtain access to information in this way; the rest of the news media therefore tries to obtain a similar arrangement with the government (Mezzera and Sial 2010).

With regard to advertisements, Nawaz (2008) contends that there is a hidden arrangement for advertisement distribution, whereby private companies follow the line adopted by the government and prefer to distribute advertisements within the organisation favoured by the public sector. In the annual gazette of 2015, the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) mentioned that regional newspapers are dependent upon official advertisements, where the allocated budget stands to the tune of 20 million US dollars. The gazette further says that, because of limited circulation and financial problems, regional newspapers prefer good relations with both military and civilian governments so that they may obtain their share of advertisements, which they need in order to survive.

3.5.2 Quota for printing paper

As Akhtar (2000) notes, imports of printing paper are regulated by the government, so the print news media has to consider this before publishing anything against the authorities. He further states that Pakistan does not have sufficient pulp forests to meet local consumption, therefore it has to import print paper. He asserts that respective governments, on different occasions, have been known to bribe newspaper owners by allowing them to import an extra quota of newsprint. For instance, if their quota is for two tonnes of imports, the government allows them to import eight tonnes of paper. The owners of those newspapers sell the remaining newsprint for a profit on the black market. Since the newspaper industry is primarily businesses, newspaper owners, in the run to earn an extra quota, help the government by running pro-government editorial policies (Akhtar 2000).

3.5.3 Political pressure (political patronage)

Speaking at a conference on media safety, the Director of the Open Society Foundation of Pakistan, Absar Alam, said that 'political parties are not averse to sanctioning violence

against the journalists who criticise their policies' (Shaheen 2012). According to the Reporters Without Borders annual report (2012), political parties not only directly intimidated or used violence against individual journalists, but they also pressured news media owners into publishing or broadcasting news content that served their party agenda. This was particularly true in Karachi, the country's biggest business centre, where ethno-political violence was rampant and political parties used threats and violence to control the news media coverage of rival parties. A case in point was the killing of Wali Babur, a Karachi-based reporter for Geo TV, who was asked to do investigative reporting on political violence – he was killed in January 2011. Officials believed, and the management of Geo TV have been informally informed, that a political party was responsible for his death (Index 2013).

Political patronage has been instrumental in managing the news media at the macro level, traditionally used by authorities in Pakistan (Niazi 2005) . Majid Nizami, the editor-in-chief of The Nation group of newspapers, was once reminded by the military government of Zia Ul Haq that his media group should remember the favours it had received from the authorities before reporting issues related to the authorities.

Mezzera and Sial (2010) contend that, on different occasions, the government in power has used the leverage that it has on news media through the control of advertisements. Public sector advertisements in Pakistan come through the Press Information Department, which can stop or prevent news media from getting any advertisements if they criticise government policies or raise sensitive issues. A case in point is the tussle between the government of President Zardari in Pakistan (2008-2013) and his party the Pakistan People Party (PPP) with the Geo news media group, when they were asked to explain tax evasion and pay off all outstanding tax arrears accumulated over years due to non-payment. When facts came to the surface, the newspaper was maintaining links with the opposition party Pakistan Muslim League (PML), which the government did not like.

3.6 Ownership

 As Nadadur (2007) sought to explain, the news media in Pakistan is dependent on advertisements from the government sector and the majority of the news media ownership consists of business groups. Their main interest is to increase their business and maximise profits, not the quality of news reporting. Nadadur (2007) cites the example of the October

2005 earthquake when, despite various instances of irregularities and inefficiencies, news media ownership discouraged journalists from reporting these issues. This was because the news media ownership did not want to annoy the authorities and jeopardise their businesses. The news media indulged itself in self-censorship when government stakes were involved; this weakened the ability of the print media to accurately report events.

Studies such as George (2007) contend that ownership concentration in few hands does not help news consumers to get a variety of information. The slower the arrival of new groups into the market, the more slowly will there be change in the variety of information sources.

3.7 Role of fixers

Lindsay Palmer (2019) defines 'fixers' in journalism as people who help international news reporters in interpretation, guidance and bringing stories about that particular region to light. This is especially the case where international correspondents may not have access for various reasons but are not assigned professional journalists on the ground to provide them with information . The broader structure of international news reporting has been outlined in studies (such as Boyd-Barrett 1980; Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen 1998b; Paterson and Sreberny 2004); as has the history of foreign reporting (Knightley 2004; Hamilton 2011; Broussard 2013), the coverage produced by war reporters (Daniel 1986; Kellner 2000, 2003), the daily routines and longer term working practices of international journalists (Hannerz 2012; Pedelty 2020), the unique challenges of local journalists working with international news brands (Mitra 2017), and the various challenges faced by international correspondents in the 21st century (Allan and Zelizer 2004; Tumber and Webster 2006; Matheson and Allan 2009; Armoudian 2016; Cottle et al. 2016; Palmer and Melki 2018).

All these research studies mentioned have undoubtedly provided broad foundations and structures on which to build a much-needed scholarly discussion about the role of news fixers in international news reporting. Yet, only a few of the research studies have directly addressed news fixers. There is certainly reference in some studies about the existence of 'foreign nationals' who are relied upon for reporting overseas (Hamilton and Jenner 2004, p. 313). Mark Pedelty (2020) noticed the existence of industrial hierarchy within war reporting, highlighting the existence of distinction between foreign correspondents and stringers or fixers. Recent research conducted in the same vein has reflected on the existence of a hierarchal relationship between international correspondents and local hires and the

importance of collaboration in producing news for major news agencies (Bunce 2010; Dell'Orto 2016; Seo 2016). There are also studies which reflect on the work the fixers do instead of who the fixers are and their role in the international news reporting (such as (Palmer and Fontan 2007; Murrell 2010, 2013, 2014; Palmer 2018).

Colleen Murrell (2014) in her work argues that 'news fixing' is shaped over time due to the cultural, historical, economical and geographical factors and how globalisation has played a role when international news reporting felt the need to focus on a specific region. But my research will focus on how the local journalists in FATA had to abandon their activities and leave the area, leaving the field open for totally non-professional people. Studies mentioned earlier have so far dealt with local journalists (natives) who due to language barriers, cultural differences or other similar issues have been used as fixers or stringers, but my research deals with a complete ban on their journalistic activity.

3.8 Conclusion

The analysis that I have provided about the official influences on news reporting during conflicts shows how official influences affect the capabilities of journalists to produce quality news reports. The details of official restrictions provided in the chapter are enacted on the journalists through the corporate news media organisations in a legalised way. This research project examines the influences on news media that have been shaped by a new and different force, in a different environment and with new challenges. The task of this research is to inquire the effects of these techniques, constraints and pressures (intended and unintended) upon news gathering and news reporting in the FATA during the so-called war on terror 2002-2016, which is an area of research still not explored. My initial investigation informs that, because of the pressures mentioned earlier in this chapter, news media remained largely reliant upon official sources but, on the ground, they were dependent upon 'news fixers' because of a lack of access to issues inside FATA. More detailed consequences of those techniques, constraints and pressures for the ways in which the news media reported issues will follow in the later chapters (Five and Six). This follows an initial investigation demonstrating that journalists had to compromise on the quality of news reporting and that, in addition, the ownership did not support the journalists as they tried to deal with the challenges of FATA coverage.

I have chosen to conduct content analysis to assess whether it is possible to establish the fact that news media reporting lacks balance because of the influences imposed during

news gathering and news reporting. Once I have outlined the findings about whether that news reports produced during the conflict of war on terror inside FATA lacked quality, I will then ask the field journalists in the FATA, by interviewing them, about what they have seen and what has actually stopped them from producing quality news reports. In this way, I will get to know the responses of the ownership as well.

Conflict reporting has become the characteristic of news media, due to demand from audiences and consumers across the world (Bagdikian et al. 2004). Despite the increase in popularity of conflict news, for all its magnificent imagery and technological superiority, the news consumer is a victim of partial truth due to a lack of context in conflict reporting (Philo and Berry 2004). There has been much sensationalism and spectacle, but factual news is obscured underneath the barriers (Manning 2001). This is because of the multi-layered barriers in the field, which the journalists fail to break through most of the times. In the recent conflict of the war on terror inside the FATA, news media in Pakistan has witnessed a new form of environment; the militants became a dominant force, subjugating the news media (Rehmat 2008). The news media was caught in the middle; on one hand, they were not allowed to publish anything against the wishes of the authorities and, on the other, the militants would not allow them to visit the conflict zone to collect information. The journalists were scared to go out in the field to report on any eventuality or see facts for themselves. The militants appeared to be the dominant threatening force controlling the war theatre in this case, and their brutal tactics paralysed news media on the ground.

The literature dealing with conflict reporting informed that militants had learnt the use of news media technologies (Aly et al. 2016). They would keep close eyes on news media activities and would monitor all the journalists who were assigned a beat in the conflict zone. Furthermore, they were not limited to news media alone; they had also understood the power of social media and used Twitter and their videos on YouTube for propaganda purposes. To manage the news media, they used brute force, to terrorise journalists hailing from all news media (Rehmat 2008). No one from within the conflict zone was allowed to share any type of information with anyone from outside (Khan and Joseph 2008). The conflict zone was cut off from the rest of the country due to lack of news media access (Fleischner 2011).

The news media was only allowed to publish as prescribed by the militants (Zaidi 2014). Even the most professional journalists under those conditions would find it difficult to maintain journalistic standards and the local reporters had to compromise the quality of news

reporting for fear about their safety and that of their families (Wang 2010). The challenges that have prevented journalists from producing high-quality journalism deserve detailed investigation. This task is undertaken in this research project, and the research has engaged interviews with experienced journalists who were working in the conflict zone to find who stopped them from reporting facts in the war on terror, why and how did it affect news reporting and the details of the methods that were used to do this.

Chapter Four

Statement of Aims and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter One, this study examines the challenges faced by local journalists who were caught between the global 'war on terror' (2002-2016) and its local consequences in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). It investigates the range of problems that the journalists faced in the FATA while gathering news and how those problems affected the process of news making and the ways in which the news was reported.

Based on my personal and journalistic experiences, I gained the impression that news reporting out in the field during the conflict in the FATA seemed to be an 'information blackout', and that journalists had difficulties with access to the area and gathering news independently. To help obtain information to understand the underlying factors affecting the process of news gathering, I developed the first of the Key Research Questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What techniques, constraints and pressures (intended and unintended) influenced news gathering in the FATA during the so-called war on terror 2002-2016?

My overall research aim was to understand the impact of the circumstances during 2002-2016 across the whole process of news reporting, from initial gathering through to eventual publication. I aimed to make clear through the evidence-gathering the relationship between the news gathering on the ground and the news reporting through to publication/distribution to the readers and audiences. This led to the next research question:

Research Question 2 (RQ2): what were the consequences of those techniques, constraints and pressures for the ways in which the news reported issues?

Judging what is 'news' and what is not touches on concepts debated by scholars and by reporters themselves, and the effect of the conflict on those judgements and decisions was covering in the third research question:

Research Question 3 (RQ3): what were the responses of the journalists and news media to these pressures?

As outlined in Chapters Two and Three, after studying literature relevant to the issues associated with such situations, I have investigated the process of news making from the perspective of the sociology of news, and news media content from the political-economy perspective.

In this chapter, I outline how I set out to obtain information to answer these questions through selecting methods that would produce a greater depth of evidence than currently available, in ways that would make it useful for analysis. Because the purpose of this research was to reveal insights into news gathering in the FATA itself, it was important to use research methods that would produce credible information about the news gathering on the ground inside the FATA. I provided a brief summary of the circumstances faced by journalists in the FATA in Chapter One, and this context helps to explain why information about the news gathering process has not been easy to obtain.

To understand how the circumstances and factors directly affected the behaviour, judgements and decisions of reporters, it seemed important to find out from reporters themselves how they viewed the newsgathering process. For that reason, I decided to use qualitative interviews as the method to gather information and examples pertinent to the research aim. This evidence was potentially relevant to all three RQs. Decisions about news are made in the field, in news offices and by media owners, so it was important to gather evidence about what happened at these different levels.

The other main information that would be needed to provide answers to the RQs was a survey of content that had been published about the conflict – this was especially relevant to Q2's reference to *'the ways in which the news media reported issues'*.

I concluded that quantitative content analysis would be particularly useful because it would lend itself to detailed analysis, using tags and a range of search techniques. These two specific methods would be used alongside standard research methods using published reliable sources. I will next outline the details of the two methods, starting with the content analysis.

4.2 Content analysis

I will begin by detailing the reasons why content analysis was the most suitable way to obtain information to help answer RQ2. Quantitative content analysis is said to be an effective method for 'revealing patterns in news content, and making evident previously unarticulated assumptions about how the news is structured and presented' (Berelson 1952).

Research scholars argue that quantitative content analysis is a powerful tool that is used to illustrate patterns in news content of newspapers (Ericson et al. 1991). Upon identification, these patterns can provide empirical evidence to locate more qualitative assumptions with regard to the production and reproduction of meaning (Ericson et al. 1991). For them, the strength of content analysis lies in its clear and systematic approach in studying textual content for analysis and interpretation. The usage of 'content analysis' has a clear advantage in social research for its claim of academic legitimacy (Seale 2004). 'There is clearly no reason for content analysis unless the question one wants answered is quantitative' (Holsti 1969).

Not all the Research Questions (RQs) in this research project require quantitative answers, and so the content analysis will only produce part of the answer.

4.2.1 Frequency

Content analysis uses frequency measurements to describe communication content; the communication form being investigated is quantified and measured according to the purposes of the study (Holsti 1969). A comparison of the frequency within which a given word, phrases or a sentence appear in relation to others is a standard means of investigating media content (ibid.).

4.2.2 Coding

Coding is the process by which the content is divided into categories depending upon the themes each query carries in the research. Holsti (1969) defines coding as the process whereby raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit precise description of relevant content characteristics (Holsti 1969).

It is important to select codes in line with the main themes of the research project, otherwise it will affect the results. The basic principle to guide coding while conducting comparative analysis is the assumption that the categories classified are mutually exclusive,

so that no item could be scored twice or ambiguously coded within a category set. In addition, the basic assumption to be adopted as regards the problem of categorising the material is that all categories reflect the general practice of the newsroom (ibid.).

The unit employed in this research was the news item: non-advertising printed matter in the newspaper.

4.2.3   Coding procedure

In the coding procedure, items selected were examined, measured and coded to indicate the attributes for each of the following variables: date, serial number, page, placement of the article in the page, size, news type, story topic, headlines, source or origin, and with an image or without image.

4.2.4   Numbering

Each unit in the coding scheme was given a serial number. During this process, the units of all newspapers were numbered together.

4.2.5   Page

The items in the coding process were recorded by their page numbers in the newspaper. As Van Dijk (1992) notes, according to general newspaper practice, the division of page space is done by 'a scale of values'; the most important story is placed on the front page with a big headline, while a general story likely to have little demand is put under the column in an inside corner. This is a general rule applied universally everywhere in publications including all English language newspapers, whereas broadsheets in Pakistan and US are not an exception.

4.2.6   Placement

The next step was to trace the newspaper practice in determining the placement of a news item in the page. The GMG (Glasgow Media Group) found in its television news analysis that 'certain decisions by the news producers revealed their perception of the relative importance of one story as against another' (Eldridge 1993). While these findings are attributed to television, they can, nonetheless, be applied to newspapers, as it is noticed that the bigger the item, the higher it is on the top in the page, the more important it is assumed for readers (Oliver and Myers 1999).

The placement of a news item on a page indicates the importance, but it is modified by the page number as well. The news value of news stories on the front page, therefore, cannot be evaluated as being the same as inside-page stories, even though each story is placed at the top of the pages (Carter et al. 1998).

4.2.7   Size

The unit coded is supposed to be measured by its size. The size of the news story can be measured by the numbers of characters, words and sentences. The other way of measuring the size of a news story is through columns; since the design, the size and language of the newspaper is same in all three countries, the application of numbering and size both units for measurement can be useful.

4.2.8 News type

The corpus of the data was divided according to news types that make roughly six categories.

The news reporting recording facts, i.e. news stories, was coded as category 1. In this category were news reports about the killing of bin Laden. Reaction over this incident from different circles that include political leadership, military commanders, analysts, public and journalists were placed in category 2. The follow-up stories about the killing of bin Laden were coded as category 3. News about bin Laden before and after his assassination made up category 4. The mixture of comments and news reports fell in category 5. The details and sequence of news items were categorised by news types as follows;

1. News story covering killing of bin Laden

2. News reports about the reaction from different circles were put in 2

3. Follow-up stories about the killing event

4. News stories about bin Laden before and after assassination

5. Mixture and comments type of stories about killing of bin Laden and others generally covering bin Laden

6. Ambiguous

4.2.9 Story topic

I coded each unit into different categories that corresponded with this topic and have been featured in the article. Decisions about topic categories were developed after thorough reviews of the unit texts.

News of the killing of bin Laden were coded as category 1. The news about the war on terror, bin Laden and the aftermath effects on the former were put in category 2. News reports from the US government, political leadership, military commanders and the same sources from Pakistan and UK were put in category 3. Reaction of news media, public, civil society were put in category 4. Information about the relationship of Islam and the west, US and Pakistan, and the image of Pakistan in the west for its role in the war on terror were put under category 5.

The list of topics was like this;

1. News coverage of the killing of bin Laden

2. War on terror/effects of this event on war on terror

3. Official pronouncements/ military/political

4. News media interpretation/reaction/civil society/public enlarge

5. Information related to this event with relevance to future interaction of the west and Islam

6. News about role of Pakistan in war on terror and in particular the presence of bin Laden in Pakistan

7. Ideological aspects of killing of bin Laden; Islam vis-a-vis the west.

8. Pakistan and the war on terror; future implications of this event on Pakistan and its image afterwards.

4.2.10 Sources

Sources are usually employed to set the news lead in the opening paragraphs of an account, thereby framing how readers are to make sense of what is being reported (Hall et al. 2013). In order to locate the proximity of the stories filed during the killing of bin Laden, it is important to categorise the sources of the news reports.

1. News reports sent by correspondents; those who were local/home were categorised as 1.

2. If it was done by a correspondent but despatched to a story site, it was put as 2.

3. The news story reported by a correspondent but who is stationed abroad or in foreign place was cited as 3.

4. News reports made by a news agency were put under category 4.

5. Mixture of different sources that included national network of newspapers were put as 5.

6. Commentaries were included in 6, because they were a source in the sense, as they are printed on many occasions as the newspaper's voice.

7. Interviews about the killing event and any relevant information were put in category 7. They could be with senior analysts, political leadership and military professionals.

8. Anonymous and other mixtures were put under category 8.

The list of sources was like this:

1. Correspondents or reporters-------home/local

2. Correspondents /reporters--------dispatched to

3. Correspondents -------abroad

4. News agencies

5. National collections

6. Editors

7. Interviews

8. Anonymous/mixture

4.2.11 Pictures

Images and pictures have effects in newspapers, and some images are more important, explaining their meanings more than texts in some cases. Visual materials were discussed by GMG in the following words:

> 'If there were different patterns of technical input (e.g. film) from story category to story category this would reveal different strategies adopted by news rooms with different story types. But with each category we assumed that the more inputs of a technical nature into a story the more important it could be said to be since each input represents a decision to commit effort, time and money in one direction rather than another.' (Glasgow Media Group, 1976. p. 46).

Similar to the above categorisation of stories and sources, images and pictures have been put into different categories.

1. If the photograph is the portrait of bin Laden, it was to be coded as 1.

2. Photos of demonstrations and groups of people were put into category 2.

3. Pictures of militants, weapons and bomb blasts were to be recorded as 3.

4. Pictures showing past messages, video messages and poses for different reasons were to be put as 4.

5. When the news report was added with some pictorials depicted as graphics, cartoons and handmade stuff was recorded as 5.

Categorisation of photos and pictures is given below:

1. Portrait

2. Crowd as demonstration

3. Protest/gathering

4. Scenes of wreckage, bombs and blasts

5. Interview pictures

6. Cartoons, graphics

4.2.12 Selection of newspapers

I selected two English language Pakistani broadsheets (the daily *The Express Tribune* and daily *Dawn*) for my content analysis. The reason for this selection of Pakistani broadsheets lies in the fact that, although there have been numerous studies to analyse the role of Pakistani news media in general, such as (Pintak and Nazir 2013) and (Ricchiardi 2012), there is not a comprehensive effort to study the content of the publications in terms of who are the main sources of news media to supply news, what themes appear in abundance and whether news reports contain all the necessary ingredients of news values to make them quality news.

The studies done earlier provide a general overview of the overall news media environment, but this study goes into the basics to track down the main power brokers who want to register their say in the public sphere. Moreover, the English language press in Pakistan is for the English-speaking class and it is important to examine the trend of news reporting in these publications in terms of similarities and differences with the global news media and its corporate culture. I also wanted to demonstrate how the sources influenced the process of news reporting in these publications and the consequences of that for news reporting.

I started my examination of the content using a pilot study. In my pilot study, I wanted to observe whether the codes/news items I selected would produce any results. In my pilot study I did sampling through a web program called a 'randomiser'. It gave 10 % of the total number of news articles for random sampling and the selection is arbitrary. I analysed a total of 502 articles in these two broadsheets. The 'randomiser' brought forward 52 articles out of the 502, which helped me to analyse the data. The results were successful and I did not have to change the codes, so I started my content analysis after completion of this pilot study stage. The initial count was high, but I had to filter down the search results to articles that were specific to the war on terror and the FATA. As I was looking at the war on terror since the NATO invasion of Afghanistan 2002-2016, I decided to choose an area right in the middle when war on terror was at its peak – 1 May 2011 to 30 October 2011 – for news publications analysis. The other main reason to select this time period for analysis was because bin Laden was killed on 2 May 2011 and this event attracted the global news media attention. Bin Laden was killed in an operation conducted by US marines in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad and was held as responsible for the attacks known as 9/11, and it was important to see what sort of news appeared on his death.

The content analysis only provided me with information to establish certain facts through the quantification of the data. To find out the in-depth problems faced by journalists, which are not covered usually in the content of the broadsheets, I needed a more qualitative approach such as in-depth open-ended interviews to inquire from the journalists what actually happened in the FATA. As outlined in Chapter One, this study was aimed at examining the challenges faced by the journalists who were caught between the global 'war on terror' (2002-2016) and its local consequences in Pakistan's FATA. What were the main problems faced by journalists when they wanted to gather news out in the field and how did the restrictions on their movement affect their professional way to produce quality news reports? The questions about the influence of certain factors could only be answered through interviews, because the journalists from the FATA know what they have been through and the reasons for their frustrations.

4.3   Interview method

The research interview is a specific professional conversation between the researcher and the subject (Flick 2007). Ashley and Boyd (2006) contend that 'neither texts and nor readers exists in vacuum. Both are shaped by and participate in a social material context.' As no single method of investigation can offer complete truth but instead provide limited access insight into social forces/processes, the research interviews are, however, useful for broader analysis of events where the informants draw picture of an event and a process, in light of their knowledge, experience and understanding, based on his/her expertise often combined with considerable insight (Benwell and Stokoe 2002).

This project conducted qualitative interviews, generally referred to as in-depth, semi-structured interviews or 'conversations with a purpose', due to a number of advantages that they offer in comparison to structured interviews and focus groups (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). As Bernard (2012) explains, semi-structured interviews are meant to explore investigation where an interviewer can 'invent questions on the spot in order to follow up interesting leads ... [meaning] that respondents … [can] discuss different topics'.

During the process, the researcher is supposed to repeat the research questions to almost all participants, to check if any new information comes out, so that the information gathered may be compared; they also provide the participants with freedom to express their opinions about the questions under examination (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). For Seale

(2004), '[i]n adopting a semi-structured interviewing format, participants were given the scope to introduce topics and themes which had not been anticipated'.

4.3.1 Decision to interview journalists

Based on my research aim, purposes and my personal experiences as journalist, I decided to interview the journalists in the FATA to talk about the multiple difficulties they faced in getting access to the people inside the region of the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016 and to find out how they thought it affected their performance as journalists. In addition, freedom of movement to gather news and report independently was restricted severely. To help obtain information to understand the underlying factors why and how this situation affected the process of news gathering, I decided to use interviews to find out answer for my first question:

Research Question 1; What techniques, constraints and pressures (intended and unintended) influenced news gathering in the FATA during the so-called war on terror (2002-2016)?

4.3.2 Approaches to selection: theoretical background

Theoretical sampling for this research was based on the idea of mixture of two ideas i.e. 'Grounded Theory' based on Strauss and Corbin (1997) and sampling through snowballing or 'friendship pyramid' as mentioned in (Jackson et al. 2007). The initial recruitment of participants was done through snowball sampling or network sampling (Seale 2004). This involved contacting informants through referrals among people who either belonged to that profession, or through peer groups and any other link that could help in connecting to someone who could give a valuable input about how the news about the state of news reporting and news making inside FATA during the war on terror (2002-2016). It was thought that that could be helpful, because the researcher needed to figure out who were the important people to talk to about the main issues. In the process, it helps to inform the study of elite groups where the connections between significant individuals are gradually discovered as the study progressed, eventually helping the researcher when comparing the news making processes, for instance, about the news gathering and news making inside FATA, among people within the field of news media who remain hidden normally.

The idea behind the latter sampling is 'Theoretical sampling' taken from the 'Grounded Theory' (Strauss and Corbin 1997), whereby the interviewers are observed for the characteristics that are likely to help in developing an emerging theory (Coyne 1997). This is

a key characteristics of theoretical sampling for Seale (2004), whereby the research proceeds with the study and decisions are taken according to the output as interviews progress, in order to maximise the possibility of developing an emerging theory. After the first three interviews have been seen, in the case of Garnett (2003)'s research, the decision to recruit the fourth interviewer was taken on the grounds that he/she practises an alternative therapy that does not involve massage or touch, in order to allow accommodation for other theoretically interesting meanings.

My efforts ended up in non-random sampling due to the requirement of the research that supposes it would bring in specialist and qualified people in their field. As Athique (2008) points out,

'there can be no perfectly representative subject, nor any method of selection which is truly "imperfect"… The articulate, informed and compliant will always be better represented in scholarly text than their opposites.'

Whoever is engaged for their honest opinion or information, the first thing the researcher does is to ensure their confidentiality, and the commitment that the research project is an independent one, solely for study purposes (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). That effort makes all the participants comfortable with the interview process (Fontana and Frey 1994).

4.3.3   Final interview group

I contacted journalists who had worked in the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016 and who had covered the field from the perspective of a journalist. I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews with the 36 journalists, which comprised 18 field reporters, 2 sub-editors, 10 news editors, 2 directors of news and 4 resident editors of the national dailies published from the metropolitan areas of Pakistan. Before the start of every interview, all of the participants were given a consent form so that I have in writing their consent as a record for the researcher and a legal formality and requirement. They were also verbally informed that their anonymity was guaranteed, and they could skip any question they didn't want to answer. They were told that there was no force or compulsion and they could quit the interview at any point without stating any reason.

I wanted to probe the issues of news making by asking follow-up questions relevant to the core functions of news gathering and news reporting. I interviewed them in the English language, because they all had a good understanding of the English language. The interviews

were recorded so that they could be transcribed later, and the average duration for each interview was almost 90 minutes. Their consent was taken before the start of interviews and all the ethical formalities fulfilled before the start of the interviews, which included surety about anonymisation of their names and addresses. Initially, there was little hesitation on the part of some of them because of the security situation, as they were still in a perpetual state of fear due to the sensitivity of the matter, but they agreed after my surety and after talking with them about the fact that I was an independent researcher and the research was just to help understand the problems faced by journalists in far-flung areas.

4.3.4 Interview practicalities

I conducted face-to-face interviews, keeping in mind the mode of investigation involved despite the added factors of arranging travel and additional time consumption. This approach is also preferred for its methodological advantages over others, such as gaining additional insight through studying non-verbal cues and body language, which are normally not readable during telephone interviews and emails. Face-to-face interviewing has arguably the best potential when taking into account the types of questions that can be asked, and the complexity of questionnaires (DeLeeuw and Mayer 2008).

The actual interviews aimed to achieve continuous engagement of the respondents in order to avoid any possible distraction during the conversation. Researchers have faced problems in settling down easily for a long conversation if trying to do it on a telephone with a person with whom they do not have any prior acquaintance (Seale 2004).

In face-to-face interviews, even the venues matter a lot, as sometimes the responses from the participants might be affected by the location. To get maximum results within the fixed time, the joint consent of both the interviewer and interviewee on the venue should be reached, so that they can talk undeterred and be not disturbed (DeLeeuw and Mayer 2008). For all of the reasons mentioned, the conclusion was reached to conduct interviews either in the homes or offices of the participants wherever possible. Neutral grounds are often favoured but sometimes interviewers feel uncomfortable due to interruptions or high levels of noise that can affect the value of recording (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). I interviewed two-thirds of the interviewees in their offices, because their offices for them were the most comfortable zones where they could talk unhindered. Some were interviewed in their houses and some in press clubs. I also interviewed a couple of them in coffee shops.

4.3.5 Questions framework

1. What is the state of news media in the FATA and how do you compare it to the rest of the country?

2. How does news media operate with reference to independent reporting and balance in news reports?

3. What are the influences upon a news reporter in the field? Include reference to covering events like terrorism, terrorist events, activities of the Taliban.

4. Does a news reporter have access to the information directly in the case of terror-related events such as the killing of bin Laden, or do reporters have to depend on specific sources for information?

5. What are the pressures on newsrooms, in times of covering terrorist events and the bin Laden killing.

6. Once a news report is produced, does it have to go through any protocols before it is published?

7. What factors can affect the news reporting process out of the newsroom?

8. What is the role of owners/editors-in-chief in news making?

9. Objectivity and professionalism: their meanings and definitions and the understanding of these terms in the FATA, and in a country like Pakistan, in the eyes of the professionals.

10. How is news made? What ideas and opinions do the interviewees have on newspaper reporting in particular?

4.3.6 Recording of interviews?

For Harvey Sacks (1984), audio tapes are a useful tool for recording data of all naturally occurring talk. He further says that one should work with 'actual occurrences' of talk for ethnographic issues of qualitative research. He argues,

> 'Now whether you think these kinds of things are important will depend upon what you can show with or without them. Indeed, you may not even be convinced that conversation itself is a particularly interesting topic. But, at least by studying tapes of conversations, you are able to focus on the 'actual details' of one aspect of social life.'

As Sacks put it:

> 'My research is about conversations only in this incidental way, that we can get the actual happenings of on tape and transcribe them more or less, and therefore have something to begin with. If you can't deal with the actual detail of actual events then you can't have a science of social life.' (Sacks 1984).

Interviewers do not entirely depend upon their notes and memories, as it is not easy to take lengthy notes during the conversation for obvious reasons. Tapes and transcripts also offer more than just 'something to begin with', with clear advantages over other forms of qualitative data (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

1. Tapes can be kept as archive records.

2. They can be replayed again and again to gain clarity of thoughts and for improvements of transcripts.

3. With the help of tape, it is possible to focus on the sequence of the conversation during the actual interviews.

Moreover, ethnographers agree that a particular transcript gives a fuller idea of the utterances in any particular interview, as against the extracts taken from any piece of research. It is within these sequences that the researcher can make sense of complete conversations, rather than a single turn of phrase. In this way, tapes and transcripts preserve the sequences of talk. To determine what was said in any given utterance, it is important to have in hand all the surrounding utterances (DeLeeuw and Mayer 2008).

4.3.7   Analysis of interview data

Although qualitative interviews offer advantages for researchers, they also bring in epistemological, methodological and ethical issues with regard to their analysis for social research (Silverman 2020). In order to do analysis, there is a need to make distinction between data collection and data generation as the purpose of the interviews.

As per the positivist approach, the interview data must give us access to 'facts' about the world; where the social world is assumed to have existence independent of language, the information given by an interviewee is assessed according to how accurately it reflects the real social world. In this case, the job of analysts is to check the interview data for bias in

terms of the extent to which they represent the distortion of truth. On the other hand, the naturalists consider interviews to be one possible version of the social world. Here the interview generates data that gives an authentic insight into individual people's experiences. In latter case, the researcher might inquire about, for instance, how the interviewee uses different rhetorical strategies in order to achieve particular effects (Frankenberg 1993; Roulston 2010).

In this project, I adopted a constructionist approach, in which the interviewer and interviewee are always actively engaged in constructing meaning. For Kathryn Roulsten (2010):

> 'A constructionist conception of interviewing rejects access to the authentic self via interview data in favour of a "locally produced subject" in relation to a particular interviewer. Here, how the interaction unfolds becomes a topic of study in its own right, with researchers interested in the documentation of "the way in which accounts are part of the world they describe".'

The constructionist school is distinguished from others through its attempt to treat the happenings as a topic, which Denzin and Ryan (2007, p. 37) call 'focussed interaction' in its own right, and not something that comes out of 'authentic' understanding of somebody's experience. As a result, for Silverman (2020), it has direct impact on the type of knowledge that is under investigation for the constructionists.

For constructionists, in the case of knowledge, 'accounts are not simply representations of the world; they are a part of the world they describe' (Hammersley 1993; Atkinson et al. 2003). For Kitzinger, Markova and Kalampalikis (2004), while commenting on the interest of constructionists, they document accounts where they are considered as 'part of the world they describe'. They add:

> 'Constructionism … disputes the possibility of uncovering "facts", "realities" or "truths" behind the talk, and treats as inappropriate any attempt to vet what people say for its "accuracy", "reliability", or "validity", thereby sidestepping altogether the positivist problems raised above. From this perspective, what women say should not be taken as evidence of their experience, but only as a form of talk – a "discourse", "account" or "repertoire" – which represents a culturally available way of packaging experience.' (Kitzinger et al. 2004).

In practice, this means that the type of knowledge that we are concerned with in this project deals with how interview participants create meaning, actively. Gubrium and Holstein (2001) sharing their idea about the practice of interview, construed as active, the subject behind the respondent who not only holds facts and details of experience, but, in the very process of offering them up for response, constructively adds to, takes away from, and transforms the facts and details. The respondent can hardly 'spoil' what he or she is, in effect, subjectively creating. (Gubrium and Holstein 2001).

Once data is gathered from the transcribed interviews, then the next stage of the research is the analysis of these transcriptions in order to deduct meanings and themes (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

4.4   Thematic analysis

This research aimed to use thematic content analysis for the examination of transcribed data. The decision to do thematic analysis was made because, during the interview conversations with the participants, certain themes were seen as developing and the researcher decided as a result to include them formally. My approach was that a theme 'represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Braun and Clarke 2006). Also, thematic analysis is useful because it helps in analysing implicit and explicit ideas within data to explore more the patterns that develop in the interviews, and the themes; it goes beyond the explicit words or phrases (Guest et al. 2012, p. 10). As compared to other form of analysis, thematic content analysis is said to be a simpler approach to analysing the transcribed data. It is easier to make sense of the data when the researcher divides the data into themes or patterns to get an idea of what this phenomenon, event and social interaction mean to the individuals of interest (Seale 2004).

4.4.1 Coding and categorisation:

Coding is the first step in thematic content analysis. My coding involved selection of all theoretical sensitive phrases and broad impressions of concepts, meanings and relationships surrounding the title of the research and gathered in the interviews (Wilkinson 2011). I aimed to put all this into a number of parts that seem temporarily disconnected from the whole. But it should be remembered that it is also the job of the researcher to remember all those

concepts from which the fragments are drawn, in order to get a sense of the immersed material later (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

Before I began thematic coding, I collected data through a process of iterative data gathering and analysis normally known as a zigzag coding approach or open coding (Seale 2004). This for Strauss and Corbin (1997) means the process 'of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data'. The original formulations of the Glaser and Strauss (1997) theory is significant in providing qualitative researchers a legitimacy for their methods by presenting strategy like the codified research process. This is not something that tests new theory but the development of a theory through induction. The goal is the development of categories that can catch the fullness of the actions and experiences under study (Charmaz 2006). This process comes to an end when it is ensured that no new theme is coming into the data and hence it has reached a saturation point. For Seale (2004), this approach enhances the theoretical sensitivity. After immersion in the first few bits of data to get a feel of what it says, afterwards, the formal coding can begin. This term was first used by Glaser and Strauss (2017) and points to the chunks and labels of data that capture the essence of the data.

After data gathering is done, ethnographers prefer to do a check of relevancy with basic research questions, such as 'what is happening?' and 'from whose point of view?' This is vital to make sure that the researcher maintains focus.

Here is a list of questions taken from Rabiee (2004) to ask of the data during analysis:

1. Words: how are specific words used, and what they mean to participants?

2. Context: when does the participant raise a topic? Does it relate to anything else?

3. Internal consistency: are topics talked about differently at different times? Can this be related to anything?

4. Frequency: why are some things repeated more frequently than others? Does this reflect their significance to the participant, and is this because they have problems coming to terms with something, or because they wish to be seen in a certain light? Is it significant that a particular topic is rarely mentioned, avoided or missing?

5. Extensiveness: how much coverage is given to particular topics (it should be remembered that a topic may be mentioned only once but take up half an interview, for example)?

6. Intensity of comments: what positive and negative words and emphases are used and what their significance?

7. Specificity of responses: do the data describe an actual event or a hypothetical situation? Is the first or third person used?

8. Big picture: what major trends or topics are there that cut across cases?

Along with these few basic techniques in thematic analysis, I looked for patterns within such as what is missing and what is not. During the conversation in face-to-face interviews, the interviewer has the added advantage of getting impressions from unspoken words or body language. It is important that the researcher has a good understanding of how to recognise a particular impression (Greenhalgh and Peacock 2005).

Open coding would result in a long list of codes that need narrowing down into simpler categories in order to get an idea of the main themes of the investigation so far. These need to be grouped together into categories and then into themes; one way of doing this is to put them into spider diagram, to organise thoughts (Seale 2004).

The spider diagram can describe all the main thoughts and themes surrounding the title of the investigation. The next step is to make categories of similar themes, in a way that describes the circumstances surrounding this research. The category making can be done through physical means; with the advent of Microsoft Word and other word processing tools, such as NVivo, Atlas.ti and MaxQDA, these support qualitative data analysis. Once it is done, then the next step is operationalisation, which means that the data should be defined in such a way as to make it understandable to all those who read it and to the researcher himself. In simple words, the abstract data is put into concrete words. But it should be remembered that after the data is put into categories, there should be constant comparison of all the bits of data with each other and constant comparison of the data across categories. This process of continuous check on data ensures a trickle down of data into main interpretations, thus bringing the finest detail (Lee 2001; Seale 2004; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009; Cope 2010).

After categories were formed, the next stage of our analysis was to develop them into themes. This is the third step towards thematic coding, from open coding and categorisation development and then finally thematic development (Lindgren et al. 2020).

In order to check whether the themes provide a good example of the data and also to check whether there are any gaps, it is useful to draw a concept map. The map considers a theme as significant on the basis of whether it accounts for a great deal of data and is therefore, the one that has been much focused upon. In doing this, the first thing is to put the label for this theme at the centre of the concept map. Then the qualities and features of this theme are given according to the research questions. The interpretation of each theme represents the validity of the data that depends upon the research questions and the approach of the researcher. This is how meaning is created from the data puzzle. Concept maps are of great help when you write up your data, developing your ideas and also when you check whether the data is sufficient or there is still room to collect more data. There are computer softwares available that are designed solely for commercial concept mapping, such as ketso, that comprises mats and Velcroed leaf shapes, which can be used for ideas or codes, as well as other comments, prioritisation and linking symbols.

4.4.2 Applying the methodology to the evidence

In the next two chapters (Chapter Five; Content Findings and Analysis and Chapter Six; Interviews Findings and Analysis), I will provide the details of the results of the application of the methodology. Chapter Five will cover the details findings and analysis of the content of the newspapers (*The Express Tribune* and daily *Dawn*) whereas, Chapter Six will include the details of the findings and analysis of the interviews I had conducted with the participants.

Chapter Five

Content Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of different influences over news media activities; specifically, upon journalists inside the FATA when they were gathering news and the consequences of the circumstances for news reporting. Which factors were involved and what techniques, constraints and pressures (intended and unintended) influenced news gathering in the FATA during the so-called war on terror 2002-2016 are examined in this chapter and the next; the ways in which news was reported to the public, as a result of those influences, will be at the heart of discussion in this chapter.

As stated in Chapter One, my overall research aim was to understand the impact of the circumstances during 2002-2016 across the whole process of news reporting, from initial gathering through to eventual publication. I aimed to make clear, through the evidence-gathering, the relationship between news gathering on the ground and the news reporting through to publication/distribution to readers and audiences. This led to Research Question 2: what were the consequences of those techniques, constraints and pressures for the ways in which the news reported issues? The evidence that helps understanding of the answer to this question is outlined in this chapter.

Judging what is 'news' and what is not touches on concepts debated by scholars and by reporters themselves, and the effect of the FATA conflict on those judgements and decisions was covered in Research Question 3: what were the responses of the journalists and news media to these pressures? As outlined in Chapters Two and Three, after studying literature relevant to the issues associated with such situations, I have investigated the news media content from the political-economy perspective and have attempted to locate the

influence of different forces on the news making. The examination of the arguments relating to how news about the conflict regions was shaped, drawing on the detailed research of news media content, includes considerations of the political and economic influences that can lead to news values having an increased emphasis on the threat emanating from terrorism and terror-related events (Lewis 2012).

Cottle (2009) comments on the political economy perspective of news reporting in international news media, which makes judgements

'… through the lens of geopolitical economy that sees transnational media corporations and western-dominated global news agencies positioned by history and market ascendancy to capitalise on contemporary internationalising market processes.' (p. 29)

By applying the Habermas (1974) model of public sphere to the state of news reporting from the FATA, the contemporary news media landscape can be understood as a conflict between the power brokers to grab more space/share in the global public sphere. The foundations of international news media from which it derives power – such as democracy, freedom of expression, democracy and human rights – were challenged by Taliban and labelled as a tool and conduit of western militaries and its channels to be used for intervention. Although there was a conflict on the ground, the real war was fought on the news media level where the concept of global public sphere was challenged. Lack of access of the news media to core issues on the ground in FATA was exploited by both the parties concerned. The struggle to capture more space within the media sphere increases during periods of crisis (Cottle 2006), as will be demonstrated later in this chapter. In much analysis (Miller 2003; Klaus and Kassel 2005; Macdonald 2006; Thrall and Cramer 2009; Kumar 2012; Layne 2012; Lewis 2012; Boyd-Barrett 2014), the pressure to produce more information and speedy updates affects the process of authentication and verification of news reports, an important process that in the FATA was seldom fulfilled. This is becoming more of a general trend for the market-driven forces of the global news media during conflicts, because the intention is to meet the need to support for invasions and wars with the justifications frames such as the humanitarian intentions in Kosovo (1999), weapons of mass destruction in Iraq war (2003), liberation of women in Afghanistan (2001) and the war on drugs in Mexico (1989). In these examples, global news media channels were exploited for geo-political interests.

As explained in Chapter Four, I chose to examine news content of publications over the period between 1 May and 30 October 2011 and selected two daily English language Pakistani broadsheets (*The Express Tribune* and *Dawn*). The reason for examining this time period lies in the fact that it comes in the middle of the war on terror time frame 2002-2016, which was selected for this research project. Bin Laden was killed on 2 May 2011 and the consequent developments in Afghanistan in its wake, with its relevance to the war on terror and the effects on news media gathering and reporting, are also a reason to choose this time period. The war on terror expeditions were at their peak during these days, and such was the curiosity and sensitivity of news consumers that few journalists around the world dared to question the veracity of the news related to any terrorist event or to terrorism and security matters (Boyd-Barrett 2016).

I selected themes relevant to the research aim and this context, for the search for data for the detailed content findings and analysis. This is a summary of the findings; the sections throughout this chapter examine each result in detail.

Table 1: Dominant Themes Summary

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
9/11	n=242	n=255	497
Al-Qaeda	n=95	n=219	314
Jihad	n=7	n=36	43
Cross-border raids	n=83	n=211	294
Sponsors	n=4	n=33	37
Taliban	n=58	n=110	168
War in Afghanistan	n=14	n=83	97
Drone strikes	n=28	n=48	76
Safe havens	n=3	n=98	101
Threats and challenges	n=3	n=98	101
Aid to Pakistan	n=21	n=50	71

Peace in Afghanistan	n=28	n=36	64
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

5.2 News sources

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, my main queries revolve around the struggle of journalists to carry out independent news reporting in the FATA, the types and extent of influences they were faced with, and how the overall environment affected the process of news making. The introduction in Chapter One gave the context about how access of journalists to the FATA region was disconnected by the Taliban. Whoever provided information to the news media during the war on terror 2002-2016 would delineate the sources of news, and whoever provided particular types of information would shape the basic news values. I set out to examine which sources were quoted more than others, and why, during the war on terror 2002-2016. On the basis of the extent of information included in stories, or the position given by the news media in terms of which sources are mentioned first, second and third in the hierarchy of sources, I identified first, second and third categories of source in the table used for analysis.

By looking at the research questions, which examine how the news media works under pressure during conflicts and how those pressures help shape news media reporting, and comparing them with the sources in Table 5, it can be argued that news media is managed at a high level, because information has been controlled by the officials on one of two sides of the seesaw of power sources. The journalists were not allowed to analyse events and stories on their own inside the FATA by the Taliban, while the specific issues of relevance to policy interests inside the FATA 2002-2016 were influenced by the Pakistan military.

The analysis further informs how information is shared with news media rather than being gathered by journalists. I will examine in detail in Chapter Six how, inside the FATA, at the official level, the worth of information depended upon the source of news. Any piece of information that was relevant to important developments was tightly held by the military and the journalists had to make efforts to get access to the source. In my analysis of the content in

this chapter, I found that the military authorities were more valuable than other sources in the case of the FATA, because they were mentioned in these two newspaper publications under analysis.

5.2.1 Military and Official sources

As can be seen in Table 2, officials were the main sources of information during the time period under examination (1 May 2011 to 30 October 2011). Pakistani officials and US officials made up the bulk of information providers. The figures in Table 2 show the proportion of stories from the Pakistani military to be 6% and Pakistani officials 19%. The figures from Table 4 put Pakistani officials as 18% and 27%. Table 3 shows that the Pakistani officials were quoted as main sources in Pakistani publications (*Dawn* and *The Express Tribune*, at 13% and 14%, respectively).

In the case of this research, this figure holds importance because according to the figures, 80% of the information arrives from the official sources; this can be translated as showing that the respective governments invested a lot in how to manage news media, rather than the corporate news media investigating to provide their own information. This supports the argument that news tends to privilege those who have access to information and who are in control of the situation (Lewis 2012).

In the situation of the FATA, examined by this research, the military authorities had control of many of the sources of news – Chapter Six includes a range of examples of the direct pressures applied, in addition to these influences over content indirectly. On the ground, they turned out to be the major force physically present and controlling the whole situation including news media. The 'Other' sources denote every other source in the news media such as TV, radios, journalists, news media, public figures, surveys and independent sources in Pakistan.

Table 2 demonstrates the extent of influence of 'official sources' over news media and information sharing. It points towards the political and geo-strategic interest of the forces involved in the field and the way the public sphere is shared. The access to the public sphere depends on the power a particular force possesses, which translates into influence over journalists, including curtailing their capabilities and efforts to produce independent news reporting.

Table 2: Sources of Stories

Source	Number	Percentage of total stories from this source
US officials	n=835	32%
Pakistani officials	n=495	19%
UK officials	n=109	4%
US military	n=261	10%
Pakistani military	n=152	6%
UK military	n=19	0.1%
Officials from other countries	n=191	7%
Other	n=523	20%
Total	n=2585	98.1%

Although the data on publications reflects 6% of Pakistan Military sources, it will be seen in Chapter Six that the journalist interviews provide evidence that the pressures from both the militants and Pakistan military were direct in their influence on news gathering. The field journalists felt the pressure directly on the ground; both the military and the Taliban forces severely restricted their capabilities to produce quality news through balanced news reports and independent news reporting.

Table 3: Pakistani Military Sources

Source	Newspaper		Count
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Pakistani Military Sources	n=80	n=72	152
	52%	48%	100%
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

Table 4: Pakistani Official Sources

Source	Newspaper		Count
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Pakistani Official Sources	n=195	n=300	n=495
	8%	11%	19%
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

5.2.2 Militant sources

As mentioned in Chapter One and the beginning of this chapter, the journalists in the FATA had to struggle to gather news inside the FATA 2002-2016 due to the presence of multiple influences, in particular those of the Taliban and the Pakistan military.

The Taliban influence upon the journalists was both direct and indirect, using many methods. They banned the movement of journalists inside the FATA to collect items of information relevant to the crisis or the Taliban; they could only pay a visit if the Taliban allowed them to. In this case, the journalists could not visit any scenes of events, and the Taliban would issue their responses to events through YouTube or through their FM radio channels situated inside the FATA. That was how the journalists received updates about the FATA from the Taliban. The reporters also sought information from the public, such as taxi drivers and shopkeepers, but they had little or no chance of verifying facts or seeing things with their own eyes. The communication model used by the Taliban was audience-based, which means that it was centred and culture-dependent, which has been described by Freedman and Thussu (2011) as always being tied into an ongoing narrative stream that was part of the socio-political context in which those organisations operated.

My analysis provides information that the Taliban had a presence online, and their communication strategy, as also noted by the evidence in Chapter Six, proves that they created a virtual Habermasian public sphere and they are going to stay in the news media sphere (Klausen 2015; Simons 2016). The Taliban used a variety of media to provide information and news about developments in the FATA and also to share their strategies

channels policies with the public and news media. The most important one was the FM radio channels, which were run regularly in all areas inside the FATA including the Swat and Dir regions of the Frontier province, until they were eliminated when the Pakistan military started a series of operations (Ali and Khan 2018). These FM radio services were set up specifically for propaganda purposes, to give news and information about day-to-day happenings and the success of the ideological charter of the Taliban across the region and Afghanistan and to counter the Pakistan military campaign against the Taliban and their ideology. These FM radio services had different frequency ranges, from short to longer distances, but they covered all of the FATA and those regions where the Taliban wanted to establish their writ (Basit 2014). FM radios were also used as source of policing, to warn opponents about respecting the law of the land.

The Taliban also used YouTube videos to share news and propaganda about their success stories and debates about their ideology. They appeared under different titles, which were changed regularly if it seemed that they were to be identified and reported. Instagram videos and Facebook Messenger were also in use under fake names and IDs, and attracted a sizeable number of audiences across the region and Afghanistan. YouTube videos of suicide bombings and attacks on NATO forces in Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan were shared and watched. The viewership of YouTube videos, subscription and live chats is possible to measure, as viewings or likes appear in the window and are added up automatically.

Illustration A: Taliban YouTube media – Pashto Voice
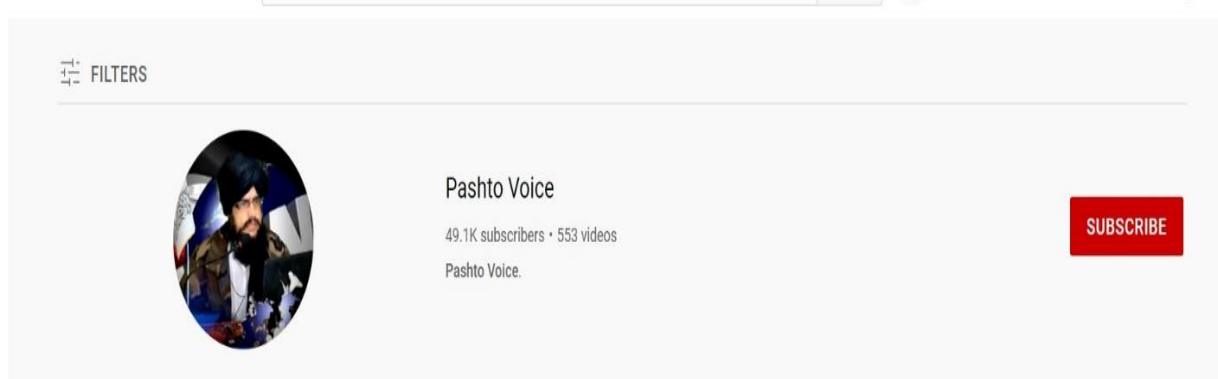
One popular YouTube live video service was run under the names of Azan radio, General Mobeen, Islamic Nasheed TV and Pashto Voice, attracting thousands of subscribers and millions of views and likes. Taliban religious scholars would debate and argue about the legality of their actions and their resistance against the so-called occupation forces. Examples

from that time were taken down, then replaced with slightly different titles. These illustrations show current versions.

Illustration B: Taliban YouTube media – Azan Media

Illustration C: Taliban YouTube media – General Mobeen

5.2.3 Other sources

The ban on the movement of journalists inside the FATA made the news media dependent on a variety of sources to get information about the developments inside the FATA.

Table 5: Sources – Others

Source	Newspaper		Count
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Other Sources	n=203	n=320	n=523
	8%	12%	20%
Total number newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

Those sources were given the opportunity to define the situation on terms which otherwise would have a different shape, if the news media had had access to carry out direct research on the ground. I have put all those sources into the category 'Other' who were not traditional means of providing information. Those sources of information include social media (Facebook, Instagram), YouTube channels, and FM radio channels. It also includes sources of news from different genres of news media such as visual media and newspapers to be reproduced back in the broadsheets.

5.2.4 Summary

The aim of this research is find out how and why journalists' access to gather news inside the conflict zone of the FATA 2002-2016 was denied and the consequences of this behaviour for news reporting. The research has drawn conclusion from the findings that both the Taliban and the Pakistan military exploited the opportunity on the ground and lack of access of news media. This situation provided a chance to both the parties to define the situation on their own terms, using innovative new routes to distribute information to the public. My content analysis informs us that the news media space was dominated by official sources in the content and by those of the Taliban on the ground during the war on terror, which consequently compromised the quality of news reporting by the journalists. The Taliban entry into the Habermas 'public sphere' was a challenge to the very basic idea of the existence of global public sphere. The Taliban banned news media activities inside FATA on one hand, but at the same time they were using social media channels and their own FM radios to influence public opinion.

5.3 Theme of 9/11

The events known as 9/11 considerably impacted western news media representations and the news values in the west, as highlighted by news media research scholars such as Lewis and Cushion (2009), Lewis (2012), Curran and Morley (2007) and Freedman and Thussu (2011). To examine the same or (different) impact of the event on the Pakistani broadsheets (*The Express Tribune* and *Dawn*), I chose the theme of 9/11.

My third research question deals with judging what is 'news' and what is not, which touches on concepts debated by scholars and by reporters themselves, and the effect of the conflict on those judgements and decisions. The event known as 9/11 has changed the course

of international politics and has affected news media representations by changing the definition of new values (Lewis 2012). The event of 9/11 has had far-reaching consequences for the politics of the FATA in terms of the war on terror and the Taliban. The war on terror was started in October 2001 to oust the Taliban, and was a direct consequence of the event of 9/11. The news media around the world have been held hostage by developments in the FATA (2002-2016) in relation to the war on terror under the dominant frames of 9/11.

Table 6: Coverage of 9/11

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
9/11	n=14	n=55	69
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

5.3.1 Theme of 9/11 and global access of technology

The theme of 9/11 was covered robustly in news reports during the time period 1 May 2011 to 30 October 2011, because of the increased focus of the political elite and military officials on this issue due to the killing of bin Laden on 2 May 2011. It was mentioned specifically during this time period in many different ways because of the killing of bin Laden; the main issue was the threat and security concerns of the USA which kept global news media under pressure (Hoskins and O'loughlin 2010), and it was the technological superiority of the global news media which dominated Pakistani news media this whole time. The purpose of my research is to evaluate the news media role to report issues during the conflict and the pressures on the news gathering which affected the independence of news reporting.

The questions at issue include whether the news media was an extension of a westernised and liberal ideology; whether the way in which it portrayed the version of terrorism – framed by US and UK governing institutions – remained uncontested; and

whether the international news media shared, to a certain extent, complicity in the consequences of the global war on terrorism (Freedman and Thussu 2011). All of these questions remain viable because of the technological superiority which helped the global news narrative to be established even before the local news media had any hint of any development. In Chapter Six, we will see how the journalists working in the conflict zone of the FATA informed that they came to know about the bin Laden killing through President Obama's press conference. The news was then linked to the Twin Towers attacks on 9/11, causing multi-pronged effects on US society and external affairs, covering foreign policy matters across the whole world while helping to shape the public's understanding of the significance of the counter-terrorism policy. The news media were no exception to those effects (Hoskins and O'loughlin 2010). The images of 9/11 flashed across news media throughout the world, reaching many news consumers.

If we employ at this point the Bourdieu idea, as stated in Benson and Neveu (2005, p. 277), it states that the field of journalism is a part of the 'field of power' within a society. This example suggests that journalism is concerned with 'those agents who possess high volumes of capital'. Patrick Champagne's suggestions about the power of the journalistic field says that that power can be seen:

> '… in its effects (which explains why some speak, a bit naively of the press as the 'fourth estate'), but, at the same time, by reason of this very power, finds its operation strongly dominated and controlled by other fields, especially the economic and the political' (Champagne 2005, p. 49).

The Pakistani publications' reporting of issues relevant to 9/11 leads us back to the 1960s when Galtung and Ruge (1965) defined the news as how and why some events or issues become 'news' but other do not. For others, such as Schlesinger (1990), Gans (2004) and Tuchman (1978), news is understood to be a process more like a manufacturing process, with different factors playing different roles to produce the end product. However, some scholars argue that the development of news as a genre is because of the support that it receives and that it gives to certain types of ideas and narratives (Williams 2003; Rantanen 2005; Cushion and Lewis 2010). Drawing on those various definitions, the way in which the event of 9/11 was projected to make it an international event shows how the Pakistani publications had come under dominant global news media narratives.

The ways in which the themes of 9/11 were projected in the news media are a demonstration of the critical importance that communication plays in helping the public to prepare for, respond to, and recover from, terrorist events. This shows that traditional news media is still considered by the news consumer as the primary medium for conflict information, especially news that is related to terrorism (Lynch 2013). The appearance of the 9/11 theme in the news media coverage provides valuable insights into public diplomacy by the government of USA with the support of technology. With the globalisation of media corporations, online content from US newspapers reached millions of people abroad in a short span of time (Boyd-Barrett 2016).

The emphasis of the political and military elite on the theme of 9/11, with the images of atrocities that it brought, was a manifestation of successful war missions abroad which were criticised by sections in society and human rights activists (Miller 2003; Halliday 2010). The importance of events such as 9/11 in the US political environment can be seen and measured from the attention that they received in the news media. The heightened news media attention highlighted the significance of counter-terrorism achievements (Halliday 2010). This provided the public with knowledge about counter-terrorism, which in turn affected people's capacity to prepare for future terrorist events. The news media coverage discussed the public diplomacy carried out in the name of security, as defined by (Tuch et al. 2012) as,

> 'a government's process of communication with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies'.

5.3.2 Theme of 9/11 and foreign policy

International news reporting from the troubled regions of the world is tailored to suit the national interest, domestic political scenario and cultural values, in which we see the increased influence of the event of 9/11 (Bergen 2011). The discourses and narratives in international news reporting about the conflict zone and terrorism are a demonstration of a controlled news media in a typical capitalist system where, historically, news is provided by multinational organisations in a way that is described by (Lewis et al. 2011) as news serving the interest of the elite.

The increased focus on the event of 9/11 in the news media can best be understood if analysed in the context of the political environment that came into being in the aftermath. The

event of 9/11 was a turning point in international politics, as it was the first attack on the world super-power after Pearl Harbour in the Second World War (Dower 2010). President Bush exploited the event as an opportunity to redefine US foreign policy to the world and to set forth various domestic and global objectives. News media came under ideological pressures and could not question some of the tough legislation, such as strict immigration screening rules and tough domestic security measures, that were approved in the name of national security (Esposito and Voll 2001).

The official statements that arrived from around the world represented 9/11 as a global issue with the whole world faced with terrorism. Statements from the political elites were regularly released, with emphasis on the efforts they had put into the global war on terrorism 2002-2016. News media was not allowed to gather any footage or cover operation 'Geronimo' that was conducted to kill bin Laden on 2 May 2011. It was more like a Hollywood movie than a news report. US Marines were shown as bravo heroes who did not care about going beyond international borders to conduct operations and take out their target. The way this operation was shared by news media has all the elements of a movie. Such was the hype over the political jubilation caused by the event that the world's political leaders had no option but to approve the operation sanctioned by President Obama and the United States, applauding them for achieving their target against terrorism (Baker et al. 2013). The Twin Towers attacks of 9/11 were perpetrated by the Saudis, and bin Laden was of Saudi descent. However, throughout the more than a decade-long global war on terror 2002-2016, the news media did not give the necessary attention to Saudis and their activities with regard to their human rights issues or arms deals worth billions of dollars (Boyd-Barrett 2016).

The war on terror was not the only conflict that has occurred in recent years; there have been different conflicts in many forms and manifestations in different parts of the world, but very few have received so much focus and attention (Cottle 2006). This was because of the political power coming through the news media, which made the war on terror 2002-2016 more newsworthy than the rest. For instance, there has been turmoil in Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Palestine and other regions, but the conflict situation in Afghanistan and the war on terror was the one most focused on by news media because of the US geo-political interest (Kumar 2012). The war on terror coverage in the news media resonated with the foreign policy objectives of the US. The way in which issues related to either of these subjects was projected was just a change of priority from one form to another, which Edward Said has called 'orientalist' representations (Said 1978). As discussed earlier, dominant terrorism

narratives remained newsworthy; because of their presence, the war on terror 2002-2016 became a compelling news story – it had saliency because it had political and strategic context. It just kept changing its shape due to the changing priorities of the political elites.

The bin Laden killing on 2 May 2011 was an important milestone in the war on terror 2002-2016 because of its importance in terms of the event of 9/11. The journalists were not allowed to visit the spot, despite the news media concerns about the presence of bin Laden at a stone's throw distance from the country's elite military academy, and they questioned the role of Pakistan in the war on terror 2002-2016. The lack of access for news media to investigate the facts on the ground provided an opportunity for the political leadership to exploit the situation for its own interest. The US Marines claimed to have collected a large stock of CDs and printed materials in the bin Laden compound about operational details and the planning of Al-Qaeda's future attacks. He was shown to be in good health and overseeing the activities of his network from his house in Abbottabad, but no news media briefing was arranged to talk about the operational details of the bin Laden killing. The news media was not allowed to see things inside his compound, and neither were they given any chance to see the corpse of bin Laden or his funeral. The news media fell prey to the dominant political narrative and simply forwarded what they were told by the authorities.

5.4 Fear and threat factor

The sensitivity of the public towards safety and security pulled them towards pre-emptive security measures such as the 'Bush Doctrine' (Norris et al. 2013). One of the reasons for the appearance of the 9/11 theme regularly in the news media during 2002-2016 was that it was a reminder of the threat. When the announcement of the bin Laden killing was made by President Obama, he said that, 'today, justice is done' (Storie et al. 2014).

However, for some, the issue of threat and fear appearing in news media was escalated, as we saw with regard to the possession of 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' (WMD) by Saddam Hussain in the Gulf War (2003) (Miller 2003). As a consequence, matters relevant to security and conflict became central, and nations across the world were identified as 'rogues' and 'rivals' on the basis of the US definition (Mertens and de Smaele 2016).

Strict immigration policies came into effect after 9/11, which were claimed to be part of an effort to stop the repetition of such events. This included monitoring Muslims across Europe and in the USA. Muslims became the natural target in the new security paradigms for

their involvement in the 9/11 attack (Poole and Richardson 2010). Questions such as the integration of Muslims into western societies due to their different culture and belief system became a common debate. Muslims as a whole were viewed with suspicion because of their religious beliefs and the threats posed by individuals such as bin Laden and Abu Qatada to the liberal and secular outlook of the home societies (Richardson 2009).

5.4.1 Military-media alliance

The theme of 9/11 appeared in news media in connection with the military-media alliance, a demonstration that news media depended upon military sources for information about developments in relevance to the conflict. For critical news media theorists, the heavy defence budgets for arms purchases and invasions would have been difficult to secure agreement for, without the frame of 9/11 (Lewis 2008). In the case of the FATA, there was disillusionment within the public about the claims of the military in its efforts against terrorism and the presence of bin Laden inside Pakistan.

The news media in Pakistan considered bin Laden to be an international terrorist and the person responsible for the event of 9/11. As I will demonstrate with the evidence included in Chapter Six, the Pakistani news media showed its helplessness when trying to get access to the spot. The journalists complained that news media in Pakistan were unsure how the world's biggest terrorist, who had been chased by for more than a decade and accused of killing so many innocent civilians during 9/11 and other incidents, was found in Pakistan. But they could not investigate the problem.

5.4.2 A spectacle of terror

The spectacular demonstration of coverage of the bin Laden killing on 2 May 2011 in the news media aimed to increase confidence in the west, because it was a demonstration of power, technology and bravery (Ambos and Alkatout 2012). It was projected as an achievement and victory for the United States in terms of its Afghanistan war policy and a success against terrorism in the war on terror. The US and UK governments justified the US Marines' midnight cross-border operation against bin Laden on the grounds that Pakistan could not be trusted in such a sensitive and important task. They did not want to jeopardise this mission, so maximum care was taken to keep it as secret as possible.

5.4.3 Summary

The analysis of the content findings on the killing of bin Laden provides information that the event known as 9/11 appeared regularly because of its importance for political and military geo-strategic policies. The news media remained under pressure and could not go into depth to check facts during events like those. The ideological pressures, military pressures and lack of access to the spot affected in-depth, investigative reporting of events like 9/11 and the bin Laden killing, and the news consumer never knew about the facts on the ground (Powell 2011).

The Pakistani news media system (including the journalists) was under the influence of a dominant narrative during the killing of bin Laden (2 May 2011). The killing of bin Laden was seen as a response to the event of 9/11, and the opportunity was utilised at its best by the political elite.

5.5 Al-Qaeda

The theme of Al-Qaeda was selected for analysis because Al-Qaeda and bin Laden have remained important ingredients of news stories throughout 2002-2016, and have occupied news consumer attention, dominating over some other equally deserving issues. As explained in Chapter One, the public sphere inside the FATA was divided between the Pakistan military and the Taliban. The journalists wanted to go into the FATA territory to know more about the developments in that region and help out the people who were stuck there 2002-2016. As Seib (2016) stated, the exact nature of the Al-Qaeda and operational network of the organisation could never be brought to the surface. It was so in the case of the FATA as well, because it remained the symbol of fear for the natives and also for journalists who were working inside the FATA. As such, it provides a useful starting point for contemplating the reach and methods of a diverse array of terrorist enterprises.

As Wanta et al. (2004) stated, the more negative coverage an issue receives in the news media, the more negatively news consumers think about that issue. Al-Qaeda, bin Laden, the Taliban and terror remained important components of news media representations in foreign news. The representation of Al-Qaeda can be explained by the no-concessions doctrine, in which the emphasis is on the idea that we should not give in to terrorists, as a signal that violence does not pay. However, they were more like virtual reality, which the

journalists never had a chance to see or verify. This lack of factual existence and the psychological reasons are stated to be one of the main reasons for the rising wave of extremism from the conflict zone (Horgan 2012).

Table 7: Coverage of 9/11

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Al-Qaeda	n=95	n=219	314
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

Critical news media theorists contend that news media was not given the chance to carry out investigations in most cases of terror attacks, and that any act was attributed to Al-Qaeda even before initial investigations had been carried out (Poole and Richardson 2010); for this research, such an approach is confirmed by the evidence provided in Chapter Six. In the case of the FATA 2002-2016, the Pakistan military exploited the pretext of Al-Qaeda presence to launch military operations across the FATA, with no political dialogue, and the public had to suffer due to long unannounced curfews. As a result of the presence of Al-Qaeda and their association with the Taliban, the Pakistan military kept the FATA disconnected throughout the war on terror 2002-2016. Not only the Pakistan military but globally, the increased attention to the actions of Al-Qaeda caused respective governments across Europe and the US and even Middle East repressive regimes to implement conservative policies (Powell 2011).

In the case of Pakistan, officially the government of Pakistan was a member of an international coalition against Al-Qaeda (Pintak and Nazir 2013) and, as my interviews with the journalists in Chapter Six will inform, the Pakistan military pledged to put up to 600 military check posts throughout the FATA to keep eye on the infiltration of Al-Qaeda from the porous Afghan border into Pakistan through the FATA. The Pakistan military received $1 billion annual aid, and its status was elevated to that of a non-NATO ally. The news media

would represent Al-Qaeda as a terrorist organisation for killing Pakistanis and targeting national installations (Simon 2014). There have been more bomb blasts in Pakistan than in any other country and the majority were claimed by Al-Qaeda (Siraj and Hussain 2012). As I demonstrated in Chapter One, Al-Qaeda was alleged to have killed 60,000 civilians in bomb blasts and other similar attacks, and the Pakistan military totally disconnected the FATA to root out Al-Qaeda. However, journalists were not allowed to visit the area (Simon 2014); the news media did their best to know about the facts on the ground and asked the authorities to explain all the circumstances, but they were kept off limits (Simon 2014).

This research provides evidence that, because of the delimitation of news media to the strategic and ideological issues, journalists could not gather facts inside the FATA 2002-2016 about Al-Qaeda, despite the fact that the claims made by the organisations were not backed up by evidence. As noted by Nacos. B (2016), the purely terrorist actions in the name of religion were politically motivated actions that were shared through news media, and responsibility was claimed so that groups could share the political motivations behind their actions. The way in which terrorists shared the aims behind their actions and their concern for the party behind the terrorist action illustrated their political aims. Such a situation has been called mediatised conflict (Cottle 2006).

The increase in the volume of the coverage of terrorist acts and overall terrorism was linked to the repeated discussion of this topic by different groups that had vested interests; examples included political leaders who were vying to gain support, and the military and security experts. This highlights how serious this issue has become. As was mentioned in Chapter Two (Why This Research Matters), the war was fought not just on the ground but also on the news media space between different conflicting parties: nation states, political parties and the economic interest groups working in their own interests and using news media space. This does not mean that the threat of terrorism was not there – thousands of civilian deaths have occurred in Pakistan alone as a result of bomb blasts, suicide bombings, killings, shootings at the hands of Taliban, drone strikes and military operations (Bowden et al. 2019). However, my research will confirm (in the discussion in Chapter Seven) that, on the ground, the news media could not operate in a professional way. The supposedly factual nature of war reporting was far from reality. Although the news media is fed with hard news, it is notable that, even before the journalists in Pakistan could know about a particular event, the global news media would have already started to provide information about the events relevant to the war on terror 2002-2016.

5.6 Terrorism, terrorists and terrorist groups

The themes of terrorism and corporate news media work in a symbiotic relationship with each other. The terrorists want to attract the attention of the media and public through their actions, while the news media tries to attract readership by giving more space to news about terrorism. Whether the purpose was to achieve political aims or to place pressure on decision makers to strike a deal, news media remained the favourite channel of communication during the conflict 2002-2016. The difference was that news media was approached by the political elite and authorities through the front door, due to their dependence on these sources, while the terrorists used the back door, using coercive means to reach the public. In the case of the FATA, to break this impasse and know the facts, the journalists of the FATA have suffered as a result.

The context of terrorism has links to colonial projects to silence the colonial subjects and to manipulate the lands and resources (Jayyusi 2012). That approach has a certain appeal, and for a while it might appear to work. America's post-9/11 foray into Afghanistan took that approach, with a nice Hollywood touch: CIA operatives rode on horseback with the Northern Alliance while B-52s bombed Al-Qaeda and the Taliban from invisible altitudes (Nacos 2003). Stirring stuff, but successful in only a limited way (Lewis 2012, p. 258). In the case of the FATA, the themes of terrorism, terror and terrorists have served to identify the lives of natives of the FATA as being precarious in nature. Their movement was severely restricted inside the country and they had to go through rigorous identity and security checking process with their families. They were without hospitals and schools for a long time periods (2002-2016), but their difficulties were ignored and they were instead labelled as sympathisers. There was no one to hear them and help them out. The journalists were banned inside the FATA and the local people could not come out.

News media is approached by perpetrators in order to gain publicity for their cause and the political purpose of attacks, as noted by (Mattelart 2010). This is the political interest that plays its role when the news media highlights the terrorist act. However, others, such as (Wieviorka 2004), interpret the war on terror in a different way. He outlines that, in most cases, the perpetrators of political violence are not concerned about the attention they receive in the media, because of a lack of access or other problems; it is other actors who give them the required publicity, such as the press itself and the government authorities. The events of 9/11 added a new phenomenon, whereby terrorism was used successfully to publicise

political causes. This was possible because the threat of terrorism was relayed on a global level to each and every news consumer in the west, thanks largely to global access to news media (Manning 2001).

This research has produced evidence that news media favoured official sources and officials' views during the conflict. This is something that Cottle (2006, p. 9) calls the public necessity to turn towards news media and the political elite to obtain information and guidance about situations. The political elite seems to be obsessed with the elements related to terrorism in news coverage, helping to strengthen the general perception of threat. As can be seen in the earlier tables, the focus of news media on the threat of terrorism, terrorists and terrorist groups incites the emotion of the public and they adopt the hawkish foreign policy views of their government, as noted by Lewis (2012). This is why news of terror events spreads like wildfire and people do not even question the veracity of the coverage.

The analysis of Pakistani publications informed that terrorism, terrorists and terrorist groups have become compulsory elements, and the inclusion of these elements in any news report makes it an important one. For critical news media theorists, it is this very basic property of these issues (being of news value) that has registered on the political agenda and made them important news (Doran 2010, p. 10). Their presentation in a dramatic style by adding violence, conflict and a threat to the people makes them relevant to the news consumer (Friedman et al. 2004).

The themes of terrorism, terrorists and terror groups appear in the news media due to high demand from news consumers without any context or clear understanding of historical or political circumstances (Seib 2016). The terrorist actions are represented as being politically motivated, which makes them more appealing. The social and economic fabric of Pakistani society was torn apart by the havoc and the rising wave of militancy; the authorities had to face very serious law and order challenges as a result. Pakistani society and news media had to face the brunt of the terrorism wrath for their united stand with the rest of the world against terrorism, whose epicentre was in its immediate neighbour – Afghanistan (Pintak and Nazir 2013).

Pakistani news media's focus on terrorism was meant to highlight the efforts it made in the war on terror and the losses that Pakistan received as a result (Simon 2014, pp. 8-9). Moreover, it was also meant to reiterate that an unstable Pakistan is not in the world's interest

as it is a nuclear-powered country; if instability remains, nuclear bombs could fall into the terrorists' hands, which could jeopardise the security of the whole world.

5.7 Jihad

News media scholars, philosophers and political scientists have debated about the theme of Jihad and how to explain the concept in the current situation since the event known as 9/11, so it was important to examine how the broadsheets (*The Express Tribune* and *Dawn*) in Pakistan have represented this term.

One serious issue that the journalists of the FATA had to cope with, and which was used by the Taliban to frighten journalists, was the theme of jihad. The journalists were seriously scared to touch on the issues, because it could seriously concern the Taliban and they may, in return, criticise the journalists. A case in point is the news report (described in Chapter Six) by a journalist named D, who reported that a mosque in a territory ruled by the Taliban, which was known as 'swat', had been hit by a rocket shell. The Taliban rang him up because the news story was filed with his by-line. He was asked to explain the news report because, according to Taliban, they were there to establish sharia law and do jihad, not bulldoze mosques. These were the circumstances that the journalists had to work under, which severely affected their professional way of news reporting.

5.7.1 Background

'Why do they hate us?' The question has resonated widely in the UK and US news media and in the rest of the west since the events of 11 September 2001, and there is barely a commentator or a journalist who has not ventured an answer (Poole and Richardson 2010). The explanations provided in the news media have been diverse, but most have revolved around differences in culture and ideology and less on the specific relationship of the United States, or the west more generally, with the invasions of Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003) or the Middle East. News media representations of jihad have drawn their strength from the Taliban and characters such as bin Laden, Abu Hamza, Al-Zarqawi and Abdullah Azam, whose philosophy revolves around the legacy of western imperialism (Khiabany and Williamson 2008). Or the news media has focused on the problems particular to the Muslim

world: a lack of democracy, economic opportunity and the right to political dissent and free speech.

For Buruma and Margalit (2005), the most recent manifestation of hostility towards the west is part of a much broader phenomenon, one that has a history stretching far beyond the confines of the Middle East, Islam, or specific political circumstances or policy choices. Others think of it as nothing less than the latest variation of a multifaceted, geographically and culturally diverse worldview of resistance to western modernity itself.

5.7.2 Political interest

The Taliban wanted to create particular circumstances by using the name of 'jihad', but it created a serious security issues for journalists and their independent way of news reporting. The journalists were afraid that, if they reported anything that annoyed the Taliban or other militants' groups, that could be used against them as anti-jihad, and they could be hurt.

Takeyh and Gvosdev (2002), while debating the actions of the Taliban or anti-state elements (more generally), contend that 'If our supporters grew militant, they did so in reaction to the government repression, discrimination, violence and doubletalk.' Islamist movements attract those who believe that the status quo in government and the economy precludes them from achieving their rightful potential. These movements draw power and legitimacy by framing these questions in terms of Islamic justice and morality. However, the Utopian vision of the Islamists – rooted in an ahistorical version of Islam – is also their Achilles' heel.

Second, historically, Islamist movements have often gained momentum because the regime in power ignores the activities of the Islamists or tacitly renders support to them, usually to gain policy or strategic gains, as is the case in the dispute in Kashmir. Pakistani news media would call it an independence movement because, if they did not, it would put them against Pakistan's foreign policy or appear pro-India. Most of the Islamic movements have political roots in their genesis, while that version is either ignored or exaggerated by news media. Esposito and Voll (Esposito and Voll 2001) claimed that, in post-revolution Iran, the Shah's American advisors focused on pro-Soviet leftists, not the clerics, as the primary threat to the regime. Indeed, throughout much of the Middle East, the United States has viewed Islamists as potential allies against 'godless' Soviet communism, an approach subsequently adopted in the decision to support Islamist guerrillas in Afghanistan against a Soviet-backed regime.

5.7.3 Summary

'Jihad' appears in the publications (daily *Dawn* and *The Express Tribune*) as part of the analysis of content between 1 May 2011 to 30 October 2011. It was used by the Taliban to suit their political interest and frighten journalists and the public; it was mentioned by (Takeyh and Gvosdev 2002) when they debated how different governments have used it. The Pakistan military called the jihadis a threat and the publications call them a threat, but it put the journalists in a difficult position. As demonstrated in Chapter One, the journalists were attacked and kidnapped because of their stance on jihad. It severely affected the process of news reporting and the journalists were afraid to touch such issues.

Table 8: Jihad Coverage

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Jihad	n=7	n=36	43
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

The news media has considered the Taliban themselves to lack the fully-fledged systems needed to run a government, as has been seen in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan (Rashid 2001). They have simply used extremely harsh laws to establish their writ, which was devoid of any debate or consensus. The journalists have had to pay for raising concerns like these.

5.8 Cross-border raids

The theme of cross-border raids was chosen for examination of content analysis in *The Express Tribune* and *Dawn* because I wanted to analyse whether there was any ideological pressure on these publications during 2002-2016 and how the news media dealt with it. This research is studying the issues that journalists faced when they were caught inside the FATA between the global war on terror and the Taliban; the environment surrounding them has

seriously affected their capabilities to produce independent news reporting. The Pakistan military was officially an ally with NATO in the war on terror 2002-2016, but their official position was problematic in many ways, so the journalists found themselves caught between a rock and a hard place.

5.8.1 Results of research

My examination informs that the frames of cross-border raids in publications in Pakistan is an example of the framed communications based on selective narratives during the war on terror (2002-2016). My research has demonstrated how the news media's reliance on dominant terrorism frames led to unintended consequences. The cross-border raids were called useful tools to hit terrorists across international borders, an alternative to conventional warfare that was able to reach strategic targets with the help of technology and without involving a regular army. This is perhaps why the anti-drone protests and the responsibility frames seldom appeared in US and UK publications when they covered the bin Laden killing and the war on terror (Fair et al. 2014).

Establishing the exact nature of the casualties resulting from these raids remained a dilemma; this was the biggest challenge for journalists, but the raids were shown as a successful strategic tool. The journalists failed to uncover the factual position on the ground and there was always hesitation in admitting that the victims were civilians in the Afghanistan side of the border area and in the FATA (Jaeger and Eckhardt 2018). The point is that the delayed attention paid to this matter points towards the inability of the news media to go against the dominant political narratives defined by the official governments and the military establishments.

The inability of the news media to gain access and verify the factual position on the ground was exploited by the political elite. In the presence of the overwhelming global rhetoric against the Taliban in general, and terrorism in particular, it was not deemed important to verify or confirm the actual number and nature of the casualties. All of the victims were depicted as bad guys who were 'evil', as mentioned, who had to be eliminated (Benson 2014; Shane 2015).

Table 9: Cross-border Raids

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Cross-border raids	n=83	n=211	294
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

The theme of cross-border raids has political and policy implications and, as can be seen from Table 9, the Pakistani publications gave considerable coverage to this issue. A case in point is the killing of bin Laden, who was killed deep inside Pakistan in a midnight operation conducted by US Marines; the American authorities claimed that they planned and executed this operation without the knowledge and involvement of Pakistani authorities. The American authorities further claimed that the CIA had been monitoring the activities of people around bin Laden for some time and had maintained tight vigilance over his compound. The CIA organised a fake vaccination programme to confirm the presence of bin Laden, organising his killing later (Ambos and Alkatout 2012). However, the claims of both the parties could not be confirmed because news media did not have access to information.

If this is true, the activities of the CIA were illegal, as there is no such provision for these espionage activities under diplomatic protocol. The US military and political elite celebrated this event as a great accomplishment, but there was no mention of any support that Pakistan provided, despite the fact that its international border was clearly violated by US Marines. The US authorities failed to fulfil the basic condition of legal procedure and conducted the killing operation on their own. The political and military elite ignored human rights issues in this case and claimed to have shot bin Laden in front of his family. The leadership wasted no time in celebrating the killing of bin Laden; such was the hype over the event that the violation of Pakistan sovereignty was never discussed.

On the other hand, the Pakistani news media raised the issue of the violation of its sovereignty and it asked the authorities to explain their position in this case (Ambos and Alkatout 2012). Not only were they mindful of the nature of the operation conducted by American commandos on 2 May 2011, but they were equally outraged at the presence of bin Laden on Pakistani soil. This shocked the whole nation and they could not believe that an international terrorist such as bin Laden had been found living inside Pakistan. They asked the authorities to investigate this issue and to bring forward the facts (Pintak and Nazir 2013).

The point of this discussion is that only the Pakistani news media took the issue of the breach of Pakistani sovereignty. American authorities and political leadership wanted to demonstrate their capability of hitting their targets beyond international borders and the country's global position as a super-power. At this point, the news media took subterfuge under political and ideological narratives and kept silent over the breach of Pakistani sovereignty. On the other hand, Pakistani publications, despite the negative image of bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda, took the issue of the unannounced midnight operation seriously. The US authorities even threatened to take similar action in future, and they pressurised Pakistan to keep silent over the legality of the operation to take out bin Laden.

5.9 Support/sponsors

The theme of sponsors/support was selected because, during conflicts, it is alleged that news media does not have time to check the verification of news, and the basic conditions of news values are not fulfilled (Hammond 2003). I wanted to examine how the Pakistani broadsheets (*The Express Tribune* and *Dawn*) represented this theme.

The global war on terror 2002-2016 were challenging times for journalists because they were caught in the middle; on one side was the Pakistan military and on the other was the Taliban. The Pakistan military did not practically differentiate the people of the FATA, who were treated as either sponsors or supporters of the Taliban. However, the majority of the population was innocent; they were stuck inside the FATA because they could not move out due to multiple reasons. The journalists were confused because they could not help to bring this issue out to the public. Because of this, the population, which included women, children and elderly people, who were there without hospitals and schools, had to live in the FATA under the tyranny of the Taliban.

As can be seen in Table 10, the news media focus remained centred on the issue of support elements within Pakistan. The Pakistani political elite and military authorities alleged

that bin Laden and other Al-Qaeda leadership were living in the FATA with the help and support of people who were protecting them. How could it be possible for bin Laden to run an international terror organisation like Al-Qaeda without the help of supportive elements (Schmid 2012)? The journalists asked questions about the dubious role that Pakistan had played in the war on terror and the way the people of the FATA were suffering, but it was of no use.

Table 10: Support/sponsors

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Sponsors	n=4	n=33	37
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

The bin Laden killing (2 May 2011) was an important development in this connection. The news media in Pakistan wanted to explore the full facts about the killing of bin Laden but they were stopped from investigating it by the authorities, thus the facts of the killing event, that should have been shared through news reporting, were sealed forever. The journalists (see evidence in Chapter Six) showed their concern about the presence of bin Laden and asked the authorities to publish the full facts. They contended that the issue of bin Laden's presence in Pakistan needed to be investigated so that whoever had been supporting him could be taken to task as well.

5.10 Taliban

The Taliban have appeared in the news media sphere as a reality after the attacks known as 9/11, and it was important that their role in the FATA, in news making and their impact on representation of news, is examined and analysed; that is why I included the theme of the Taliban in the content analysis.

As mentioned in Chapter One, one of the biggest challenges for the whole world including Pakistan was the force that totally stopped the movement of journalists inside the borders of the FATA: the Taliban. The Taliban were very sensitive about the activities of the news media and they considered the global news media and news media of Pakistan (see Chapter Six) as their rivals. They arrived in the FATA after the collapse of their government in Kabul (October 2001) as a result of the NATO invasion, but they started their activities soon after their arrival by challenging the writ of the Pakistani state. They considered the news media to be working for the respective governments that they were fighting against, including that of Pakistan, and therefore devised strategies about how to use the same channels against them. The journalists were banned from entering the FATA for news gathering and reporting unless approved by them.

Table 11: Taliban

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Taliban	n=58	n=110	168
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

The images and theme of the Taliban appeared consistently in the publications. The themes of the Taliban circulated in the news media, giving the impression that they wanted to have a say in the media sphere. They officially declared their dislike for some of the journalists working in Pakistani publications because they were state puppets or working for Pakistan military who had waged war on them to make NATO happy. The publications from Pakistan (*Dawn* and *The Express Tribune*) considered the Taliban and their ideology to be against democracy and their actions to be extremist and dangerous (Pintak and Nazir 2013). The Pakistani news media would count the sacrifices the Pakistan military had made against the Taliban and their ideology, and the successes they had had in military operations against the Taliban. This was followed by the political elite, by counting the damages that the

Taliban had inflicted on the state of Pakistan and the innocents they had killed since Pakistan had joined the coalition against terrorism.

However, neither the ownership nor the political elite and Pakistan military would support journalists who asked for support to find out facts on ground (see Chapter Six). The news media in Pakistan represented the Taliban in the same way as the global news media, in terms of the threats and dangers they posed, or their strictness in dealing the public, which was alien to the culture and democratic society of Pakistan. In so doing, those journalists who covered the conflict zone and covered the front lines had to pay a heavy price (Ashraf and Brooten 2017). The activities of the Taliban continued to be the subject of news reports, making a plea to justify actions against them but at the expense of journalists who were on the front lines and at the expense of the values of news.

The Taliban would appear in the news media as posing a threat, involved in terrorist activities and an enemy, but the bad image of them in the news media would give the Taliban justification for their actions by developing their pressures on the journalists. In this tug of war, the front-line journalists suffered. The Taliban were doing this because they were at war with NATO and, in this way, the war on the battle ground was fought on the media lines but the journalists suffered and so did the quality of news.

It was further alleged that movements like the Taliban and other extremist elements harboured hatred, with no reason, against democracy and peace (Malik 2013) while, on the other hand, the Taliban were alleging that the occupation forces were there to eliminate their culture and belief system from the face of the earth. The Afghanistan invasion (2001) was shown as an attempt to establish democracy but, within this coverage of the war on terror, the discussion of political motivation was suppressed (Baloch and Andresen 2020). For example, no mention was made of the imperialist designs of the western governments' foreign policies, such as the historical support for dictatorships and military regimes across the world. A case in point is the support for the military ruler of Pakistan, General Musharraf, who was elevated as a non-NATO ally in terms of personal consumption and strategic interest (Giroux 2005).

At this point, it should be mentioned that, although the Pakistani news media had been officially following the same line as the global news media, that is why their access was denied. However, those members of the Taliban who had announced peace agreements with the government and had promised not to attack state installations were termed by the Pakistani government as 'good' Taliban. The news media were not allowed to differentiate

between the 'good' and 'bad' Taliban, only because they were not attacking Pakistani state installations. It was hard for journalists to understand this side of the Taliban picture, but the issue was off limits and reporters were only provided with press releases about the developments inside the FATA and military operations.

5.11 War in Afghanistan

War in Afghanistan has had serious repercussions for instability, the law and order situation, news making and the life of journalists in the FATA (Ashraf 2021). I chose this theme to examine how the content of the publications reflected it.

The theme of war in Afghanistan has been used in many different ways since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and more recently during the Taliban and NATO episode when they invaded (2001). This research has considered the war in Afghanistan theme for its effects on the lives of journalists and on news making in the FATA.

Table 12: War in Afghanistan

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
War in Afghanistan	n=14	n=83	97
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

War in Afghanistan is synonymous in news media to refugee images, women and children lined up to fetch clean drinking water, mud houses and dirt in refugee camps; for the journalists of the FATA, it was only those images that the Pakistani publications and the global news media had in common. The Pakistani news media would attempt to demonstrate that Pakistan had suffered because of war in Afghanistan and Pakistani society was paying the price of its Afghan policy, but the journalists could not talk about the effects of Pakistan policies on the FATA and its people.

It was claimed by Macdonald (2006) that the invasion of Afghanistan was carried out on humanitarian grounds and with the purpose of liberating Afghani women from the tyranny of the Taliban. The press lauded the values of freedom and democracy at that point and supported the invasion adventure against the Taliban, who were portrayed as an evil influence that needed to be eliminated in order to bring peace and prosperity to the distressed people of Afghanistan. But we see that those claims gradually disappeared from the news media representations and the focus remained centred over the withdrawal of troops instead (Hatef and Luqiu 2021).

NATO authorities and the Taliban entered into negotiations with regard to withdrawal from Afghanistan, which was in fact accepting the Taliban de facto regime and legalising its permanent presence in Afghanistan, but the Pakistani news media did not discuss these issues openly (Behuria et al. 2019).

The initial purpose of invasion was to liberate Afghani women from oppression by the Taliban, as the veiled images and texts describing their subjugated status made a major part of the content (Macdonald 2011) but, as can be seen, veiled women still accounted for the majority of the female population in Afghanistan after the Taliban had departed. That is a demonstration that news media avoided the cultural aspects of the issue and just consumed a cultural issue for the sake of foreign policy interest. The big claims of achieving peace and stability were still to be achieved, as the Taliban as a force was still a formidable challenge (Hatef and Luqiu 2021). The point that needs attention is that news media changes its stance with a change of political rhetoric but the journalists become the war fodder and so do the facts on the ground. The blame game goes on without any major improvement in the standard of living or wellbeing of civilians; only corporate interest is served.

The war in Afghanistan was a reaction to the terrorist attacks on 9/11 and the purpose of the war was to eliminate the threat of terrorism forever (Bergen 2011). Due to the threat of terrorism, troops had to be stationed in Afghanistan; this made the issue appealing, with the news media providing news reports of military successes across the country, live footage of military operations and the destruction of Taliban hideouts using live satellite images (Blank 2013). As against news media claims, the factual position on the ground was not accessible at all and the global news media, including that of Pakistan, had to depend on fixers (Murrell 2014; Ashraf 2021). Neither the military nor the Taliban could be persuaded to give the news

media access, so the professional journalists remained stuck somewhere in the middle between the two.

This brings into the question the emerging trends in conflict reporting where, apparently, factual news reporting has ceased to exist; as outlined in Chapter One, this is in fact the contribution of this research project. With the help of technological advancements in news media, and the support of the fixers, the news media may have helped to establish the dominant narratives about the war stories from the conflict zone, throughout the war on terror (Boyd-Barrett 2016) but the news reports lacked balance and the news values were seldom fulfilled. The war in Afghanistan was represented by the Pakistani news media (*Dawn* and *The Express Tribune*) in the same vein as the global news media, narrating the successes of military operations, but the journalists had few chances to do news reporting independently. The Pakistani news media would talk about the war in Afghanistan from their political perspective and national interest such as their contribution and sacrifices in the war on terror.

5.12 Drone strikes

The theme of drone strikes has been selected for content examination because the issue of drone strikes has remained debated throughout 2002-2016, including the way in which it affected journalists and news reporting inside FATA.

The theme of drone strikes in the news media has appeared as a combination of psychological warfare and technological demonstration, but it has been a big test of credibility and risk for the journalists of the FATA specifically when it came to the gathering of information and reporting of drone strikes. The news reports about drone strikes have appeared regularly in the publications but, in actuality, they have remained difficult to verify for journalists on the ground. The news reports included in this research are claimed to have lacked balance about drone strikes, due to inaccessibility and the sensitivity of the matter for the journalists (see Chapter One).

Drone strikes were shown to be hitting a target, with images in the news media of terrorists being killed. However, they were one of the most serious issues for journalists in the field and information relevant to drone strikes has had to be filed very carefully. The information about drone strikes have been difficult to access, as they were claimed to have taken place in faraway areas.

Table 13: Drone Strikes

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Drone strikes	n=28	n=48	76
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

Drones are used in areas in conflicts where conventional armies cannot operate; they are unmanned vehicles, capable of striking at the enemy even if they are across the border (Jaeger and Eckhardt 2018). They are also claimed to be successful weapons because of their superior technology, which incurs maximum damage with no damage in return. It is claimed that they are extremely accurate (Storie et al. 2014).

The coverage given to drones lacks clarity, because facts about the exact nature and circumstances of drone strikes are not known. The question remains over whether the claimed strikes have hit their intended targets. This is because there has been apprehension within the public that the victims of drone strikes could not be confirmed independently on most occasions, because the journalists could not visit to the areas hit by drones (Butkus 2020; Zubaida Aziz and Erum 2021). As a result, all the parties involved in the war on terror – the Pakistani military and the Taliban – used the issue of drone strikes in their own interests and subjugated the facts. The US military claimed that drones had been instrumental in limiting the movement and tactics of the Taliban due to their high success rate, but the nature of the casualties remained unconfirmed, as noted by (Johnston and Sarbahi 2016). Drone attacks were carried out in the FATA, in faraway places where conventional armies were hard to mobilise or where the Taliban hideouts were based. However, evidence has emerged that this was not always the case, and that drones have hit houses, wedding parties and seminaries; innocent children and women have been killed as a result (Kilcullen and Exum 2009). These strikes were conducted as a part of a containment policy but the truth of the matter was not verified or confirmed, as the journalists are normally supposed to do.

Due to the threats and risks associated with the reporting of drone strikes, the journalists remained hesitant about publishing news reports about drone strikes, according to the evidence gathered by my research project. On the one hand, the reporters were mindful of the military's reaction to factual news reporting and, on the other, they were scared of the Taliban. It was not possible for journalists to travel around in the FATA to collect pieces of information on their own. Journalistic activity in the FATA was imbued with too many dangers, as far as the reporting of news or events was concerned. According to the statistics gathered by this project and shared by International News Safety Institute INSI (2019), the figure recorded of the killed journalists in Pakistan stands at 60 during 2002-2016. The Taliban would contact the journalists and give them the necessary information, which the journalists were supposed to publish. Alternatively, the journalists had to obtain permission from the military authorities if they wanted to bypass the Taliban version. This process was time consuming, and it could take weeks to get approval. By the time the journalists were allowed to visit the area that had been hit by drone strikes, it would no longer be news. Information like this was shared with the news media through officials and through military media cells such as ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations). In the case of the global news media, it was not possible for their journalists to visit the areas hit by drone strikes and they relied on official sources and fixers for information. In the cases of drone strikes, most of the time the objectivity and timeliness of news was compromised, while the authorities were left with an open field to publish their reflections in whichever manner suited them best.

Due to ideological pressures, the journalists of the FATA had to deal with the drone issue in a different way, compared to the military authorities and NATO or even the news media. The Pakistani leadership avoided openly discussing the nature of the command and control of the drones and the effects of these strikes as an effective warfare tool. It is interesting to note how sensitive issues have been effectively managed at the news media level. The authorities remained silent, believing that discussing such issues would backfire in the current circumstances. But the authorities started to argue about the drones and the disenchantment they were causing within the general public, as well as the help that the Taliban gained to win sympathy from the public because of the high number of civilian casualties. The casualties included innocent people on most occasions, in some cases involving women and children.

The authorities in Pakistan were the only organisations to define the national interest, not the news media or anyone else, according to the journalist interviews (see Chapter Six).

The journalists had no access to those areas to confirm or verify those reports; Pakistani journalists could not go there and they had to rely on official sources or fixers. Those who dared to go to attempt to unearth the facts behind the drone policy had to pay a heavy price. One of them, whom I call H, filed a news report about a drone after he found a shell of a missile fired from a drone which had written on it: 'Made in USA'. He took a picture of it and filed the story. He was found dead a few days later and the mystery about his death still haunts journalists across the FATA.

The news media sometimes has to take information from militant sources to obtain first-hand information, which has put them in danger. The authorities took this issue very seriously and asked many journalists to explain their contacts with the Taliban and the sources of their information. On the other hand, relying on militants alone has not been too fruitful, as their information was not necessarily factual. There was no guarantee that the information provided by the Taliban was devoid of any bias. Their access to information depended upon the mood and needs of the Taliban, who would decide when to give briefings to the journalists. The journalists could not make any contact. It can be seen in the publications that the Pakistani military is mentioned as one of the influential sources for providing information and news about the conflict zone, keeping in view that the Pakistan military due to its physical presence remained in direct control of the whole FATA landscape when it comes to news gathering (Chapter Six).

5.13 Safe havens

The theme of safe havens had multifarious meanings for different sections and the issue has affected journalists of the FATA. The Pakistan military would call the whole of the FATA safe havens for Taliban and militants, but the Taliban would negate it, and would expect journalists not to listen to the claims made by the Pakistan military.

The theme of safe havens appeared in publications, as can be seen in Table 14, and this demonstrated the issue of Taliban hideouts/safe havens in the FATA. The news reports about safe havens of the Taliban was a problem for journalists; the journalists in the FATA had to be careful of filing anything that dealt with the Taliban safe havens. These stories did not simply represent the training camps or the facilities that they were using to launch attacks; they also included their hideouts inside the settled areas where they could stay for brief periods.

Table 14: Safe Havens

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Safe havens	n=3	n=98	101
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

These themes appeared regularly, and they gained strength from the presence of the Taliban in the FATA. It was highly likely that the rest of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda leadership would be residing in the border lands of Pakistan (Simon 2014). There were terrorist safe havens in these areas and they created problems for NATO troops in Afghanistan. They used these safe havens as training grounds for militants and Pakistan's lack of sincere effort to eradicate them allowed them to survive. Pakistani news media also levelled the allegations at the Pakistani authorities for their lack of knowledge about these safe havens. The news media in Pakistan was under ideological pressure and failed to publish any concrete information about the presence of safe havens or bin Laden, due to restrictions imposed by authorities. The news media could not delve deeper into this issue – they had to follow the official lines given by the political and military authorities and blame Pakistan.

It was further alleged that the inaccessible parts of the Pakistani border lands (FATA) were used as breeding/training grounds for suicide bombers, in order to create further disturbances and security problems for NATO troops in Afghanistan. The news media would raise questions over the support/sponsorship of terrorists and the existence of safe havens; a new theory was propagated in relation to Pakistan and its role in the war on terror. All of these issues were relevant to the developing scenario in Afghanistan, due to the high stakes of the US/UK military involvement, but at the same time, the insurgency in Baluchistan, which was directly linked to terrorist training camps run inside Afghanistan with the support of India, were not reported (Khetran 2017). Seldom was there any debate of the strategic and tactical mistakes that NATO forces had made against the Taliban and their choice of political

alliance with people who were not strong enough to give them the political support they needed. The news media would avoid talking about their mistakes and wrong priorities from the beginning. As a result, the Taliban survived; instead, the blame was placed on Pakistan and certain elements in its establishment for supporting insurgency.

5.14 Threats and challenges

The theme of threats and challenges to civilised society was selected for content examination of Pakistani broadsheets to compare it with mainstream international news media. My aim was to analyse whether Pakistani news media represent it in the same manner. The threat factor dominated news media representation more after the events known as 9/11 (Esposito 2010). Using news media channels, the political elite in the west and the military planners coined the issue of the threat and challenges to the peace and security of the civilised world from certain parts of the world that breed militancy (Esposito 2003). The widespread concern was over security and the threat posed by the Taliban because of these concerns, and heavy military budgets and foreign invasions were approved (Lewis 2008), despite the fact that in essence the threat factor seemed speculative in nature (Moore et al. 2008; Esposito 2010).

For the news media in Pakistan, terrorism and the threat from the militancy in certain geographic regions such as border regions of the FATA were a threat to their country, modernity and civilisation; and the political elite used the same narratives as those of the western political elite to communicate with the public (Entman 2003; Nacos et al. 2007; Hoskins and O'loughlin 2010 pp. 416, 102). Through images of people like bin Laden and their actions, with no alternative description of the broader situation, this approach played a basic role in affecting the perceptions of the people. The point to note is the news media's inability or unwillingness to be used as a channel or medium of publicity for terrorism, and threats of terrorism, because of its economic and political reasons.

The influences on perceptions were not only from the official sources; the entertainment industry, including the Hollywood and 'Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network', have played their role in making terrorism a worldwide phenomenon (Der Derian 2009).

Table 15: Threats and Challenges

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Threats and challenges	n=3	n=98	101
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

5.15 Aid to Pakistan

The theme of aid to Pakistan in Pakistani broadsheets (*The Express Tribune* and *Dawn*) was selected for analysis because, historically, the US news media has remained under pressure with regard to matters of foreign policy, as mentioned in Chang, Shoemaker and Brendlinger (1987), and it will be seen how much space Pakistani broadsheets have given to these issues. Aid to Pakistan was one of the foreign policy tools that were used in the news media by the political elite. They used it as a pressure tactic in the developing scenario of bilateral relations. Pakistan had been receiving $1.5 billion annually as part of a coalition support fund, to play an active role in the war on terror. When the Americans allegedly found bin Laden in Pakistan, they started to accuse Pakistan of double standards and the political elite began a debate about the aid it had been giving to Pakistan. Strings were attached to this aid programme from the very first day and Pakistan was supposed to work against the rising wave of militancy in Pakistani society, and also provide logistics support in Afghanistan in the fight against the Taliban.

The presence of bin Laden provided the US/UK political elite with an opportunity to level criticism against Pakistan, but in Pakistan also, there was a changed political rhetoric because of the operation to kill bin Laden. The killing was seen as a violation of Pakistani sovereignty and international law; those from the right wing in particular found an opportunity to challenge the decision to join the coalition with the US in the war against terror. The military was under severe stress because of the mounting pressure from the news media and politicians, which criticised the decision to give the US unlimited access inside

Pakistan. The political leadership and news media in Pakistan raised the issue of border violation and questioned the terms of engagement with the US.

Table 16: Aid to Pakistan

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Aid to Pakistan	n=21	n=50	71
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

A debate over aid came to be the focal point of the diplomatic relations between the two countries and the news media in Pakistan, supported by the political elites, demanded that bilateral relations with the US were revisited. They contended that Pakistan had been receiving far less aid than when it was engaged in the war on terror and the damages done to its infrastructure were much bigger in proportion.

The news media and politicians alleged that Pakistan had offered too many concessions and, because of those concessions, the country's sovereignty had been breached.

5.16 Peace in Afghanistan

The theme of peace in Afghanistan is selected for analysis because peace and stability in Afghanistan has a direct effect on the law and order situation in the FATA and other regions of Pakistan, as well as the life and routines of journalists and news making. For the journalists of the FATA, it was hard to understand how peace in Afghanistan was linked with instability in the FATA and why the news media was silent about their issues inside the FATA but talked about peace in Afghanistan. They were trying to understand what was the fault of the people of the FATA in the war in Afghanistan. Why were they suffering for the mistakes they had never committed? However, they could not do much; they could not even talk to the people about their suffering, because that was off limits.

Table 17: Peace in Afghanistan

Dominant Theme	Newspaper		Count – number of times this theme covered
	The Express Tribune	*Dawn*	
Peace in Afghanistan	n=28	n=36	64
Total number of newspapers searched	128	345	473

Dominant themes * Name of Newspaper Cross-tabulation

Table 17 demonstrates the appearance of the theme of peace in Afghanistan and the Afghan policy in the publications. Despite serious and systematic attempts to make the Afghan project a success, contrasting views started to appear that questioned the Afghan war game. The lingering war in Afghanistan challenged the optimism of the Americans about their role as a super-power, one that could bring about forceful change and enforce its security policy abroad throughout the world.

With the presence of bin Laden outside Afghanistan, shock waves were felt in the 'old frame' (Freedman and Thussu 2011, p. 14). The invasion of Afghanistan (October 2001) took place to make the world a peaceful place, because the way the war on terror was defined in the news media was as the war of the 'good' people versus the 'bad' people; in a typical orientalist way, it was shown as the war of the free world against the miscreants and people who do not believe in modernity. However, the question remains as to why, in the case of the Taliban presence, innocent civilians were killed and villages were raided because their inhabitants looked like the Taliban. This research project has examined the evidence about whether the news media was encouraged and supported to work independently or whether it was not.

The content analysis outlined in detail in this chapter suggests that the media coverage only served military objectives and met political demands. The point is that, if peace in Afghanistan was a real motive, as stated in the news media, then, instead of spending $2

billion a week for almost twenty years (2001-2020), in a futile mission, only a fraction of that amount on the ground would have brought real change in the lives of ordinary Afghans. If the Taliban could be negotiated with now, why not before the invasion and save the whole effort, heavy financial bill and much bloodshed. Not only in Afghanistan; this amount of money could have changed environmental problems, hunger and diseases around the globe in countries that cannot afford treatment. The content analysis suggests that such sums were spent in the pursuit of legitimising the invasion.

5.17 Conclusion

As stated in Chapter One, this research aims to bridge the gap between what is published in news media and the realities of the conflict for the front-line reporters on ground. The data analysis gave weight to the sources of news because it was important to example news coverage to demonstrate where the information about the conflict was supplied from. As demonstrated in the details provided earlier in this chapter, that information arrived to the news media from the official sources of the respective governments and not the journalists themselves. On one hand, the news media and the front-line reporters faced pressures from the conflict situation themselves, which included threats, intimidation and torture from the forces on grounds such as Taliban and militaries, and on the other, the editorial boards of the news media was under pressure from the ownership to listen to the political elite, officials and military high-ups. So, the journalists were under two-way pressure; on ground, where they were kept off limits, and on the official side as well, where they were supposed to forward what was being told to them. The corporate news media published what was readily available because the front-line journalists did not have access to facts on ground. They were dependent on fixers and people who had no journalistic background, or no notable experience, because they needed people who could bring information without being noticed. It may have worked for a while, but it risked the lives of many people, including those of the fixers.

As a consequence of these practices, independent news reporting ceased to exist; due to the increased pressure of the Taliban, the local professional journalists had to either quit their profession altogether or move to other safer parts of the country to save their lives and those of their families. The evidence in support of this is detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Interviews Findings and Analysis

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the challenges faced by journalists when they were gathering news in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan during the so-called war on terror 2002-2016, and the ways in which the circumstances shaped by the Taliban and Pakistan military affected the process of news reporting. I itemise the evidence produced by 36 journalists when interviewed about their experiences, which can then be drawn on to conclude answers to the three Key Research Questions.

I will examine a range of issues that they raised in their first-hand testimony, and assess the extent to which these affected the processes of news gathering and reporting to the public. These include the details of how the journalists of the FATA suffered for the sake of free speech and independent news reporting (putting their lives and those of their families in danger at the hands of both the Taliban and Pakistani authorities), and the issue of the influence of the corporate interests of news media, including whether that resulted in journalists being used as 'war fodder' and compromised the quality of news reporting. I will outline the evidence for the different methods used to restrict and deny access and movement inside the FATA and how much that affected the public who were stuck inside the conflict zone of the FATA during the period between 2002 2016, under the reign of Taliban.

As outlined in Chapter Four, I set out to contact journalists who had personally covered events in the FATA, in order to get to know their first-hand experience of news media during the war on terror 2002-2016. I wanted to include experienced journalists: the editors and senior correspondents who could tell about the changes that had occurred during

news media reporting in the war on terror. Talking to experienced people was important, as they were able to draw a comparison between the environment surrounding them before the conflict, during the conflict and after it. Most of the participants had also worked with foreign journalists and were aware of global professional standards of journalism. They could tell clearly and factually about the lessons that the war on terror had taught them in terms of war journalism, as well as the consequences for the news media in Pakistan and the overall profession of journalism.

In the following sections of this chapter, I outline their evidence about the types of influence exerted and restrictions imposed, and the effects that those had on the individual journalists and the overall newsgathering process. I sought to interview journalists who were involved with the profession of journalism in the FATA, and hailed from the FATA, because they had a sentimental attachment with what was going on there. Some of them were affected directly at the hands of Taliban and the security agencies of Pakistan. They were abducted, tortured, beaten up or threatened time and again for their news reporting. The quotes have been taken on the basis of their individual knowledge and their personal views, so that together they add up to a collection of information that can be used to take our discussions and conclusions further forward. It will also be apparent from the quotations that all of the journalists who had remained involved with reporting in the field in the FATA were male.

This evidence suggests that, during the war on terror, the journalistic role was changed to doing a job similar to that of a postal worker, carrying and conveying the messages of the Taliban and the security authorities. Within the conflict zone, the evidence suggests that, eventually, there was no journalistic activity at all. In the areas adjacent to the conflict zone, journalists could move around news locations, but they were still monitored and their activities were under scrutiny. Besides the restrictions imposed on journalists by the authorities and the Taliban, the evidence describes organisational and routine pressures, which affected the performance of the journalists. There was a lack of resources and back-up from the media organisations to support journalists to do any investigative reporting; however, the organisations demanded more news about the FATA. Any contributions that the journalists have claimed to have made are totally on the basis of their personal capacity, produced by their personal efforts and interest. They were not provided with any safety equipment to help to protect them bomb blasts and terror activities, nor given any training to cover sensitive operations. All of these factors hampered professional journalism in the field

and, as a result, a very important opportunity affecting public understanding of the facts of the conflict was missed.

This development also put the authorities in an awkward position, because they failed to anticipate this abrupt development in the conflict zone and were left in the dark. This may be the reason why they failed to develop a clear policy on how to deal with the situation; they did not understand the operational mechanisms of the Taliban and were therefore unable to devise a strategy.

6.2 Violence and militants as journalistic pressures

The conflict of the war on terror and the related events of terrorism have exposed the dangers involved in the field of news gathering in Pakistan. The participants expressed their fears and grievances while sharing their thoughts about how the journalists covering the conflict zone of FATA 2002-2016 suffered, and described how they had to wrestle on many fronts to gather news. The Taliban were the deadliest in the region when it came to pressures upon the journalists, and were exceptionally sensitive about news media activities in their territory. As a result, journalists were threatened, intimidated, tortured, kidnapped or killed in record numbers. According to the CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists) in its annual report for 2019, more than 60 Pakistani journalists lost their lives in Pakistan during the conflict of the war on terror 2002-2016.

According to details provided by the participants, the Taliban were the biggest challenge in reporting any developments related to the conflict, and journalists suffered at their hands, as they were easy targets. The journalists failed in the initial stages to identify the penetration of the militant threat and had underestimated the Taliban's ability to integrate into society. The news media came to know about the existence of the Taliban among the journalists when it was too late. The participants further confirmed that the Taliban had established a very well-developed news media monitoring system to supervise the activities of journalists. The militants had access to social media and news media (printed and broadcast), and they kept a close eye on the activities of news media and individual journalists. The authorities failed to realise the extent of that close monitoring until very late in the conflict. Journalists carried out their jobs facing the high risks posed by the Taliban and associated militant outfits (militant groups who were not known by the Taliban but which believed in the same ideology, more or less, such as Lashkar-e-Islam, Ansar-ul-Islam, Jaish-

e-Muhammad). Those groups all sought to use technology and violence to communicate their messages through news media.

6.2.1 Routine violence

Participant Mank, while talking about his experiences in the field during the peak days of militancy, commented that:

> 'Going out in the field in the conflict zone to gather pieces of information is imbued with multiple risks. We are not provided with any safety gear when we go out in the field in case of any eventuality and neither are we given any kind of training as how to remain safe in the line of duty. Several of our friends and colleagues have lost their lives while covering incidents of bomb blasts and terror-related events. During the peak days of militancy when bomb blasts were a routine matter, even then, we did not take any breaks and kept on doing our job.' – *Mank, resident editor, Mashriq (daily newspaper, Urdu), 20.07.2016*
>
> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The signs of fear and terror were still visible on the face of the participant and, although he was recording his voice on the condition of anonymity, he hesitated a few times.*

The war on terror exposed the vulnerabilities involved in the field of journalism for those reporters who had to cover events such as bomb blasts and terror attacks in their beats ('beat' is usually described as something like a specific geographic area to which an individual reporter is assigned to gather and deliver regular coverage of stories). The participants told how, during the peak days of the war on terror, they had to collect information while such events were taking place. Bomb blasts were a daily routine, and they saw their friends become targets of suicide bombers, but they could not stop going out to gather news, due to the organisational pressure on them. They were confronted with multiple threats, such as of injury, permanent disability or death in the line of duty. The horrible consequences for their families, if they were injured because of routine violence, was another pressure.

Participant Mal told a story about a terrorist incident:

> 'I and a friend of mine got caught up in fire exchange when the terrorists attacked the airport. I still remember when the terrorists were firing shots towards us as we were near the place where the police were lining up to retaliate. The whole scene was terrible and we were very scared because I have never been in a situation like this before. Eventually, we had to take cover in the nearby market to save our lives.' – *Mal, city reporter, The Frontier Post (newspaper, English), 21.07.2016*
>
> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant would become sad at times, when he was recording his words.*

The journalists were not provided with any sort of training in this highly dangerous field of news gathering, neither by the organisations they worked for nor by the government. They were not even provided with training what to do in case of any terrorist attack or bomb blasts. One quarter of the participants admitted that they were caught up in the cross-fire, between the law enforcement authorities and the terrorists, on different occasions. An example is when the terrorists attacked Peshawar airport, the journalists got caught up in the middle and one participant said that he could hear the shots sizzling through the air above their heads; they had to take shelter in the nearby market to save their lives. Another participant said that, when the terrorists attacked the Charsadda university, they were caught up in the middle and were told by the authorities to leave the premises to avoid harm. Similarly, in the attack on a veterinary college, the journalists arrived at the spot because it took a little while for the authorities to clean up the building from the hiding terrorists.

They were not provided with any compensation if they were hurt or injured in the line of duty, as they did not have insurance for working in a conflict zone. Unlike the servicemen, law enforcement authorities and other government officials who are compensated by the government if they are hurt or killed in a bomb attack, the journalists receive no payments. They are treated the same as the general public; if the government announces any package for the general public, then if those affected include journalists, they are compensated, otherwise not. There is no specified package for the journalists, despite the fact that they have been covering stories in one of the most dangerous fields of journalism.

All of the participants interviewed were permanent employees but still they were not provided with any cover if anything happened to them. They told about their colleagues who lost their lives in the line of duty, whose families had to struggle to get funds out of the government, not from the employers. The ownership did nothing at all in this regard. This affected not only the journalists in the field during the attacks; some senior journalists have been attacked inside their houses and also in their offices. Peshawar press club was attacked with a bomb blast and some of the journalists I interviewed were present there when this attack happened.

Despite all these threats and dangers, the journalists were asked to report exclusive news stories, without any reward. The majority of the participants informed that media ownership in Pakistan is business oriented. They do not think of the employees, but have become billionaires. The media is just like any other investment, and they would only look

after their interest. The state in this case has so far failed to do anything for the welfare of the journalists, because there is no wage board and no employment contract regulations like those that exist for other departments or institutions. Despite their positions as permanent employees, the organisations can sack any journalists at any point without even fulfilling the basic conditions of the contract, which is a big failure on the part of the state. It is described by Pedelty (2020) as a culture that the corporate news media has developed in war journalism. The ownership would appreciate scoops, but would turn a deaf ear to journalists' concerns about dangers of working in the field.

Miz, while commenting upon the environment in which the journalists had to work during the peak days of militancy, said:

> 'I have worked in different areas of journalism for the whole of my career but since 2009, I have specifically covered crime and the war on terror, including bomb blasts and terrorist attacks. I lost one of my friends and a colleague in a suicide bomb blast. From 2009 onwards, reporting terrorism proved to be very challenging as militancy was at its peak but we had to go out to cover our beat. We would never be sure that we would come back alive or not. In addition to the natural threats associated with the state of security in times of crisis, we faced too many other challenges as well, which included among others the serious issue of threats and intimidation by militants and terror banned groups.' – *Miz, senior staff reporter, daily Mashriq, 21.07.2016*

> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant is seen sad and remorseful at the friends and colleagues he used to work with, and who were not there any more.*

The participants provided information about how covering terrorism has subjected many journalists to trauma and stress. In a similar situation, described by (Feinstein 2015) the journalists of the FATA feared the loss of life in a bomb blast or inviting the wrath of the Taliban if they published anything relevant to their activities. One participant described how the scenes after bomb blasts, with dead bodies lying on the ground or the body parts of the deceased scattered, have paralysed his nerves. He just did not want to report incidents like this again, and he found himself in a situation like those explained by (Pyevich et al. 2003). Those field reporters who had covered war on terror between 2002-2016, and had witnessed bomb blasts and suicide attacks and had seen the killings, incidents of murder and shattered skulls in the suicide bombings or bomb blasts have developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); some of the interviewees were also suffering from PTSD, and shared their views how they could not eat or sleep for few days or even still have sleeping problems after witnessing these events repeatedly. The news reporters who apparently have PTSD believed

that they were in need of a psychological treatment, as some journalists could not sleep at all and now had permanent sleeping disorders. The casualties they had witnessed in bomb blasts included children and women, and such experiences led to the development of mental problems.

When they received threats, the reporters would not know the faces of those who threatened them, as they were concealed among the local population. They could not talk openly in public, due to the fear of the presence of Taliban sympathisers.

6.2.2 Taliban

Participant Tolo shared his personal story when he was asked by his city editor to visit an area to meet people as part of investigative story:

> 'In 2008, we were asked by our city editor to visit a nearby area to see a family where police had arrested youngsters that were would-be suicide bombers. We visited that area to see the family of those youngsters in order to investigate the reason for their falling into the hands of Taliban. We started to search for that particular seminary where these children were turned into by terrorists. We were trying to get closer to that area to see things by ourselves when an armed group took us hostage at gun point to a nearby mosque for questioning. We tried to argue that we are only journalists and didn't belong to any organisation and we are just trying to find facts so that the world could know the real story. We told them that we would also publish their point of view through our news media organisation if they wished. One of our colleagues informed the newspaper management as soon as we were taken and they didn't waste any time in informing the authorities. Soon the police arrived over there and we were released unharmed.' – *Tolo, crime reporter, The Frontier Post, 22.07.2016*
>
> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant's body language and tone had an anger about the way they had been treated at the hands of the Taliban.*

During the war on terror, journalists were exposed to different levels of danger. The most severe were the threats from the Taliban, and the result of those threats was that journalists became a mere channel for the exchange of messages between the Taliban and the authorities. For the participants, the biggest problem that they feared was the concealment of the Taliban in the population. They would still work ideologically for the respective Taliban faction with which they were affiliated, but they were in disguise. It was very difficult for news media to work independently on issues pertaining to public interest, as there was the serious risk of getting into trouble with the Taliban. That's why the journalists could not conduct investigative journalism about any issue that involved the Taliban. To do so would be suicidal.

In such circumstances, the participants reiterated that the journalists suffered a lot; they did not know who they were talking to. As participant Mick said:

> 'They did not know whether individuals that they were interviewing for possible stories were members of the Taliban or not.' – *Mick, staff reporter, The Frontier Post, 29.07.2016.*
>
> *Note on non-verbal evidence: the journalists were showing confusion through their body language but were not saying it.*

It was not always possible to get help from the authorities, and any misadventure could put their lives at risk.

Consequently, they had to trash important information involving the Taliban. Members of the Taliban would contact journalists and place on record their version of a story, which they then expected would be published. Participant Sim commented:

> 'From 2006 onwards, many journalists were killed, injured and threatened by Taliban. I got injured myself in a twin bomb blast but fortunately survived. I was severely injured along with two other fellow journalists who were also present on the spot to cover that event. I remember a guy named Zee, who used to work for our television channel and was also associated with American radio (Voice of America). He was assigned a beat in the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan but he got killed by the Taliban, unfortunately. The relevant authorities conducted an investigation to know the cause of his ill fate. It was found to be as a result of the fact that he had conducted interviews with the local Taliban from that area which he did not air.' – *Sim, news editor, The Statesman, 23.07.2016*
>
> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant shared information but very cautiously and used his words carefully, which helped me to see what practising journalism in the FATA would look like.*

For those journalists working in the field, it was important to understand the sensitivities of the Taliban. For instance, the journalist needed to know why the Taliban were talking to him, and whether it would be possible for him to publish their version and explain his position in this regard to the authorities. He also needed to know what the consequences would be if he failed to publish the Taliban point of view and what they would be if he did publish their point of view. The journalists were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. If they published the Taliban version, they would be asked to explain their position with regard to that story by the respective authorities; many journalists were interrogated and questioned to explain the source of particular information in a news report. And if they did not publish the Taliban version in any news report, they would face the wrath of the Taliban.

During the conflict of war on terror in the FATA, the way in which the situation gradually evolved, for the Taliban, the message to journalists was either 'give voice to us' and/or 'anything that goes from here should have our version as well or you are banned from FATA'. Participant Sankee expressed his view on the dilemma facing journalists in the field:

> 'I think that many things are clear from 2005 onwards. We have lost over 60 people belonging to different sections of news media – 60 per cent of them were working in the Frontier province adjacent to the conflict zone and the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas). The majority of the casualties occurred due to conflict reporting. They were either covering conflict-related incidents or issues or they might have filed something that annoyed people (militants) over there and fell prey to them.' – *Sankee, resident editor, The News, 30.07.2016*

> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant, when he said that they knew what to report and what not to report, became a little relaxed because they knew now what they were not supposed to touch. In this way, they learnt how to remain safe while doing news reporting in the FATA.*

The journalists were not fully aware at first of the repercussions of dealing with the Taliban, and they treated such dealings as normal situations. With the passage of time, after experiencing the deaths of friends and colleagues at Taliban hands, they realised how dangerous it was to publish the militant points of view and the dire consequences of ignoring them. This is how changes in the field of journalism in the FATA gradually became accepted and institutionalised. The news values of 'news' were reduced to simply the prescribed details that came from the Taliban or the Pakistani authorities.

In this way, important information was never reported; journalists decided not to file news stories for their personal safety and that of their family. Participant Niara told us about his experiences:

> 'I was first attacked in 2006 when I filed a story on the Taliban activities in Afghanistan. It was about Arabs buying Afghan soldiers in Jalalabad and selling them out further. It got published in a daily, "The Nation", and because of that my house was attacked. I was inside my house along with my family when the militants attacked us with a bomb but fortunately, we remained safe. The most terrible was the suicide attack on the Peshawar press club when I was the president in 2009. There were several incidents of attacks on me and I was chased many times by the Taliban but I survived. In 2012, when I was in Kabul (Afghanistan), I narrowly escaped a bomb blast near my residence. I was the target of that attack, claimed by the Afghan Taliban.' – *Niara, resident editor, The Nation, 28.07.2016*

> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant took a deep breath (I could see from his body language the troubles he had been in because of his news reporting). He had to stop to drink water many times during the conversation about how he was attacked inside his house when he was with his family but he was saved by God.*

The participants recounted that those journalists who did not comply with the new code for the field of news media in the conflict zone and carried on with their independent way of reporting had to suffer. The Taliban would not hesitate to use any means to take down their targets. People were attacked with gun fire and their houses attacked with bomb blasts. No one has accepted any responsibility to this day, and only a few of these cases could be investigated by the authorities due to a lack of evidence.

For those cases that were investigated, the blame was put on the banned Taliban outfits that were operating in the conflict zone, where the courts and law enforcement agencies had little or no jurisdiction. This was the main reason why those who attacked journalists in FATA did so with impunity; the journalists did not have access to courts. Their ordeal has been much longer, with links to other episodes in history, so the Taliban episode is just an extension of that history – another chapter, not a big change (Ashraf 2021). The Taliban made life a misery for those who came out and openly confronted them, with much suffering as a result.

The police complained about a lack of training for journalists, which sometimes led to the destruction of evidence before the police arrived to witness a terrorist event. Because of that, the police were unable to investigate such cases properly. Participant Doul commented on the challenges in the field in these words:

> 'We have worked in the extreme conditions of security in this part of Pakistan where more than 45 journalists have so far been killed. Till this date, we don't know who the killers are. So far, only three or four cases could be pursued and the responsibility for the crime is fixed within the militant groups. Other than these, most of the cases are clueless. The field of news media in the conflict zone is sandwiched between the militants and the military establishment.' – *Doul, resident editor, daily Dawn, 05.08.2016*
>
> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant was annoyed at the apathy of the state and state institutions, when talking about where to go to ask for justice and who to hold accountable. His eye filled with tears while sharing these views.*

The participants provided information that, if a reporter wanted to do his job in a peaceful way, he had to stay aloof from anything related to the Taliban and their activities. They felt that this factor might be the main reason for the total disappearance of investigative journalism during the war on terror and, indeed, independent news reporting. There was no support to keep those in existence from the ownership of respective news media organisations, especially in cases when the Taliban were involved. The journalists could not fight this war alone, and the lack of any support broke their hearts. The news organisations

asked them to bring exclusives to improve the newspaper ratings, but at their own risk. It was a situation when the journalists become the fodder for the war on terror for corporate news media. They were not concerned how news was made or who brought the information; their main concern was to have stories from the FATA so that they could have more readers or viewers.

Some of the participants said that they were told by representatives of corporate news media organisations that it would be harmful to stay aloof from seeking to cover news stories there; information could be attained through different channels, such as 'hired natives' – this was a term coined by corporate news media for hiring 'parachute journalists' as 'stringers', but now they replaced them with 'fixers' during the war on terror (Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Pedelty 2020; Ashraf 2021). According to participants, during the peak days of the war on terror 2002-2016, the militancy spread not only in the FATA but to the adjacent settled areas as well. It was a time when the journalists realised the sense of danger and they would hesitate to touch news and information in relevance to Taliban.

During this time period, the local journalists lost their jobs and some even quit their jobs themselves due to the threats and risks involved, but they started to help the senior correspondents and even in some cases for the correspondents from the global news media as well, on daily wages in disguise. They were not all necessary journalists; taxi drivers and shopkeepers would bring us news and information from the FATA or far-flung areas, just to feed the corporate news media, and they started to be known as 'fixers', a term coined much earlier by scholars (Murrell 2009, 2014, 2019; Pedelty 2020; Ashraf 2021).

Participant Sino commented about pressures in the field:

'The war on terror has proven to be the biggest challenge for news media with regard to going out to do news gathering in the field. When the United States and Pakistan military started joint operations against the militants in the conflict-hit zone, the most affected party as a consequence was the news media. We got caught between the military and the militants. The military does not want the news media to publish the militants' propaganda while they want to have their say. During this process we noticed from our observations in the field that the militants are news media sensitive and they keep a very close eye on news media activities. If you are filing a story related to them, it is important that you publish their version also. Ignoring their point of view has cost us heavily, as we have lost many of our colleagues and friends.' – *Sino, resident editor, The Street Times, 12.08.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant showed his annoyance at the lack of the liberty and independence that this profession demands, and the consequences of that if there is none.

The mode of restrictions imposed by the Taliban depended on the location and the time when the journalists were asked to produce a news report. If they were assigned a beat near the FATA when Pakistan military operations were going on, then it would involve too many difficulties. The Taliban have always used news media channels to terrorise people, whereas the Pakistan military did not want the public to listen to the Taliban or the news media to forward their messages. The Taliban used news media to propagate their viral messages, which could cause disenchantment within the public about the armed forces. The situation in operational areas was more severe, and the Taliban did not tolerate the presence of journalists unless they agreed to broadcast their claims and stop publishing Pakistan military gains. The Taliban did not allow anyone to enter their territory and drove away all of the government officials who were working in the health and public sector and who supplied information to news media.

Participant Etham shared his views about challenges in the field:

'In 2005, I visited Waziristan to attend a press conference organised by Baitullah Mehsud, the then chief of Taliban. There were different Taliban groups present on that occasion as well and they inquired about our fellow journalists working in different media houses. They asked about H working for BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). We said yes, he is here. They hugged him and gave him very warm welcome because, according to them, they were happy with his work and the way he was covering that area. They asked about another guy named S, who works for VOA (Voice of America). We told him that he is not here. They said, alas! Had he come here he would have never gone back alive. These are the things for us to understand. They remain in touch with news media. They listen to BBC, VOA, VOG (Voice of Germany) and other numerous news media channels, both national and international to get accurate information. This is how they are, they like to get as much information as possible. The journalists in the conflict zone have to keep these things in mind but things are not always in their control. If they bring some news reports which deal with the Taliban point of view, the security establishment is going to ask for an explanation and his position with regard to that news story. If they fail to give space to the militants' version in a news story, they are going to be hit by them. This is the main reason for the intrigue and many of our colleagues have been targeted for falling short, for not fulfilling the expectations of either of these parties.' – *Etham, resident editor, The Express Tribune, 12.08.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant's eyes were opened and he exclaimed when he expressed his words about the Taliban's access and understanding of the news media monitoring system. This is something that they should be worried about, I grasped, from his tone and expression.

The most important thing that all the journalists had to bear in mind was the sensitivity of the Taliban about the use of news media. They kept a close eye on the activities

and news reporting of journalists and knew almost all the journalists who worked in the FATA for different organisations. They had knowledge about the affiliation of different news media groups and their priorities. News media activities and the news stories published have put at risk the lives not only of journalists, but also politicians, human rights activists, social activists and NGO employees, who have been pinpointed by the Taliban for their policy statements and briefings about militancy. If a news reporter published anything that was relevant to the Taliban, from any angle, they would ask the news reporter concerned to publish their response as well. Failing to comply would lead to serious consequences; that is what the journalists had to understand. As a result, the news media space was divided between the Taliban and the military authorities, which have been discussed in the examples quoted here.

Participant Gike expressed his opinion about challenges in the field:

'I was kidnapped by the Taliban in 2008 and they held me for five days. They were not happy with my reporting, that's what I was told during my captivity. I was detained by security agencies because they were not happy with my reporting. I tried to explain to both sides that we write for people and not for any group. The journalists working in the conflict zone have suffered at the hands of Taliban also for not having any back-up from the organisation they work for. With regard to my experience with foreign news media, I would like to add that they don't care about anything more than the safety of their employees. They have on different occasions killed important information and news stories for the sake of the safety of local journalists as they comprehend that it may bring harm to them.' – *Gike, senior correspondent, Geo News, 15.08.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant expressed anger and frustration for what happened to him and the way his family was in trauma because of him. He was not happy at the state of affairs and what journalists had been through during war on terror in the FATA 2002-2016.

'Our national media houses ask us to bring information but at our own risk. They never seem bothered to provide us with any safety training or to do security arrangements when we go out in the field. We are surviving because of our own efforts and the training we received from international organisations. The international organisations have encouraged us to explore areas to take out actual information within the conflict zone and in the meantime they have provided us with basic training to remain safe in such crisis. I have spent weeks in the remotest places of the conflict zone to collect pieces of information and have dealt with the militants skilfully. It has been possible due to my personal contacts and the training I received from the international trainers. The war on terror started in front of our eyes and we have seen the militants grow up and become war lords.' – *Niara, chief reporter, daily The News, 06.08.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant was avoiding direct criticism at people within the Taliban and naming the security agencies, but was mad at the corporate

nature of the news media. From his tone, and language, I grasped that corporate news media did not care about the consequences for journalists, who had to make every arrangement for their survival on their own.

The participants informed that tragic news about their colleagues and friends would put them in shock and grief as they would hear about the ordeals of torture and abduction at gun point by the Taliban and see the lack of sincere effort from either the government or the media ownership for their release. The stories of abductions and torture – some of the kidnapped journalists died in Taliban custody due to torture – made them worried about themselves and their families. If someone was taken by the militants, the news media organisations or government provided no support financially or made any effort to release the taken journalist. The journalists were left on their own to handle the situation, despite the fact, as already mentioned, that they were asked to bring in exclusive news reports to help improve the audience ratings of particular media organisations.

The participants appreciated the solidarity and support of international organisations with the journalists working in the conflict zone of FATA and their sacrifices in the conflict reporting from the conflict zone. Dealing with militants is a risky business; without support, it is not possible for journalists to survive. The Taliban have abducted journalists and tortured them to discourage them from reporting against them. The participants informed how the families of the journalists have been made to pay large amounts of money as ransom. In cases like these, the journalists have had to survive on their own and they were not given any support by their respective organisations. Participant Alpha added:

> 'We are reminded time and again in workshops by foreign trainers (the participants informed that keeping in view the high rate of casualties and damage to the journalists, international news organisations have called us number of workshops and seminars to enlighten us not to involve unless fully prepared) to keep in mind always that a dead man is not a journalist. So avoid things that bring harm.' – *Alpha, Bureau Chief, Dawn TV, 04.08.2016*

Participant Romeo, while talking about difficulties in the field, commented:

> 'The most challenging job in the field is to get access to the concerned parties in a crisis. It is not easy for journalists to talk to any group, the Pakistan military or the Taliban, as no one would allow you to go near them. I remember when the Taliban were controlling the tribal areas and they strictly prohibited the movement of journalists across their territory. There was no access for us and the whole FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) was looking like a graveyard. People couldn't visit from outside to see the developments going on in that area and neither did the insiders have any resource or channel to speak for them. It was complete silence over

there. There is no representative body, human rights groups or lawyer forum to speak for them, only the local public and the local elders who were all terrorised, already.' – *Romeo, resident editor, 92 News, 12.08.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant stood up, annoyed, and wanted to talk, but then he stopped and sat, but stood again. He seemed annoyed and irritated at the state of affairs the journalists were faced with.

In this section, we have examined evidence from the interviewees about the threats and intimidation imposed by the Taliban in order to force journalists to remain quiet or to ignore news about the Taliban. The participants found it difficult to visit the conflict zone under any circumstances. The militants would provide information to them if they wanted to share anything, and the journalists could not even contact them. They would call news media briefings about their policy about certain issues. They worked very systematically and were organised when it came to dealing with the public through news media. Participant Satt shared his views about going out in the field:

'We are under certain pressures while reporting such issues. The biggest challenge is life security. Those people who are known to be terrorists are the biggest threat because I believe that they are monitoring me and my fellow journalists. This brings into question my capabilities of working independently as a journalist the way this profession demands. It is a general impression in Pakistan that the state doesn't bother a lot about the security and protection of people and everyone is responsible for his safety. Pakistan has been declared as the third dangerous country for journalists after Iraq and Afghanistan by the committee to protect journalists. The pressures over journalists are multiple and some of them are from within the society as well. The risk associated with my job always bugs my head because I know very well that I am not safe.' – *Satt, senior reporter, The Street Times, 28.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant moved away the face to the left side to stop eye contact, and whispered slowly. It was not easy to grasp what he said and even upon giving him time to think and share his views, he preferred silence. His closed mouth said a lot about the serious challenges they faced and that practising news reporting independently was not possible.

6.3 Official pressures

This research project has developed several research routes to provide new information about the differences between war journalism and peace journalism, and another factor that has been examined is the measure of control that governments adopt to control the flow of information. The Pakistani authorities learnt their lesson from the Kargil conflict (1998); they saw how the conflict situation could get out of control without a complicit news media and

how this could put the whole country into defensive positions at home and abroad, despite gains on the battlefield.

Great care had to be taken if sensitive issues were allowed to be discussed on public forums (Kuhn 2007). The participants in my interview sessions commented that the Pakistani authorities restricted news reporting from the conflict zone and during the bin Laden killing, so as not risk their national security. Not only did they force news media to stay at a distance from the matters at stake; they also expected them not to talk to the Taliban, so that they could not exploit the news media channels for their propaganda.

In the recent conflict of the war on terror 2002-2016 and after the bin Laden killing, the Pakistani authorities used multi-layered techniques to stop the news media from gathering news independently and then reporting that news. With the passage of time, the journalists understood the mood of the Pakistani authorities with respect to what they saw as red lines about what to publish and what not to publish about the conflict zone during the war on terror. This situation was similar to what was referred to by Kuhn (2007) when he stated that the political pressure on news media to publish official versions is imposed in a legal way.

Chomsky (2008) also argued that, when the firing starts, the news media had to become a party with one side; I think at this point it is important to examine carefully the pattern of news media support for Pakistan authorities and what the reasons for that may be in a situation in which the news media in Pakistan has to choose sides. The news media in Pakistan survives on advertisement revenue, which is in official control, and also on government funding (Nadadur 2007). There is no non-governmental sources of revenue which provides strong support to the news media industry. There are no TV subscriptions, newspaper sales or private sponsorship such as those available in the capitalist world. Official restrictions have been in place in almost all wars and conflicts globally, and this project has exposed the role of the Pakistani authorities in the so-called war on terror and the bin Laden killing at the same level.

In the case of the FATA, the journalists were dependent on official vehicles, official communications and official resources to gather news. The news about the FATA and any relevant information would arrive through ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations), which had a role similar to that of the Joint Information Bureau set up by the allies during the Second Gulf War (2003) (Kumar 2006; Robinson and Robertson 2010). ISPR started to play an active role at the beginning of the 1990s (Khan 2011). It used to give regular media briefings

about policy issues and to share occasional reports with limited information (Mezzera and Sial 2010). It became proactive in providing information about the conflict zone after 9/11.

Its scope expanded from merely news briefings to covering Pakistan military operations against the Taliban and the role of Pakistan's army in the global war on terror. However, the interaction between the news media and the Pakistan military remained constrained by the need of the Pakistan military to maintain maximum secrecy, and the fact that this necessity affected the capability of the news media to understand the practical realities and the exact situation on the ground in the FATA. The whole effort was organised with the purpose of discouraging the independent newsgathering process. The issues and news reports would be framed through liaison with embedded journalists, along with the rest of information shared in this way throughout the war on terror 2002-2016 and in relation to bin Laden's killing. Participant Siara, discussing the state of news media, said:

> 'I haven't visited any area within the FATA as a journalist since 2005. The last time I visited any region in the conflict zone I went to Wana, the headquarters of South Waziristan in 2005. Since then, I never found a chance to see that place with a journalist's eye. I am always accompanied by the security officials if I am asked to pay a visit. I visited Bajaur agency, bordered with Afghanistan in 2007 and North Waziristan in 2006. We could not see any public to talk to about issues they are faced with or collect information. We have to depend on officials for information about people but they would not allow us to get any information from the public.' – *Siara, resident editor, daily Express Urdu, 26.07.2016*

> *Note on non-verbal evidence: While not looking at me, and using a comparatively very low tone, the participant expressed his frustration at the level of restricted environment they had been working in, 2002-2016. He shrugged his shoulders and said, we just forward what we are told because we cannot go out.*

The journalists were discouraged from visiting the FATA on their own. There was a complete blackout and nobody had any idea about what was going on in that region. The Pakistan military was very mindful of the operations zones and those areas where the military was deployed. The participants stated that the Pakistani authorities claimed that the pressures on news media were for positive reasons. During conflicts, news media channels were ideal for rival propaganda, which could demoralise Pakistan military and cause public resentment against its own army. The Pakistan military would not allow any journalist to visit the conflict zone on their own to see things, due to the risks involved. They would arrange visits for the journalists at the end of operations, when the area was cleared and they would share information with the news media through a joint press briefing.

Participant Dah shared his experiences:

'If bomb blasts occur, you talk to police officials, bomb disposable units and hospital authorities on the number of casualties and injured. These are all common things and you can confirm the number without too much trouble. But, if a drone attacks an alleged militant hideout, then this is something that would need careful analysis. In this case, if I go to the spot and produce any news report based on my personal analysis of the situation and interview eye witnesses … if I bring news that only 2 per cent of the dead are Taliban and the remaining 98 per cent are all innocent civilians, then these facts and figures are going to create a problem for me. Pakistan military authorities do not like news reporting in an independent way and because of this the true picture of the situation cannot be shown in times of conflicts, wars, and crisis.' – *Dah, crime reporter, daily Dawn, 27.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: At this point, he put his glasses on the table in front of him, and breathed heavily, to show his frustration at the state of news reporting during the drone strikes.

The participants stated that the Pakistan military would adopt extra control measures over issues that were important components of its security and foreign policy. A case in point was the issue of drone strikes in the FATA. The authorities in Pakistan were wary about this issue and information about drone strikes was shared with the news media through ISPR or official sources. The participants commented that they were aware of the sensitivity of the issue and, for that reason, they were always mindful of news and information about drone strikes before it was sent for publication.

They confirmed that the issue of drones remained controversial since the beginning of the war on terror in December 2001. Pakistani authorities said that they never accepted any deal with the US authorities about drones and would always deny such a deal in public. However, the US stated that drone strikes were done with the approval and consent of Pakistani authorities. Pakistani authorities avoided discussing this issue in public for fear of a backlash. The Taliban, on the other hand, would expect the news media to present information or news about drone strikes in such a way that would affect public sentiments and demoralise official circles, such as by emphasising allegations about giving too many concessions to the US. For example, the Taliban would exaggerate the number of killings and say that the casualties included many children and women because the target was a wedding party. The Pakistani authorities would show a different picture of the event in order to avoid a backlash and resentment towards the US within the masses. However, the news media could not visit the location to see what had happened and talk to people to confirm the news reports.

That's how they were stuck between these two opposite poles, and seldom were able to produce independent news reports with balanced information.

Participant Inzi, commenting upon the state of the news media, said:

'It is difficult to verify news reports in times of conflicts and crises for multiple reasons. We lack resources, sources, getting access to the right person in order to get accurate information and a lack of security arrangements. Firstly, it is not easy to get access to the conflict-hit areas and see things on our own. In the case of any eventuality, the security forces check the area first to make sure that it is safe before news media are allowed to enter. It takes time and the authorities would not allow the journalists to wander around the area on their own due to the risks involved.' – *Inzi, city reporter, daily Express Urdu, 28.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: He started talking with both his hands waving, saying that they did not have resources and funds to travel and arrange trips. Even if, despite all the odds, they did pay a visit, the authorities used delaying tactics, killing the whole purpose of the visit and timely news reporting.

The participants recounted that the conflict zone was at the mercy of these two forces, the Pakistani security officials and the Taliban, as these were the two main power brokers inside the FATA. In the presence of these two parties, it was not possible to publish a balanced news report. For any news report to be authentic, the person who files it needs to have visited the spot in person and have witnessed the situation on the ground. But this did not happen in the FATA; if a journalist wanted to visit an area hit by a calamity, he needed permission from the respective authorities. This would sometimes take weeks to process and by then the news would be already cold. If the journalist dared to visit the site on his own, this entailed great risk. as no one would take responsibility for what might happen.

Participant Nam expressed his opinion about pressures in the field:

'The most challenging job for a reporter is to go to an area where a bomb blast has just occurred or to an area where there is any terrorist attack. Like last year, this happened with us when BK University was attacked by Taliban and the Pakistan military and other law enforcement agencies started clean-up operation. We arrived there with our reporting crew on the spot but we were not allowed to go near the spot to see what was actually happening. We were given a briefing in the end when the premises were cleared off. What is more concerning for a reporter is filing a story as there are too many things every journalist has to keep in mind – the Taliban and the Pakistan military. No journalist can afford to go against any of these and one has to find a way down the middle of the line. The journalists feel threatened by both the parties involved.' – *Nam, city reporter, daily The Nation, 30.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant showed his frustration through his body language by talking in a very slow tone. He took the support of both his hands when explaining that it was not possible to touch things that concerned the Taliban or the Pakistan military.

Participant AA also commented on the pressure in the field:

> 'The most challenging job in the field is to bring balance in a news report from the conflict zone. It is a hard job because the reporter has to deal with the Taliban, intelligence authorities and the Pakistan military at the same time. In the meantime, it also depends on the individual, his personal affiliation, and ideological or political attachment. This is something that needs to be decided by the reporter. Some people want to work for intelligence, others want to become the mouthpiece of other law enforcement agencies, while some work for political parties as well. Then, there are some who work for the public and are more concerned with the people on the ground …' – *AA, crime reporter, Samaa News, 08.08.2016*
>
> *Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant used his shoulder to explain because he was stuttering that independent journalism or independent news reporting was not possible in the FATA in situations such as the war on terror 2002-2016.*

The participants complained about lack of access to information during the war on terror. Not all of the journalists had access to information on the ground, because only those journalists who had developed a liaison with one of the conflicting parties in the field could get information. The participants contend that it was more like a selection process and information would be fed to the privileged journalists. Even senior journalists, while expressing their thoughts about access to information, admitted that information in Pakistan is a privileged thing. This situation is similar to what Simon Cottle (2006, p. 2) argues defines the contesting space of media sphere during the newsgathering process. Every group has a political, ideological and strategic agenda; in this case, the Taliban and the state of Pakistan made the effort to make use of the news media to advance their aims. The monopoly of the media space depends upon the resources and institutional advantages any particular group has. In this case, the state of Pakistan had those advantages, but the Taliban in a bid to secure their aims used every means, including brute force, to secure their aims and to make sure that their messages got across. This affected the independent working capabilities of the journalists; leaning towards any one particular group meant that the information would be biased towards that group. Director News (Khyber TV) Jam, expressed his views:

> 'The war on terror in terms of news reporting was terrible because we could not dig out the reality to reach a conclusion. We journalists were in very difficult circumstances as no one was ready to share factual information about the terror events. We were trying our best to find anything and used every possible measure and contacts including the police, the public, authorities, and local administration. We contacted top army officials even but no one was ready to share anything due to the sensitivity of the case. The areas belonging to the military has been very hard to go

there as we were told in clear terms to remain careful about our own safety and to be cautious about our coverage.' *Jam, director news, Khyber TV, 22.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant explain with a smile that the journalists had to work very hard in getting access to the information because of the layers of restrictions around information.

The participants pointed out that issues and stories that involved the Pakistan military and those with ideological and security concerns could not be talked about in an authentic way in news media output. If they were talked about, it would not be authentic information because, during the war on terror and bin Laden event, the relevant authorities could not be approached to verify news. The news would lack balance, in the sense that it would only be forwarded stories by local people who did not have access to official information. The participants further opined that, although information is privileged everywhere, it is especially so in Pakistan, because not every journalist has access to information. The information is fed to particular reporters who have access to those sources; the ethics of news reporting are not fulfilled.

Participant Siara expressed his views about the control of the authorities:

'The biggest challenge is a controlled press. You can write anything about any issue but not against the military. The elected prime minister of this country was referred to court and the president had to leave the country for raising questions about the role of the military in the killing of bin Laden.' – *Siara, court reporter, 92 News, 09.08.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant moved his head left and right, just to demonstrate that reporting issues that were relevance to the Pakistan military was something that you could not do.

Participant Sim added his analysis in response to the question of pressures in the field:

'In the case of the bin Laden event, getting access to information was not easy. Nothing was coming out from the US government and their officials over here refrained from coming forth. From our side as well, no one was ready to share their point of view. The whole area was taken over by the military and it was not possible for journalists to visit that place and collect anything they thought might be newsworthy. The journalists could not talk to the close circles in the neighbourhood. They tried to talk to people in the surroundings to get first-hand information but the military cut off all access routes and denied access.' – *Sim, city reporter, daily Jang Urdu, 27.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant moved both his hands, making a circle, to show that everything was controlled and you could not go inside.

Participant Jan added his views:

'What we experienced in the bin Laden case applies to all other similar cases. You cannot talk to anyone in the neighbourhood or any of the security personnel present at that time. The news media covered all the military operations and conflicts from Peshawar, being close to the conflict zone. There are many incidents of bomb blasts, drone attacks and related events of military operations. But it is always very challenging to gain access to these areas and it is very difficult to take out information about an event. In the past, it used to be relatively easy. In 2006, there were two drone strikes in Bajaur agency, another tribal zone where a drone hit an area called Damadola. I was able to access that scene along with some of my fellow journalists and we observed things on our own. We met the affected and the survivors. By comparing that incident to the latter one, we see that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get access to those areas, meet people and see everything. Before, we used to go in at close quarters to collect information. That's what we had been discussing with the military and we raised the issue of giving access to those areas. Especially for the visual news media who need images and pictures for their news reports, that's the primary issue.' – *Jan, news editor, daily Aaj Urdu, 29.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant tried to explain, with a rather obedient voice, that they had been trying to raise these issues but no one was paying any heed.

Participants Romeo and Tim shared their views about effects on journalism in these terms:

'When we want to quote someone within the high-up officials of the military command preferably, or civil authorities in an event of international level, we have noticed that no one from within the high command is ready to talk. In the case of bin Laden, the news was released by the US authorities in the first place but there was no one to comment and similarly from within the Pakistani government no one would talk and give any information. That's the main challenge for us. Journalists try but they can't find anyone to confirm, deny or comment on any issue.' – *Romeo, bureau chief, daily Nawai-Waqt, 28.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant's helplessness was visible from his broken tone which was very difficult to grasp, but he moved his hands to make a cross sign (X) with his hands, by which he meant that there was no access and no news reporting.

'You can't quote the affected or the public or someone in a responsible position. The information is controlled mainly by intelligence agencies and you can't talk to them. You know that they won't talk to you because they don't trust anyone. If they decide to reveal anything they have their own way of doing it and would only give you their version. In the conflict zone, you are left with only the militants and the intelligence agencies to quote, whereas there is no chance of verifying the news from independent sources. The journalists are reminded time and again to keep national interest in view while doing their job. Different authorities, civil and military always advise us about national security and national interest. The definition of national security may be different for some people and also the meaning of national interest and we can differ on its interpretation and on the policies of the government. But, the problem is that

they think they have the right to define national interest and national security.' – *Tim, resident editor, Dawn TV, 25.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant expressed his views in a 'mimic' way to show that journalists were not allowed to do what they do in other parts of the world.

The participants who held senior positions in their respective organisations commented that the military authorities viewed the security situation from their own perspectives and wanted the news media to follow their lines. For them, it was too risky to let the news media deal with information about sensitive issues. Information is controlled by the authorities for reasons, and they release it when they think it is the right time to suit their own purposes. The main purpose of the highly controlled environment is to dominate the conflict situation. Whatever is published about the conflict situation is expected to go through them before being published or aired.

The participants commented that the security authorities in Pakistan think that it is their right only, and they should be the one to define the national interest of the country. They do not take advise or accept anyone else judgement in this case. In high profile cases like the war on terror, journalists had to wait to hear from the main sources within the establishment, and only then file it for publication. Those sources were never cross-examined by the way of following usual journalistic practices. The participants stated that the journalists were given briefings at the end of the military operation and the details were shared, but the journalists were not allowed to verify things independently as journalists; for example, they could not ask about who provided the information and the authenticity of the news origin. The senior participants added that they requested many times that they should be given access to the spots to confirm basic things, but their requests were denied.

Participant Ml commenting upon the pressures in the field, said:

'When a story of this magnitude develops then it is difficult to find information because the intelligence agencies and the military forces get involved. For every reporter and journalist, it becomes difficult in a country like Pakistan where information is a privileged thing. The military and intelligence agencies are not forthcoming anywhere but specifically not in Pakistan. To get access to information is really challenging. To find out what happened in Abbottabad or which places bin Laden had been so far, how he managed to come to Abbottabad, made it very interesting.' – *MI, city reporter, The News, 26.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: He negated the ideas of independent news reporting by moving his head sideways to show that that was not the case in Pakistan.

The participants confirmed that when highly significant events happened inside the country, such as 9/11 or the killing of bin Laden, the news media automatically came under pressure. There was too much at stake for the nation involved, the obvious areas being foreign policy and national interest. The security agencies became very sensitive when such events happened, and they looked into the perspective of the event in great depth. It was not possible for journalists to access any high-ranking officials to speak publicly about security issues and foreign policy. They did not come out to face the news media so that journalists could attend question and answer session, but would issue a press release and their reaction about that particular event.

6.4 Effects of these pressures on journalism: how news is shaped differently as a consequence

Major events have profound impact on news making and the news media cannot function normally in times of crisis and conflicts (Zelizer and Allan 2011). The purpose of this research is to examine the problems confronted by journalists in getting access to the issues faced by the people during the war on terror 2002-2016. Events and crises, such as the killing of bin Laden, provided an opportunity for the political elite to redefine their priorities because, in the wake of a catastrophe, the whole nation becomes indecisive and turns towards the political elite for guidance and direction (Bagdikian 2004). The quality and standard of news and information in situations like these is often questioned because the stories do not arrive through proper channels and are not verified independently. Information during the crisis situation in FATA arrived through 'fixers' instead of journalists and they were hardly verified or cross-examined, which brings into question the facts being supplied. It suits the ownership because their readership and viewership goes up, as does their rating, but the quality of news is compromised.

Due to limitations on the movement of the journalists in the FATA during the war on terror and the bin Laden killing, the working environment in the field of news media collapsed and the newsgathering process was far from ideal. Because of these limitations on the journalists, the professional methods of news gathering and news reporting of news media were paralysed in FATA.

Participant Sim commenting upon the state of news media, said:

'For newsmen, the biggest challenge the world over is the authenticity of news and its verification. In times of conflict, it has become difficult to bring proper information or good news on the basis of an investigation. You do take out a bit of information when you struggle but people give you only that information which they want to disperse and not what you are after. In our part of the world, it is hard for journalists to get proper information verified from independent sources. By that, I mean that there are various tiers of information that stop you from reaching the bottom. When you want to go deeper then certain elements may create problems for you.' – *Sim, senior reporter, daily Aaj, 29.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant raised his voice and said that if you can't talk to both sides of the story, it is not a balanced news report, but you can't do it here.

During the war on terror 2002-2016, it was difficult to get access to information about developments in FATA. When the journalists could not go any more to FATA, they were dependent on the staff working in different organisations such as hospitals, banks, agriculture and telephone departments. However, those sources started to dwindle as the fear of Taliban grew to such an extent that people would be careful when talking about the Taliban and their activities. Besides, hospitals staff started to disappear because female health workers and nurses have terminated their services. So to find out about the deaths and casualties, there was no one left to share the number. After 2011, when the military started military operations to hit hard at the Taliban, even the hospitals and the schools were shut down. The reason was that the Taliban started to blast all the schools and even the bridges that would connect the FATA with the settled areas. Within the FATA, almost all the primary schools were either demolished or turned into the camp by the Taliban. By the time the journalists verified facts about stories, the authorities would usually have found out, and reporters would be stopped from further investigations. Expecting journalists to produce quality independently-verified news reporting in such circumstances was out of the question.

Participant Soul argued:

'It was not possible to produce a factual report about any news event during the recent crisis and conflict of war on terror. There were no professional journalists in that area due to the restrictions from the Taliban. This situation has put news media in a difficult position as without the physical presence of news reporters on the ground there cannot be any independent news reporting.' – *Soul, city reporter, Express News Urdu, 08.08.2016*

Due to threats made against the lives of journalists and the safety of their families, professional journalists left the conflict zone. There were no journalists on the ground and news reports were issued either by official sources, to give the official version of the story, or by a Taliban spokesperson, to give their position on that event. Those who attempted to bypass these two parties had to face the brunt of their responses. With such restrictions and journalists' fear of these two parties, journalists would scrap the information even if they had verified it.

Participant Mike added:

> 'Our reporting has been limited to statements. There is no concept of investigative reporting here as the national organisations cannot sustain pressure from the authorities. Sometimes, some very good news stories come to the surface but the organisations do not have the balls to publish it.' – *Mike, staff reporter, Samaa News, 05.08.2016*

Participant Nino commented on the effects of restrictions upon news media:

> 'News media tries to create an ideal environment whenever any event of this magnitude happens but as you know in Pakistan, ISPR has total control over visual news media and print media as well. Even today, if anything of a sensitive nature happens you cannot forward it directly in visual news media or print. A case in point is the helicopter crash in Afghanistan. Although I noticed the tickers going on Geo TV, soon ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations) geared up and started disseminating information about the event. Our news media is not free but very controlled. It has been relatively easier to control print news media but I believe that electronic news media is kept on a leash by the ISPR and PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority).' – *Nino, senior sub-editor, The Street Times, 11.08.2016*

Participant Beta talking about difficulties in the field, commented:

> 'No factual information about parts of the tribal belt, South Waziristan, North Waziristan, and Khyber agency, is coming out and whatever comes out is under the strict control of military information channels. Throughout this conflict, getting access to information and then verifying it has remained the most challenging job for journalists.' – *Beta, senior sub-editor, 92 News, 10.02.2018*

Participant Yankee commented on the state of news media with regard to the pressures they face in these terms:

> 'During the conflict of the war on terror, it is difficult to get access to reliable information. The security forces make their own claims and the militants have their own. It is hard for journalists to give a balanced picture due to the restrictions upon them and the lack of access. We come to know about the claims of the security authorities through official press releases, handouts and ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations). On the other hand, the militants have their spokesmen to share pieces of information. The journalists cannot contact them and they contact the concerned

journalist from an unknown location.' – *Yankee, resident editor, The Express Tribune, 02.08.2016*

Participant BM, shared his views in these words,

'We do our best on our behalf to collect evidence from the public, eye witnesses, local administration and politicians about an event, and attempt to piece it together into a balanced news story. But here, we are talking about the conflict zone and over here the border regions are conflict zones. A journalist cannot go to the conflict zone on their own to take out information, report an incident or gather facts and figures about any eventuality. In order to visit that area and work on any exclusive, the journalists have to ask for proper permission.' – *BM, city reporter, The Nation, 30.07.2016*

Participant AR shared his views on the challenges in the field:

'I have covered the military operation against the Taliban in the Swat area where I used to give live coverage of the ongoing operation. I have received threats from the Taliban directly for not giving space to their point of view. This type of situation puts us in an awkward position because when we give coverage to the Taliban it annoys the military and officials. It becomes very difficult to bring balance in a news story if you work in the conflict zone. The people in head office in Islamabad or Karachi can publish independent versions because they are safe and far away but we cannot. In the presence of the Taliban, I think it is not possible to bring balance in a news story. Despite all these hardships we have worked hard and tried to follow the ethics of journalism, but the factual position cannot be shown in the conflict zone hit by the war on terror and the news story has to be compromised.' – *AR, city reporter, The Muslim, 30.07.2016*

The participants argued that working in the field remained a challenge for many reasons, but threats to their lives made by the Taliban haunted them all the time and they had to remain careful when filing a news story that had any relevance to the Taliban. The newsgathering and news-reporting process was directly relevant to the conflict situation. Participant Rio while sharing his views about the decline of investigative journalism in the conflict zone and his personal experience with the Taliban, commented:

'Many of my friends and colleagues have received life threats from militants. Keeping in view this scenario and the environment around us, I have decided to stay aloof from covering these big issues or being involved in investigative reporting. I am saying this because once I filed a news story about an incident in Swat when it was under the total control of the Taliban. The news report was about a mosque being hit by shelling from the Taliban. The story got published in the newspaper on the very next day with my byline. On that very day, I received a call from someone within the Taliban to clarify my position and the details of that story about that bulldozed mosque. He told me that they were not happy with the stance of the news story because I had alleged that they had hit a mosque. The guy further said that they were there for the implementation of sharia and not for bulldozing mosques. I was threatened with dire

consequences for filing that news story and the fear and shock were so immense that I feel it on my nerves even now.' – *Rio, crime reporter, The News, 25.07.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: The participant turned his face to one side when he was saying these words. I realised that he was still worried about himself and his family

Participant Sim commenting upon getting access to information, said:

'I think that we are too dependent to get a balanced view of the news story. Sometimes, we have victims and evidence of an event but getting the opinion of the officials about that particular case is difficult. This is the main difference between now and before and the main reason for the declining standard of journalism. We can report soft issues and social issues but when it comes to sensitive questions, we are not allowed to do that. We don't get any response from the people at the helm of affairs, which means that I don't have any story at all.' – *Sim, senior reporter, Aj Tak news TV, 30.07.2016*

Notes on non-verbal evidence: More through body gestures than any talk, with movement of hands and shoulders. Uncomfortable gestures, intermittent intervals to drink water frequently

Participant Soul shared his views about the effects upon journalism:

'I may admit that because of these challenges and threats that we deal with on a daily basis and also because of no access to the conflict zone we have involved ourselves in self-censorship. Those journalists who are given beats near the conflict-hit border regions or those who belong to those areas feel more threatened and they are the ones at most risk, compared to the rest. They involve themselves in self-censorship as they cannot afford to annoy the militants. It is rather the killing of information at our own hands and not hiding. Sometimes, we feel that what we are doing is against the basic ethics of journalism but we do this to make safe our lives and those of our family. Due to these risks, most of our fellow journalists who belonged to that area have fled to other parts of the country. Despite tall claims by the military about bringing security and making our lives safer by driving away the militants through their military operations, news media is still not completely free and the official challenges have restricted and paralysed our natural working environment.' – *Soul, city reporter, Aaj TV, 28.07.2016*

Notes on non-verbal evidence: Looking at the right hand side a lot and thinking too much throughout the time. If I divide the time he took and the words he spoke, one minute and one word would be fair description.

The participants said that, most of the time, journalists had to rely on official briefings, press notes, press releases and press notes provided through ISPR. In response to a question about pressures upon journalists, Fino added:

'Yes, we are asked on a daily basis not to cross certain limits. Our institution and our bosses warn us regularly not to touch certain things and also those organisations that give us advertisements. This is not only the case with our organisation but everyone

has adopted this policy. Every media house does the same thing.' – *Fino, city reporter, daily Dawn, 04.08.2016*

Note on non-verbal evidence: No eye contact and looking downward most of the times. Hesitation in talking and intermittent stops.

Since this study looks at the period of the war on terror 2002-2016, and within this time period, a very important event (in terms of its relevance to war on terror) of the killing of bin Laden happened. The event sent shock waves across the globe due to the high importance it was given, but equally shocking was its mysterious nature because no one was expecting Bin laden to be in Abbottabad. The expectation was for him to be somewhere in the FATA in a cave or far away in mountains such as the Tora Bora area. With an event of that magnitude developing within the study period, it was important to analyse the influences on news media and journalists, the effects on news reporting and whether there were similar level of influences on news gathering and reporting in the FATA.

6.5 Pressures faced by journalists after killing of bin Laden and effects on news reporting

Bin Laden was killed on 2 May 2011 in a midnight operation by American commandoes in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad. It was one of the most spectacular events in global news media history, with the event appearing in news flashes and headlines throughout the world. The mysterious nature of the event made this event exceptional, because nothing was shared with news media and no details of the operation or any briefing were given to the journalists. The whole area was cordoned off for months to come and information was sealed in such a way that journalists had no idea who to talk to, as neither US nor Pakistani authorities were coming forward. The level of coverage that the killing of bin Laden received on a global scale made this event a different news story altogether from routine breaking news (Kellner 2015).

The killing of bin Laden was an important event in the context of the war on terror 2002-2016. The total blockade of information on the ground provided an opportunity to the political elite to define the situation in their own terms. The interview participants informed that they were under pressure from the authorities at this moment of time, and they were reminded by the authorities that the event raised a question of Pakistan's national interest. Despite the killing event, one of the most debated and highlighted news events, there were

physical restrictions on the ground, and there were clearly drawn red lines as well; the journalists were told to respect them.

One participant Mike, shared his views in these words,

> 'The very basic facts that bin Laden was found in Pakistan was very shocking. He was a declared terrorist and the most wanted man on the face of the earth. How come it is possible that he is found residing in the most peaceful city? The shock and shame were felt jointly throughout the national news media and in almost every news room. He was found in a city and an area where a bird cannot fly without permission. The public wanted to know how he managed to sneak in, get settled over there and for long he was living there? Also, what happened on that night in that compound?' – *Mike, city reporter, Express Tribune, 09.08.2016*

> *Notes on non-verbal evidence: Even though we inside the committee room for interview, the participant was shaking and was looking here and there just to make sure that no one is listening.*

As explained in previous paragraphs, the area where this event happened was totally inaccessible to news media. The journalists wanted to know the details of the operation and issues associated with the presence of bin Laden in this place, but there was an information blockade. Even his family was out of bounds, and no one was allowed to see or talk to his family. The news media wanted to know what was the role of the family and how they managed to remain safe in this high level of military operation?

Participant Tom, recorded his response,

> 'The helicopter raid by American Marines was a big surprise, as was the presence of bin Laden in Pakistan. It was hard to believe how a nuclear power that consumes more than eighty percent of his budget on buying the latest weapons and equipment failed to detect and stop invading helicopters. They claimed to have come down at midnight, have carried out the killing operation for about half an hour and left unchecked, while taking away the dead corpse of bin Laden.' – *Tom, city reporter, daily Aaj, 29.07.2016*

> *Notes on non-verbal evidence: Despite closed-door talking, the participant still looked too worried and wanted to finish in haste.*

The participants added that the bin Laden killing was a surprise, but equally shocking was the nature of the operation. The American authorities claimed to have conducted the operation on their own without informing Pakistani authorities. The news media wanted to know the response of the authorities and the full circumstances of the operation, but no one was available to comment. The participants showed their frustration at the facts not being brought forward because of the breakdown of information from the people at the helm of affairs. The participants were not happy at the presence of bin Laden but they could not defend themselves against the global onslaught because of lack of authentic information.

144

Participant Sam argued;

> 'The nature of the operation was controversial but the authorities have clipped off our wings and we could not do anything because news media was totally disconnected from the scene. He said that the news media was aware that there is some sort of arrangement between the US and Pakistani authorities in border regions where the drone strikes are done but this operation was done deep inside Pakistan and the news media wanted to know the details of the operation.' – *Sam, resident editor, daily Nawai-Waqt, 28.07.2016*
>
> *Non-verbal evidence: Looking on one side always, and most of the time did not maintain eye contact while talking.*

The mysterious nature of the American commando operation led to a lot of confusion in the news media about the delimiting of news media from issues of policy interest. The operation demonstrated that the news media is kept outside the issues of strategic interest and ideology. News media cannot argue or inquire about issues where the military is involved in Pakistan. The debates about military spending have remained outside the public debate in Pakistan, which is why facts remain hidden from the news media and from the public. The news media wanted to know how the chief of Al-Qaeda entered the garrison city and for how long he was living there, but no one came forward to explain. Moreover, bin Laden was not an ordinary person but the leader of Al-Qaeda, so the news media wanted to know if he was living there alone or whether he was running his terror outfit from his compound. These are all questions of public interest, but the news media could not explore them due to the breakdown of information.

Participant Romeo shared his views in these words;

> 'This was the most important event of my journalistic career. I used all my resources and contacts to remain in the loop and to get in touch with every single contact that I had. I was trying my best to know more, as information was coming out very slowly and the whole world wanted to know more. This was an exceptional news story and journalists from the whole world were flocking towards Abbottabad in great number. it was very sudden and never expected; uncertainty was everywhere and this fact makes it unique. Everyone was caught in disbelief and only reliable and authentic information could help in taking the journalists and the public out of this situation.' – *Romeo, city reporter, The Statesman, 24.07.2016*
>
> *Non-verbal evidence: Too much waving of hands, eyes wide opened as when someone exclaims and shows surprise*

The interviews with the participants opens up debates about how information is kept under tight control and far away from news media unless the authorities want to release it. For the news media, it was a big surprise, yet they were only allowed nearer to the site of the killing by the authorities who wished to be seen to have a media event. The journalists could not go deep into the facts due to the restrictions on their movement and the bar on information from the top. It remained a topic of discussion and analysis for weeks and months to come, but the facts remained hidden from the public because the news media could not get anything more other than the address of the compound where bin Laden had been living. Participant Alpha commented about the coverage of the killing event in these words:

> 'Bin Laden was killed on Pakistani soil, which was a failure for us. He was living here for so long, that was bad news. The news media failed to raise these issues because there were invisible pressures which were felt by everyone. Sometimes, you have to give preference to your national interest over journalism. This is a set trend throughout the world and that's what the majority of national news media outlets have done here. They did this to save the image of their country and their defence forces.' – *Alpha, resident editor, daily Jang (Urdu), 27.07.2016*

> *Notes on non-verbal evidence: Shrugging his shoulders, off and on, just to demonstrate through his actions that journalists are becoming irrelevant*

Some of the participants were of the opinion that there were not always defined red lines and that, in some obvious cases, the journalists had to sacrifice factual news for the sake of ideological reasons. The news media understood that the presence of bin Laden gave a bad image to Pakistan so, instead of doing more harm, the news media did not dig deeper to help to calm down the situation. They were reminded that this event raised questions about Pakistan's national interest, which it was expected the news media would respect.

6.6 How have these practices affected journalism in Pakistan?

The cap on information that is linked to strategic issues seriously undermines the capabilities of journalists to produce quality news reporting in Pakistan. In times of crisis, wars and conflicts, the movement of journalists is severely restricted as we have seen inside the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016; this discourages them from working on important issues of public interest. The journalists in Pakistan wanted to debate critical issues and they wanted to involve the public in decision making about issues of a serious nature, but they were

denied access. Such a situation was regarded as not good for the overall wellbeing of society, and the nation state as well, by senior participants.

On a global level, the international news media and Pakistani news media remained focused on the war on terror and the associated issues, such as threats and security, after the event known as 9/11. That approach made the news media a subterfuge under the dominant narratives and other equally important issues worthy of attention were side lined (Lewis 2012). The news media in Pakistan was not an exception, and it could not highlight genuine issues faced by the public. About five million people stuck in the FATA conflict zone suffered a great deal and were unable to access news media, due to the conflict zone being controlled by the militants. News media failed to produce news based on facts verified from independent sources about the situation on the ground.

Due to the lack of a clear view of the situation in the FATA, the authorities failed to check the expansion of the Taliban, which increased its influence across the whole of the region. Due to the absence of the news media, the authorities lacked a clear understanding of the different dynamics of the conflict theatre, which let the Taliban establish its reign of terror. The public suffered because they were stranded there under the tyranny and abuse of the Taliban for a decade.

The participants in the interviews described how the Taliban banned the movement of news media across the conflict zone, which brought news media activities to a standstill. When the Taliban wished to announce updates about local developments, they would provide information and their reactions to events through their spokesman, but the journalists could not approach them or visit locations to see things with their own eyes. The participants believed that the Taliban contacted journalists with the aim of channelling its propaganda through news media, to spread awareness of their message of terror. The participants all believed that these practices contaminated the field of journalism, so that no one believed that the news media could function independently throughout the period under study. The news media failed to perform its watchdog function of informing the public about the real issues on the ground.

Participant Matt expressed these views:

'We have given too much focus to terrorism, these emergencies and all those things that affect public psychology. We are receiving regular complaints from people and fellow journalists that some very genuine problems are not paid any heed. Due to security issues and the risks associated with reporting in the field, instead of offering

147

active support and facilitation, owners of news media houses discourage investigate reporting. They have diverted their energies towards political reporting and other beats. As a result, we do not see any professional journalists in the field in the conflict zone. The word journalism has ceased to exist in the conflict zone and almost all of the professional journalists have fled this area. The same is the case with the Khyber province – either you have to play safe or face the same music. They have either quit this profession completely or have shifted to other parts of the country.' – *Mike, city reporter, Express Tribune, 09.08.2016*

Notes on non-verbal evidence: He was avoiding eye contact and talking and moving his head in any direction. Quite worried, and sad as well, at the state of journalism

Participant Romeo commented:

'Although news media is getting better in terms of an improved environment, created due to the increased number of private television channels, it has to start journeying towards maturity. There is still a lot of work to do as the reliance on advertisements for survival and commercialisation have pulled it towards sensationalist and opportunist journalism. The political and commercial interests of the owners have marginalised the need for professional news reporting.' – *Rom, director news, wire services Online, 10.08.2016*

The participants contended that the Pakistan news media coverage of the country as a whole, and specifically in its coverage of the FATA, was corporate in nature and its first priority was to safeguard its commercial interests. Other researchers in the field, such as Ashraf and Brooten (Ashraf and Brooten 2017), have also identified this factor and said that the news media reporting of issues from the FATA needs to be seen from the political-economy perspective. This it taken to mean that, for the media ownership, the journalists did not matter and neither did the end product of news. The owners were concerned with financial security and customer ratings, which were based on the important stories. They did not take into account the point of view of the professional obligations and responsibilities of a journalist. The journalists were not supported if difficulties arose, and they were left to deal with the issues on their own. However, they were asked to bring scoops and any news that was exclusive.

Participant Mike, in his comments on the effects of news media's approach to journalistic standards, said:

'Nowadays, the future of journalism and practising journalism in Pakistan in a professional way has become too difficult. This is because the youngsters are too shy to play an active role. I am saying this because I was working on a news story about a recently crashed Pakistani helicopter in Eastern Afghanistan. The Taliban took into their custody all six crew members of the helicopter along with the Russian pilot. I was supposed to talk on that issue later in the evening but gave all the details to a young reporter, and asked him if he wanted to produce a news story with his byline.

He refused to do it because it involved militants and the military. I was shocked at his response and told him that if you want to become a professional you can't be a chooser. I told him about myself, that I had been in the field for twenty-five or so years and had reached this stage because of hard work and struggle. We have seen many ups and downs and now understand our job very well. If you people back out, who is going to come and makes things transparent? We don't need anyone's support now and no one has given us a helping hand but our personal interest and enthusiasm have brought us to this level.' – *Mike, city reporter, Geo News, 06.08.2016*

Notes on non-verbal evidence: Frustration and hopelessness was dripping off his face and very much evident from his body language.

The involvement of the Pakistan military in the affairs of the news media has had severe consequences for the growth of journalism in Pakistan. Due to ideological issues, on one hand, and the sensitivity of issues that perplexed the whole society, on the other, the journalists were in state of stress. The stress arose from uncertainty, because journalists in the FATA do not have access to courts; any actions against journalists have never been given a fair trial in courts (Ashraf 2021). This put the journalists in a precarious situation, and an unending state of fear that has severely affected their capabilities as a journalist. The journalists started to remain aloof from news stories that would involve the Taliban or the Pakistan military.

6.7 Technology as pressure on news media

The power of technology can backfire if it goes into wrong hands that use it irresponsibly (Aly et al. 2016). Although the world celebrated the advances made in news media technologies, it forgot that it could be used by the Taliban against the world. Examples of this are recent trends of using social media; You Tube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have been used for violent propaganda and preaching to incite youngsters to commit terror attacks.

And that is not all; this research project has explored whether the Taliban used its influence to get access to the Habermasian (1974) public sphere, and used the technology to channel its messages to the public. The news media and journalists paid a price for this advanced technology being in the hands of the Taliban during the war on terror. The Taliban made best use of this technology, as they not only monitored news media and journalists working in the conflict zone but also used it to disseminate their messages. They used social media for their propaganda and used news media to communicate to like-minded people about their future plans. They kept an eye on the online versions of news media outlets and

tried to locate all the journalists who were working in the field in the FATA. This project has demonstrated that Habermas' concept of a global public sphere (1974) was challenged by the Taliban.

The Taliban were well informed about all the political developments and news media activities inside the FATA. This is how they knew the affiliations of different journalists and also the points of view of different political parties. In short, they were very well aware of the entire situation on the ground. It was easy for them to contact anyone who had published a news report about the FATA and who worked for news media organisations. That is how they were able to begin to harass journalists with threats and intimidation, in order to persuade them to include the Taliban's version of the story in news reports.

Participant Mike said that he had been contacted by a Taliban commander when he was trying to collect information for news items, soon after the killing of bin Laden. He said:

> 'I was trying to talk to people in the neighbourhood where bin Laden was allegedly killed when I received a phone call from a Taliban commander. He confirmed this to me before starting the interrogation and giving his opinion about the killing of bin Laden. He told me that he had heard me on television when I was sharing my views and listening to that he decided that he was going to contact me to give his opinion about the killing event.' – *Mike, correspondent, Express News, 04.08. 2016*

> *Notes on non-verbal evidence: Preference to talk in isolation, and strictly no photography or any identity disclosure.*

Participant Jon expressed his opinion on the use of technology by the Taliban;

> 'The Taliban know who we are, where we work and for who we work. They monitor our activities and know how to approach us. I received a call one day from a guy calling himself from within the Taliban. He threatened me that they are keeping eye on my news stories and they know how many people are there in my family and where I live.' – *Jon, senior reporter, daily The News, 27.07.2016*

> *Notes on non-verbal evidence: Trying to avoid talking that deals Taliban and state institutions, and insistence on keeping his comments strictly confidential. There was too much hesitation and the fear factor.*

The participants confirmed that the Taliban were exploiting technology in multiple ways. There was a need for a full counter-terrorism cyber network at government level to tackle this issue. The Taliban incited their followers online to commit attacks and use social media for propaganda. They were successful most of the time because they could use fake accounts and fake identities to remain hidden.

The participants further recounted that, within the Taliban's territory, the use of FM radio was the most common and convenient way to rally support among local people who were illiterate, and social media was also a popular channel to use for their propaganda messages to reach qualified people.

Participant Siara, while sharing his views about the Taliban monitoring, contended:

'They have been keeping a close eye on me and my work. I cannot hide myself and neither can the rest of my colleagues who work in the conflict zone. They know everything about us, where we live and where our offices are. I was in Kabul last year and the Afghan Taliban attacked my house over there. They even knew that I had gone there. They got the full information about my work hours and the job.' – *Siara, resident editor, The News, 25.07.2016*

Notes on non-verbal evidence: Deep breaths and voice break-ups. Fear and scary situation overwhelmed.

Participant Alfie added that journalists were sandwiched between the military and the militants. He was referring to an incident when the militants attacked the Army public school in Peshawar:

'I received a call from an unknown caller exactly at the time when the militants had taken over the school and started killing innocent children. I did not notice the call as we were busy covering the incident and it was too loud out there. Another of my friends received a call from an unknown caller at that time but he attended the call. It was from Afghanistan and his call was traced by the intelligence authorities. He is still under investigation from the authorities about the nature of that call and the source of his contact. I was lucky enough to have missed that call otherwise I would need to explain my position as well. Whereas I had never known who that caller was and neither had I any contacts in Afghanistan.' – *Alfie, resident editor, daily Dawn, 04.08.2016*

Notes on non-verbal evidence: Feared and worrisome. No regularity in talking, intermittent breaks and avoidance of eye contact.

6.8 Conclusion

My examination informs us about evidence about the multi-layered pressures upon journalists in the field that made it almost impossible for them to work independently and report on the factual situation on the ground. As a consequence, professional journalism ceased to exist and important information was lost. Whatever was published about the conflict zone in the news media was more or less prescribed, by either the Taliban or the official sources (security authorities and Pakistan military). To put it bluntly, the standard of journalism plummeted due to the pressures imposed upon journalists; they had to compromise professional ethics in order to save their lives and those of their families. The environment was so volatile and

vulnerable for journalists that, even if a reporter was not personally threatened by the Taliban, they would engage in self-censorship, in view of the hostility that their work could attract from any one of the parties in the field. This was the state of the working environment of the news media in the FATA, where the journalists were stuck between the rock and a hard place; because of these restrictions, they could not fulfil the news values to produce balanced news reports.

The interview evidence outlined in this chapter illustrates how, due to this movement ban, the news media lost track of developments inside the FATA and had no idea what was going on in that area. The interviewees outline how the militants would pass to the news media the news that they wanted to share, with the information that contained only their version of a particular event in the conflict zone. The journalists could not initiate contact with them – the Taliban would contact particular journalists who they knew were working in the conflict zone. In view of the dangers, the majority of professional journalists left the conflict zone and fled to other parts of the country, while some quit the field of journalism altogether.

Journalism in the FATA in Pakistan is very different to journalism in the rest of the world or war journalism previously studied. The investigations that I have carried out have produced evidence that will be a valuable contribution to the field of war journalism. The news media research revolves mainly around the western perception of the global news media based on the democratic values and liberty in news reporting, but my research informs that the Taliban have challenged the foundations of global news media and consider themselves equal shareholders in the public space. This is the challenge to the established patterns of news reporting and, because of the conflict that emerged between the two, the journalists of FATA had to suffer. In the early stages of the war on terror, in 2002, the journalists did not experience too many restrictions and were able to visit the location of most events, such as drone strikes. However, with the passage of time, circumstances changed totally; from 2004, the Taliban established complete control over the conflict zone of the FATA and imposed a total ban on the movement of journalists.

The job of the news media is to provide information to the public to enable them to make informed decision about their future (Cottle et al. 2016). For this to happen, news media should have unhindered access everywhere, so that each and every segment of society can be at the same level in terms of democratic involvement and institution building. The

journalists working in the FATA felt frustrated that they were not allowed to practise their profession independently in the field to report factual reports about the conflict situation. Those who covered news events in the field were told to cover bomb blasts and suicide bombings targeted at mosques, schools and markets, and they were equally disturbed about the situation for the people dealing with the aftermath of the deaths and casualties. The participants informed that the majority of the field journalists who covered stories out in the field during the war on terror 2002-2016 were experiencing continuous shock and grief and had developed psychological problems. Their minds could not leave behind the experience of being at the scene of death and destruction at the hands of suicide bombers. They put their lives in danger to witness these drastic circumstances for the sake of their profession, but despite that, they still failed to report all the events inside the FATA from the point of view of the eye of the journalist. They would be prescribed which news reports to report and publish without being able to visit scenes, see witnesses or cross examine people about the events.

For journalists working in the FATA, the evidence from their interviews is that they failed to produce quality news during the war on terror and instead had to forward whatever information was provided to them by either the Taliban or the Pakistan military. This had serious repercussions for news gathering and news reporting, in the sense that the Habermasian (1974) public sphere was challenged in FATA. The conflict originated because the news media was looking at things from the global perspective and the inherent issues of poverty, lawlessness and militancy could only be resolved through a joint approach of all human beings collectively. For this to happen, the miseries, inequalities, gender biases, discrimination of colour and race needed to be eliminated. The issues needed to be seen with one standard and conflicts needed to be resolved through dialogue and rational debate in a democratic system. But the Taliban rejected these ideas and came up with allegations that the news media were in allegiance with western militaries. Professional journalists left the region because of the risks and dangers associated with war reporting in the FATA. They had to compromise the standard of their work for the sake of themselves and their families, so an important role of the news media, of great public interest, was lost.

Chapter Seven

What Does it all Mean:
Significance of Findings and Where to Next?

7.1. Introduction

This PhD study provides insight into the struggle of journalists for independent news reporting during the war on terror 2002-2016, and the challenges they faced inside the FATA when they were gathering news. This chapter picks out the most significant implications of the evidence outlined in Chapters Five and Six and discusses what they mean for the relevant strands of academic debate, for decision makers in public and private sector organisations and for institutions concerned about the relationship between independent journalism, accuracy of information, human rights and democratic freedoms. The evidence discovered, analysed and presented demonstrates the importance of news media access to gather information about events and issues on the ground, and the consequences for news making and also for the progress of society as a whole when news media is not allowed to inform independently so that people can develop their own opinions on issues.

Most academic and general understanding of news values and news production is that they depend on a society that is based on democratic ideals and institutions and where both the journalists and the public have access to a justice system. My examination for this study informs us that the FATA lacked a fully functioning justice system, which was one important reason why the journalists suffered and could not work independently to produce balanced news reports about the developments inside the FATA during the reign of the Taliban, who held hostage five million people for almost 15 years (2002-2016).

News media research has so far mainly dealt with the official influences over news media from the political-economy and the sociology of news perspective (Carruthers 2011;

Miller and Sabir 2012; Lynch 2013; Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014). In that vein, the journalists remained under one-way continuous pressure at the micro, meso and macro level from influences affecting their independent way of news making. However, my research informs about the involvement of a new force that was equally influential and made an entry into the public sphere for the first time: the Taliban. The Taliban restricted the movement of journalists inside the FATA, intentionally discouraging independent news reporting so that the news media was forced to file the Taliban's version of the facts about developments inside the FATA. On the other side were the Pakistan military, who kept the news media on a tight leash to keep it away from covering critically important issues. This is how the journalists working in the FATA were squeezed from both sides, which greatly influenced independent news reporting inside the FATA, intentionally and unintentionally, in the recent conflict of the war on terror (2002-2016).

News media scholars (such as (Lee 2001; Kellner 2007, 2009; Gadarian 2010; Lewis 2012) have remained critical of the involvement and roles of respective governments in the affairs of the news media, which they see as a tool to carve out their political and foreign policy interests.

7.2 Evidence summary

7.2.1 Significance of interviews evidence

In this section, I will elaborate on the significance of issues that were raised in the interview findings and their importance for the field of news media research. My interview findings have informed for the first time about new types of restrictions that were used by the Taliban and the Pakistan military in the field of news media reporting, the ways by which they attempted to influence (and succeeded in influencing) journalists in the field (during the war on terror inside FATA 2002-2016) when they sought to gather news, and the consequences of those pressures and influences for news media reporting.

This research has recorded detailed examples with information about new forms of pressures upon journalists who were not allowed to gather and report news about the developments inside the FATA independently, so that most of the information came through either the Taliban or the Pakistan military. My interviews with the journalists have informed about the intended and direct pressures upon journalists in the field during the crisis. The consequences of those pressures proved fatal for independent news reporting; instead of the issues being reported independently and in a balanced way, they were manipulated by both

the Taliban and Pakistan military to suit their interests. In this way, the world has lost an important opportunity of the public interest being served.

The main question that was developed to help shape my research dealt with the problems that the journalists faced on the ground inside the FATA when they were gathering news, and how the situation affected their performance:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): what techniques, constraints and pressures (intended and unintended) influenced news gathering in the FATA during the so-called war on terror 2002-2016?

Overall, the responses to the interviews illustrated how the whole environment inside the FATA was challenging, due to the effect of the Taliban presence on the law and order situation and the lack of a judicial system and access to courts. However, the journalists were mainly at risk because they sought to carry out news reporting of issues and events. News media access to report on core issues is vital for the development of institutions in any society, but it can be ensured through the dispensation of democratic culture as stated in (Cottle et al. 2016). As they and McQuail (1992) suggest, for news media to play an active participatory role in the democratic process and progress through dialogue, debate and criticism, it is important that a society has well-established democratic institutions. The FATA lacked a well-established civilian administrative set-up, which brought it directly into Pakistan military control (outside of the access of courts), which is why the Taliban could not be effectively held accountable for its denial of independent news media access, resulting in a detrimental effect on the overall wellbeing of the whole society and the suffering of the journalists.

Referring back to RQ1, which deals with the identification of techniques, influences and constraints that affected independent news reporting by journalists inside the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016, the evidence suggests that the Taliban presence and challenge to news gathering and the process of news making at the ground level meant that independent journalistic activity was not possible. It was not possible for the journalists to verify or authenticate any news reports because of the Taliban's total ban on their movement. On one side of the seesaw, the Taliban presence was at the ground level, while the Pakistan military were inside the conflict zone in the war on terror. The Taliban would not allow journalists to enter the FATA or move around independently, and the activities of the Taliban gave an opportunity to the Pakistan military to impose more stringent restrictions in the

region. The journalists had no sources to verify the news that came from the military authorities, because the military shared its news through its media wing (ISPR).

7.2.2 Significance of news content evidence and analysis

In this section, I outline the significance of the indirect pressures on news media, through discussing the analysis carried out into the content of newspapers and the relevance of the findings to the broader understandings of news media issues. My analysis informs that the news media worked within multi-level pressures when in the field, and became dependent on providers of information because of the restrictions imposed on its access to vital information. The respective forces on the ground did not allow the news media to operate independently in the field, which hindered news media capabilities. Due to the ban imposed on the journalists's movement in the FATA during 2002-2016, as illustrated in this study's findings, reporters had to depend on official sources for information; because of that, they could not produce balanced reports about the situation by witnessing events themselves.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What were the consequences of those techniques, constraints and pressures for the ways in which the news media reported issues?

The importance of international news reporting has increased in recent years, drawing the attention of households towards the troubled regions of the world because of the focus on the issues of terrorism and threat. The discussion and debate about whether technological innovations may have changed and increased the interest of news consumers in news from faraway places across the world, by bringing events closer, holds credence (Willis 2007; Herman and Chomsky 2010; Freedman and Thussu 2011; Zelizer and Allan 2011).

However, my findings (Chapter Five) inform that on the part of the corporate news media to maintain the interest of the news consumer is the continuation of the traditional way of news reporting by looking at conflict regions as 'others'. In the case of the FATA, even though, it is part of Pakistan, its corporate news media and dominant global news media narratives were similar. Most of the news would arrive through the official sources providing information, while the senior correspondents were stationed in the capital cities filing news stories about the FATA with their by-lines. Chapter Five included data showing that official sources were the main sources for information throughout all the publications under examination. Despite the origin of the news being events in the FATA, the news stories were published distantly without the verification of information on the ground being ascertained.

This was especially the case in the FATA, because of the Taliban presence there and the way in which they imposed restrictions on the movement of journalists.

War journalism scholars argue that producing balanced news report that have divergent views from all the parties concerned during conflicts has remained a challenge (Murrell 2014; Paterson 2014; Owen 2016), but this project has verified that the lack of support from news media employers or the Pakistani government has made the job of the news reporter inside the FATA very difficult. This was not only because of the dangers posed by the Taliban; a case in point is the news media coverage of drone strikes, which was seen by both the Taliban and security agencies to be sensitive. The news media would show a target area hit by a drone and report on the number of casualties as a result of the attack. The news reports included information about such attacks being a success, and being a blow to the Taliban. However, access to the areas hit by drone strikes was not possible and neither was the verification of the details, because of the distance and the time it would take to get there to verify the facts from independent sources. The drone attacks were carried out deep inside the conflict zone of the FATA, where traditional armies could not approach. In practice, only the Taliban and Pakistani authorities had access to the drone strikes, and they would know the exact location of the strikes and the number and the exact nature of the casualties. The Pakistani authorities were very sensitive about these stories, which they always found difficult to deal with.

This was one of the issues that put the lives of the journalists in danger; a range of evidence was outlined in Chapter Six which showed that journalists felt that the impact of such factors as fear of harm and concern for their families had been ignored; as a result, this failure to understand their behaviour led to broader misunderstanding about the consequences for the credibility of news reporting over that period of time. Why fish in the hard water? Society has many newsworthy issues such as poverty, ethical issues, social issues, clean water, racism, gender issues, political problems, educational problems (I could add more), so reporters considered: why not contribute and offer insight into those areas instead of taking extreme risks?

On the basis of the research that this study has carried out, the news media reporting of the conflict situation in the FATA during 2002-2016 was one-sided and lacked balance. The news media was not aware of serious problems faced by the public, such as no access to education and hospitals and many other social issues inside the FATA. The news media could

not bring forward to the world the real developments going on inside the FATA and merely focused on the political elite definition of the conflict situation, which gave the Taliban a chance to assert their position in public. The journalists complained that, because of the lack of access to the FATA, the authorities in Pakistan could not understand the strategic and tactical plans of the Taliban and so could not devise any clear strategy, which in turn allowed the Taliban to gain control of the whole conflict zone. With the passage of time, they totally banned the movement of journalists across their territory. Initially, in 2002, the journalists could visit the FATA to report events, but circumstances completely changed. With the realisation of the importance of news media for the public, the FATA was completely cut off by the Taliban, which started to bring in social control through FM radios broadcasts that would debate the government policies. In some ways, the radio service also turned out to be the source of news for news media because of the Taliban's policy statements through FM radio broadcasts.

In the meantime, the corporate news media remained too focused on the traditional themes of Al-Qaeda, terrorism and threats. Equally deserving issues, such as the humanitarian aspects of life, the state of people's lives under Taliban rule, the death of innocent people as a result of raids, the details of military operations, and the public's loss of a range of educational and health services, were not part of the public debate.

The evidence in my research (Chapters Five) demonstrates how news media priorities changed from important issues of public concerns to those defined by the powerful. Lynch (2013) claims that factual news is compromised for the sake of self-interest, but my project demonstrates that in fact, power defined what was to be published and what not. Due to the lack of access for news media in the FATA, the political elite found an opportunity to define the crisis situation to suit its interest, whereas the facts about the conflict situation on the ground remained hidden from the eyes of the world. It is natural for news media to come under pressure from the respective military authorities involved in any particular conflict (Zelizer and Allan 2011). However, this project has informed that the Pakistan military was only one side of the seesaw, while another influential force, the Taliban, held the other side of the power balance. As a consequence, independent news reporting was the fatality.

In the context of this research and the situation in Pakistan at the time, the relationship between the news media and the military has never been cordial, due to the need of the news media to understand events on the ground during the conflict situation and the desire of the

military to keep the news media as far away as possible from issues of national security and strategic interest. But the circumstances for working journalists in the conflict zone (the FATA) were much more difficult than in other similar conflicts because they were stuck between the two different forces; the Taliban and the Pakistan military.

This research is the first to point out the existence of an alternate force to the existing influences that have manipulated news gathering and news reporting so far, an alternate force that has challenged the sphere of public space by the use of brute force instead of consensus or democratic tradition of opinion making. The debates today about news media reporting culture can be traced back to the political developments in the 1970s, which have been the subject of scholarly research in communication studies in western universities. This research work, and the scholars who were associated with it, argued about the social control of the press, but this schema of media imperialism was the contribution by scholars who debated about culture and media imperialism. The difficulty that I have outlined in Chapter Two section 2.1 is that those theories were introduced in the context of western standards of society and democracy, which have failed due to inadequacies in third world societies. The evidence in Chapter Six showed that, when journalists performed their roles drawing on western standards of democracy and democratic ideals, the usual news gathering processes broke down.

Coming back to the second research question, the consequences of the pressures and factors that have been explored include assessment of what important information, worthy of public interest, was not reported from the war zone, including the effects on women, children and older people; the effects on standards of journalism (such as using prescribed information sources rather than independent journalistic reporting and eye-witness accounts); and the effects on the journalists themselves (such as their lack of security or frustration) – these been documented in Chapters Five and Six. One of the important aspects of my research that came to the surface is the role that the corporate news media plays during conflicts. News consumers are kept engaged by war reporting but, as I have demonstrated, on the ground, there were no professional reporters and the job of news gathering was done through the taxi drivers, shopkeepers or any fixers who could speak the native language.

One aspect of RQ2 is that the consequences of those techniques, constraints and pressures for the journalists and overall news making process inside the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016 included how the journalists suffered because they failed to understand

the sensitivities of the parties involved, because they were interpreting events from the westernised perspective of equality, liberty and modernity. The journalists had no access to citizens living in the FATA, to witness their side of the story or their suffering. Because of the news media blackout, the area was technically cut off from the rest of the world and the people living there had to suffer at the hands of the Taliban. The Taliban had access to technology; this project has revealed that the power of technology was not the news gathering success that is sometimes assumed, because it backfired in this case.

I will now draw together a brief outline of evidence relevant to RQ3:

Research Question 3: What were the responses of the journalists and the news media?

The evidence has significance in terms of consequences over the field of journalism in conflict-hit areas and the state of independent news reporting in countries like Pakistan. It is important to mention here that, as a result of pressures from the Taliban and the Pakistan military, the interview evidence has shown that the journalists were left alone to face the hardships and challenges and were not backed up for the common cause of independent reporting. The journalists were struggling for a modern society based on democratic culture and they became targets. Eventually, they had to succumb to pressures and had to compromise on the quality of news, forwarding only what was prescribed to them. The media ownership would ask them to bring exclusives but would not support the journalists even if they got into trouble because of the very news reports that the news reporter had filed in that very publication. They started to remind journalists to stay away from seeking to produce what they said would bringing harm.

The news media in Pakistan survives on advertisements and also government endowment funds due to their favourable news coverage in times of crisis. If we consider the state of affairs of news media in Pakistan from the political-economy perspectives, the news media has to keep connections with the political elite in order to survive. My research acknowledges Herman and Chomsky's (Herman and Chomsky 2010) 'Manufacturing Consent' with its 'Propaganda Model' based on the political-economy approach, because news media has disowned journalists under the pressure, when it comes to their political and economic interest. It also had to involve itself in self-censorship by not filing important information worthy of public interest.

RQ3 deals with the response of the journalists and news media to these pressures, and the investigations carried out have found that journalists and ownership had to bow down and

compromise on the quality of news. The reason for this was concerns about their own safety and that of their families. The fear factor played important role, as it was widely believed within the journalistic community that Taliban were present within the media and knew everything about who was working against them. The issue was the uncertain nature of the conflict, And the journalists were certain when they shared their views in interviews (Chapter Six) that the Taliban had the knowledge of every action of theirs. This created in them in a state of permanent fear.

7.3. Contribution of this research in the field of news media

The recent conflict of the so-called war on terror in the FATA 2002-2016 has produced lessons in terms of the challenges that the journalists had to face while gathering news during the conflicts. The journalists suffered at the hands of Taliban; during their attempt to establish their reign by force in the FATA, they intervened in the affairs of the news media not only by denying it access but also through physical and psychological pressures on journalists to publish favourable news reports. Different kinds of pressures (intended and unintended) were enacted upon the journalists in the FATA, all directed towards how the end news product was manufactured. However, the state of affairs prevalent in the FATA had consequences for professional journalism, which ceased to exist altogether. The journalists whose beat was assigned to the FATA or who hailed from the FATA had to flee the area due to the threats to their lives and their families from the Taliban because of their news reporting. Journalists were too scared to report anything dealing with the conflict due to the worryingly high rate of killings, abductions and similar threats faced by the journalists.

Keeping in view the state of affairs for news media activities inside the FATA, there arises the question of the public space and the share of power brokers. This research explored the interpretation of the conflict in the FATA as a contest for public space between the two power brokers: the Taliban and the Pakistan military. However, the onus of loss fell on the heads of journalists, who suffered extensively in the tussle, just because they were fighting for independent news reporting. This is the contribution of my research; I provide evidence for the first time about a rival power not seen before, challenging the one-sided communication order. Other news media research deals with the influences upon news media to an extent, but their analysis need to be seen from the western perspective of democracy and freedom of speech. Those are the concepts that the Taliban does not believe in, and that

is why the journalists were the target. The response of the corporate news media is interesting, because they would ask the journalists to bring exclusives but would not back them up in the cases where issues arose. The journalists would be left alone to deal with them.

For that reason, some ideas appear consistently when news stories represent the FATA, which can be seen in practice in the corporate news media and also in the quality broadsheets in Pakistan, in addition to what Said (2008) called 'Othering'. The particular approach to representing the FATA and its people has geo-political ramifications which, in effect, are exploited for foreign policy and security matters, as theorised by critical news media scholars studying the ways in which the whole third world is represented (Richardson 2004; Macdonald 2006; Powell 2011; Dolliver et al. 2018; Kearns and Muir 2019). My Chapter Five content evidence and analysis illustrates that themes of terrorism, terrorists, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, killings and militancy appeared when there was any incident, irrespective of the nature of the event and even before the act was verified as a terrorism incident or not. Focus on women's bodies (Richardson 2004) and theories associated with the oppression of women by the Taliban led to the thinking that these women needed to be liberated from the tyranny of the Taliban, which the news media made the focal point of the invasion of Afghanistan (Khiabany and Williamson 2008). With all these ideas present in the content of the publications, news events were measured in terms of security matters and foreign policy success, but my research suggests that the key point is about the authenticity and verification of the news reports that originated in the FATA. The main sources of information turned out to be the official ones, and the stories would appear from datelines Islamabad, New York, London or Kabul.

The research examines in detail the options that journalists had to deal with those pressures (while balancing them with protecting their lives and those of their families) and also how representatives of news media outlets responded. My evidence in Chapter Six demonstrates that the journalists had to compromise the standard and quality of their work and bow down.

7.4. Significance of evidence for relevant strands of scholarship

Paul Manning (2001, p. 17) and Cottle et al. (2016) commenting about Habermas' concept of the normative public sphere (1974) state that news media's role is to provide information and support to strengthen institutions in a society through rational argumentation, participation,

checks on human rights and equality and participation (McQuail 1992; Cottle et al. 2016). Journalists in the FATA during the war on terror 2002-2016 (Chapters Five and Six) were looking at developments from the perspective of 21st century democratic standards and how FATA could be a part of global civil society so that rule of law was established and issues were resolved in a peaceful manner through rational argument and public debate instead of use of force. FATA remained in the spotlight of international news media with flashy headlines and scoops about Taliban and military operations covered in hard news stories, but the challenge to achieve a democratic society grew stronger. Although the norms of a democratic society were being challenged, this was not reported to the same extent as the military coverage. International news media focus on this region continued throughout (Freedman and Thussu 2011; Lewis et al. 2011; Lewis 2012; Kellner 2015). The research findings inform (Chapter Five and Six) about the challenges to the Habermas 'global public sphere' (Chapter Two) and the consequences of this conflict for the quality of news.

Justin Lewis (2012) contends that the increased focus of the news media on issues associated with terrorism and threats of terrorism is speculative in nature and is not the factual representation of the situation on the ground. These issues find space in the news media because the political elites and the authorities repetitively mention them in their statements. Lewis (2012) claims that, in peacetime, these matters would not have such an impact on news consumers, but because they are connected with threats and national security, and because the public turns towards news media and the political elite for guidance at times of conflict, they become very appealing to news consumers.

Thussu and Freedman (2011) argue about a similar trend of the focus of news media on issues of conflicts and terrorism, but they view technology as a helping hand, enabling the political elite to establish their narrative. As the evidence presented demonstrates, the journalists in the FATA understood the importance of technology in the field of news media, so that news about the FATA was shared on the global news media even before the news media or even the authorities in Pakistan had any idea of what had actually happened. Most of the time, Pakistani news media came to know about any event in the FATA through the global news media when they would telecast an event live, such as the press conference by President Obama on 2 May 2011, who announced the death of bin Laden in a successful killing operation conducted by US Marines deep inside Pakistan.

However, Shoemaker and Reese (2013) describe how the political elite have a number of ways to exert influence over the news media to define issues during conflicts. They further contend that the news media always works under pressure in any environment where they operate, and cannot resist the trend of politics in any particular society. They cannot resist the views of the majority for too long, due to survival issues; they have to accommodate the views of the dominant political elite at that particular time. After the events known as 9/11 and the invasion of Afghanistan (2001), as a consequence, news about the war on terror and the US/NATO campaign to eradicate terrorism have remained the dominant political narratives and almost the prime focus of Pakistani news media over these issues. My research study investigates whether, inside the FATA, the veracity of events relevant to the war on terror 2002-2016 have been possible for any news media to investigate or challenge. As I demonstrated in Chapter Six, the FATA was inaccessible from outside and the Taliban secured not only the geographical boundaries but also the communications as well. The findings of the research demonstrate that the facts on the ground could not be explored and the Taliban only allowed information which they wanted to pass through.

Similarly, Boyd-Barrett (2016) argues that the different foreign policy frames used in the global news media, are existential in nature and only change their colour from one form to another. They were used during the Cold War against communism in a different way and then in the war on terror. The common foreign policy frames used historically are 'war on drugs', 'liberation of women' and 'humanitarian intervention' to support US foreign invasions in Mexico (1989), Yugoslavia (1999), Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). However, my research findings suggest that the news media never had access on the ground to observe facts in the FATA, so whatever news was coming out of the FATA lacked balance and any cross-examination by independent sources.

I summarised in Chapter Three (which examined the literature relating to the results of pressures on journalists) the range of studies demonstrating that the news media and communication systems of a nation are led by its national interests around the world (Chang et al. 1987; Schiller et al. 1992; Innis 2007; Herman and Chomsky 2010). Section 1 listed the ways in which the addition of technological advancements in the field of the news media has been a valuable tool.

There is an established connection between the military, the political elite, multi-nationals, business firms and global news media conglomerates, which has helped to establish

dominant international narratives (Chapter Two). However, my outline of interview evidence (Chapter Six, section 6.6) demonstrated that the Taliban were aware of the importance of news media technologies and developed strategies to counter this hegemony. For example, they knew how to use YouTube, Facebook and Instagram to address their audiences and issue policy statements. In particular, they used the channels of the international news media to send their terror messages across the whole globe. The Taliban attempted to use western news media's technological advancements against them.

A key point that this research has illustrated is that all these frames that appeared to dominate after the event of 9/11 constituted a large part of the news media representation of the FATA during 2002-2016. As a result, other deserving issues were disregarded or failed to find news media space during this period. This study has provided clear evidence that the sufferings of the innocent civilians in the FATA during 2002-2016 remained hidden under the debris of the dominant themes of terrorism, terrorists and Al-Qaeda in the news media (Chapter Six, section 6.7). In addition, the legal impact of the drone strikes remained absent from news media, despite much lobbying from Pakistan on all international diplomatic forums.

My interviews with journalists provided eye-witness evidence why those stories were not reported (Chapter Six, section 6.1) and why civilian population deaths caused by raids inside the FATA villages were not reported in the news media. The journalists wrote about them only after 2016, when the Pakistan military cleared the Taliban from the whole of the FATA and the journalists heard people's stories about what they had been through. During the 15 years-long period (2002-2016) of the war on terror investigated by my research study, there was no alternative news media to bring forward these issues, which left mainstream one-sided representations unchallenged while the Taliban strongly disapproved of independent news reporting. The response of journalists during my interviews explained that news media did not dare to publish against the dominant frames because they feared the results. Chapter Two included examples of what they feared – Al-Jazeera television's Kabul bureau was bombed for showing the bodies of dead US soldiers and innocent children and women killed in US military raids (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014).

My Chapter Three review and discussion considered whether news representations about the FATA and other conflict regions were politically motivated, due to the religion of Islam being homogenised to the work of a few terrorists and fundamentalists, denoted by

symbols to identify it from others (Macdonald 2006; Said 2008; Poole and Richardson 2010). It was noted by gathering evidence about the content (Chapter Five) that the FATA was represented in the Pakistani news media (in the same way as by global news media) during the war on terror 2002-2016. Chapters Five and Six in sections 5.5 and section 6.4 outlined evidence that Al-Qaeda and bin Laden were seen in Pakistan as terrorists and a danger for the world. They were held responsible for the killing of innocent civilians in Pakistan and around the world, and they were also held responsible for giving Muslims and Islam a bad name.

Chapter Three section 3.1 summarised a study that has identified the different challenges faced by journalists in the fields of news gathering during conflicts (Armoudian 2016). The journalists face physical challenges from multiple factors, which hindered them from news gathering. Armoudian (2016) also noted in her study that the journalists showed frustration about failing to report news stories on time, despite the current fast despatch rate of live reports due to technological advancements. In her study, she also mentioned the linguistic and cultural challenges faced by war reporters and the lack of sufficient resources to cover the war fronts. I demonstrated in the evidence provided in Chapter Six (section 6.6) that the FATA journalists showed their frustration and their guilt, because they could not help the people of the FATA because of the fear which stopped them from visiting the FATA. Their fear was based on what they had heard and seen about the Taliban's local presence, their knowledge of individual journalists and the threats and reprisals.

The classical study by Paul Manning (2001) provided a detailed analysis of the role of news sources in news making, in terms of how news comes under different influences. My comprehensive study encompasses almost all the sociological and physical effects of sources on news by giving a basic understanding of the role that the Taliban has played and how effective the Taliban as sources have been in news making. My study included eye-witness examples of the ordeal that the war journalists have been through during the war on terror, and specifically focused on the challenges faced by journalists inside the FATA.

One example from the literature review in Chapter Three that was particularly relevant as setting the context for the effects of physical influences on war reporting was (Rehmat 2008), which illustrated well the ordeal of war reporters working in the conflict zone of Pakistan and how they had to deal with a new form of pressure: the invisible Taliban, which they had never experienced before. Rehmat (2008) informed how journalists had to depend on mobile phones to talk to people in order to find out about issues inside the conflict

zone. All these developments were associated with the war on terror and they had affected news making and the quality of news. The situation that has been explained in the previous few lines developed 'news fixing' as a culture during war on terror and it was just not possible to gather or report news in that way before. Both the conflicting parties used news media channels for their publicity and their media campaign. The authorities would give news briefings (Chapter Six) about successful military operations while, on the other hand, the Taliban would deny any such adventures or achievements. It looked like a tug of war between the two and the casualty was the quality of news.

This is the first research project to inform about the details of how the Taliban established their domination in the conflict zone and totally banned the movement of journalists inside the conflict zone. The detailed interviews in Chapter Six provide insights into how and why factual reporting totally collapsed inside the conflict zone due to the presence of the Taliban, with descriptions in section 6.4 of how the news reporters would collect information by telephone, which they could not verify or cross-examine. Rehmat's study (2008) has limitations in terms of methodology and is based on observation and analysis. Moreover, he did not reveal how the militants interacted with the news media or tell us the reasons why the militants banned news media activities. My study has gone a step further, providing evidence in section 6.5 of Chapter Six that the militants wanted to use news media for their own propaganda. They used the channels of the news media to terrorise the public, establish their writ and send their message the world over. They knew how to use news media technology and monitored it closely (as outlined in Chapter Six section 6.7).

In a similar vein, Yusuf et al. (2013) described the state of news media in Pakistan during the conflict of the war on terror. However, her study is a general picture of news media in Pakistan. My study is specific to the war on terror in the FATA, and it has gathered evidence to give a more comprehensive detailed insight into the circumstances that prevented the news media from bringing the real picture of the conflict zone to the world. My study has brought forward evidence about the reasons why the news media failed to study the factual position on the ground during the conflict of the war on terror. The Yusuf et al. (2013) study does not tell us about the purpose of Taliban strict policy towards news media in FATA and its repercussions for news making.

A similar study by Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2014) informed how the Al-Jazeera TV news channel was bombed by the US military in Kabul (Afghanistan) in 2001 (Chapter Three

section 3.5). It became a target because it was showing another side of the war, in opposition to the claims made by NATO and the US military. In a similar fashion, journalists in the FATA have been interrogated and asked to explain their position with regard to their stories by the intelligence agencies. They were asked who gave them information and how they knew these particular sources within the Taliban. In this study, I gathered and presented evidence about how the military prevented the news media from going near events where the military was involved. The evidence and analysis in Chapter Six included case studies of journalists covering the FATA who were abducted, interrogated or chased and who had their activities monitored by authorities. They were not allowed to go to see things with their own eyes. Inside the FATA, in places where the military was posted, they totally blocked the news media. There were physical restrictions in place to stop the news media from accessing scene where events had occurred. There was a total information breakdown and no one was coming forward.

The participants provided information (Chapter Six, section 6.3) that gaining access to information when security agencies and the military were involved was treated as a privilege in Pakistan; that information was given to only limited numbers of journalists, who were in the good books of the authorities. My findings (Chapter Six, section 6.4) informed that every media organisation had reporters who supported the policies of the establishment and provided justification for their actions. They were the only ones who had access to information and they could talk to the authorities about issues or news reports.

The analysis by Miller and Sabir (2012) unearthed the institutional management of news media by the military of the US, UK and Pakistan during the war on terror. The analysis informed that the US/NATO had set up an Office of Global Communications (OGC) in 2002 to keep an eye on information regulation during the war on terror (Chapter Two, section 2.4). The OGC, with offices in Islamabad, London and New York, supplied war news to the news media. In this study, I demonstrated (Chapter Six) that all the information about the war on terror or the conflict zone was shared with the news media by ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations), the media wing of Pakistan's military. There was a complete breakdown in the previous ways of gathering information, as only ISPR would provide updates or any news reports about the conflict zone.

Robinson et al. (2009) argue that, in this way, the institutions of journalism – the supposed guardians of the truth – have dramatically changed in their functioning, and now

carry military propaganda and become key participants in death and destruction (Chapter Three).

7.5 Where to Next?

This research has unearthed a wide range of evidence about the difficulties that the journalists have to deal with the remote corners of the world and informs on the importance of the international action to ensure that the journalists have access to justice. This is because lack of access affects not only journalist but those societies that are disconnected and ultimately, people in the rest of the world. Moreover, it has also brought forward the peculiar nature of communication systems in different parts of the world and the challenges to establish one general standard of news reporting that could be regarded as 'professional' system, although in academia, there is no such differentiation as such.

The evidence in Chapter Six demonstrates the level of stress under which journalists had to work in the FATA. The involvement of the Taliban in the affairs of the news media changed the definition of public sphere and exposed the risks in parts of the world where the ruling elites do not believe in this approach. This research study has demonstrated that in the FATA, over the period of study, news could not be news unless it was approved by the Taliban.

This project has provided evidence and analysis to show the importance of the news media's access to events on the ground for the progress of a society and smooth functioning of democratic institutions. This illustrate what happens if news media does not have access to information from independent sources, and is made to depend upon the official sources for information.

My research will be valuable background, which can be drawn on to consider the specific steps that key institutions such as the United Nations should take to protect news media access to help protect democracy and institutions working for democracy across the globe. They help to illustrate the types of activity for which people and organisations should be held accountable. I hope that these findings will encourage further research to build on the insights and develop better understanding of the issues. By passing on these research findings to the UN, I hope that the details will strengthen its ability to achieve general agreement on

definitions of independent journalism and protection for journalists to make the world a better place.

Moreover, my research has identified specific challenges that the journalists faced when trying to carry out their profession. They were faced with many (intended and unintended) challenges and hardships, which included their concerns that they covered the war front without safety equipment or life insurance. My findings will be made available to relevant organisations around the world, to help to demonstrate why journalists should be provided with training and equipment by the organisations for which they work, with monitoring by relevant regulatory bodies, supervised and supported by governments.

Another contribution of my research, and an area worthy of further future research, is its focus on the significance of the use of technology and news media channels by non-state actors such as the Taliban. More detailed research could consider how social media groups and news media organisations could be more effective in tightening their monitoring and control, because these channels have been used effectively by the Taliban in the war on terror and will clearly be used in future as well.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

This study examines the challenges faced by local journalists who were caught between the global war on terror and its local consequences in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in their struggle for independent news reporting.

The research has examined the problems the journalists encountered in discussing serious issues and in getting access to local people to understand more about their problems and highlight the difficulties that they faced relevant to the crisis. It investigated the nature of the problems that the journalists faced in the FATA while gathering news and the way those problems affected the process of news making and the ways in which the news was reported.

The research assessed the prevalent influences on news media during the crisis of the so-called war on terror in the FATA (2002-2016), taking into account the sociology and political economy of news perspectives. However, it has taken a step further from the traditional approach of prevalent influences on news media and demonstrated how the Habermasian theory of the 'public sphere' (1974) was challenged by Taliban in FATA. The main focus of this research is centred on the Taliban because they were the dominant force physically present in the FATA region during the crisis (Gunaratna and Nielsen 2008), which makes it important to examine how they dealt with news media and to identify the consequences of their behaviour for news gathering and reporting. Their interaction with news media is seen as a challenge to the existing norms and values of news; they want news media to register their say which is set against the democratic traditions of news media. This research is the first to examine the Taliban as a challenge to the 'global civil society' as previous scholarship has focused on a one-sided view of the 'global public sphere',

highlighting issues in relation to the existing system. I believe that this research will have valuable impact on news media scholarship because it unearths issues in parts of the world which have been hidden from the news media scope. It has also revealed how issues become big challenges if not reported in a timely fashion, and how disastrous the consequences can be. A case in point is the issue of the Taliban, whose aims and strategies could not be studied because of a lack of news media access, and as a result they became so strong. This research also affirms how important it is that people are helped in a timely manner. These finding demonstrate how there can be a loss of the democratic traditions of global civil society whose ideology is based on human rights, access to justice, elimination of racial discrimination and gender bias.

The main issues that have been examined during this study are why the journalists of FATA in the war on terror 2002-2016 could not gather and report news independently. Such independent reporting is vital to produce a balanced picture of issues on the ground, and the presence of the Taliban and the Pakistan military restricted their capabilities as journalists. And because of the direct influence of those restrictions (the presence of Taliban and Pakistan military), other hidden influences also affected the process of news reporting and news gathering – these included the law and order situation created as a result of the tug of war between these two forces, the lack of fully functional democratic state institutions, and the fear factor due to the threats, kidnapping, beatings, killings and harassment of journalists. The study also explored how this overall situation impacted upon the quality of news itself and journalism, due to of the response of the journalists to these pressures and the state of news media ownership in this case study.

Based on the evidence presented in Chapter Six, this research project has demonstrated that, due to the presence of the Taliban and the Pakistan military, the movement of journalists inside the FATA was severely restricted. This research will increase understanding of the importance of access for the news media to every nook and cranny of the world, through demonstrating the consequences when that access is denied. In the specific case study that was the subject of this research, we have heard from the journalists of the FATA about the ways in which they have suffered because their approach perceived the purpose of news gathering as being linked to democratic values and a belief in freedom of speech. The evidence presented and analysed in Chapter Six illustrated how the quality of news reporting was compromised due to a range of intended and unintended pressures. Most

of the reporters interviewed quit the profession of journalism altogether, and the remainder moved to other areas of the country where they felt they and their families would be safer.

In case of the FATA, this research has demonstrated that, despite technological advancements, independent news reporting could not be carried out. The whole region was disconnected from the rest of the world during the war on terror 2002-2016 because the Taliban banned news media activities inside the FATA. Not only were journalists not allowed to travel freely on their own, the general public had to go through protocols to enter and leave the area in their own territory, where they were born and where they had lived throughout their lives. This situation not only affected the general population, who lost access to schools and hospitals and were under severe stress during this whole period; it severely affected the journalists who could not go inside the FATA to gather news and report it. News media research, itemised in Chapters Two and Three, has so far dealt with the western perspective of journalists, but my research has dealt with the journalists of the FATA, who suffered for the sake of free speech and independent news reporting.

The journalists of the FATA failed to perform their independent news reporting due to the corporate nature of news media ownership in Pakistan where the region of the FATA was always treated as marginal when it came to the priorities of news media ownership (Rasoul and Mcdowell 2012). The news media corporations in Pakistan were owned by business people from the metropolitan areas, without connections to the FATA. The Taliban had already set up FM radio channels in different areas of the FATA to disseminate their propaganda and policy through news media (Jan 2015). The arrival of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in the FATA in 2002 turned the FATA into a flashpoint for global news media, yet the journalists could not go inside the FATA to record facts and evidence the developments in the infrastructure of society in the wake of the Taliban presence in the FATA.

Despite the concentration of the news media on events in the FATA, the working conditions of the journalists of FATA were not improved. From my interviews with the journalists of the FATA, I learnt that physical security was the journalists' personal responsibility, and that job security was never an option for the reporters working in the conflict zone of the FATA. Despite that, the demand for more news and exclusives in one of the world's most dangerous zones of conflicts always multiplied. The Taliban activities and Al-Qaeda regrouping in the FATA, with which a new wave of terrorism also arrived in the FATA, turned the whole region into the epicentre of terrorism and a global news media

flashpoint. It also marked the beginning of a new set of challenges for the already deprived and marginalised journalists of the FATA. They could not say anything openly, because the Taliban saw Al-Qaeda as their allies and guests in the FATA, on account of which they were given official patronage, and there were no political institutions in the FATA to support the journalists.

There was official silence and no clear official policy about the new state of affairs that emerged in the wake of the arrival of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda nexus. The Taliban local strength grew proportionately, and their momentum multiplied. The Taliban protected Al-Qaeda, and the state institutions were not doing enough to stop it. The reason for this marginalised attitude was the peripheral status of the FATA in the political demography of Pakistan; why would anyone in Islamabad, Karachi or Lahore care about what happened in the FATA, as long as the effects of the conflict did not go out of the FATA to affect the peaceful life of the metropolitical life of the rest of the country? Some conservative circles within the body politic of Pakistan were looking at the situation with the idea that US wanted to extend its war to the FATA to take control of Pakistan nuclear assets, and so they were pulled towards the Taliban.

This power play of local and global players explains well the national and global duplicity. The Pakistan military for its dependence on military equipment and funds availed this opportunity to get funds from the US, but it lacked the sincere will to eradicate the militancy from the FATA or the Taliban. This is what the critical news media scholars call a 'double game; to run with the hare but to hunt with a hound' (Nazar 2016). The lack of clarity when it comes to how to deal with the FATA between the two allies created challenges and confusion for journalists in the FATA at the grass root level.

Some call this a double game because the US imperialist approach was also based on contradictions. They claimed to possess the world's best military arsenal powered by high gear technology, but they contracted Pakistan to hunt down Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, despite that being a mission that they promised to fulfil by themselves. Not only this, but most of the military operations and different tactical and strategic level intelligence were given to private contractors hired on high rates. These were the allegations made against the US military decisions when they hired the local warlords in Afghanistan to go after Al-Qaeda hideouts in Tora Bora.

175

The US left it to Pakistan to deal with issues in the FATA, despite the fact that there were allegations of safe havens for the Taliban in Pakistan's FATA, as well of a cosy corner for the Taliban in some sections of Pakistani society. The lack of balance at elite level had retrogressive effects on co-ordination at policy level between the two power brokers, which brought into question the issue of the intention of this war, which according to some was fought not because it was necessary, but because it was meant to perpetuate militarisation and fuelling war economy.

There were interests at every level playing their part – global and local – and because of those double standards, the global villains were turned into local villains. However, the casualty was independent news reporting, journalists and the people of the FATA. The prolonged war in 2002-2016 could have been ended quickly by the US, but Al-Qaeda and the Taliban managed to survive in the FATA. This whole situation helped develop a new militant culture: the Taliban. The Taliban would roam freely with heavy machine gun fitted at the top of their 4/4 double cabins, escorted by the AK 47 rifles carrying the local Taliban fighters. They kept instilling fear and terror across the FATA, but this new culture also inspired jingoistic fervour among the youngsters. All these developments infused a new life into local businesses, which were markedly different and poorer than the rest of the country. The local arms dealers were making money and so were the local transporters and restaurants.

The journalists I interviewed informed how the global war on terrorism and local journalism of the FATA were interconnected in terms of the effects of power politics of the former on the latter. The journalists shared their experiences as reporters in the FATA; despite having information about the activities of the Taliban that was newsworthy for the public and the rest of the world, they could not file news stories due to the fear of the Taliban. They were warned time and again that they had to close their eyes and ears about issues relevant to the Taliban. A journalist 'S' informed how he had to keep silent on important developments inside the FATA for the sake of the safety of his family and himself.

Between 2002 and 2004, the Pakistan military, under severe pressure from the US authorities, started strategic strikes against Taliban hideouts in the peripheries of the FATA. They were giving protection to Al-Qaeda, because of their involvement in the kidnapping of aid workers. The US started drone strikes on the targeted positions in the meantime, but the civilian consequences of this militarisation were severe. The consequences of these strikes were also felt by journalists, aid workers and the local population. The journalists who took

part in my interviews believed that the drone strikes gave impetus to the Taliban jihadi ideology. The Taliban grew stronger with every military operation and drone strikes, but they were told to turn a deaf ear or face the consequences.

In the case of the FATA, the war on terror (2002-2016) was hard time for journalists; they and their families suffered a lot at the hands of the Taliban and military authorities of Pakistan. Since this research programme began, the uncertainty for independent journalism has increased. I started this research project to gather evidence about a danger to independent news gathering that appeared to be looming. Before I even finished it, what I was investigating has proven to become reality. The Taliban took over Kabul on 15 August 2021.

It is also important to examine and understand the unintended pressures that have affected independent journalism. The government of Pakistan needs to make sure that the news media organisations, which are purely business oriented and have developed into large conglomerates purely because of their corporate approach, should be required to introduce a wage board for journalists. The journalists work in newspapers in Pakistan as full employees, yet they have no job security and no fixed contracts for salary levels. The wages for journalists are low as compared to the rest of the world, and they are not protected. They do not fall under any regulations, and can be struck off with a stroke of a pen. They do not have access to courts for any kind of procedural irregularity or to seek any compensation from the respective employers.

The story of how this has affected the lives of nearly five million people in the FATA has been detailed in my findings, and it is important that such consequences are not ignored.

Appendix 1

Sample coding sheet used for content analysis

Date	

Newspapers/publications

Dawn	
International Express Tribune	

OBL and the mention of his killing in the headline

Yes	
No	

N.B. OBL: Osama Bin Laden

Name of the Journalist/ byline

British	
Pakistani	
American	
Other	
None	

Journalist: Story about OBL and his killing filed by a journalist from one of the newspapers selected for examination

British: The story filed by a British journalist with his opinion on the assassination of Bin Laden

Pakistani: The story filed by a Pakistani journalist with his opinion on the assassination of Bin Laden

Other: The story written by other journalists in the newspapers but not necessarily from these two countries

None: There was no name of any journalist so would be left blank

Type of news item

Correspondent/reporter		National collections	
Despatched by correspondent/reporter		Editors	
Correspondents (foreign)		Interviews	
News agencies		Anonymous/mixture	
Monitoring desk		Feature/views/analysis	
Online news		Opinion	
Internet			

Discussion			

Date line—where the story was written and filed

Britain Where in Britain from	
Pakistan	
Where in Pakistan from	
Any other country	
Where from in that country	
Location not given/unclear	

Type of story/placement of story

Front page	
Back page	
News/home	
Letters, letter to the editor	
Opinion, editorial, comment/debate	
International	
Financial/business	
Feature	
Review	
Media/IT	
Travel	
Culture	
Other	

Length of the story

Number of words	

How central is OBL and killing of OBL in the story?

OBL and killing of OBL as the main subject	
OBL and the killing as the secondary subject	
OBL and the killing only mentioned in the list	

OBL and the killing only incidental (computer read only)	

The subject of the story dealing (mentioned in the headline or first few sentences) OBL and killing of OBL

News reports covering the killing event	
Follow up stories about the killing event	
Comments and opinion about the killing event	
Interpretation/ reaction of civil society and public enlarge over the killing	
US/Pakistan relationship in the after effects of OBL killing	
News about the news media image of Pakistan	
News about the trust on Pakistan as an ally in war on terror	
Aid and military support to Pakistan in the news	
News about the relationship of Islam and the West after the killing of OBL	
News about killing of OBL and the future of Al-Qaeda	
Killing of OBL and the future of the 'War on Terror'	
Killing of OBL and peace in Afghanistan	
Killing of OBL and Taliban	
Killing of OBL and invasion of Afghanistan	
Killing of OBL and NATO troops presence in Afghanistan	
Killing of OBL and 'US' Afghanistan policy	
Killing of OBL and Middle East	
Killing of OBL and possible after effects in 'ME'	
News reports about the objectivity of reporting during the assassination	
News of possible role of Pakistan in OBL killing	
Image of Islam and the 'War on Terror' in the aftermaths	
Aid attached to conditions	
Aid and political priorities	
International terrorism related news	
Al-Qaeda related news	

News surrounding 'U.S. Military superiority' themes during the coverage of the killing of OBL;

News reports about the global reach of US military	
News of US global strike capability/right	
Air raids a routine exercise?	
Any talk of civilians/ innocents killed during such raids including the raid on OBL?	
Violation of international borders of sovereign states/legal right to cross borders?	
Regard for prisoners of war in terms of violations of basic human rights in chasing militants/ Taliban/ Al-Qaeda /Guantanamo?	
Court trial of OBL?	

Is there any talk of execution/ killing of anyone including OBL without any trial/right of defence?	
High tech weaponry/ firepower/technology/gadgets	
Advance military tactics	
Superior manpower/high skilled military	
Information about the causality/injuries/damages during the assassination	
Superior and global 24/7 intelligence/ surveillance in tracking OBL	
Verification/ authenticity in news media reports of the killing	
What role suspense/drama and story making played during the killing	
Inquiries about the killing event	

East/West binary and Ideological themes surrounding killing of OBL

News about 'Difference' of ideology	
Difference of basic education system	
News related to specifically Islamic education system/text books	
Comparison of overall values between East and West	
News reports about Religious tolerance of Muslims	
News emphasis on liberal values/freedom of speech	
News reports about 'Extremism'	
News about conservatism/conservatives	
News related to 'Militancy'	
News highlighting 'Western way of life'	
News highlighting 'Stone age/Medieval' themes	
News about 'Us/them'	
News reports about 'Fundamentalism'	
News about Jihad	
News about Taliban	
Role of Pakistan in Talibanisation	

Cultural themes that find space during the assassination of OBL;

News reports focused on woman body	
News that contains woman rights in Islam	
News about oppression of woman	
News containing dress code information	
News about population/overpopulation	
News about religious/cultural symbols	
News about child labour/child abuse	
News reports about society structure	
News reports about violence/crime and disparity	
News reports about family system	
News reports about access to justice and social justice	
News reports marriage system	
News reports about child marriages/forced marriages	
News about mosques	
News about sermons and imams	

Themes about 'Geo-strategy' during the coverage

Distant/cut off/far off/ isolated	
Parts of the world called as dangerous	
Lawlessness/autocracy/feudalism/warlords	
Corruption/nepotism/favouritism	
News about killings/shootings	
Suicide bombers/bombs	
Kidnappings/ransom/robbery	
Jihadi groups/militant groups	
Jihadi training camps	
Human rights violations	
Security issues/ Security challenges	
Safe havens for militants/extremists/terrorists	
Law and order challenges/issues	
Peace and stability of nations related news	
News reports about poverty/misery/infrastructure	
Lack of resources/clean water/food related news reports during the assassination of OBL	
News reports related to unemployment/lack of opportunities	
Management of society related themes	
No benefits and support from governments in terms of health related news reports	

State's loose command and control	
Terrorism/international terror sponsoring states	
Rogue states, destabilising agents for the whole area	
Suicide bombing recruiting/training centres	
Chaos, disturbance, trouble all around	
Civil unrest, dictatorships, autocracy and civil disobedience	

Political economy related themes during the coverage of assassination of OBL

News reports about US geo-political interests	
News reports surrounding historical political rivalry/competition of domination	
Reports about news media and political intrigue	
Reports about invasion of Afghanistan as a plea to get access to central Asia resources	
News reports calling upon business and trade manipulation through geostrategic control	
News of arms race and arms business surrounding the killing event	
News about looking invasion of Afghanistan as containment of china by U.S.	
News reports about third world neo-colonialism	
News reports about regional blocks and pacts	
News reports about asylum/immigration	
News reports about globalisation and free trade	
News reports about border security/surveillance	

Sources quoted, cited within news reports during the assassination event (marked as 1st, 2nd and 3rd on the basis of their quotes and citations)

USMilitary	
UK military	
Pakistan Military	
US ex-military	
U.K. ex-military	
Pakistan ex-military	
U.S. political	
UK political	
Pakistan Political	
Law and order	
Analysts	
UK officials	
US officials	
Pakistan officials	
In service officials	
Ex-officials	
Academics	
Non-academics	

Business	
Diplomats	
Religious	
Media	
Journalists	
Science/tech	
Public	
Sports	
Showbiz	
Intelligence	
Govt. agencies	
Other	
Militants groups	
Eye-Witnesses	
Think tanks	
NGOS	
Not identified	

Image and portrait of OBL during the coverage of assassination;

Image/portrait of OBL alive (dominant one)		Scenes of wreckage, bombs and blasts	
Image of OBL dead (dominant)		Interview pictures	
Images of people/ groups		Cartoons, graphic pictures	
Images of militants, weapons in a group		Story accompanied by a picture	

Form of the portrait displayed

Close-up		(country side)	
Casual scene		Within gathering	

Did UK prime minister give his opinion on this event?

Yes	
No	

How does UK prime minister interpret the assassination event?

Great achievement/victory for the world	
Purpose of the Afghanistan invasion accomplished	
This is going to end 'war on terror'	
This is going to begin a new era of peace	
Stability in Afghanistan/south Asia/Pakistan	
Stability/peace in Middle East	
Consequences for 'Islam' and the 'West'	

Did UK politicians/government officials/government agencies/diplomats/military officials interpret this event?

Yes	
No	

How does UK politicians/government officials/government agencies/diplomats/military officials interpret this event?

List all:

Great achievement/victory for the world	
Purpose for invasion accomplished	
This is going to end 'war on terror'	
This is going to begin a new era of peace	
Stability in Afghanistan/south Asia/Pakistan	
Stability/peace in Middle East	
Consequences for 'Islam' and the 'West'	

Did US president give his opinion on this event?

Yes	
No	

How does the US president interpret this event?

Great achievement/victory for the world	
Purpose for invasion accomplished	
This is going to end 'war on terror'	
This is going to begin a new era of peace	
Stability in Afghanistan/south Asia/Pakistan	
Stability/peace in Middle East	
Consequences for 'Islam' and the 'West'	

Did US politicians/government officials/government agencies/diplomats/military officials interpret this event?

YES	
NO	

How did they react to this situation?

List all:

Great achievement/victory for the world	
Purpose for invasion accomplished	
This is going to end 'war on terror'	
This is going to begin a new era of peace	
Stability in Afghanistan/south Asia/Pakistan	
Stability/peace in Middle East	
Consequences for 'Islam' and the 'West'	

Did Pakistani Prime Minister give his official statement?

Yes	
No	

How does Pakistani prime minister interpret this event?

Purpose for invasion accomplished	
This is going to end 'war on terror'	
This is going to begin a new era of peace	
Stability in Afghanistan/south Asia/Pakistan	
Stability/peace in Middle East	
Consequences for 'Islam' and the 'West'	

How does Pakistani politicians/government officials/government agencies/diplomats/military officials interpret this event?

List all:

Purpose for invasion accomplished	
This is going to end 'war on terror'	
This is going to begin a new era of peace	
Stability in Afghanistan/south Asia/Pakistan	
Stability/peace in Middle East	
Consequences for 'Islam' and the 'West'	

Have any other heads of state interpreted the killing event?

Yes	
No	

How have the foreign heads of state interpreted this event?

List all:

Purpose for invasion accomplished	
This is going to end 'war on terror'	
This is going to begin a new era of peace	
Stability in Afghanistan/south Asia/Pakistan	
Stability/peace in Middle East	
Consequences for 'Islam' and the 'West'	

Have any foreign politicians/diplomats/government agencies/government officials given any interpretation of this event?

Yes	
No	

How do foreign politicians/diplomats/government agencies/government officials give their interpretation of this event?

List all:

Purpose for invasion accomplished	
This is going to end 'war on terror'	
This is going to begin a new era of peace	
Stability in Afghanistan/south Asia/Pakistan	
Stability/peace in Middle East	
Consequences for 'Islam' and the 'West'	

Appendix 2

This is a sample transcript from the interview research. There are a total of thirty six (36) interviews conducted for this research. Anonymity was assured as a part of the ethical and legal obligation to all participants and all the interviews were transcribed using the same format.

Interview No. 1

My name is xxxxxxxxxxxxxx and I am doing PhD research. This interview is purely for my own research. Your identity and your ideas will remain anonymous no matter what. You can skip any question you don't want to answer and you can quit the interview at any point without stating any reason. You can ask for breaks if you wish so if you need anything or if you have to drink water or any other reason. When you are ready, we will make a start …

Participant. Thank you, I am ready.

Q1. Introduction and professional background?

Ans. My name is AAAAAAAAAAA and working as correspondent in an English daily 'Express Tribune'. I have done my Masters in Journalism and Mass communication from Gomal University D.I Khan and currently pursuing my MPhil as well. My beat includes covering the conflict hit areas of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and the frontier regions, about issues related to terrorism and violence. I supply news not only to local dailies but I also report for various national and international news media outlets as well.

Q2. What is the state of news media in FATA and how do you compare it to the rest of the country?

Ans. If we talk about the region we operate, here the most challenging job for a reporter is reporting on security issues. FATA and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province has always remained heaven for the militants, insurgencies and for the terror related activities. Since 2001, province of Khyber and the adjoining areas of FATA has remained the main battle ground for 'war on terror' in Pakistan. Especially, the areas of FATA as it adjoins border with Afghanistan. So, in my opinion the most challenging job for a reporter is working on security issues, particularly, what happens in FATA. Because Pakistan military has started operations against insurgents in those areas. The recent operation is named as operation Zarb-e-Azab. To

report on these issues becomes difficult as the newspaper seldom file any reports, those ones having independent opinion and rather prefers to publish one sided picture by relying on press release, hand outs and press notes by the law enforcement agencies. We get information about those areas through these sources and this is the only way of getting information that are more or less official channels. The news media publish it without any verification as it has not got proper resources or chance to verify it from authentic sources. So, in my view the most challenging job is to cover these issues in conflict hit areas.

Q3. How does news media operate with reference to independent news reporting and to produce balanced news reports?

Ans. As I mentioned earlier, taking out information about security issues or what's going on here nowadays, the activities of the law enforcement agencies cannot be accessed. The authorities are inaccessible or to be approached or access to information is not possible. Information is a privileged thing in Pakistan and only available to a few people within news media. Press releases and official handouts are the main source of information for news media in times of wars, conflicts and what is going on in our frontier regions of Pakistan. In the conflict zones and during events like the one under analysis, news media is mainly dependent on various sources for information. In settled areas we have different sources of information. Also, in city beats information comes out from government departments. Handouts and press releases are issued on regular basis for news media. This is the overall scenario in which news media operate, but specifically, the Urdu language press who are totally dependent on handouts and press releases. The banner, sub-banner and big stories stretched over three, four, five and six columns, all carry information from the point of view of different government departments. Other than this, the main source of our information police department. Our newspapers are incomplete without crime stories. The most important stories are the one that deals crime. The Urdu language press gives considerable leverage to crime stories as compared to mainstream news media. On the other hand the English language press prefers to work mostly on exclusives. The mainstream press work on issues based reporting while the Urdu language press work on event based reporting. This is the main difference between the mainstream press and Urdu language press. To conclude this argument, I would like to affirm that the main source of information relating crime stories is Police.

Q4. What are the influences upon a news reporter in the field? Include reference to covering events like terrorism, terrorist events, activities of the Taliban?

Ans. Now coming to the difference in the point of view, I think that if I am sitting in FATA or the Frontier province of Pakistan, I will be more careful and watchful while covering such issues that deals with militancy and the event like the killing of bin Laden. Because he was the head of Al-Qaeda, and had been reportedly living in the regions of FATA and Frontier for so long. According to news media reports, this area is said to be the haven for Taliban and other militants who had been using this to carry out their activities. I will be more careful in to report on Bin Laden keeping in view this scenario and also, I will be more careful in reporting activities of Al-Qaeda. By careful, I mean that the words I use in my story would be used more carefully. I would keep in mind that the words I use in my story should not in any way offend or hurt the sentiments and feelings of those loyal and sympathetic to bin Laden and his organization. If I have to live in this area. But, if I am working with a foreign news media or working from any other city like Islamabad, I won't panic, then. I may not be that careful as well. Groups such as Al-Qaeda and Taliban who are very much present in this region, would make me choose words very carefully in my story. On the other hand side, International organizations are based in Islamabad. There is a big difference in doing the job of reporting from Islamabad and the area hit by militancy such as FATA and the frontier province. Basically, it depends on the peace and stability of the environment of the beat and area, whether national or international, those working from these regions would be mindful as against those who work in Islamabad.

Yes, we are asked on daily basis not to cross certain limits. Our institution and our high ups warn us regularly not to touch some things. Also, those departments that give us advertisements are out of bounds. This is not the case with us alone, but all of the news media organizations have adopted this policy. Every news media house does the same things.

I would like to compare the local press with that of international press first. As far as I am aware, International news media covers any news story with great detail and work in line with the ethics of journalism. That means that even if the story is smaller, they would include the set of sources, at least three sources in any one story and all the facts and details verified. On the other hand side, Urdu language press would carry stories without mention any one source, and would only say, 'according to sources'. Most of their stories are published without any stating the name of any one source unlike the mainstream press, who state the

name of as many source as they need to be there. The professional reporters working with the mainstream news media like daily Dawn, The News and Express Tribune, does never publish a news story without any source and give at least two to three sources, which is the standard of a news story. We are not talking about the enmity between their stories, but no anonymous information is given unless attributed to any one source.

Q5. What are the pressures on news room in times of terrorist events and events like bin Laden killing?

Ans. Obviously, if a event of this magnitude happens, then the pressure is natural. When the whole world news media is pulled towards one event, then the local news media will be under pressure. But, other than this, reporters are always under pressures to bring more in Pakistan.

This is a common practice in Urdu language press. Some of our fellow journalists working in Urdu press are asked to bring between ten and twenty stories every day. The editors and sub-editors ask them to bring this much stories on daily basis. I know one of our fellow journalist working in Urdu language daily brings ten to twenty stories everyday but his stories are short and limited to hundred and two hundred words. Furthermore, his stories are without the name of sources, any reliable data and facts and figures. Personally, I think that producing twenty stories a day with all necessary formalities that includes authentic data, facts and figures and sources is not humanly possible. On the other hand side, in mainstream news media this is not the trend and there are not pressures to just fill in the papers. I try to bring one story on daily basis but still, it's not something binding. Also, here in Express Tribune, we bring story of about four hundred to five hundred words on daily basis or at least four stories in a week. I may add that this is something only practiced in Express Tribune and does not happen in other more reputed organizations like The News or daily Dawn. Despite the fact that they give more space to official versions of news reports through press releases but the reporters over there in those organizations are comparatively at more ease. They are seniors and more experienced than us but still, they emphasize on press release a lot. In Express Tribune we try to bring one story each day but that story should fulfil the criteria of being published. That means that there should be authentic sources, verified data and facts and figures.

Q6. Does a news reporter has access to the information directly in the case of terror related events such as the killing of bin Laden, or do the reporters have to depend on specific sources of information?

Ans. In this country, in the conflict zone, I think getting access to issues or events directly is not always possible. Visiting the place where the events has occurred is most of the time out of bounds for security reasons. The main source of information for news media is the department of police. The information is shared mutually, for instance, if I cover a story in Hayatabad and anyone within my fellow journalists inquire about that, I would have to share it. We know that he has to bring twenty stories and if he does not ask the assistance of his fellows, he is never going to make it. This is how we all share news stories mutually. This practice is common in Urdu journalism. Mainstream news media is different and the reporters working there prefers working on quality news. The reporters have to contact their sources, check facts and figures and should remain aware of legal formalities.

Q 7. Once a news report is produced, does it have to go through any protocols before it is published?

Ans. Yes, there are pressures from news media organizations and the owners of news media outlets. I am not talking about editors. I have also experienced events where the reporters are asked by news media that you don't cover these organizations by naming them specifically. They argue multiple reasons for this; they give them advertisements and advertisements are the main source of revenue for newspapers in Pakistan. Newspapers can't survive without advertisements. I can name a number of government organizations they have remained out of the news media radar for this reason. This is one reason why we don't see any news story against some of the government departments, there are some other reasons as well. But, with regard to internal government departments who escape newspapers critic is that they give lion's share of advertisements to newspaper. As a matter of fact a good number of advertisements come from the public sector in Pakistan. I am a witness to a situation, where a news story was published in a newspaper in relevance to a particular department. The minister of that department called on that reporter who filed that news story. He threatened him that he will stop giving advertisements to that newspaper and also, he is going to raise this issue with the owner of that newspaper. Their department is a major contributor of advertisements to their newspapers and it is going to be stopped. Ultimately, the advertisements to that newspapers were stopped as a result of that news story. Similarly, we can't publish anything or produce any kind of news stories against law enforcement agencies. We can't even dare to ask about any particular issue. They never provide us any information they don't want to go public.

Q 8. What factors affect the news reporting/news making process out of the news room? Do reporters bow down to such pressures, if yes? Why?

Ans. Yes, they do. Because, everyone needs money for him and his family in order to survive. For that reason, they need a job. No one wants to lose their job. No one would risk their life and get abducted or shot down. Because of these things the reporters bow down.

Sometimes they do and at other they don't. At times we get it published and at others we can't, and we then share our views on social media. In case we fail to publish it in our newspapers, we try to argue with news media bosses and try to explain the plus points of that news story for our organizations. They support us to certain limit and listen to us sometimes. The journalists have to bow down to such pressures because they are afraid to lose their jobs.

Q9. What's the role of owners/editors in news making?

Ans. It happens in some places and depends upon organizations again. In quality press the sub-editor can't do too much because the focus comes from the reporter. Any changes from editorial desk might risk the diversion in the focus of news story and can jeopardise the whole purpose. Sub-editors at the news desk, don't have the authority to make any changes or amendments with regard to the focus of news story. While in Urdu language press, I have heard that the sub-editors play around with the news stories. The first copy of news story of about 300-400 words is systematically cut down to 200-250 words. While, in some cases the lower portion is removed totally, in order to adjust it within the space limits. They don't care about the importance or news worthiness of information provided in a news story but want to fit in as many as they can within the available space.

In Pakistan, I don't think things are reported factually. As a journalist, I believe it is not the case. The reasons for that is that news media organizations, almost all of them are afraid of military and in FATA regions the militants. Because of that, the reporters cannot do independent reporting.

Here, the most challenging job for reporter is to challenge the authority of the military. To unearth and criticize their policies, not only the military but also judiciary, the politicians and other organizations such as bureaucracy. Writing about their policies is the most challenging and dangerous job for a news reporter.

Q10. What does professionalism and objectivity mean to you; their meaning and definition and the understanding of these terms in FATA, and in a country like Pakistan., in the eyes of professionals?

Ans. To some extent it is there. For instance, dailies like Dawn practices and try to be a professional newspaper. But, in other organizations it does not. We don't have that much area as compared to international news media. Our field is limited and we have to work within our national domain. On the other hand, international news media have enough resources, time and people to work on a particular story. We can't afford to practice that as we have restrictions in every area. Like we don't have technological gadgets and the highly- skilled man power to handle that. The professionalism depends on multiple factors and we can't just catch up with that level, because we need all those stuff at our hands.

In Pakistan speaking of conflicts, it is difficult to get balanced point of view and trying to approach both sides of the conflict. It is equally dangerous to publish one sided view of any one party. For instance, if you publish the point of view of the military in any one particular issue, it's going to annoy the militants and they are going to target you. Sticking permanently to this side will bring you to face the brunt at the hands of militants. But on the other hand, if you file a story that just reflects the militant's version, it is going to annoy the military. During such situations we do develop our sources and rely on them for important information nut it is always hard to get access to the right person in order to take out right information. It is difficult to maintain close and reliable sources on both sides, especially in this conflict. Because, it has always been difficult to get access to militants and know their point of view.

News shortage can be overcome from various sources. One can take news from different news agencies by involving them. There are also loads of reporters and correspondents in different areas. So your main staff in head office can work on investigative stories. As far as reaction is concerned, we discuss this from time to time and inform our news editor that we cannot work on investigative story. Despite our complaints and worries, our demands are not met and our concern is seldom heard.

Q 11. How is news made? What ideas and opinions do you have as a journalist about news reporting in Pakistan with the conflict region in particular?

Ans. I read daily Guardian and New York Times. I think that we are wasting our time the way I see it. I think that we don't have that maturity in our news. We are forced to file routine news stories on daily basis. We are forced to file two to three stories every day. It is very

difficult to bring complete information about anything. There is always shortage of time to investigate issues properly. Taking out authentic data, facts and figures and investigating demands time. But, we are not given that much time and are under pressure to bring more and more and quickly. By comparing our news media with them in terms of covering of issues, I think that we waste our time. The international news media is more mature and work in professional way as compared to our national news media. This is so because of demand and because of the policies of newspapers. In Express Tribune, we are asked to produce one story each day. While the main stream news media like daily Dawn and daily The News, reporters over there just bring one story in a week.

References

2009. Geo News reporter Musa Khankhel killed. *Dawn* Front page. 29th of Fberuary, 2009, p. 24.

AbuKhalil, A. a. 2002. *Bin Laden, Islam, & America's New War on Terrorism*. Seven Stories Press.

Aday, S. 2010. Chasing the bad news: An analysis of 2005 Iraq and Afghanistan war coverage on NBC and Fox News Channel. *Journal of communication* 60(1), pp. 144-164.

Afridi, S. A. and Gul, S. 2018. Pakistan Counterinsurgency in Swat: A Critical Review of Literature. *Central Asia Journal* 6(2), pp. 146-151.

Akhtar, S. 2000. *Media, religion, and politics in Pakistan*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Ali, Y. and Khan, I. 2018. Uses and Abuses of FM Radios by Militants in Former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA), Pakistan. *Central Asia* 83(Winter), pp. 157-171.

Allan, S. 2004. The culture of distance: Online reporting of the Iraq War.*Reporting War*. Routledge, pp. 357-375.

Allan, S. 2013. *Citizen witnessing: Revisioning journalism in times of crisis*. John Wiley & Sons.

Allan, S. and Zelizer, B. 2004. *Reporting war: Journalism in wartime*. Routledge.

Aly, A. et al. 2016. *Violent extremism online: New perspectives on terrorism and the Internet*. Routledge.

Ambos, K. and Alkatout, J. 2012. Has 'Justice Been Done'? The Legality of Bin Laden's Killing Under International Law. *Israel Law Review* 45(2), pp. 341-366.

Andersson, M. 2012. The debate about multicultural Norway before and after 22 July 2011. *Identities* 19(4), pp. 418-427.

Arif, R. et al. 2014. Mediated public diplomacy: US and Taliban relations with Pakistani media. *Media, War & Conflict* 7(2), pp. 201-217.

Armoudian, M. 2016. *Reporting from the danger zone: Frontline journalists, their jobs, and an increasingly perilous future*. Routledge.

Ashley, P. and Boyd, B. W. 2006. Quantitative and qualitative approaches to research in environmental management. *Australasian Journal of environmental management* 13(2), pp. 70-78.

Ashraf, S. I. 2021. *The Dark Side of News Fixing: The Culture and Political Economy of Global Media in Pakistan and Afghanistan*. Anthem Press.

Ashraf, S. I. and Brooten, L. 2017. Tribal journalists under fire. *The Assault on Journalism*, p. 147.

Athique, A. 2008. Media audiences, ethnographic practice and the notion of a cultural field. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 11(1), pp. 25-41.

Atkinson, P. et al. 2003. *Key themes in qualitative research: Continuities and changes*. Rowman Altamira.

Bagdikian, B. H. 2004. *The new media monopoly: A completely revised and updated edition with seven new chapters*. Beacon Press.

Bagdikian, B. H. et al. 2004. *War, media, and propaganda: A global perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Baker, P. et al. 2013. *Discourse analysis and media attitudes: The representation of Islam in the British press*. Cambridge University Press.

Baloch, K. and Andresen, K. 2020. Reporting in conflict zones in Pakistan: Risks and challenges for fixers. *Media and Communication* 8(1), pp. 37-46.

Barker, G. G. 2012. Cultural influences on the news: Portrayals of the Iraq war by Swedish and American media. *International Communication Gazette* 74(1), pp. 3-22.

Basit, A. 2014. Mullah Fazlullah: A Journey from 'FM Mullah'to Head of the Pakistan Taliban. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 6(10), pp. 13-16.

Behuria, A. et al. 2019. US-Taliban Talks for Afghan Peace: Complexities Galore. *Strategic Analysis* 43(2), pp. 126-137.

Bennett, W. L. et al. 2008. *When the press fails: Political power and the news media from Iraq to Katrina*. University of Chicago Press.

Benson, D. C. 2014. Why the internet is not increasing terrorism. *Security Studies* 23(2), pp. 293-328.

Benson, R. and Neveu, E. 2005. *Bourdieu and the journalistic field*. Polity.

Benwell, B. and Stokoe, E. H. 2002. Constructing discussion tasks in university tutorials: shifting dynamics and identities. *Discourse Studies* 4(4), pp. 429-453.

Berbers, A. et al. 2016. The news framing of the 'Syria fighters' in Flanders and the Netherlands: Victims or terrorists? *Ethnicities* 16(6), pp. 798-818.

Berelson, B. 1952. Content analysis in communication research.

Bergen, P. L. 2011. *The longest war: The enduring conflict between America and Al-Qaeda*. Simon and Schuster.

Bernard, H. 2012. Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches Sage Publications. Incorporated.

Bhattacharya, S. 2015. Violence: A bane for Pakistani media. *Journal of the International Relations and Affairs Group* 5(2), pp. 228-248.

Blank, J. 2013. *Lashkar-e Taiba and the Threat to the United States of a Mumbai-style Attack*. RAND Corporation.

Bowden, J. et al. 2019. Economy through a lens: distortions of policy coverage in UK national newspapers. *Journal of Comparative Economics* 47(4), pp. 881-906.

Boyd-Barrett, O. 1980. *The international news agencies*. Constable & Robinson.

Boyd-Barrett, O. 2014. *Media imperialism*. Sage.

Boyd-Barrett, O. 2016. *Western mainstream media and the Ukraine crisis: A study in conflict propaganda*. Routledge.

Boyd-Barrett, O. and Rantanen, T. 1998a. *The globalization of news*. Sage.

Boyd-Barrett, O. and Rantanen, T. 1998b. The globalization of news. *The globalization of news*, pp. 1-14.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology* 3(2), pp. 77-101.

Broussard, J. C. 2013. *African American foreign correspondents: A history*. LSU Press.

Brown, J. S. 2002. Growing up digital. How the Web changes work, education and the ways people learn.

Bunce, M. 2010. 'This Place Used to be a White British Boys' Club': Reporting Dynamics and Cultural Clash at an International News Bureau in Nairobi. *The Round Table* 99(410), pp. 515-528.

Bunce, V. J. and Wolchik, S. L. 2011. *Defeating authoritarian leaders in postcommunist countries*. Cambridge University Press.

Buruma, I. and Margalit, A. 2005. *Occidentalism: The West in the eyes of its enemies*. Penguin.

Butkus, P. 2020. *Questioning the US CIA Drone Program as a Counter-Terrorism Strategy in FATA, Pakistan between 2004 and 2018.* Utica College.

Carruthers, B. G. and Babb, S. L. 2000. *Economy/society: Markets, meanings, and social structure*. Pine Forge Press.

Carruthers, S. L. 2011. *The media at war*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Carter, C. et al. 1998. Setting new (s) agendas. *News, Gender and Power. London: Routledge*, pp. 1-9.

Champagne, P. 2005. The 'double dependency': The journalistic field between politics and markets. *Bourdieu and the journalistic field*, pp. 48-63.

Chang, T.-K. et al. 1987. Determinants of international news coverage in the US media. *Communication research* 14(4), pp. 396-414.

Charmaz, K. 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. sage.

Chomsky, N. 2008. *Interventions*. Penguin UK.

Cope, M. 2010. Coding transcripts and diaries 27. *Key methods in geography* 440,

Cottle, S. 2003. *Media organization and production*. Sage.

Cottle, S. 2006. *Mediatized conflict: Understanding media and conflicts in the contemporary world*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Cottle, S. 2009. Journalism studies: coming of (global) age? *Journalism* 10(3), pp. 309-311.

Cottle, S. and Lester, E. 2011. Transnational protests and the media.

Cottle, S. et al. 2016. *Reporting dangerously: Journalist killings, intimidation and security*. Springer.

Coyne, I. T. 1997. Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of advanced nursing* 26(3), pp. 623-630.

Curran, J. and Morley, D. 2007. *Media and cultural theory*. Routledge.

Cushion, S. and Lewis, J. 2010. *The rise of 24-hour news television: Global perspectives*. Peter Lang.

Daniel, H. 1986. The 'Uncensored War': The Media and Vietnam. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

DeLeeuw, K. E. and Mayer, R. E. 2008. A comparison of three measures of cognitive load: Evidence for separable measures of intrinsic, extraneous, and germane load. *Journal of educational psychology* 100(1), p. 223.

Dell'Orto, G. 2016. *AP foreign correspondents in action: World War II to the present*. Cambridge University Press.

Denzin, N. K. and Ryan, K. E. 2007. Qualitative methodology (including focus groups). *The SAGE handbook of social science methodology* 3, pp. 578-594.

Der Derian, J. 2009. *Virtuous war: Mapping the military-industrial-media-entertainment-network*. Routledge.

Devarajan, S. and Reinikka, R. 2003. Making services work for poor people. *Finance & development* 40(003),

Dolliver, D. S. et al. 2018. A geographic analysis of drug trafficking patterns on the tor network. *Geographical review* 108(1), pp. 45-68.

Doran, R. 2010. *Cultural Theory after 9/11: Terror, Religion, Media: Special Issue of SubStance, Issue 115, 37: 1 (2008)*. Univ of Wisconsin Press.

Dower, J. W. 2010. *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/Hiroshima/9-11/Iraq*. WW Norton & Company.

Echevarria II, A. J. 2007. *Clausewitz and contemporary war*. OUP Oxford.

Eldridge, J. 1993. News, truth and power. *Getting the message: News, truth and power*, pp. 3-33.

Entman, R. M. 2003. Cascading activation: Contesting the White House's frame after 9/11. *Political Communication* 20(4), pp. 415-432.

Ericson, R. V. et al. 1991. *Representing order: Crime, law, and justice in the news media*. Open University Press Milton Keynes.

Esposito, J. L. 1999. *The Islamic threat: Myth or reality?* Oxford University Press, USA.

Esposito, J. L. 2003. *Unholy war: Terror in the name of Islam*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Esposito, J. L. 2010. *The future of Islam*. Oxford University Press.

Esposito, J. L. and Voll, J. O. 2001. *Makers of contemporary Islam*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Esser, F. 2009. Metacoverage of mediated wars: How the press framed the role of the news media and of military news management in the Iraq wars of 1991 and 2003. *American Behavioral Scientist* 52(5), pp. 709-734.

Fahmy, S. 2004. Picturing Afghan women: A content analysis of AP wire photographs during the Taliban regime and after the fall of the Taliban regime. *Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands)* 66(2), pp. 91-112.

Fair, C. C. et al. 2014. Democratic values and support for militant politics: Evidence from a national survey of Pakistan. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58(5), pp. 743-770.

Farhang, M. 1993. The United States and the question of democracy in the Middle East. *Current History* 92(570), p. 1.

Farwell, J. P. 2014. The media strategy of ISIS. *Survival* 56(6), pp. 49-55.

Feinstein, N. W. 2015. Education, communication, and science in the public sphere. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 52(2), pp. 145-163.

Fleischner, J. 2011. *Governance and militancy in Pakistan's Swat valley*. Center for Strategic and International Studies Washington DC.

Flick, U. 2007. Concepts of triangulation. *Managing quality in qualitative research*, pp. 38-54.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J. 1994. The art of science. *The handbook of qualitative research* 361376,

Frankenberg, R. 1993. Growing up white: feminism, racism and the social geography of childhood. *Feminist Review* 45(1), pp. 51-84.

Freedman, D. 2014. *The contradictions of media power*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Freedman, D. and Thussu, D. K. 2011. *Media and terrorism: global perspectives*. Sage.

Friedman, M. J. et al. 2004. Fighting the psychological war on terrorism. *Psychiatry* 67(2), pp. 123-136.

Gadarian, S. K. 2010. The politics of threat: How terrorism news shapes foreign policy attitudes. *The Journal of Politics* 72(2), pp. 469-483.

Galtung, J. and Ruge, M. H. 1965. The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers. *Journal of peace research* 2(1), pp. 64-90.

Gans, H. J. 2004. *Deciding what's news: A study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek, and Time*. Northwestern University Press.

Garnett, M. 2003. Sustaining the cocoon: the emotional inoculation produced by complementary therapies in palliative care. *European Journal of Cancer Care* 12(2), pp. 129-136.

George, L. 2007. What's fit to print: The effect of ownership concentration on product variety in daily newspaper markets. *Information Economics and Policy* 19(3-4), pp. 285-303.

Gerges, F. A. 2003. Islam and Muslims in the mind of America. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588(1), pp. 73-89.

Giroux, H. A. 2005. The terror of neoliberalism: Rethinking the significance of cultural politics. *College literature*, pp. 1-19.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. 2017. *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.

Greenberg, B. A. 2011. The news deal: How price-fixing and collusion can save the newspaper industry-and why Congress should promote it. *UCLA L. Rev.* 59, p. 414.

Greenhalgh, T. and Peacock, R. 2005. Effectiveness and efficiency of search methods in systematic reviews of complex evidence: audit of primary sources. *Bmj* 331(7524), pp. 1064-1065.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. 2001. *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Sage Publications.

Guest, G. et al. 2012. Validity and reliability (credibility and dependability) in qualitative research and data analysis. *Applied thematic analysis* 79, p. 106.

Gunaratna, R. and Nielsen, A. 2008. Al Qaeda in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan and beyond. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31(9), pp. 775-807.

Habermas, J. et al. 1974. The public sphere: An encyclopedia article (1964). *New German Critique* (3), pp. 49-55.

Hall, S. et al. 2013. *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Halliday, F. 2010. *Shocked and awed: how the war on terror and jihad have changed the English language*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Hallin, D. C. 2004. The media and war.*International media research*. Routledge, pp. 228-254.

Hamilton, J. M. 2011. *Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign Reporting*. LSU Press.

Hamilton, J. M. and Jenner, E. 2004. Redefining foreign correspondence. *Journalism* 5(3), pp. 301-321.

Hammersley, M. 1993. *Social research: philosophy, politics and practice*. Sage.

Hammond, P. 2003. The media war on terrorism. *Journal for Crime, Conflict and the Media* 1(1), pp. 23-36.

Hanitzsch, T. and Mellado, C. 2011. What shapes the news around the world? How journalists in eighteen countries perceive influences on their work. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 16(3), pp. 404-426.

Hannerz, U. 2012. *Foreign news: Exploring the world of foreign correspondents*. University of Chicago Press.

Harcup, T. and O'Neill, D. 2001. What is news? Galtung and Ruge revisited. *Journalism studies* 2(2), pp. 261-280.

Hatef, A. and Luqiu, R. 2021. Media and Intervention: Examining Representations of Afghan Women in The New York Times. *Journalism Practice* 15(5), pp. 688-703.

Hayes, D. and Guardino, M. 2010. Whose views made the news? Media coverage and the march to war in Iraq. *Political Communication* 27(1), pp. 59-87.

Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N. 2010. *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. Random House.

Holsti, O. R. 1969. Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities. *Reading. MA: Addison-Wesley (content analysis)*,

Horgan, J. 2012. Interviewing the terrorists: Reflections on fieldwork and implications for psychological research. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 4(3), pp. 195-211.

Hoskins, A. and O'loughlin, B. 2010. *War and media*. Polity.

Index, P. F. 2013. Reporters without borders. *Data available at: http://www. rsf. org/enclassement298-2002. html*,

Innis, H. A. 2007. *Empire and communications*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Jackson, R. L. et al. 2007. What is qualitative research? *Qualitative research reports in communication* 8(1), pp. 21-28.

Jaeger, L. and Eckhardt, A. 2018. When colleagues fail: Examining the role of information security awareness on extra-role security behaviors.

Jahedi, M. and Abdullah, F. S. 2012. The ideological construction of Iran in The NYT. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 32(3), pp. 361-381.

Jayyusi, L. 2012. Terror, war and disjunctures in the global order. *Media and terrorism: Global perspectives*, pp. 23-46.

Johnston, P. B. and Sarbahi, A. K. 2016. The impact of US drone strikes on terrorism in Pakistan. *International studies quarterly* 60(2), pp. 203-219.

Kasi, A. u. 2012. 22 Journalists killed in Balouchistan in four years (2009-2012). *Dawn* 02 October, 2012.

Kearns, I. and Muir, R. 2019. Data driven policing and public value. *The Police Foundation*,

Kellner, D. 2000. Habermas, the public sphere, and democracy: A critical intervention. *Perspectives on Habermas* 1(1), pp. 259-288.

Kellner, D. 2003. *Media spectacle*. routledge.

Kellner, D. 2007. Media spectacle, fear, and terrorism. *Media Development* 54(3),

Kellner, D. 2009. Toward a critical media/cultural studies. *Media/cultural studies: Critical approaches*, pp. 5-24.

Kellner, D. 2015. *Media spectacle and the crisis of democracy: Terrorism, war, and election battles*. Routledge.

Kernell, S. 2006. *Going public: New strategies of presidential leadership*. Cq Press.

Khan, A. 2014. Journalists at work in FATA: an overview of consequences. *Tiagh: A Journal of Peace and Development* 5, pp. 45-61.

Khan, A. U. 2011. *Reporting the frontier: Media and its capacity building for peace in Pakistan's tribal areas bordering Afghanistan*. VDM Publishing.

Khan, Z. and Joseph, B. 2008. Pakistan after Musharraf: The media take center stage. *Journal of Democracy* 19(4), pp. 32-37.

Khetran, M. S. 2017. Indian Interference in Balochistan. *Strategic Studies* 37(3), pp. 112-125.

Khiabany, G. and Williamson, M. 2008. Veiled bodies—Naked racism: Culture, politics and race in the Sun. *Race & class* 50(2), pp. 69-88.

Kilcullen, D. and Exum, A. M. 2009. Death from above, outrage down below. *New York Times* 16, pp. 529-535.

Kim, H. S. 2010. Forces of gatekeeping and journalists' perceptions of physical danger in post-Saddam Hussein's Iraq. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 87(3-4), pp. 484-500.

Kitzinger, J. et al. 2004. Qu'est-ce que les focus groups? *Bulletin de psychologie* 57(3)), pp. 237-243.

Klaus, E. and Kassel, S. 2005. The veil as a means of legitimization: An analysis of the interconnectedness of gender, media and war. *Journalism* 6(3), pp. 335-355.

Klausen, J. 2015. Tweeting the Jihad: Social media networks of Western foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38(1), pp. 1-22.

Knightley, P. 2004. *The first casualty: The war correspondent as hero and myth-maker from the Crimea to Iraq*. JHU Press.

Kuhn, R. 2007. The public and the private in contemporary French politics. *French Cultural Studies* 18(2), pp. 185-200.

Kumar, D. 2006. Media, war, and propaganda: Strategies of information management during the 2003 Iraq war. *Communication and critical/cultural studies* 3(1), pp. 48-69.

Kumar, D. 2012. *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*. Haymarket Books.

Kundnani, A. 2014. *The Muslims are coming!: Islamophobia, extremism, and the domestic war on terror*. Verso Books.

Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. 2009. *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. sage.

Layne, C. 2012. This time it's real: the end of unipolarity and the Pax Americana. *International studies quarterly* 56(1), pp. 203-213.

Lee, C. S. 2001. An analytical framework for evaluating e-commerce business models and strategies. *Internet Research*,

Lewis, J. 2008. The role of the media in boosting military spending. *Media, War & Conflict* 1(1), pp. 108-117.

Lewis, J. 2012. Terrorism and news narratives. *Media and terrorism: Global perspectives*, pp. 257-270.

Lewis, J. and Cushion, S. 2009. The thirst to be first: An analysis of breaking news stories and their impact on the quality of 24-hour news coverage in the UK. *Journalism Practice* 3(3), pp. 304-318.

Lewis, R. et al. eds. 2011. *Intuitive morality and reactions to news events: Responding to news of the Lockerbie bomber's release*. *annual meeting of the Broadcast Education Association, Las Vegas, NV*.

Lindgren, B.-M. et al. 2020. Abstraction and interpretation during the qualitative content analysis process. *International journal of nursing studies* 108, p. 103632.

Lipman, M. 2010. Freedom of expression without freedom of the press. *Journal of International Affairs* 63(2), pp. 153-169.

Livingston, S. and Eachus, T. 1995. Humanitarian crises and US foreign policy: Somalia and the CNN effect reconsidered. *Political Communication* 12(4), pp. 413-429.

Lynch, J. 2013. *A global standard for reporting conflict*. Routledge.

Macdonald, M. 2006. Muslim women and the veil: Problems of image and voice in media representations. *Feminist Media Studies* 6(1), pp. 7-23.

Macdonald, M. 2011. British Muslims, memory and identity: Representations in British film and television documentary. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14(4), pp. 411-427.

Malik, S. 2013. Media and Militancy: Case Study of Use of FM Radio by Taliban in Swat. *IPRI Journal* 13(1), pp. 77-96.

Manning, P. 2001. *News and news sources: A critical introduction*. Sage.

Matheson, D. and Allan, S. 2009. *Digital war reporting*. Polity.

Mattelart, A. 2010. *The globalization of surveillance*. Polity.

Mbembe, A. 2006. On the postcolony: A brief response to critics. *African identities* 4(2), pp. 143-178.

McChesney, R. W. and McChesney, R. W. 2008. *The political economy of media: Enduring issues, emerging dilemmas*. NYU Press.

McChesney, R. W. and Schiller, D. 2003. *The political economy of international communications: Foundations for the emerging global debate about media ownership and regulation*. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development Geneva.

McPhail, T. L. 2010. *Global communication: Theories, stakeholders, and trends*. John Wiley & Sons.

McQuail, D. 1992. *Media performance: Mass communication and the public interest*. Sage London.

Meek, J. 2001. Northern Alliance enters Kabul as Taliban flee. *The Guardian*,

Mertens, S. and de Smaele, H. 2016. A Cross-Cultural Analysis.

Mezzera, M. and Sial, S. 2010. Media and Governance in Pakistan: A controversial yet essential relationship. *Initiative for Peace Building*,

Miller, D. 2003. *Tell Me Lies: How the Media Mis-Reported and Distorted the Attack on Iraq*. Pluto.

Miller, D. and Sabir, R. 2012. Propaganda and terrorism. *Media and Terrorism: Global Perspectives. London: Sage*, pp. 77-94.

Miller, T. and Yúdice, G. 2002. *Cultural policy*. Sage.

Mills, C. 2014. *The philosophy of Agamben*. Routledge.

Mitra, S. 2017. Adoptability and acceptability of peace journalism among Afghan photojournalists: Lessons for peace journalism training in conflict-affected countries. *Journal of the Association for Journalism Education UK* 6(2),

Moore, K. et al. 2008. Images of Islam in the UK. *Cardiff: Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies*,

Moore, M. 2013. Watchdog or lapdog? The role of US media in the international humanitarian intervention in Libya. *Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy* 4(1), p. 4.

Mowlana, H. 1997. *Global information and world communication: New frontiers in international relations*. Sage.

Murrell, C. 2009. Fixers and foreign correspondents: News production and autonomy. *Australian Journalism Review* 31(1), pp. 5-17.

Murrell, C. 2010. Baghdad bureaux: An exploration of the interconnected world of fixers and correspondents at the BBC and CNN. *Media, War & Conflict* 3(2), pp. 125-137.

Murrell, C. 2013. International fixers: Cultural interpreters or 'people like us'. *Ethical Space* 10(2/3), pp. 72-79.

Murrell, C. 2014. *Foreign correspondents and international newsgathering: The role of fixers*. Routledge.

Murrell, C. 2019. Fixers as entrepreneurs. *Journalism studies* 20(12), pp. 1679-1695.

Nacos, B. 2016. *Terrorism and counterterrorism*. Routledge.

Nacos, B. L. 2003. Terrorism as breaking news: Attack on America. *Political Science Quarterly* 118(1), pp. 23-52.

Nacos, B. L. et al. 2007. Post-9/11 terrorism threats, news coverage, and public perceptions in the United States. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV)* 1(2), pp. 105-126.

Nadadur, R. D. 2007. Self-censorship in the Pakistani print media. *South Asian Survey* 14(1), pp. 45-63.

Nawaz, S. 2008. *Crossed swords: Pakistan, its army, and the wars within*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Nazar, M. 2016. Pakistan's Frontline Status, War on Terror and the Jama'at-E-Islami Response. *South Asia Research* 36(2), pp. 143-166.

Niazi, Z. 1986. *Press in chains*. South Asia Books.

Niazi, Z. 2005. *Fettered Freedom*. Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi.

Nohrstedt, S. A. 2009. New War Journalism. Trends and Challenges.

Nohrstedt, S. A. and Ottosen, R. 2014. *New wars, new media and new war journalism: professional and legal challenges in conflict reporting*. Nordicom.

Norris, P. et al. 2013. Framing terrorism: The news media, the government and the public, eds. Routledge.

Nye Jr, J. S. 2004. Soft power and American foreign policy. *Political science quarterly* 119(2), pp. 255-270.

Oliver, P. E. and Myers, D. J. 1999. How events enter the public sphere: Conflict, location, and sponsorship in local newspaper coverage of public events. *American journal of sociology* 105(1), pp. 38-87.

Owen, T. 2016. Global media power. *The Sage handbook of digital journalism*, pp. 25-34.

Palmer, J. and Fontan, V. 2007. 'Our ears and our eyes' Journalists and fixers in Iraq. *Journalism* 8(1), pp. 5-24.

Palmer, L. 2018. *Becoming the story: War correspondents since 9/11*. University of Illinois Press.

Palmer, L. 2019. *The fixers: Local news workers and the underground labor of international reporting*. Oxford University Press.

Palmer, L. and Melki, J. 2018. Shape shifting in the conflict zone: The strategic performance of gender in war reporting. *Journalism Studies* 19(1), pp. 126-142.

Paterson, C. and Sreberny, A. 2004. *International news in the 21st century*. Georgetown University Press.

Paterson, C. A. 2014. *War reporters under threat: The United States and media freedom*. Pluto Press.

Pedelty, M. 2020. *War stories: The culture of foreign correspondents*. Routledge.

Perlez, J. 2010. Pakistani Journalist Speaks Out After an Attack. *New York Times* 24th of September, 2010.

Pfau, M. et al. 2004. Embedding journalists in military combat units: Impact on newspaper story frames and tone. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 81(1), pp. 74-88.

Pfau, M. et al. 2005. Embedded reporting during the invasion and occupation of Iraq: How the embedding of journalists affects television news reports. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 49(4), pp. 468-487.

Philo, G. and Berry, M. 2004. *Bad news from Israel*. JSTOR.

Pintak, L. 2009. Border guards of the 'imagined' watan. *Arab Journalists and the New Arab*,

Pintak, L. and Nazir, S. J. 2013. Pakistani journalism: at the crossroads of Muslim identity, national priorities and journalistic culture. *Media, Culture & Society* 35(5), pp. 640-665.

Poole, E. and Richardson, J. E. 2010. *Muslims and the news media*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Powell, K. A. 2011. Framing Islam: An analysis of US media coverage of terrorism since 9/11. *Communication Studies* 62(1), pp. 90-112.

Pyevich, C. M. et al. 2003. The relationship among cognitive schemas, job-related traumatic exposure, and posttraumatic stress disorder in journalists. *Journal of Traumatic Stress: Official Publication of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies* 16(4), pp. 325-328.

Rabasa, A. et al. 2007. *Ungoverned territories: Understanding and reducing terrorism risks*. Rand Corporation.

Rabiee, F. 2004. Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the nutrition society* 63(4), pp. 655-660.

Rafi, G. 2017. The Fall of Swat Valley to the Taliban: Reflecting on Immediate and Long Term Causes. *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 9(2), pp. 29-45.

Rahman Ullah, P. and Khan, A. U. 2017. Role of FM Radio in Education (A Case Study of FM Radio in Peshawar). *J. Soc. Sci* 3(3), pp. 9-16.

Rantanen, T. 2005. *The media and globalization*. Sage.

Rashid, A. 2001. *Taliban: The story of the Afghan warlords*. Pan Macmillan.

Rehman, A. 2013. Impact of drone attacks in Pakistan and the war on terror: A consideration of the effects of drone attacks in Pakistan and whether they are helping or not to win the war on terror! Malmö högskola/Kultur och samhälle.

Rehmat, A. 2008. Murder and Mayhem: the worst year ever for Pakistani media. *Annual State of Pakistan Media Report 2007* 8,

Ricchiardi, S. 2012. *Challenges for independent news media in Pakistan*. Center for International Media Assistance Washington, DC.

Richardson, J. E. 2004. *(Mis) representing Islam: The racism and rhetoric of British broadsheet newspapers*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Richardson, J. E. 2009. 'Get shot of the lot of them': Election reporting of Muslims in British newspapers. *Patterns of Prejudice* 43(3-4), pp. 355-377.

Robinson, M. and Robertson, S. 2010. Young men's health promotion and new information communication technologies: illuminating the issues and research agendas. *Health Promotion International* 25(3), pp. 363-370.

Robinson, P. 2011. The CNN effect reconsidered: Mapping a research agenda for the future. SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England.

Robinson, P. et al. 2009. UK media and media management during the 2003 invasion of Iraq. *American Behavioral Scientist* 52(5), pp. 678-688.

Rodgers, J. 2012. *Reporting conflict*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Roulston, K. 2010. Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative research* 10(2), pp. 199-228.

Russell, J. 2007. *Chechnya-Russia's' war on Terror'*. Routledge.

Sacks, H. 1984. Notes on methodology. *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*, pp. 21-27.

Said, E. 1978. Introduction to Orientalism.

Said, E. W. 2008. *Covering Islam: How the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world (Fully revised edition)*. Random House.

Schiller, N. G. et al. 1992. Towards a definition of transnationalism. *Annals of the New York academy of sciences* 645(1), pp. ix-xiv.

Schlesinger, P. 1990. Rethinking the sociology of journalism: Source strategies and the limits of media-centrism. *Public communication: The new imperatives*, pp. 61-83.

Schmid, A. P. 2012. The revised academic consensus definition of terrorism. *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6(2),

Schudson, M. 1989. The sociology of news production. *Media, Culture & Society* 11(3), pp. 263-282.

Schudson, M. and Anderson, C. 2009. Objectivity, professionalism, and truth seeking in journalism.*The handbook of journalism studies*. Routledge, pp. 108-121.

Schwedler, J. 2001. Islamic Identity. *SAIS Review (1989-2003)* 21(2), pp. 1-17.

Seale, C. 2004. *Social research methods: A reader*. Psychology Press.

Seib, P. 2016. *Beyond the front lines: How the news media cover a world shaped by war*. Springer.

Seo, S. 2016. Marginal majority at the postcolonial news agency: Foreign journalistic hires at the Associated Press. *Journalism Studies* 17(1), pp. 39-56.

Shaheen, A. 2012. Senior journalist Absar Alam appointed as PEMRA chairman. *Express Tribune* 23rd Oct, 2012.

Shane, S. 2015. Faulted for Avoiding 'Islamic'Labels to Describe Terrorism, White House Cites a Strategic Logic. *The New York Times*,

Shoemaker, P. J. and Reese, S. D. 2013. *Mediating the message in the 21st century: A media sociology perspective*. Routledge.

Siddiqua, A. et al. 2020. Media Framing of Pandemics: A Case Study of the Coverage of COVID-19 in Elite Newspapers of Pakistan. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies* 6(4), pp. 1267-1275.

Silverman, D. 2020. *Qualitative research*. sage.

Simon, J. 2014. *The New Censorship*. Columbia University Press.

Simons, G. 2016. *Mass media and modern warfare: reporting on the Russian war on terrorism*. Routledge.

Siraj, S. A. and Hussain, S. 2012. War Media Galore in Pakistan: A Perspective on Taliban Conflict. *Global Media Journal: Pakistan Edition* 5(1),

Stafford, A. 2013. The Role of the Media during the Cold War. *E-International Relations, Oct* 26,

Storie, L. K. et al. 2014. The death of bin Laden: How Russian and US media frame counterterrorism. *Public relations review* 40(3), pp. 429-439.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. M. 1997. *Grounded theory in practice*. Sage.

Takeyh, R. and Gvosdev, N. 2002. Do terrorist networks need a home? *Washington Quarterly* 25(3), pp. 97-108.

Taylor, I. 2017. *Media Relations of the Anti-War Movement: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*. Routledge.

Thrall, A. T. et al. 2014. May we have your attention please? Human-rights NGOs and the problem of global communication. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 19(2), pp. 135-159.

Thrall, T. and Cramer, J. K. 2009. American foreign policy and the politics of fear. *Threat Inflation since 9* 11,

Thussu, D. K. 2006. *Media on the move: Global flow and contra-flow*. Routledge.

Thussu, D. K. 2007. TheMurdochization'of news? The case of Star TV in India. *Media, Culture & Society* 29(4), pp. 593-611.

Thussu, D. K. 2009. *Internationalizing media studies*. Routledge London.

Thussu, D. K. and Freedman, D. 2003. *War and the media: Reporting conflict 24/7*. Sage.

Todd, P. et al. 2009. *Spies, Lies and the War on Terror*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Tuch, A. N. et al. 2012. The role of visual complexity and prototypicality regarding first impression of websites: Working towards understanding aesthetic judgments. *International journal of human-computer studies* 70(11), pp. 794-811.

Tuchman, G. 1978. Making news: A study in the construction of reality.

Tumber, H. and Webster, F. 2006. *Journalists under fire: Information war and journalistic practices*. Sage.

Van Dijk, T. A. 1992. Discourse and the denial of racism. *Discourse & society* 3(1), pp. 87-118.

Van Ham, P. 2003. War, lies, and videotape: Public diplomacy and the USA's war on terrorism. *Security Dialogue* 34(4), pp. 427-444.

Vos, T. P. 2019. Journalism as institution.*Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*.

Wang, L. 2010. Talibanization in the tribal areas of Pakistan. *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies (in Asia)* 4(1), pp. 74-100.

Wanta, W. et al. 2004. Agenda setting and international news: Media influence on public perceptions of foreign nations. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 81(2), pp. 364-377.

Wieviorka, M. 2004. *The making of terrorism*. University of Chicago Press.

Wilkinson, S. 2011. Analysing focus group data. *Qualitative research* 3, pp. 168-184.

Williams, K. 2003. *Understanding media theory*. Oxford University Press.

Willis, W. J. 2007. *The media effect: How the news influences politics and government*. Praeger Publishers.

Yusuf, H. 2011. Conspiracy fever: The US, Pakistan and its media. *Survival* 53(4), pp. 95-118.

Yusuf, H. et al. 2013. *Mapping digital media: Pakistan*. Open Society Foundations.

Zaidi, S. M. A. 2014. OF MULLAHS, RADIO AND RELIGION: THE TALIBAN AND TRIBAL SWAT 'S WOMEN IN PAKISTAN. *WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN PEACE BUILDING: CONFLICT, COMMUNITY AND CARE*, p. 181.

Zelizer, B. and Allan, S. 2011. *Journalism after september 11*. Taylor & Francis.

Zubaida Aziz, D. and Erum, R. 2021. US DRONE STRATEGY IN WAR AGAINST TERRORISM AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 4(1),