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**THE INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM AND  
NATIONALISM BY THE ELITE THROUGH THE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE MEDIA IN PAKISTAN**

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Submitted for PhD in Social Anthropology  
University of Kent at Canterbury

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PhD in Social Anthropology

**The Interpretation of Islam and Nationalism by the Elite Through the English  
Language Media in Pakistan**

**ABSTRACT**

The media is constructed and interpreted through what people 'know'. That knowledge is, for the most part, created through day to day experiences. In Pakistan, Islam and nationalism are two components of this social knowledge which are intrinsically tied to the experiences of the Pakistani people. Censorship and selection are means through which this knowledge is articulated and interpreted.

General conceptions of partially shared large scale bodies of knowledge and ideas reinforce, and are reinforced by, general medium of mass communication: the print and electronic media. Focusing on the government, media institutions and Pakistani elites, I describe and analyse the different, sometimes conflicting, interpretations of Islam and Pakistani nationalism manifest in and through media productions presented in Pakistan.

The media means many things, not least of which is power. It is the media as a source of power that is so frequently controlled, directed and manipulated. The terminology may be slightly different according to the context within which one is talking - propaganda, selection, etc. - but ultimately it comes down to the same thing - censorship. Each of the three groups: government, media institutions and Pakistani elites - have the power to interpret and censor media content and consideration must be taken of each of the other power holders consequently restricting the power of each group in relation to the other two. The processes of this manipulation and their consequences form the major themes of this thesis.

# CONTENTS

Page No.

*List of Plates*

*List of Figures*

*Acknowledgements*

<b>CHAPTER ONE - Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Social Identity, Self and the Media	5
Looking Back - Sources and Informants	16
Looking Ahead	29
<b>CHAPTER TWO - Islam, Pakistan and the Elite</b>	<b>34</b>
Pre-Partition and the Idea of Pakistan	36
Nationalism and ‘The Islamic Republic of Pakistan’	42
Religion -v- Culture	51
Being a Muslim in Pakistan	57
Islamabad’s Elite	62
Literacy and Education	64
English Language	68
Gender Differences	72
Conclusion	79
<b>CHAPTER THREE - ‘The Fourth Pillar of the State’? I</b>	<b>81</b>
‘News’ and the Freedom of the Press	85
The Newspaper Industry’s Development since Partition	91
The Incentive of Advertising	102
Two Recent Disputes	107
Banning of Six Karachi Urdu ‘Evenings’	108
Newsprint Prices	114
Conclusion	118
<b>CHAPTER FOUR - ‘The Fourth Pillar of the State’? II</b>	<b>120</b>
Inside View - ‘What the Papers Say’	123

Political Orientation	126
The Quality of Journalism	132
How important is 'news' in a newspaper?	139
Outside View - 'What the People Say'	142
Islam and the Press	150
Conclusion	159
<b>CHAPTER FIVE - The Politics of Television</b>	<b>161</b>
Pakistan's National Television	164
PTV and STN/NTM	164
SPTV	168
Power abuse -v- power protection	170
Security, Law and Order	176
International Relations	188
Fundamentalism	192
Conclusion	197
<b>CHAPTER SIX - Electronic Media: The Religious Context</b>	<b>199</b>
Acceptability?	201
Religious Programming	207
Programming - By whom, for whom?	211
Advertising	218
The Practice of Censorship	228
Conclusion	234
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN - Interactive Audience</b>	<b>235</b>
Placing Television	239
Groups, Peers and Individuals	244
'Remote' Control	257
Conclusion	259
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT - Conclusion</b>	<b>261</b>
Power and Influence: Government, Media Institutions and	

Individuals	265	
Power and Influence: Other Players	275	
Conclusion	279	
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>282</b>	
<b>Appendix I</b>	<b>Code for Censorship of Films</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Appendix II</b>	<b>Certificate: Lady Punisher II</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>Appendix III</b>	<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>Appendix IV</b>	<b>Press Guidelines - 11 July 1977</b>	<b>301</b>
<b>Appendix V</b>	<b>Karachi Casualty Statistics</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Appendix VI</b>	<b>Advertising Rates</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>307</b>	

## PLATES

		Page No.
Plate 1	News Punch cartoon 'Imran Khan - Rediscovering Nationalism (Playboy)' ( <i>The News</i> 15.5.95: 7)	22
Plate 2	Maxim Cartoon: The Nation (28.7.96: 6)	28
Plate 3	'Gogi' by Nigar Nazar ( <i>The News on Friday</i> 21.6.96: 38)	141
Plate 4	'Hearsay' by Nasir Javeed ( <i>The News on Friday</i> 19.7.96: 38)	141
Plate 5	Licence to Thrill - Gunpoint ( <i>The News on Friday</i> 5.7.96: 2)	203
Plate 6	Help Save My Life - Go on strike & stop Advertisement on PTV, NTM & Radio <i>The News</i> (19.3.1995: 12)	219
Plate 7	'I hate such obscene programmes' ( <i>Dawn</i> 8.7.96: 22)	254

## **TABLES**

	<b>Page No.</b>	
Table 4.1	English Language Newspapers Bought	127
Table 4.2	No. of Newspapers Sold per Group	131
Table 4.3	Magazines and Weekly Newspapers Bought	146
Table 4.4	No. of Newspapers Bought per Household	146
Table 4.5	Language Distribution of Newspapers Bought	147
Table 6.1	Gender Differences in the Watching of Religious Broadcasts	210
Table 6.2	Satellite and Video Ownership	212
Table 7.1	Video Viewing (Language)	248
Table 7.2	Film Genre Viewing	251

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# *Chapter One*

## INTRODUCTION

Within Pakistan, as within other countries, there are pools of ideological resources which may be selectively drawn upon simultaneously or individually. The interpretation of those ideological resources called upon at any given time can vary according to the intention or purpose behind the selection. It is through following this line of thought and examination therefore that we gain an understanding of how it is that different political administrations, media institutions and individuals may have varying understandings and interpretations of Islam and Pakistani nationalism. The banner behind which Pakistan was created was 'Islam in Danger' yet, not since 1947, has the role of Islam been clear with regard to the political running of the nation. The first President of Pakistan and the man who created Pakistan out of India, Mohammad Ali Jinnah made a famous speech to the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947 which can still frequently be found cited in the national press of Pakistan in support of opposing religious and political perspectives or simply questioning Jinnah's original meaning and intent. Those sentences which cause the most confusion but which are most frequently cited are

You are free to go to your mosques or to any other place ... belong to any religion or caste or creed ... that has nothing to do with the business of state. ... Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims. Not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual but in the political sense as citizens of the state.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of the perspective adopted in relation to Jinnah's speech or Islamic ideology generally by successive political administrations, what is absolutely clear is that Islam may not be ignored in Pakistan. Islam was the *raison d'être* for Pakistan's existence and continues to serve as a significant social identity marker to Pakistan's citizens. Regardless of the extent to which Islamic ideology is implemented in political or personal life, it is still regionally situated in South Asia and Pakistan and therefore it is important for any study of the kind considered herein, to consider the implications of nationalism.

Broadly speaking, throughout the course of this thesis we consider five individual but coaxial components - Islam, nationalism, government, media institutions and Islamabad's elite - utilising the media as the axis from which to elucidate their relationship to one another and the media. It is my intention to demonstrate that the media means many things, not least of which is power. It is the media, as a power, which is so frequently controlled, directed and manipulated. The terminology may be slightly different according to the context within which one is talking - propaganda, selection, etc - but ultimately it comes down to the same thing - censorship.

The media is, in many respects, a somewhat anomalous phenomenon. Listening to conversation and presentation, as it appears through the newspapers and televisions as well as from political and public sources, one could be forgiven for thinking of 'the media' as an independent entity, free from outside control and influence. The very foundation of the concept of the 'Fourth Pillar of the State', for example, rests on the print media's position as a politically and ideologically neutral presenter of news originating from political and ideological information. Whilst we are repeatedly exposed to this notion of media neutrality, we are as often made aware of the social and political bias of media presentations, these contradictory messages frequently originating from the same sources.

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter 2

Little more than a moment's thought will tell us that 'the media' is nothing more than a tool, a powerful one granted, but a tool nonetheless. The content of the media is not neutral or self-sufficient but is generated through the interpretations of events - social or political - and notions of what constitutes entertainment, by individuals and groups within the social setting where the newspapers and programming are *being produced and/or received*. The social settings of each nation affects individual and group social identity, indeed, one can go further and say there are considerable regional and ethnic social identity variations within the same nations. There are numerous facets to social identity applicable to any nation, all of which would affect the presentation and interpretation of the media. Pakistan has its own 'official' national, political and religious orientation which are different from those of other countries. The ramifications of each ideological component of social identity are extensive for any nation including Pakistan but throughout the course of this thesis we concentrate specifically upon two of the filters people use to present and interpret media content - Islam and Pakistani nationalism.

Pakistani media productions are not only interpreted through Islam and Pakistani nationalism but are also created through them. We shall see also how foreign productions are made to fit into the Pakistani social and political context. Instrumental in the production and consumption of media content are three basic groups: governments, media institutions and the general public. Needless to say, these groups can be subdivided further and we have done this by frequently referring to the leaders of different administrations, making reference to particular English language print and electronic media institutions and we specifically consider Pakistan's elite residing in Islamabad. One could as easily have focused upon different administrations or political parties, upon the Urdu press and television broadcasting or upon Pakistan's middle or lower classes. It is my contention, however, that the power attached to the three groups which form the basis of this analysis is more direct and pervasive, at least with regard to the international political arena, than other possible groups of study.

Put at its most basic and superficial, throughout the course of this thesis we consider the means by which Islam and Pakistani nationalism form the bedrock of Pakistani media production and consumption. We consider how governments try to tell the population what these two things are, the media institutions themselves present a version of how they see them and finally, the people themselves use their faculties of knowledge, understanding, censorship and selection (affected by both the previous factors) in order to interpret what comes into the newspapers or

onto the screen.

My concentration on the elite population of Islamabad has the consequent affect of my focusing significantly upon English language newspaper and television productions. While some of these media sources are nationally produced, particularly in the case of newspapers, others are produced outside of Pakistan when they either reach the public via the government controlled or influenced media institutions or directly into the Pakistani home via video or satellite connection. In the case of nationally produced media presentations, whether print or electronic, the censorship carried out by government employed censor personnel is minimal, as the majority of the censorship has already taken place through the implementation of self censorship by the production and editorial teams. This institutional self censorship is, as we shall see, religiously and politically motivated. The same censorship processes as practised in Pakistan are, at least in part, consistent with those of other countries which have access to a print and electronic media. In Pakistan, however, the censorship processes employed for the electronic media are somewhat unsophisticated and therefore it is frequently relatively easy to follow the procedures. Clips taken from Pakistani television's different channels and contained on the CD Rom attached hereto provide examples of censorship methods and occasions.

While news in the West may be recognised as containing a bias (eg. Glasgow News Group), it is rarely referred to as propaganda, no matter how true such an accusation may be.<sup>2</sup> In Pakistan, the political use of the electronic media is often scorned and condemned as government propaganda. The awareness of the blatant manipulation may, however, mean that the associated power is reduced - propaganda is only of use when it is believed and, therefore, when it is not considered propaganda. Censorship is overwhelmingly regarded as a negative phenomenon. However, censorship cannot be seen purely in these terms without neglecting other aspects of the process, perhaps aspects which are applied more regularly and forcefully, although with less appreciation of their existence. Censorship is acknowledged and condemned by various human rights organisations as well as other political organisations as an instrument for the suppression of freedom. We do not repudiate this argument, but would suggest that censorship as a whole is vastly under-acknowledged as an important, if not essential, boundary marker. It is the physical action of cutting out scenes or articles, which can provide insight into the process of dividing the Pakistani from the Indian or the Muslim for the

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<sup>2</sup>Herman and Chomsky (1988) make some valuable contributions with regard to the background of propaganda in the media.

Christian for example.

It would be naive sweepingly to categorise political censorship as bad and religious censorship as good and it is the intention of this thesis to consider the implications of censorship and, more broadly, the media within the context of the interpretation of Islam and nationalism by governments, media institutions and the elite within Pakistan. Through censorship procedures it is possible to see the flexibility and variability of notions of Pakistani social identity and how it may be harnessed to support a proposed identity, changing over time. It is through the media and censorship processes that identities are created and recreated, interpreted and reinterpreted. It is frequently assumed to be in the power of those in control of the electronic and print media to direct these social identities through presentations which legitimate the identities and the status of those imposing them. However, as Das has pointed out and as we hope to demonstrate throughout the course of this thesis

No bureaucracy, however powerful, can shape the world totally as if it were a reflection of its own desires. (Das, 1995:169)

It is necessary to make a brief but specific examination of social identity and 'self' in order to fully contextualise the role and interpretation of the media within Pakistani society. It is my contention that governments, media institutions and Islamabad's elite are conscious of what it means to be a Pakistani and a Muslim. It is this consciousness of social identity through which the media, whether national or international, print or electronic, passes and can consequently be interpreted and appreciated by the reader and viewer. Further, one should not lose sight of the fact that the process of identification has a dual effect. As Jenkins states

The notion of identity simultaneously establishes two possible relations of comparison between persons or things: similarity, on the one hand, and difference, on the other. (Jenkins, 1996: 3-4)

### **Social Identity, 'Self' and the Media**

As the quote from Jenkins cited above indicates, the notion of social identity results in a dichotomy whereby one is simultaneously made aware of the similarity and difference between

oneself and others whether they be within one's own society or outside of it. It is this dichotomy which Jenkins presents, together with Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Communities' (1993), which provides the theoretical foundation of the research presented within this thesis. It is the ability to recognise similarity and difference of social identity which forms the basis of presentation, censorship and consumption of media representations. As Anderson points out

The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. (Emphasis in original) (Anderson, 1993: 7)

Being a Pakistani Muslim differentiates citizens of Pakistan from citizens of India and the West, Muslims from Hindus and Christians and so on. There are 'cultural repertoires' which are tied up with the social identity and, as Jenkins states,

Since identity is bound up with cultural repertoires of intentionality such as morality, on the one hand, and with networks of constraint and possibility, on the other, it is an important concept in our understanding of action and its outcomes, both intended and unintended. (Jenkins, 1996:26)

It is aspects of similarity (or imagined similarity) of social identity which provide reference points for the construction, reconstruction and maintenance of codes of viewing, reading, content, censorship etc. A 'knowledge' of social identity at the national level within Pakistan is deeply embedded in Islam. By drawing upon various symbols and terminology, politicians (and others) frequently assume that they are in a position to manipulate people's consciousness. Pakistan's various administrations have attempted to affect the population's understanding of 'Pakistani culture' and Islam by emphasising some elements and rejecting others according to their own national and international objectives (see Chapter 2). There is a power to be gained by being in control of these symbols and it is these which governments attempt to harness. As Kapferer most eloquently phrases it,

Nationalism makes culture into an object and a thing of worship.

Culture is made the servant of power. (Kapferer, 1988:209)

It is the negotiation of social identity (predominantly relating to Pakistan's Islamic social identity) which has occupied significant political energy as the successive administrations of Pakistan have never fully determined the role that Islamic ideology should play within Pakistan. Consequently, Islam has become a tool of power of the different governments. Each administration attempts to reduce or increase the public profile of Islamic ideology while, at the same time, acknowledging that Islam is a significant part of Pakistani social identity and consequently cannot be disregarded altogether. Through a use of the media, governments have presented their versions of national and Islamic identity. Their ability to make such representations has, at the same time, served as a means of political legitimation. Censorship is a crucial element in the process of the interpretation of Islamic and national identity which combine together with other elements to form Pakistan's social identity (identities) and subsequently lead to the political legitimation of the administration making the representations.

Censorship, whether imposed by an official body or oneself, is a recognition that the content of the media, either print or electronic, is, in some way, foreign to the censorer's and/or consumer's notion of acceptability. It is when one is confronted with media projected material which falls outside the boundaries of a nation's socially recognised acceptability that national social identity becomes relevant to the television and newspaper consumer. Censorship is primary as an active response to television and newspaper consumption and as a reflection of social identity for the community and the self. Censorship is a means by which the group or individual is able to eliminate the content of programming or articles which run counter to acceptability (political, social or moral) recognised by the Pakistani Muslim social identity. It is in this respect therefore that we can consider the means by which, as Fiske states,

Television is not the dominating monster it is often thought to be; viewers have considerable control, not only over its meanings, but over the role that it plays in their lives (Fiske, 1987: 74)

However, it is important not to take Fiske's statement too far but to bear in mind that there is a power attached to the media in that, while the audience may have the power of exclusion they do not have access to the mechanisms of presentation and creation. Fiske falls in with those writers who rejected earlier media researchers' claims that the media had overarching control,

not only of what was presented through the media but also how those presentations were understood. In his dismissal of such claims Fiske, and others, went to the opposite extreme in their rejection of media power. Throughout the course of this thesis we shall consider the various mechanisms of power and control as wielded by different groups - the government, media institutions and Pakistani elites - and how each group is similarly restrained by these same mechanisms but utilised by the other groups.

It is the act of censorship which assists as a controlling mechanism over meaning. This kind of censorship can be broken down into two main types: that which is imposed by the governing body, what we shall call 'official censorship' and that which is imposed by oneself - 'self censorship'. This broad distinction of censorship types implies a far more basic model of the circumstances of censorship than is presented throughout the course of this thesis. It does, however, provide me with a starting point from which to consider who it is we mean when using the term 'self censorship'. At its most basic level, self-censorship is applied to the act of censorship not carried out at the media's source of origin or by the official implementation of Censorship Codes before the newspaper or television programme reaches the viewer or reader. However, it is necessary to deconstruct the term 'self' a little if we are to follow the complexities of media consumption within Pakistani society.

Following Marsella et al (1985), the self, far from being static, is a malleable and undetermined entity, the boundaries of which are flexible.

The self changes through time. It changes in the life cycle and/or with social change occurring external to the individual. Such changes can cause new tensions in the experiential self, resulting in changing forms of behaviour. (Marsella, Devos & Hsu, 1985:6)

This truism may, however, be more revealing when contextualised within the notion of social identity. As Jenkins maintains

Identity can in fact only be understood as process... One's social identity - indeed one's social identities, for who we are is always singular and plural - is never a final and settled matter. (Jenkins, 1994: 4)

It is cultural traditions of thought, according to Marsella and his colleagues, which influence how the self perceives itself. They stress the distinction between adaptation and adjustment in understanding human behaviour, whereby it is adaptation which relies upon the conscious process of interaction between oneself and the environment, while adjustment refers to a non-interactive process carried out by the individual according to his or her own criteria of socially correct and acceptable behaviour. It is here that we can apply the notions of 'official censorship' and 'self censorship'.

In the media context we are comparing the means by which the government and other outside forces attempt to affect the dynamics of Pakistani identity through manipulation of religious codes in censorship and 'propaganda' practices. Behaviour, according to Marsella et al 'is often a result of continuous conflict between experiences of self and one's social role expectations.' (Marsella, Devos and Hsu, 1985:6). These writers maintain that the self must be considered apart from one's social role

Adaptation is an interactively social concept. Behaviour is often judged by the "self" as well as being socially judged by others with whom one is in interaction. Behaviour is judged consciously as adaptive or maladaptive in reference to social expectations or in reference to such criteria as that of social success or failure. (Marsella, Devos and Hsu, 1985:6).

This adaptation in relation to social expectations can be demonstrated with regard to the media and the variation of the extent to which self-censorship is imposed, depending upon who is in the room with whom. All my informants maintained that they varied censorship practices if there were older or younger people in the room or people of the opposite sex. However, they frequently felt able to reduce the censorship requirements when they were with members of their peer group or when alone. The following two comments made by different informants - one male and the other female - should serve to introduce this adaptive attitude to self censorship. As one of the informants told me

I'm old enough and mature enough but other kids aren't. And with adults I censor due to respect.

The other informant said

If I sit with a group of friends we don't censor, but certain rock videos or shows have to be censored with my grandparents or someone like that around.<sup>3</sup>

The core of the argument presented throughout the course of this thesis is to suggest, and demonstrate, that it is social identity, particularly in relation to nationalism and religion, which dictates media presentation and consumption. Francis Robinson's article 'Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print' (1993) and his recent article 'Religious Change and the Self in Muslim South Asia since 1800' suggests that the 19th and 20th centuries saw a shift in focus of Muslim piety from the next world to this world.

The balance which had long existed between the other-worldly and the this-worldly aspects of Islam was moved firmly in favour of the latter. (Robinson, 1997:1)

With an emphasis on the this-worldly came an assumption by individual Muslims of responsibility for creating Muslim society on earth whereby the individual came to the fore as an active agent. Robinson attributes this change in emphasis toward the individual and the this-worldly to British colonial influences and the import of western ideas of individualism, personal fulfilment and the rights of man. For the Reformists to whom Robinson attributes the movement, God was still merciful but also to be feared and therefore sectarianism could be explained, in part at least, as

Muslims in different social and intellectual locations strove with great sincerity to find the right way towards salvation. (Robinson, 1997:6).<sup>4</sup>

With the change in status of the individual so too, we would suggest, came a change in the potential for the use of the Islamic symbolism and terminology in order to legitimate political

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<sup>3</sup>See Chapter 7.

<sup>4</sup>Some parallels can be drawn between the reaction of the Muslims of South Asia as presented by Robinson and Weber's work relating to Calvinism and its links to the introduction of capitalism (Weber, 1930).

movements and the creation of the Pakistani nation. Robinson points out that the ulama undermined its own position within Indian society.

By translating key works of the Islamic tradition into Indian languages and by printing them largescale, [the ulama] aimed to give Muslim society strength to cope with colonial rule, but in the process they helped to destroy their own monopoly over religious knowledge. (Robinson, 1997:7).

With the move away from the ulama and towards individualism, political groups could harness symbolism which was previously limited to the ulama and kept distinct from the political arena.

There is the sense of empowerment that comes with the knowledge that it is humanity that fashions the world. There is a sense of personal autonomy and individual possibility that comes with the knowledge that the individual makes choices. There is the transfer of the symbols and centres of meaning in life from the signs of God and the friends of God to the mundane things of ordinary life. And there is the development of that extra dimension of the self, the internal space. (Robinson, 1997:13)

Parallels can be drawn between Robinson and James Curran's article 'Communications, Power and Social Order' (1982). While Curran presents findings in relation to the Christian tradition, he too points to the direct accessibility of religious materials, predominantly the Bible, as a cause of the weakening of the power of the Church. Curran uses the writings of Kantorowicz (1957), Ullmann (1969, 1970 and 1975) and others to point to the selective view of history presented by the Catholic Church. It was the expansion of book production which contributed to a change in the status of the Church.

This diffusion of the Bible undermined the monopolistic position of the clergy as agents of religious communication, and threatened their authority as mediators of religious knowledge by providing direct access to an alternative, more authoritative source of religious teaching - that of Christ as reported in the Scriptures. (Curran, 1982:217)

In the same way that monasteries dominated book production prior to the thirteenth century and the Church dominated as educators, both of which reinforced the ecclesiastical view of the world, so too can we make connections with the maddrassahs and the publications sanctioned by the ulama as pointed to by Robinson (1997).

While Robinson mentions only in passing the relevance of the mass media and concentrates on 'self', Curran concentrates on the mass media, predominantly in the form of the newspaper industry, neglecting explicit reference to 'self' altogether. However, we would suggest that reference to 'self' is easily applied. As Curran and other modern media researchers have shown (eg. Cooper and Jahoda, 1947; Hovland, Janis and Kelley, 1953; Klapper, 1966), and as we attempt to do throughout the course of this thesis,

People tend to read, understand and recall elements within a communication selectively, in ways that accord with their prior dispositions. (Curran, 1982:219)

Notions of 'self' play a significant part in processing the information received, whether it comes from religious or secular sources.

Curran takes a predominantly secularist view of modern British society and points to the role of the media as an alternative to the Christian church.

Like the medieval Church, the media link together different groups and provide a shared experience that promotes social solidarity. The media also emphasize collective values that bind people close together, in a way that is comparable to the influence of the medieval Church; the communality of the Christian faith celebrated by Christian rites is now replaced by the communalities of consumerism and nationalism celebrated in media 'rites' such as international sporting contests (that affirm national identities) and consumer features (that celebrate a collective identity as consumers). (Curran, 1982:227)

While we would suggest that similarities can be drawn with the press of Pakistan we would point to the significance of the Islamic terminology and symbolism used within the print media,

embedding itself within the community. Unlike Curran's example, however, while the print media of Pakistan has attempted to draw for itself some of these niches within society it has, like the government, done so with the aid of Islam (as will be referred to in greater detail in the following chapters), rather than as a replacement to it.

Elizabeth Eisenstein has also considered the implications of the print media on (Western) society and thought but her conjectures extend beyond the boundaries of religion upon which both Robinson and Curran have concentrated. While looking at the implications of standardisation, Eisenstein considers that there has been an underestimation of the effects which relate to how printed material is presented rather than text emendations or errors (1981: 56). She maintains that the thoughts of readers are guided by the way the contents of books are arranged and presented suggesting that basic changes in book format may lead to changes in thought patterns.

Of all the new features introduced by the duplicative powers of print, preservation is possibly the most important. No manuscript, however useful as a reference guide could be preserved for long without undergoing corruption by copyists, and this sort of 'preservation' rested precariously on the shifting demands of local elites and the fluctuating incidence of trained scribal labour. (Eisenstein 1981: 59-6)

Eisenstein goes on to suggested that

It seems to have been permanence that introduced progressive change. The preservation of the old, in brief, launched a tradition of the new. (Eisenstein 1981: 65)

As individuals were able to decide for themselves what they read and how they interpreted such readings so the hold of the church over theological interpretation and understanding diminishes. There is no 'church' within the Islamic tradition but there has been, as we have seen through the work of Robinson, a change in the thinking of the Muslim community since the translation of key works within the Islamic tradition. However, unlike the Christian world, regions of Islamic ideological dominance have not turned away from their religious foundations towards secularism but instead have frequently turned to more fundamentalist thinking. Gellner has

attempted to explain this apparently contradictory phenomenon in his book 'Postmodernism, Reason and Religion' (1992). His reviews of postmodernism and relativism are rather scathing as he apparently has little time for either. He points out that he is not a follower of Islamic ideology either but he does present a convincing argument for its continuance and indeed enhancement, in the face of secularisation and a more powerful and secular West. Gellner points out that doctrine and law were both bound up in the Message received by the Prophet.

The fact that, in this way, legislation is pre-empted by the deity has profound implications for Muslim life. It does not merely mean that a fundamentalist may have difficulties in accepting modern law and legislative practices; it also means that a certain kind of separation of powers was built into Muslim society from the very start, or very nearly from the start. This version of the separation of powers did not need to wait for some Enlightenment doctrine concerning the desirability of a pluralist social order and of the internal balance of independent institutions. (Gellner, 1992: 7)

Gellner goes on to point out the differences between the High Islam of the scholars and the Low Islam of the people which he maintains are hardly discernible but each has its place within the social structure. While High Islam emphasised the religion's monotheism and nomocracy, Low Islam laid more emphasis upon magic than learning and more on ecstasy than rule-observance (1992:11). It was Low Islam which maintained the status of High Islam in the past and High Islam, according to Gellner, has strengthened its position within society as a consequence of urbanisation, political centralisation, incorporation in a wider market and labour markets. Gellner points to the significant role Islam plays in relation to national identity and suggests that it is difficult to distinguish between Islam and nationalism.

Islam provides a national identity, notably in the context of the struggle with colonialism - the modern Muslim 'nation' is often simply the sum-total of Muslims on a given territory. Reformist Islam confers a genuine shared identity on what would otherwise be a mere summation of the under-privileged. (Gellner, 1992:15)

Ultimately, what Gellner is suggesting is that the reason that Islamic ideology continues to play

such a key role in the social identity of Muslim nations is that as modern requirements encroach upon their societies self-reform can take place within the context of a return to the 'genuinely local ideal'.

Pakistani society is certainly reliant upon Islamic ideology not only in relation to its functioning but also with regard to the legitimation of its very existence. There is much merit in what Gellner says in relation to fundamentalist Islam which does, in fact, provide an insight as to the ideological background of Pakistan. However, one must consider, as we shall see in the forthcoming chapters, that fundamentalism *per se* is a matter of political, if not social, concern within the country. The modernist - compromise - attitude towards Islam still plays a significant role in the social as well as the political spheres of Pakistani life. Fundamentalist, or High, Islam cannot be disregarded and indeed is highly influential within Pakistani society but it is by no means dominant.

In summary then and to conclude this section, we may consider Anthony Cohen's comment that

Society may well be greater than the sum of its parts, the excess including the means by which to compel the actions of its members. But as an intelligible entity, it cannot be conceptualised apart from the individuals who compose it, alone and in their relationships. So far as they are concerned, it is what they perceive it to be, and their actions are motivated by their perceptions of it. ... Similarly, cultural forms, such as language, ritual and other symbolic constructions, are made meaningful and substantial by people's interpretations of them. (Cohen, 1994: 166-7)

It is the means by which external forces, especially the government, attempt to harness symbolism within the media, especially in relation to Islam, in order to construct Pakistani social and cultural identity, which is considered throughout this thesis. However, this is only part of the picture and it is necessary also to examine the means by which people manipulate their 'reading' of media presentations in order to fit the content into their perceptions of self identity, the consciousness they possess of the self. Local moral worlds exist at different levels of Pakistani society and it is the content of these which is utilized and manipulated by the

government, media institutions and the people.

Having considered some ideas in relation to this research project it is now appropriate to introduce the sources and informants which have been used to gather and present an analysis of the interpretation of Islam and nationalism through the media in Pakistan.

### **Looking Back - Sources and Informants**

When I first arrived in Pakistan I lived in G-9/1 with the then Registrar of the private college where I worked, together with her servant. However, after four months I moved to F-7/2 taking the upper portion of a house with a family of two daughters and their mother. There were a number of practical and personal reasons for leaving G-9/1, not least of which was that the majority of my informants lived and/or worked in the F sector which, although geographically not more than three miles away it was socially considerably further. F-7/2 placed me in the centre of my informants residential area and it offered me the opportunity of spending more time with a Pakistani family from the same social class as the rest of my informants (my landlady in G-9/1 had not been Pakistani although she had been married to a Pakistani and had lived in the country for some 35 years). Although my portion of the house was, to some extent, separate from the family's, I ate my meals with them and was able to go down and talk with them whenever I wished.

There were a number of benefits to living and working in Islamabad. Not only was it the political capital of Pakistan but it also housed the Pakistan Television Corporation's (PTV) centre and the Film Censorship Board as well as regional centres for the Network Television Marketing (NTM) and Shaheen Pay TV (SPTV). The central offices of The News were situated in Islamabad's twin town, Rawalpindi, and The Nation had a regional office at Zero Point in Islamabad. While Karachi and Lahore also had print and electronic media offices in their cities these frequently represented Sindhi or Punjabi perspectives. Islamabad was able to provide media presentations which were far less regionally specific. This arose out of the fact that Islamabad was a city inhabited, almost exclusively, by immigrants. Due to this and the consequent diversity in regional origins of my informants I was able to speculate on the attitudes of the elite elsewhere in the country.

Working with the elite, although an accident, had the feel of inevitability about it. This was not only because these were the people I worked with at the college and therefore the people with whom I had the greatest contact. Conducting research in relation to the print and electronic media required informants who could afford access to these facilities. An initially unforeseen consequence of working with the elite was my concentration on English language newspaper and television productions, whether locally or internationally produced. On finding that the elite relied almost exclusively upon the English language media it proved to be a valuable source of information for the examination of ideology behind Pakistani productions and the religious censorship applied to international media.

During the eighteen months of my fieldwork in Pakistan I worked more or less full time at an English language college. The college was founded in 1992 and forms part of the growing number of private educational institutions sprouting up in the regional cities and in Islamabad (HRCP, 1995: 189). Like the majority of these colleges, the language used was English and the qualifications towards which the students are studying were British qualifications of A levels and Degrees. Hoodbhoy (1985:191) considers the significance of such institutions and qualifications upon Pakistani society.

The students attending this college were from amongst the elite of Islamabad and of Pakistan. The majority of them had spent some time abroad and in the West, either on vacation or for longer periods of time. The staff also, for the most part, came from the upper middle classes and the elite as they were required, if not to have studied in the English system completely, at least to have done part of their studies abroad and to have an extremely good knowledge of the English language. Due to the large amount of time I spent with these people and my field of study it quickly became apparent that work centred on these elite would be the most fruitful.

It is the elite within any society, and Pakistan is no exception, who most frequently and consistently hold a significant portion of the nation's power. Further, not only was Pakistan's elite community most in a position to impose its own world view upon the rest of the country, but also, through its access to foreign media sources, the most likely group to be affected by outside influences. It was through their financial and language capabilities that the elite had access to videos and satellite television and consequently were frequently exposed to foreign as well as home media sources.

Being Registrar of the college (a position I was promoted to in May 1995 when the previous Registrar retired) put me in the privileged position of having immediate access to over one hundred students and staff, the majority of whom belonged to the same status group but whose backgrounds were still somewhat different. The ethnic identities of my informants were varied and included Punjabis, Sindhis, Pathans, Baluchi, Kashmiris and Mohajars. As we shall see in Chapter 2, Islamabad is a city of migrants and consequently my informants also originated from all over Pakistan. The occupations of informants or father's of informants were no less varied with landowners, politicians, police, army, navy, lawyers, media institution employees, bureaucrats of various departments, sportsmen and numerous other professions being represented.

The college provided me with a point of access to my informants which would otherwise have been extremely difficult to find within such a family orientated and relatively closed society as Pakistan. However, due to the nature of the position I held within the college, both as Registrar and as a seminar leader in Sociology, there were times when I considered the implications of being a participant observer in these circumstances and whether the participation element of my duties adversely effected my abilities as an observer. In many ways I became a kind of trouble shooter within the college, attempting to improve the efficiency of the college both from an academic as well as an administrative point of view. As Registrar it was my job to keep the accounts, pay the teachers, interview prospective students, ensure that students paid their fees, run and organise the library and, to the best of my ability and together with the Principal, ensure the smooth running of the college. My concern most frequently derived from the fact that, if we use a media derived metaphor of the 'good cop - bad cop routine', I played the role of the 'bad cop'. I was the one who, most frequently, either by my own sense of need or by request, trod on the toes, both of students and of the staff. On occasion I became concerned that this role gave me too much participation and too little observation, particularly as I became alienated from one or two of the staff members. However, in much the same way as Geertz explains how his reaction to the raid on the Balinese village where he conducted his fieldwork allowed him access to the world of Balinese cockfighting (Geertz, 1993: 412-417), so too did my work at the college and concern for the students allow me to become accepted. Everyone at the college either knew what I was doing in Pakistan or had access to the information; at no time did I conceal the fact that I was doing research or what it was on.

Whether or not I instigated such conversations, there was considerable talk in relation to

newspaper articles and television programming. Media presentations form the basis of much conversation which is carried on outside the viewing context. As Morley points out

Qualitative research strategies such as ethnography are principally designed to gain access to 'naturalized domains' and their characteristic activities. The strength of these approaches lies in the possibilities generated from contextual understanding of the connections between different aspects of the phenomena being studied. Clearly, this type of analysis is dependent on various techniques of 'triangulation' in order to reconcile different aspects of the observational work. (Morley, 1992:186)

I have used techniques of 'triangulation' in order to supplement, verify and back up the findings obtained through participant observation. I carried out a total of twenty five tape recorded interviews, ten of which were with media personal and the remaining fifteen were extensive interviews with informants of different ages, genders and occupations. These fifteen interviews were spread over the eighteen months of my fieldwork and primarily served as an aide memoir, backing up information already gleaned from observation and conversation. The interviews also occasionally served to draw my attention to aspects and perspectives of information I was gathering which I had not fully appreciated. The remaining ten interviews were carried out with print and electronic media personnel, people whom I would not have been able to question as extensively without the aid of an interview environment. Five of those interviews were with members of the electronic media, five with the print media and one was a media personality.

Those interviews with electronic media personnel included interviews with Aslam Azhar, probably the most respected and well known of all previous PTV Managing Directors, the BBC's Pakistan correspondent and a representative of SPTV. A further interview with a senior member of the PTV staff lasted some seven and a half hours and was held over 3 meetings. The final interview relating to the electronic media was with the Director of the Film Censorship Board.

The interview with the Director of the Film Censorship Board was a little exceptional in that although not directly related to television, as it dealt with the productions to be presented at the

cinema, there were obviously some connections<sup>5</sup> and helped shed some light on the censorship issue as a whole. The most useful aspect of the interview was an opportunity to see the censored portions of three films - one English language import, one Pushto and one Punjabi - which had been through the censorship process the previous day. These were the scenes within the films which were deemed unsuitable for public viewing. The first series of clips had been edited out of the English language film and it was not difficult to see why as it was an 'adult' film containing a more than average amount of explicit sex. Bearing in mind that I was sitting in the screening room with the Director, his secretary and the projectionist, all of whom were male, it was not a comfortable experience (particularly when one takes into account that I had already been living in Pakistan for over a year and was used to the censorship of kissing scenes let alone this kind of material) and therefore I asked for the clips to be turned off. Apparently there were some fifteen minutes of clips which were censored from the film.

The Pushto film, I was told, had been censored on the ground of vulgarity also, but it was of a much less explicit nature than the previous film. It was a matter of common knowledge that Pushto films were vulgar (not that anyone admitted to having seen them) and consequently I had frequently been told that the Pushto movies were vulgar. It should be borne in mind that the Pushtoon area of Pakistan and the Pathans generally are regarded by themselves and others, as the most religiously conservative Pakistanis. The main female actor (at least as far as censorship was concerned) was wearing a tight jumper tucked into a pair of leggings with a belt round her waist and thereby revealing her figure to the audience. It was a dance scene which had been censored from this film, the main point of which seemed to be that the woman should thrust her chest forward as many times as possible.

The final series of censored clips came from a Punjabi film starring the late Sultan Rahi who is famous for having made some seven hundred and fifty films in his career - a figure which has earned him a place in the record books.<sup>6</sup> This was the most interesting film as far as censorship was concerned due to the range of motives for censorship. There was a scene of

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<sup>5</sup>The Film Censorship Board has a more liberal policy towards censorship than does the television authority. The common explanation for this difference is that the cinema has a predominantly male audience.

<sup>6</sup>The Nation, Friday Review (1.3.96) made reference to Sultan Rahi's mention in the Guinness Book of Records but, although I scanned all the record books I could find no such reference. However, bearing in mind that the books I did look through concentrated on Hollywood actors and the largest number of films acted in by any star was a lot lower than 700 I am assuming that, if the Sultan Rahi is in no record book he ought to be and therefore I have retained the reference.

sectarian violence with a fight between Sunni and Shi'i groups at the foot of a mosque while in the foreground of the shot there was a boy standing on the Mosque's wall calling the Azan (lit. 'announcement', the call for prayer). When he had finished the call to prayer he turned round, picked up a machine gun and began shooting at members of the crowd below. Another censored part of the film was the shooting and destruction of four statues of Hindu origin. The Director of the Censorship Board explained that the Censor Code specifically states that there should not be any statements made against Islam or any other religions (see Appendix I).

There was a number of scenes of violence edited out of the film (something Punjabi films are renowned for): sectarian violence, violence by the army and constabulary and violence in general. However, there were a couple of scenes which came out where it was apparent that there was no violence but there were some dialogues between the police and prisoners threatening torture or retaliation, which were unacceptable. There were also a few scenes that were censored because they were seen as too sexual, but these were relatively small in number and time in relation to the rest of the censored parts. Finally there was the censorship of a scene which referred to India in as much as there was a signpost reading 'India 104 miles' (see Chapter 6 for discussion).

The Director of the Film Censorship Board explained later that after a film has been reviewed by the Censorship Board it is issued with a certificate which lists the scenes to be excluded before screening on the back. Appendix II shows a copy of a certificate which had been issued for 'Lady Punisher II' which illustrates some of what the censors were excluding from the films. There was a triangle facing upwards on the front of the certificate which indicates that the movie had indeed been censored and on the back there was a list of exclusions. Pakistan does not have a system of film ratings such as U, PG, 15 and 18 but rather all films are censored to a U standard.

I was surprised at the ease with which I obtained the interview with the Director of the Film Censorship Board as obtaining interviews with personnel from the television stations was extremely difficult. Despite months of trying I was unable to speak to Mrs Rana Shaikh, the Managing Director of PTV for the majority of time while I was conducting my fieldwork. I had a similar problem with Network Television Marketing (NTM). I was told that there was only one person who was in a position to speak to me, but again, despite months of trying, I was never able to speak to the gentleman concerned and nobody else was willing to speak to

me. One could speculate that the problems I had in relation to obtaining interviews with senior personnel within the electronic media were, at least in part, due to the restricted freedom of the media in Pakistan.<sup>7</sup>

Gaining interviews with personnel from the print media was not as difficult as with the electronic media and may suggest a correlation between the relative openness of the print media and the closed nature of the electronic media. Those interviews I had with members of the newspaper industry included one with the owner of *The Muslim* and another was with a Marketing Executive from the same newspaper. I also interviewed an editor from *The News* although my original appointment had been with an owner who, upon my arrival, passed me over to the editor. The remaining interview was with an editor from *The Nation*. Each of these interviews lasted in the region of two hours.

The final interview I conducted in relation to the media was with Imran Khan who occasionally wrote articles published in the national press, but, more importantly, was a media celebrity.



Plate 1 News Punch cartoon 'Imran Khan - Rediscovering Nationalism (Playboy)' (*The News* 15.5.95: 7)

Imran Khan made significant use of the print media in order to publicise his philanthropic works as well as his political campaign. However, he was also the subject of much media

<sup>7</sup>See Chapter 5 for further discussion on the freedom of the electronic media.

interest as the 678 (approximate) articles I collected over the eighteen months can attest. These were not always complementary as Plate 1 demonstrates. It was for this reason that I obtained an interview with Imran Khan which took place in Lahore at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust Hospital and lasted for about an hour and fifteen minutes.

Many of my regular informants were reluctant to take part in formal interviews. They maintained that I spoke to them so often that I was in a position to know what they thought without the inconvenience of an interview and, more especially, a tape recorder. However, after some time it became apparent that the nature of the research was such that many mundane but relevant questions did not come up in the usual day-to-day conversations. In an attempt to contextualise much of the information I had already gathered I circulated questionnaires to many of the students and staff at the college and obtained fifty-three responses. The questionnaire itself was designed to be as open in the hope of gaining as much information as possible with little guidance on my part (see Appendix III). Of approximately one hundred questionnaires distributed I collected 53 completed responses. Some of the information generated through these questionnaires has formed the basis of the tables produced in later chapters of this thesis.

When studying the subject of the media, newspapers and television cannot themselves be neglected as a research resource. Throughout my stay I regularly read three different newspapers: Dawn, The News and The Nation. These were the most widely read and influential of the English language newspapers and the majority of my informants read at least one of these (see Table 4.1). I also consulted two weekly newspapers, The Friday Times and Pulse, for the second half of my fieldwork. Periodically, through the whole eighteen months of my fieldwork I obtained copies of monthly magazines, Herald and Newline, and weekly magazine, Politics and Business, which contained relevant and useful articles. From these accumulated sources I collected articles in relation to, roughly speaking, six different subjects: the print media (371 articles), electronic media (591 articles), Islam (323 articles), nationalism and culture (161 articles) and Imran Khan (678 articles although these frequently related to the other topics as well as to Imran Khan himself).<sup>8</sup> The majority of the articles in relation to the print and electronic media and Islam have been scanned onto computer and placed on a concordance file which, despite being a time consuming exercise, has allowed easy access to and filtering of the information contained within each of the articles.

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<sup>8</sup>All of these figures are approximate as some cuttings contain more than one article relating to the same or different topics.

These articles came from various sections of the newspapers and magazines; some from the 'news' pages generated through day to day current events and others from the opinion pages. There were other articles published periodically in relation to special occasions and public holidays such as Jinnah's Birthday (25 December - conveniently coinciding with Christmas Day), Independence Day (14 August) and the different Eids (changing from year to year). These occasions, and others, usually warranted full page or pull-out supplements.

In addition to newspaper articles, I collected published letters from readers of the newspapers which provided a wider range of opinion in relation to the above six subject areas than was possible through day to day contact. I heard it suggested that some of the more radical, religious letters, particularly in relation to vulgarity on television, were sent through organisations that wished to give the impression that Pakistan was more Islamically conservative than was otherwise believed. While I cannot provide evidence that this was indeed the case I also cannot produce evidence that it was not. Whether or not there was any truth to the suggestion, these letters still provide a valuable source of information. These letters gave the impression that religious radicalism was more common than is the case; however, one should bear in mind that there were letters published with conflicting views, also published letters tended to reflect a balance between the radical and liberal.

Newspaper articles constitute a primary source of information about the media itself as well as other aspects of society. Newspaper articles relating to the electronic media, for example, combined with television viewing to expand information from informants.

For the first year of my stay in Pakistan I had no television of my own. (There were televisions in the houses where I lived, but, in both instances, they were situated in the bedrooms of my hosts and therefore access was restricted.<sup>9</sup>) During this initial year, whenever I watched television, it was in the company of others. It was in this way that I learned which programmes people watched, what videos they hired and, most importantly, when and how censorship was imposed. Through watching television with different groups - all female, mixed gender groups, mixed age range including young children and grandparents, parents and so on - I learnt when the occasions for censorship changed, something I would

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<sup>9</sup>See Chapter 7 for more extensive discussion in relation to the position of the television within the household.

never have been able to establish without having first hand experience of those watching circumstances.

The self censorship of a video was far easier to control than that of satellite television as, for television, one must switch over to another channel and then attempt to turn back again to the programme when the objectionable scene has finished but without missing too much of the story. This, needless to say, can be a rather hit-and-miss exercise and somewhat irritating when it happens on a regular basis during the course of one programme. Videos on the other hand can be fast-forwarded and the image can still be seen (if briefly) therefore allowing the operator of the remote control to know when to revert to standard play.

At the end of my first year in Pakistan I was lent a television and video by a friend. I was then able to spend more time watching television independently but with the advantage of a developed knowledge of the background to the ideology behind the creation and censorship of the programming. I was lent the television at the end of February and in June Shaheen Pay TV (SPTV) start airing its cable transmission. I immediately bought the receiver for SPTV so I could make the most of the research opportunity before leaving the field at the end of August.

During those six months of television access I recorded a total of 75 hours of programming from PTV, STN/NTM and SPTV. Twenty four hours of this material relates to Urdu programming covering the spectrum of media presentations from religious programming, to news broadcasts (English and Urdu versions) and Urdu dramas aired on PTV and STN/NTM. Twenty one hours of videoed material relates to English language programming aired on the two national television channels, PTV STN/NTM. These contain programmes such as BBC or CNN news presented by STN; 'Alice', 'Sydney' and 'Fresh Prince of Belair' shown on NTM and 'Dr Quinn Medicine Woman', 'Star Trek' and 'Earth 2' presented by PTV. The remaining thirty hours of tape relates to the various channels and programmes of SPTV although the heaviest concentration of recordings relate to TNT, NBC, MTV, BBC World and Discovery Channel as these channels received the highest proportion and widest variety of censorship and programming. Video Appendix 1 provides examples of censorship taken from three films aired on TNT. I took this opportunity of reproducing examples of censorship in order to introduce the style of censorship to which I regularly refer. Star Sports, ESPN and Asslaam Alaikum Pakistan contained little unacceptable material and before long it became predictable what would be censored, with little or no variation according to staff changes or programme changes. I

collected almost no video recordings of ABN or the Cartoon Network as these channels remained totally or almost totally free of censorship.<sup>10</sup>

The final television watching situation was created by me with some of the older students of the college. The usual format for these sessions was that I brought in the video of the recorded programme or film and we watched it together. Immediately afterwards we began the discussion so that the programme was fresh in the minds of the group. The aim of this group was to assess the immediate reaction to a small selection of videos (both English and Urdu) and programmes from national television and satellite. These discussions were left more or less unguided by me. However, each of the participants was aware of my research and therefore tended to guide the comment about the programme we had just seen themselves along the lines that they thought I was most interested in. Each discussion went on for some time and in considerable detail. There was only one male participant involved in the discussion although it was notable that he talked perhaps as much as the others combined. This may have been partially due to the male/female gender relations within Pakistan but, I suspect in this case, it mostly arose out of his keen personal interest in the electronic media, especially the film business.

There were five of these watching group discussions which covered the spectrum of the viewing options available to the participants.<sup>11</sup> The programmes that we watched and discussed were chosen for different reasons in attempt to gain a diversity of perspective. There were three films: 'Pretty Woman', 'Executive Decision' and 'Jeeva'. 'Pretty Woman'<sup>12</sup> was chosen because it took the old fairy tale of Cinderella and turned it into 'the American Dream' and I wanted to examine the relevance of an alien ideology to Pakistani viewers. 'Executive Decision'<sup>13</sup> was chosen because of articles published in the newspaper which criticised the production for its anti-Islamic stance. One of the articles was a letter which had been written in Malaysia, the other originated in America and read as follows:

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<sup>10</sup>Various clips from these tapes can be seen on the attached CD Rom.

<sup>11</sup>One exception was the programmes on national television. The programme was only available to people who had a national television aerial but two of the participants did not have this as it had been dismantled to obtain a better satellite reception. In this case, they saw the programme after I had recorded it on my own television and then passed it over to them.

<sup>12</sup>Dir. Garry Marshall, 1990 (US)

<sup>13</sup>Dir. Stuart Baird, 1995 (US)

## Islamic group condemns film

WASHINGTON: An Islamic group said Friday it was concerned that a soon-to-be-released film portrays Muslim and Islam in a negative light.

“Executive Decision,” due out March 15, is about the highjacking of a plane by Chechen terrorists who target Washington with a lethal nerve toxin, according to the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

CAIR called on Warner Brothers studio to eliminate links in the movie between Islam and violence, and to insert a disclaimer at the beginning of the film, the group said in a statement.

“It is unfortunate that Muslims are the sole remaining 'safe' villains available to movie producers," the statement said.

CAIR said the Warner Brothers studio had offered to arrange a pre-screening of the film for the Muslim community.—AFP (The News, 3.3.97: 9)

As a representative of the Urdu films I chose the film ‘Jeeva’<sup>14</sup> which had been acclaimed within Pakistan as one of the better films to be produced in the then recent months. The film followed the Urdu formula of death, revenge, love and lots of singing and dancing. Although Islam and religion were brought into the film it was notably culturalised as was observed by the members of the watching group at different points.

‘Baywatch’ is a programme which is frequently referred to in Pakistan as an indication of the depravity of western people, frequently used as a marker against which the principles of Islam could be set, while, at the same time, presented as what the masses wanted to see. The cartoon in Plate 2 highlights this.

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<sup>14</sup>Dir. Syed Noor, 1995 (Pak)

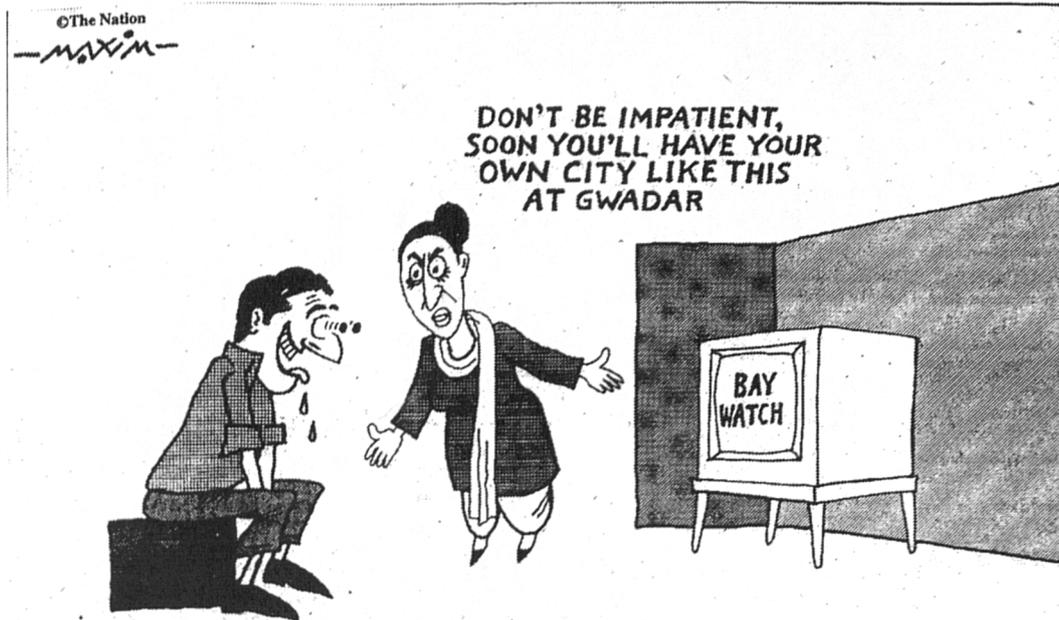


Plate 2 - Maxim Cartoon: The Nation (28.7.96: 6)

As a consequence to the contradictory position of the show in relation to Islamic ideology on the one hand and its enjoyment value, on the other, it formed a necessary part of the watching group selection of films.<sup>15</sup>

The final programme watched by the group was taken from Pakistani national television and was the first episode of a much publicised series called 'Gunpoint'. The reason for choosing this drama was that it was presented as Pakistan's 'first action adventure drama'<sup>16</sup>.

It is a combination of the observations, interviews, questionnaires, newspaper articles, videos and the watching group described above which provide the bases for the findings represented throughout the course of this thesis. In the final section to this introduction we briefly 'look ahead' to the content of this thesis as a presentation of the interpretation of Islam and nationalism through the media by the elite in Pakistan.

<sup>15</sup>Baywatch is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>16</sup>See Chapter 6 for further discussion in relation to Gunpoint.

## Looking Ahead

Chapter Two provides an introductory examination of the history of Pakistan and the role that Islam has played in the development of the nation before and after Pakistan's partition from India. It is important to understand the link between Islam and its impact on Pakistani culture and society and, conversely, the impact of Pakistani culture and society on Islam. These two perspectives contribute to the originality of a Pakistani response to media creations and presentations. This breakdown of media responses is considerably more than a 'Pakistani' response to the teachings of the Qur'an. The government and the media institutions are indeed imposing their respective notions of 'Pakistani identity' through the programmes, newspaper articles and censorship practices. However, throughout the course of this study we make specific reference to only a portion of the general public - the elite of Islamabad. This portion of Pakistan's population is privileged not only through their access to the financial resources which allow them to buy newspapers, televisions, VCR's and satellite dishes, but also due to their access to the educational facilities which teach them literacy and the English language. In Chapter Two, I also consider the significance and implications of literacy, education and the English language.

This chapter is concluded by a brief examination of gender ideology within Pakistan and amongst the elite in particular. This issue is deeply embedded in Islamic and Pakistani ideology and consequently effects not only the social structure of Pakistan but also (and more importantly in relation to this study) the content and appreciation of the media. Gender ideology is frequently used and manipulated by governments, media institutions and individuals in order to present Islamic ideology and support ideological positions. We shall see, within this chapter and elsewhere in the thesis, how the visibility of women, as presented through the media, has been decreased by different administrations in order to support their religiously conservative positions.

Chapters Three to Six provide an ethnographic examination of the media. Chapters Three and Four focus on the print media from alternative perspectives: that of the government and that of the print media and its readers.

Chapter Three is concerned primarily with the political significance of the newspaper industry in Pakistan, especially in its role as an identity marker. I examine the means by which various

governments have attempted to legitimate their actions and their positions within society by deciding what it is that the people ought to know and what they ought not to know. I consider, referring to research carried out outside of Pakistan, how the newspaper industry provides the reader with a version of news, news which it has selected as being appropriate for consumer consumption. The following subsection examines the historical position of the print media since Partition, making reference to Acts of Parliament, acts of violence and censorship which have all been imposed upon the press and have consequently effected the content and coverage of the newspaper industry. However, the constraints placed upon the press are not always explicit and I specifically consider the implicit effects of advertising and its revenue upon newspaper perspective and content. I shall see how some 65% of the industry's revenue is derived from government advertising and will consider the implications of this heavy reliance upon political institutions.

The final section of Chapter Three provides two examples of strike action threatened by the newspaper industry against measures taken and proposed by the government. The first of these examples relates to the banning of six Karachi Urdu evening newspapers and the second to newsprint prices. In both cases the press of Pakistan, both English language and Urdu, formed a united front of protest to demonstrate their hostility towards, what they believed to be, the government's heavy handed attitude towards the newspaper industry. These two instances of press resistance to government action provide an illustration of the counter-restrictions the newspaper industry of Pakistan hold over the government thereby highlighting that, although the government has much power over the press, this is bounded by its need and reliance upon the press.

While the aim of Chapter Three is to demonstrate the manipulation and censorship imposed upon the newspaper industry, the aim of Chapter Four is to examine what the people on the two sides of the newspaper production line think is being done. If, how, and when they rationalise their culture and their nation - their identities - through what they produce and read in the newspapers. The first section is dedicated to an examination of the print media industry as seen from the inside. I consider an industry which describes itself as the 'Fourth Pillar of the State' and consequently ideologically neutral, in relation to political affiliations, journalism quality and newspaper content. It is the apparent contradiction between the newspaper industry's representations of itself as the 'Fourth Pillar of the State' on the one hand while admitting and indeed discussing its shortfalls and limitations on the other. The view of the

newspaper industry and its personnel in relation to the press is only one side of the coin however and in the next section I turn to an examination of 'What the People Say'. The governments of Pakistan and the various newspapers all have messages that they wish to present to the population of Pakistan and indeed how those messages may be portrayed. On the other hand, readers have choices as to which newspapers they purchase, what articles they read (they may prefer, for example, to read only the sports or the horoscope) and how they interpret the messages which are presented to them. In this section I consider these issues in order to contextualise the foregoing sections which have pointed to the powers imposed upon and used against the press by governments and media institutions.

As with all other aspects of Pakistani society, Islam is of great importance and influence to Pakistan's newspaper industry. Therefore no study of the Pakistan's print media would be complete without considering the significance of Islam. The final section of Chapter Four, and indeed the final section of the print chapters as a whole, is dedicated to an examination of the effects of Islam and Islamic ideology upon the content of the Pakistani press. I consider the implicit and explicit influence of Islam through which articles newspaper editors choose to publish and how they choose to relay stories. Pakistan's majority population of Muslims necessitates the print media's consideration of Islam, but also limits the discussion of Islamic ideological issues which may prove to be contentious.

The format of examination of the print media within Chapters Three and Four is largely echoed in Chapters Five and Six, which consider Pakistan's electronic media. Within these chapters I concentrate on the electronic media in the form of national, cable and satellite television and video. Chapter Five begins by introducing the national and cable television channels of Pakistan before moving on to examine the means by which censorship is used to create and recreate political legitimacy. Like Chapter Three, Chapter Five concentrates on the control mechanisms utilized by the governments particularly with regard to national and cable television. In order to highlight the official mechanisms used by the Pakistani governments I pay particular attention to two of the Clauses from the Censorship Code: Security, Law and Order and International Relations. Through an examination of these Clauses, I consider how various administrations (particularly that of Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister at the time fieldwork was carried out) utilise the Censorship Code to reinforce their own legitimacy and withhold access to television resources from the opposition and India.

The final section of Chapter Five considers the notion of fundamentalism as presented through the media, both national and international. We consider how media definitions and presentations of fundamentalism effect Pakistani politics as governments attempt to negotiate negative portrayals of Pakistan's religious ideology. On the one hand, a heavy reliance upon international business and aid requires that Pakistan's official position towards Islamic ideology be moderate. On the other hand, governments may not present themselves as being unconcerned about Islamic ideology within a nation that is largely populated by Muslims.

In Chapter Six I concentrate on the position and significance of Islamic ideology within the electronic media. What, when and how programming may or may not be watched is examined in the context of national and religious identity. In order to provide a basis for the sections which follow, I begin by considering notions of 'acceptability' as dictated by Islamic ideology set within the Pakistani context. I then go on to examine religious programming, entertainment and advertising before concluding this chapter with an account of the practice of censorship.

Chapter Seven examines the means by which private groups and individuals tailor media productions according to personal and community criteria of acceptability. The national governments of Pakistan are not in a position to impose control on transmissions which are produced outside of Pakistan and come directly into the country. As many of Islamabad's elite rely heavily or solely upon satellite television and imported videos for their news and entertainment it is important, to complete our understanding of the interpretation of Islam and nationalism through the media, to consider how viewers negotiate programmes which have received no prior (Pakistani) government control and censorship. This interpretation is itself fluid. I examine how different viewing contexts alter the boundaries of notions of acceptability which must be adhered to. Finally I consider how the remote control device itself becomes a means by which to 'control' viewing.

The conclusion draws upon the key terms of reference utilised throughout this thesis and my examination of the print and electronic media: media; governments; media institutions; Pakistan's elite; Islam and nationalism. By drawing upon these groups and terms and relating them to one another I see how each is interdependent upon the others in relation to the one remaining key term - power. Power maintenance and manipulation is central to any consideration of the social and political significance of the media. It is as a consequence of this negotiation of media power in relation to the interpretation of Islam and nationalism in Pakistan

which makes the consideration of the media through the discipline of Anthropology so pertinent. As access to print and electronic media resources increase so too do their effects within society and upon social identity. One's community is, at the same time, imagined, reinforced and created through the media as it is presented and received within Pakistan's Islamic society.

Pakistan's religious conservatism is fundamental to this creation of community. Islam was a constant source of reference, in some form or another, to all of my informants. The media, either through programming or censorship, frequently highlighted its Muslim origins. In fact, little was done without reference to Islam whether by the government, the media or the people. The country's relatively recent independence meant that many people were also keenly aware of their national identity. Despite this, almost everyone we asked, said that they valued their Muslim identity above that of their Pakistani one.

# Chapter Two

## ISLAM, PAKISTAN AND THE ELITE

*O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another*

Qur'an XLIX:13

The nation of Pakistan was largely founded upon a notion of unity maintained through Muslim brotherhood. 'Islam', as it is practised in Pakistan is based on an interpretation of Islam and the Qur'an with some aspects specific to Pakistan. The print and electronic media received in Pakistan, whether produced within the country or not, are subject to interpretation through notions of both Pakistani and Muslim identity. Through the course of this chapter we are introduced to aspects of Pakistani and elite society which affect not only the understanding of what appear within the print and electronic media, but also access to these resources.

This chapter is divided into five sections, the first of which introduces a brief account of the history of the subcontinent leading to the formation of Pakistan. It is important to establish the part Islam has played in establishing the new nation and how the roots were established of the

Muslim brotherhood which eventually culminated in the creation of Pakistan. Islam served as a means of unification but also separation and so it is in the second section that we turn to events since 1947 and the establishment of the 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan'. Throughout the course of this section we consider the changing face of Islamic ideology as it became a tool for political legitimisation and power, Ziaul Haq's Islamisation Process being such a case in point.<sup>1</sup>

Islam cannot be taken as ideologically neutral when considered in relation to a specific nation as its understanding and interpretation are affected by a complex amalgamation of the religion itself and the pre- or concurrently-existing cultural and social phenomena which also operate within the same social time and space. 'Religion -v- Culture' considers the affects these two elements of Pakistan society have upon one another. We use three different categories of Qur'anic, Muslim and Pakistani in order to distinguish the different manifestations of Islam in Pakistan as it becomes intertwined with non-Islamic cultures of the Indian sub-continent. We consider, for example, Willmer's comment which points to the difference between religious ideology and cultural values that

Social custom had suffocated true Islamic values and prevented women from taking their rightful place in society. (Willmer, 1996:583)

The fourth section 'Being a Muslim in Pakistan' draws upon the material of the first three sections to consider what it means to be a Muslim in Pakistan and how this is open to interpretation. We consider, for example, how there have been changes in religious duties for political motives, such as when Z A Bhutto banned the drinking of alcohol and gambling in an effort to align Pakistan more closely with the oil rich nations of the Middle East.

The final section, 'Islamabad's Elite', is divided into three sub-sections through which we focus particularly upon the elite. Literacy, education, English language ability and gender all effect access to media facilities and how one understands and interprets what one receives through these media. The wealth which the elite possess allow them to pay for educational as well as media resources which much of the rest of the Pakistani population find prohibitive. Being a Pakistani and a Muslim are still relevant criteria to the viewing of television programmes and the reading of newspapers but the subsections introduce us to additional

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<sup>1</sup>I have taken the spelling of Ziaul Haq from the guidelines to the Press issued on 7 July which stated that this was the correct spelling of the name (Niazi,1994: 4).

aspects of the interpretation process relevant to the elite. We see, for example, that the use of the English language by Pakistanis is not necessarily the same as that of the British or the Americans and the way newspaper articles are written are effected by this alternative use of the language.

### **Pre-Partition and the Idea of Pakistan**

A brief examination of the pre-Partition Indian history of Islam will help to highlight the social, political and national significance of Islam in Pakistan since 1947. The history of Islam in India is long and Islam has occupied an important place in the area's development as a nation and subsequent nations (Pakistan and Bangladesh), both politically and culturally.

According to Ahmad (1974), the Muslim arrival in India came in three waves beginning with the Arab missionaries and merchants arriving at the southern coast. This follows a pattern similar to that of Malaysia and Indonesia. The majority of the converts came to Islam through these, predominantly Sufi, missionaries following the great devotion of the saints (Mujeeb, 1967). This slow, but steady, trickle continued until the 15th century and coincided with the other two waves of Muslim arrival in India. The second wave came in 711 under the Umayyads when an expedition, organised by Hajjaj B. Yusuf and led by Mohammad b Qasim, annexed Sindh and part of lower Punjab to the Umayyad Caliphate. This area changed hands twice before it became part of the Delhi Sultanate and so joined the mainstream of Muslim power in India. The third and final wave came at around the turn of the 11th century with immigration through the north-east passes of Afghanistan establishing Ghaznavid power in Punjab. For the most part, these Muslim conquerors were secular in their rule.

The colonialists of these eras brought their religion into Hindu territory and a society which already had its own established set of cultural norms and values. The arrival of Islam and its immigrant population heralded the incorporation of Islamic ideology, although different regions responded differently to these new and initially outside forces. It was not only the religion which was being brought into the Indian subcontinent but also the immigrants' own cultural interpretations of Islam as propagated through their country of origin.

Propagation of Islam met with greater success in Bengal than in any

other part of the sub-continent except the north-west, but culturally the Bengalis remained closer to their Hindu origin. (Ahmad, 1974:133)

As the Indian sub-continent itself responded to a state of social mobility, so too did the interpretation of Islam by the colonising force. India could not (and cannot) stand apart from social forces; Islam could not (and cannot) function outside society and is consequently affected by it. During the Mogal 'time of troubles', when the court was ineffectual and the elite on the decline, Shah Wali-Allah (1703-62) emerged as a spiritual leader.

His theology was fundamentalist with a liberalism which paved the way for modernist trends in Indian Islam. (Ahmad, 1974:137)

Wali-Allah's ideas influenced the *Mujahidun* (holy warriors) in their movement which began in the early 19th century. This was an organisational network among Muslim masses in Northern India which advocated the rejection of pseudo-religious social customs borrowed from Hindus. The movement collapsed when its leader, Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi, was defeated by the Sikhs and died in 1831.

With the decline of Mogal power came a new colonising force - the British East India Company which was subsequently replaced by the direct rule of the British Parliament and Crown after the 'Sepay Mutiny' of 1857. The change in rulers brought with it, predictably enough, a change in the balance of power, tipping the scales away from the Muslims and into the hands of the British. This also affected the balance of power between the Muslims and Hindus as the Government of the East India Company frequently favoured the Hindus over the Muslims. For example, in Bengal Governor-General Cornwallis and Sir John Shore introduced a land revenue system in 1793 whereby the Muslim farmers and peasants were reduced to the level of agricultural labourer, the same time as a class of Hindu landlords (zamindars) was created. Despite policies such as this, however, there were other moves made by the British which reinforced the Muslim community, such as the development of Urdu prose at Fort William College, Calcutta.

Much of the political distinction made within the population of the Indian sub-continent was made in relation to religious identity, initially by the Indian population upon itself, as some converted to Islam. This was continued by the British as a means of ruling the colony. With

the political and economic disparity between the religious populations, one group benefited at the expense of the others, broadening and perpetuating the initial religious divide into the spheres of economics and politics.

From its conception, Pakistan has always been couched in Islamic symbolism (Metcalf:1987). Rashid points to the War of Independence of 1857 as the starting date for the recognition by the Indian Muslim elite of the potential of Islamic ideology for providing a point of unity.

Islam's consequent effectiveness as a frequently used rallying-cry succeeded in conveying the impression that it was the sum total of their inherent ideology. The impression seemed to survive even when patently 'extra-Islamic' factors should have been discernible, as in the movement among Indian Muslims to acquire a nation-state for themselves. (Rashid, 1985:71)

The already existing 'Muslim' identity which the British had sharpened through their religious demarcations of the Indian population was further enhanced by the efforts of Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-98). Khan was of a Delhi noble family who joined the East India Company in 1839 and remained loyal to the British during the 'Mutiny'. He advocated a consolidation of an all-India Muslim identity (Hoodbhoy, 1985; Rashid, 1985; Ahmad, 1967 and 1974). He attempted to deny the existence or validity of any ethnic or regional ties to which the Indian Muslim might adhere, therefore perpetuating the notion of the Muslim population as a cohesive whole.

In 1859 Sayyid Ahmad Khan made an effort towards adjustment to British rule which developed into a modernist religious, educational and social movement. Although the details of his political thought were rejected by future modernists, he left his mark on future Muslim elites and their religious thinking and belief. His ideas encouraged a wariness of Hindus and a loyalty to the British in Muslim politics.

While the desire for Independence led to a gradual move away from British loyalties, wariness towards the Hindu population increased. The Muslim League, which had been established in 1906 to safeguard the interest of the Muslim community and petition for separate electoral bodies for Muslims, became increasingly prominent in its activities with Hindu-Muslim conflict

coming into the open during the 1920s and 1930s (Sayeed, 1967). It was not for some time, however, that there developed a desire for a separate Muslim nation petitioned by the Muslim League and its leader, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, rallying support under the cry 'Islam in Danger'.

In 1930, Allama Mohammad Iqbal, probably Pakistan's most foremost philosopher, presented the idea of a separate homeland for Muslims in the majority provinces in his presidential address at the annual session of the Muslim League. It should be noted, as Rashid points out, that Iqbal's address referred to the Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Sindh and Balochistan and did not include Bengal, where the greater number of Indian Muslims lived. This omission has been attributed, by Rashid, to Iqbal's recognition

That the basis for such a state had to lie not simply in Muslim majority areas but in Muslim majority areas in India which were geographically and therefore culturally contiguous. (Rashid, 1985:78)

However, Gilmartin would appear to disagree with this interpretation of Iqbal's ideology through his contention that Iqbal believed local identities could become secondary to the Islamic community, an Islamic community which could as easily incorporate Muslims from across the continent as those who belong to a neighbouring province.

The key to the political definition of the Muslim community for Iqbal did not lie in competing with others; it lay in expressing the positive heritage shared by all Muslims. The public power of Islamic symbols lay in their ability to direct each individual Muslim to realise his own "ideal nature," as Iqbal put it. Islamic community thus arose not as a marker of the boundaries between Muslims and other groups or as a rejection of local identities but as a critical part of the personal transformation of each individual Muslim. (Gilmartin, 1988:167)

Whether Iqbal appreciated the significance of geographical location or not, Bengal was destined to become part of the new Pakistani nation. However, this was not to last for long as East Pakistan split from West Pakistan in 1971.

There is little doubt that the painful separation of Bangladesh from

Pakistan strikes at the very roots of Pan-Islamism - the belief that Muslims all over the world belong to one nation and that differences among them are insignificant. (Hoodbhoy and Nayyer, 1985:173)<sup>2</sup>

In pre-independence India religious ideology was politically charged, forming the basis of a split in ethnic identity dividing India into two main groups - Hindus and Muslims. The creation of Pakistan provided the potential for Islam to take up a role more as a faith than an ethnic classification, a classification which allowed an uneven distribution of wealth and status. If Islam was allowed to become a private religion only, however, then there would be problems providing a basis for the state. Rather than constituting a component which divided India into two oppositional groups Islam became the banner under which one group was to be united. As such it was not able to be ignored by the politicians as it was both the means of separation and unification - separation from the rest of India and unification for the Muslim population who were, in many other respects culturally different.

Muslim nationalism was supposed to unite almost two thirds of South Asia's Muslims in a country that was in fact a composite of diverse linguistic, ethnic, regional, and cultural identities/communities, and whose two wings (West and East Pakistan) were separated by more than a thousand miles of Indian territory. (Esposito and Voll, 1996:103)

It has always been a matter of considerable debate as to what Mohammad Ali Jinnah actually intended the position of Islam to be in the newly created nation of Pakistan in the Muslim majority areas of the former India. Iqbal had regarded Islam as a religio-social order and therefore envisaged the Pakistan emerging as an Islamic state, whose institutions and laws would be based on Islam. To Jinnah, however, Islam did not occupy such a significant political position, and he saw Islam as providing a common cultural heritage and identity (Alavi, 1988). In his speech of the 11 August 1947 in the Constituent Assembly, the Quaid-e-Asam, Jinnah said:

If you change your past and work together in a spirit that everyone of you, no matter to what community he belongs ... is first, second and

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<sup>2</sup>It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the region of Kashmir was *not mentioned in Iqbal's speech* either and it is this region which is the root of much of the unrest existing between Pakistan and India at present.

last citizen of this state with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place ... belong to any religion or caste or creed ... that has nothing to do with the business of the state. We are starting the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one caste or creed and another ... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state... I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal, and you will find that, in course of time, Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims. Not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual but in the political sense as citizens of the state.

Some have assumed that Jinnah meant Pakistan to be a politically secular state, but, for the Muslim population, privately and personally 'Islamic'. However, others have pointed to the fact that the Qur'an says Islam should affect every part of one's life, it is a holistic religion which cannot be compartmentalised into public and private spheres. Adding to the confusion with regard to the intention behind the speech is the fact that a complete transcript was, for some time, 'unavailable'. As a result of this, those analysing the content of the speech were aware of the absences within the text and were therefore attempting to second guess its substance and significance. Regardless of Jinnah's intentions, however, it quickly became apparent that creed was to be of great significance within the infant nation. Partition was marked by the migration of Hindus in one direction and Muslims in the other and there was great bloodshed on both sides and the consequent animosity continues to this day. One informant told me of an incident where her grandmother had been on one of the trains which had suffered mass casualties but she had survived because a Sikh assassin had not wanted to kill her as she was carrying a baby. Despite this apparent compassion by the Sikh the grandmother and her family harboured a continued hatred for both the Sikhs and Indian Hindus who were responsible for the killing of Muslims. The scars from the slaughters on both sides still cut deep despite 50 years of separation.

## **Nationalism and ‘The Islamic Republic of Pakistan’**

Pakistan came into being as a country in 1947 as a part of the process of independence from the British colony that had been called India. The nationalist movement which supported the formation of Pakistan relied almost solely on religious affiliation. The dynamics of the Pakistan movement arose from the desire for equal treatment for Muslims in the Indian colony. For some time prior to Partition, access to resources and political influence of groups in the Indian population was split along the lines of religion, the Hindus on one side and the Muslims on the other<sup>3</sup>. While other nations have often been able to draw on a wider range of ethnic and regional similarities which could provide alternative symbolism for nation building and maintenance, Pakistan was primarily defined in terms of where, geographically, Muslims were concentrated - at Partition states of Pakistan were located on both the east and west of India.

Pakistan did not exist prior to independence other than as an idea. India’s colonial period under the British was of significance in relation to the nationalist movement, as it originated through an imported and therefore, to some extent, foreign ideology. India, through its position as a colony, was influenced by the British and consequently by their European perspective towards nationalism. It has been suggested that nationalist ideology was first developed in Europe and in European diaspora in the period around the French revolution ( Eriksen, 1993: Rashid, 1985) although many would more readily associate nationalist ideology with the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain. It was through an industrialised background that the West saw the emergence of nationalist movements. However, India did not have the benefit of a strong and centralised political state under which to unify. The British had perpetuated the Hindu - Muslim divide by following colonial procedure informed by experiences elsewhere, particularly Africa. The integration of the Indian colony came about through creation of common laws and administration for the entire colony, rather than the totally piecemeal approach used by the Mogals. Some have maintained, however, that the British favoured one group over the other through policies of ‘divide and rule’.

The British policy of opposing the Hindu and Muslim communities finally found a formal expression in the Indian Councils Act of 1909, which brought about separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims.  
(Hussain, 1985:200)

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<sup>3</sup>There are other religious groups, for example Christians and Sikh, but I am concerned here only to provide a general model as presented by my informants.

It should be pointed out, however, that this Act came about, in part, because of demands from the Muslim elite as pointed out by Rashid (1985) in his work. He maintained that

Consequently when these colonised societies emerged as independent political states it was often the result of a *negative* nationalism directed at the oppressing colonial power. But it still meant that in a positive sense nationalism remained weak, and the nation, if it could be called that, remained fragmented, with loyalties defined at the subnational level, ie., at the level of the region or province - the territorial unit where the 'community of culture' defined an authentic as opposed to a wishful state of affairs. (Rashid, 1985:70)

It was religious labels which had served to divide access to resources in India prior to Partition and it was religious classifications which served as the basis of the 'negative nationalism'. Religion was what held the wider Muslim community together as a group. When placed in opposition to Hinduism, Islam enabled otherwise distinct ethnic, linguistic and regional groups to unite under the banner of Pakistan. However, once this *significant other* was removed the cohesiveness of the newly formed group itself became less stable as its internal differences became more apparent.

Territorially, the Pakistan of Partition was divided by hundreds of miles with East and West Pakistan situated on either side of the Indian territory from which it had split. Linguistically English provided the most common link between the two regions otherwise divided, broadly speaking, by Urdu in the West and Bengali in the East (not to mention the other twenty or more major languages of Pakistan). These general language demarcations were further broken down into regional dialects and languages which further splintered the cohesiveness of the nation.<sup>4</sup> (India, on the other hand, has over a hundred major regional languages). These differences are only the tip of the iceberg, but they serve to illustrate the point that it was Islam which provided the means of unification over all the divisions. However, the split between East and West Pakistan in 1971 demonstrated the inability of Islam to stand alone as the unifying force of the nation.

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<sup>4</sup>See the English Language section of this chapter for a more detailed description of the significance of language in Pakistan.

Islam is a world religion and therefore, by definition, transnational. Gellner points to Pakistan's problem arising out of its reliance upon Islam for its unification in his statement that

The scripturalist version [of faith] can be presented as a national ideology, defining all Moslems in a given territory as one nation (even if that, as in Pakistan, leads to a dilemma as to whether faith or nation is the basis of the state). (Gellner, 1981:58).

Once Pakistan was formed the status of Islam became anomalous as other identities came to the fore providing strong and often oppositional sources of separation rather than cohesion. Islam was capable of providing a banner of unification against a more significant other - Hinduism - but it was apparently less capable of providing a cohesiveness that would allow members of the nation to 'imagine their community' (Anderson, 1983) when Islam was common to them all. As Kedourie maintains

In the doctrine of Pakistan, Islam is transformed into a political ideology and used in order to mobilize Muslims against Hindus; more than that it cannot do, since an Islamic state on classical lines is today an impossible anachronism. (Kedourie, 1960:71)

Both Anderson (1983) and Cohen (1974) argue that politics cannot be purely instrumental but requires symbols which can provide an emotive function whereby feelings of loyalty and belonging can be created and maintained. It was Islam which provided, and continues to provide these in Pakistan. It was the emotional power attached to Islam which provided the politicians, if they could tap that power, with the legitimation for their ruling position. There can be no disputing the importance of Islam in the context of Pakistan, but how this importance has changed and, consequently, been expected to manifest itself has caused continuous confusion and disagreement. The struggle for a Muslim homeland has meant an implementation of Islamic symbols and terminology under which to unite an otherwise divided population (eg. Metcalf, 1987; Willmer, 1996). This Islamic terminology has continued since Partition, and it is this which has served as a tool of legitimation for those who have wished to gain, or have gained, political power, as well as forming different political alliances although the implications of its use have changed with various administrations. At the same time,

however, Islam has been kept out of the political arena with the exclusion of the *ulama* from direct participation, therefore leading to a confusion over the function of the religion in the public arena.

Both Anderson and Gellner stress that ethnic or national identities are constructions, they are not 'natural'. A nation never 'is', but it is created, frequently through the somewhat arbitrary drawing of lines on a map.<sup>5</sup> With reference to Gellner and Anderson, Eriksen makes the point that

Both stress that nations are ideological constructions seeking to forge a link between (self-defined) cultural group and state, and that they create abstract communities of a different order from those dynastic states or kinship-based communities which pre-dated them. (Eriksen, 1993:100)

The nation is created from nationalist ideology. This can be identified in the Pakistani case, where the perceived discrimination against the Muslim community united the population against the Hindus in a struggle for political and social equality. Therefore, the basis of the nationalism was identifiable well before the nation was thought of. In fact many argue that Pakistan's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, never really wanted a separate Muslim homeland, but rather sought it only in the absence of an alternative solution to the divide between Hindus and Muslims.

The role Islam has played within Pakistan has been dependent on the interpretation that the administration of the time has wished to take, both in relation to the Qur'an and in relation to Jinnah's speech. What is clear, however, is that Islam, as a religion, must play some role in the national infrastructure of Pakistan. Initially, even if we are to set Jinnah's speech to one side and concentrate on his use of Islam in the move towards independence and his short rule over Pakistan, we can see that Islam was used as an instrument of unification, a banner under which the Muslim population could be united. There were commitments to Islam in relation more to the periphery of social life than in relation to the centre of politics. Religious issues were never central. There was a commitment to nothing being undertaken that would be repugnant to Islam, but this would have been very difficult to avoid, although, as is referred to

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<sup>5</sup>We cannot assume the arbitrariness of the Indian/Pakistani borders as there have been, and continue to be, disputes to change them in relation to the region of Kashmir.

throughout this thesis, the definition of what is repugnant to Islam, is open to some interpretation. This did not mean a move towards the *ulama*<sup>6</sup> taking a more active role in politics, but rather Islam and Islamic symbolism and terminology becoming increasingly important, rather like window dressing - the mannequins stay the same, only the costumes change.

Mohammad Ayub Khan followed in a similar tradition to that of Jinnah and those who followed him. As Amin states

In his view, Pakistan has been won by the secular liberal educated middle class and the Islamists had little claim to make any demand. (Amin, 1991:70).

It was Ayub Khan's contention that it was enough 'to express and practice the spirit of Islam in the language of educated man, which is the language of science, history, economics and world affairs and above all, the language of nationalism. While Ayub Khan believed in modernisation along Western lines he too continued the tradition of using an Islamic rhetoric and indeed, the book 'Twenty Years of Pakistan: 1947-1967' published during his administration made much of his religious background.

His family was deeply religious and the first plan for his early education was that he should become *Hafiz-i-Quran*, meaning that he should know the whole of the Holy Book by heart. (Pakistan Publication, 1967:703)

It was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who, despite not being personally religious, brought Islam to the fore of Pakistani politics in an attempt to bring Pakistan closer to Saudi Arabia and Iran, moving away from the West to which Pakistan had been tied through military aid and American developmental theory (eg. Esposito and Voll, 1996: Metcalf, 1987). The *ulama* continued to remain outside the fold of political influence but the significance of Islam and Islamic symbolism and terminology increased in important. The political structure of Pakistan was still to be distinct from the ideological, but the change in the emphasis of the rhetoric was intended

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<sup>6</sup>Scholars in Mohammadan divinity and law who form the theocratic element of the government in Muslim countries, who, by their fatwas or decisions, regulate the life of the Muslim community

to reflect, more prominently, the Islamic foundation of the nation, both socially and politically.

Two sets of factors influenced a more self-conscious Islamic or Middle Eastern identity: one was internal, the loss of East Pakistan and with it a claim to legitimacy as a South Asian Muslim homeland; and second, an external set of factors, the new-found wealth and power of the oil-rich Muslim states (Metcalf, 1987:133).

It was General Ziaul Haq, the Chief Martial Law Administrator of the 1970s and 80s, who began the 'Islamisation process', bringing Islam still further to the forefront of public life and utilizing the religion as a significant national identity marker. Zia was part of the emerging group of officers who came from a different social background to the personnel who had previously dominated the officer corps. Immediately post-Partition the officers were, by and large, from the landowning class which followed an ideology having its origins in the British military traditions (eg General Ayub Khan). It was during the 1960s and 1970s that there came a shift in the intake of military personnel towards the petite bourgeoisie in the urban areas and in the countryside.

This shift in the class origins of the officer corps was accompanied by increasing ideological factionalism in terms of a fundamentalist religious ethos on the one hand and a liberal left-wing ethos on the other. This tendency towards the emergence of opposing political perspectives within the officer corps was reinforced by two important developments. First, the right-wing *Jama'at-i-Islami* systematically sent its sympathisers and many of its cadres to seek commissions in the armed forces; second, the radical national rhetoric of former Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto and the rapid promotion of officers who appeared committed to his regime also influenced the officer corps. (Hussain, 1985:208)

General Ziaul Haq formed part of this less educated and more religious generation of officers having his origins among the economically depressed migrants of East Punjab. He took over as the new chief of the army staff from Tikka Khan after superseding four other generals. He had been promoted to this position by Bhutto in the vain hope that Zia would feel obliged to be

loyal.

The *coup d'etat*, led by Zia, brought about a further change in the status of Islam with its increased legitimation within the political sphere and the title of 'The Islamic Republic of Pakistan' was reintroduced by Ziaul Haq after having been dropped during the Ayub Khan era. However, religious leaders continued to play a limited role in national politics and, while the coup had been supported by the Jamaat-i-Islami and other parties of the *ulama*, writers such as Metcalf have maintained that the

Religious influence within the new regime came from non-clerics, broadly speaking, influenced by the Jama'at, and not from the traditional religious leadership. (Metcalf, 1987:134)

The Jamaat-i-Islami was, in fact, legally outlawed along with the other political parties in 1979, although it remained, informally, very influential. There were changes in the extent to which Islam was able to come into direct contact with the political apparatus, but these were largely cosmetic. These changes in the influences of Islam since the conception and establishment of Pakistan can be seen through media restrictions and presentations. The electronic media provides a ready forum for identifying political changes in policy relating to Islam and its relationship to the State. Islam became a more prominent feature of television life with an increase in the number of religious broadcasts and a change in the focus of censorship policies.<sup>7</sup> This was especially apparent in relation to the role (if any) of women on television. The visibility of women through the media articulated the overall social position of women within Pakistan. According to Jalal

Zia calculated that playing the women's card could confirm his regime's commitment to Islam and, by extension its legitimacy ... Making women the focal point of his 'Islamisation' programme would win him a round of applause from the religious parties as well as the muted approval of broad sections of society. (Jalal, 1991:101)

Zia was not the first to use women as a means of legitimating his government and setting them within the rhetoric of Islam. Jalal talks of the constant downplaying of Islam during the Islamic colonial era as the majority of the population was not Muslim but their allegiance was necessary

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<sup>7</sup>See Chapter 6.

to the Muslim rulers.

But there was consolation in the knowledge that the real strength of the Islamic social order lay in the continued stability of the family unit, and more specially the social control of women. (Jalal, 1991:80)

Jinnah had encouraged women to become politically active, not in relation to their own rights and status within society but rather as a symbol of Muslim identity and a force which could educate the male population to become more politically active. Willmer also makes this point, attributing a 'special kind of power' to women in their capacity as 'mothers of the nation', but also pointing out that this power is limited.

The Muslim League's 'agenda' for women seems to have been mainly a case of identifying an obvious and distinct constituency which could be readily exploited for rhetorical purposes and politically mobilised to good effect. (Willmer, 1996:574)

As Jinnah proclaimed at the Twenty-seventh Session of the All-India Muslim League in Lahore on the 22 March 1940

If political consciousness is awakened amongst our women, remember, your children will not have much to worry about. (quoted in Pirzada, 1982:328)

Still, today, women continue to be used more as political tools than active members of the constituencies. Benazir Bhutto, on returning to Pakistan after the death of Zia and later becoming Prime Minister, sought to legitimate her claim to the leadership of the PPP not only through her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, but also by personally using Islamic symbolism. She gave up wearing western cloths and even began to cover her head, she accepted an arranged marriage (something she frequently mentioned, given the opportunity) and she always carried prayer beads. While the majority of the male politicians wear western clothes, at least some of the time, and do not, by carrying prayer beads, make such an open display of their religion it was apparently something that Benazir Bhutto felt that she must do in order to win the support of the voters. Even informants who were supporters of the PPP would comment on Benazir

and her use of Islamic symbolism which they thought hypocritical.

The case of the ex-cricketer, Imran Khan and his moves towards political office illustrates well the perceived desire for a secular political arena. Imran Khan's relations with Pasban, the breakaway youth group of Jamaat-i-Islami, and General Gul, former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief<sup>8</sup> which had been strong between 1992 and 1995, were commonly believed to be played down as he began to make more direct overtures towards the Prime Minister's House. It was suggested that this distancing was taking place on the basis of the 'fundamentalist' associations the two connections carried and the perceived damage such associations could do to his political career. According to two of Pakistan's leading monthly magazines

Perhaps realising the political liability of his alignment with reactionary political elements, Imran has recently started distancing himself from Pasban. (*Newsline*, April 96)

And, referring to General Hamid Gul The Herald said

In public, at least, the two men have now parted political company, leading separate movements to 'reform' society. (*The Herald*, May 1996)

These articles were substantiated by numerous comments made, particularly after Imran's launch of his political party.

This chapter so far has introduced the elusive and consequently manipulated role of Islam in the political sphere of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as it was created and maintained. Each administration has been in a position to alter the interpretation of Islam, at least to some degree, in relation to Islam's public role, legitimating the government's own position at the same time. In the next section we consider three different categories of Qur'anic, Muslim and Pakistani

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<sup>8</sup>General Hamid Gul preached a 'soft' revolution. 'The general's recipe for revolution involves organising the middle class as a pressure group to "mobilise our educated, urban elite, who were not born with a silver spoon in their mouth but who are concerned ... to transform Pakistani society from an exploitative feudalistic society which has been the victim of centuries of exploitation and tyranny into an egalitarian, industrialised Islamic society".' (*Herald*, May 1996)

Islam in order to distinguish the different manifestations of Islam in Pakistan as it becomes intertwined with non-Islamic cultures of the Indian sub-continent.

## Religion -v- Culture

To explicate the relationship between the religion and culture within Pakistan we can differentiate between three broad categories of culture within the country and, indeed, within all Muslim countries.

The first is 'Qur'anic culture'. It is this which relates specifically to the Qur'an and is an ideal towards which practising Muslims aim. It was not until a conversation with my landlady that I fully appreciated the extent to which Pakistanis themselves recognise the 'ideal' character of Islamic or Qur'anic culture<sup>9</sup>. She told me during a conversation over dinner preparations that all Pakistanis know that they are not good Muslims, no matter how devout they are and following the true path of Islam was an ideal, but one towards which all good Muslims strive. I was initially surprised by her candour but gradually came to appreciate that many of my informants apparently held the same ideas.

The Qur'an itself is believed to be the word of God and therefore cannot be altered or improved in any way. It is the specifics of the Qur'an therefore which can be attributed to this Qur'anic culture and mainly those connected with such things as the five tenets<sup>10</sup> which provide little or no room for diversity. The Qur'an itself therefore can provide an ideal basis for society, but once this is brought down to a 'human' level it is prone to become contentious through its various interpretations, interpretations affected by the national and local cultures within which the 'human' element or population reside.

The second category of religious culture is 'Muslim culture', that culture which extends throughout the majority of the Muslim world, but which has nothing specifically to do with Qur'anic culture. This relates to such things as 'Islamic architecture', (a subject on which

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<sup>9</sup>There is a large degree of interchangeability between the terms 'Islamic' and 'Quranic' culture within the literature. I predominantly refer to 'Islamic' rather than 'Qur'anic' culture in an attempt to avoid unnecessary confusion as 'Qur'anic applies directly to the Book, while Islamic tends to incorporate social functions as well. However, there is some interchangeability within this thesis.

<sup>10</sup>The five pillars are: the 5 daily prayers, fasting, Hajj, Zakat and Jihad.

the Qur'an is ideologically neutral), but which has become amalgamated with the religion through its historical association with the countries connected with Islam. The Muslim culture in the Indian subcontinent, as pointed out by Syed

Was "Muslim" only in the sense that the traditions in architecture, and in visual and literary arts, accompanying the conquerors from Arab lands, Iran, and Central Asia, became dominant in the amalgam resulting from their interaction with the native Indian traditions. They have no necessary connection with Islam which, as an ideology, is neutral as between various architectural designs, literary forms, shapes of utensils, and footwear fashions. (Syed, 1984:116)

Muslim culture has, since the initial demands for Muslim separatism within India, formed a basis of the Muslim national identity in Pakistan. The symbols of the Muslim culture acted as manifestations of unity to which all Muslims of the Indian subcontinent could point. Regional cultural diversity was, of course, appreciated, but there was believed to be an all encompassing Muslim culture to which all could relate, the boundaries of which extended on into the rest of the Islamic world. The Mosque design is perhaps the most obvious example. Indeed it was important for such a Muslim culture to exist in order for the notion of Pakistan to exist in a legitimate form distinct from post-Partition India but relevant to the rest of the Muslim world. However, one can also look to the secession of East Pakistan in 1971 to question the strength of the Muslim cultural bond to which Iqbal and Jinnah referred as a unifying force. One should perhaps also bear in mind also that Bengal was not part of the original territory to form Pakistan as named by Iqbal. This would suggest that such pan-Islamic forces as Muslim culture were inadequate in unifying separate and distinct territories.

The third culture of Pakistan is 'Pakistani culture' itself. Pakistani society is in part derived from and has been pervasively shaped by Indian - Hindu - culture. (Inevitably the reverse is also true and Indian society has, to some extent, been influenced by the Pakistani - Islamic - culture.)<sup>11</sup> Like so many other nations and cultures, Pakistani 'culture' and Indian 'culture' are not two naturally distinct entities (Smith 1990, Bateson, 1972). The nations have been separated with the creation of Pakistan (and subsequently also

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<sup>11</sup>This is not to suggest that there is one culture for each country but rather, for the sake of simplicity, I have put it in such terms.

Bangladesh), but their origins are similar and their cultures are interlinked (Lambek, 1995). This phenomenon is acknowledged in day to day affairs, but selectively and varyingly, according to the circumstances of the situation. The popularity of Indian cinema films provides an illustration of the acknowledgement of similarities in cultural tradition between the two nations. Although Indian films are illegal in Pakistan (see Chapter 6) pirate videos are extremely popular and readily available. Pakistani and Indian films are from a similar genre where the emphasis is on music and dance, the difference being that it was generally accepted that the Indian productions were of a superior quality, if a little more risqué than would be allowed in a Pakistani film.<sup>12</sup>

Of course we are making a broad generalisation in talking of a 'Pakistani culture'. The religious practices of each country are different as they have been and continue to be affected by the culture and traditions of the countries. It is therefore equally applicable to refer to Iranian Islam, Saudi Arabian Islam and so forth. Of course this assumption can then be extended to take into consideration the regional differences of any specific country's culture and this, in turn, affects the Qur'anic interpretation, or perhaps, more accurately, the practices employed by the Muslim population. Then we must take into consideration the various sects which, although starting from the same point, namely the Qur'an, and although existing within the same country, end up with divergent doctrines and ideologies. As Rashid puts it,

In all different Muslim states that exist today, the 'received word' has been articulated differently given the specific conditions prevailing in a particular time and place. The result, obviously, cannot be the creation of some sort of monolithic Islamic empire but the emergence of socio-political entities which are nevertheless, in some significant way, informed, if not inspired, by the ideal of Islam. (Rashid, 1985:82)

It is my intention throughout this thesis to concentrate on the broad classifications of these three cultures as they exist in the ideal, if not in practice, but which are constantly referred to within the media and by the people to whom I spoke. These cultures constitute different 'moral worlds' - things as they ought to be rather than how they are. I will, however, be looking at how the classifications change according to who is using them and what is

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<sup>12</sup>See Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion on the Indian film viewing or avoidance.

wanted from them. In this respect I will be predominantly concentrating on Qur'anic and Pakistani culture, although Muslim culture is also used, particularly as a political tool. Under 'Islam and the Press' in Chapter 4 for example, we shall see how *The News* cites the Qur'an each day and *The Nation* has a feature called the 'Light of Islam', both of which examples concentrate on Qur'anic cultures. An example of Pakistani culture can be identified in relation to the advertising of skin bleaching cream as considered in Chapter 6.

The print and electronic media chapters which follow will examine the significance of the Qur'anic and Pakistani cultures in relation to one another and we shall see how India is frequently held up as an example of the route which Pakistan must avoid if it is to retain its own identity. Through its exposure to Western media, India is thought to have been westernised. It is the westernisation of the Indian media which is perceived as having the knock-on effect of transforming Indian culture. There is concern that Pakistan is already on this path to what is presented as being ideological destruction and the electronic media is being used as its instrument. One newspaper article states that

In a bid to compete with international satellite channels, PTV and STN have started emulating them rather than competing with them on merit, thus becoming a tool of cultural invasion. (*The News*, 23.5.96)

As Miller (1995) points out, particularly with regard to the work of anthropologists rather than the population under consideration, in relation to imported goods generally

It is as though after anthropologists have documented the resilience of local resistance and the ability to 'tame' imported ideas and traditions, these might finally fall exhausted before the onslaught of imported goods. (Miller, 1995:2).

This is a trap which many others have also fallen into and it is one which underestimates the resilience of the indigenous cultures and overestimates the strength of commodities including the media.

The 'invention of tradition' has, at times, been necessary to distinguish significantly the nations of Pakistan and India from one another in order that the societies and 'cultures' can

be recognised as distinct where they otherwise may not have been (Hobsbawn & Ranger 1983) and the media has played a significant part in the highlighting of this distinction, in Pakistan as elsewhere (Anderson, 1983). The role of Islam has been primary in this respect, distinguishing Muslim Pakistan from the Hindu India. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has linked together religion with the nation. Within the country, 'Islam' has become almost synonymous with 'Pakistan'. However, the Islam to which Pakistan is linked is culturalised - a Pakistani Islam - affected by the origins of the nation and its consequent world view as is the case for the Muslim nations of the Middle East and elsewhere.

Partition did not take away the cultural traits previously associated with Indian society, it simply brought Islam to the fore. The Qur'anic cultural ideal and Muslim culture have been used as a unifying force within an otherwise culturally diverse nation and have been drawn upon selectively by the political elite as required. There is a power generated through the Islamic discourse which the various groups attempt to tap for themselves by demonstrating that their own particular brand of Islam is the right one. Chapter 6 examines the significance of the interpretation of Islamic ideology in relation to the electronic media. The role of Islam within both the print and electronic media is kept as ideologically neutral as possible in order that different groups are not given additional ideological power and are not offended by a questioning of their religious perspective. At the same time as using a selective interpretation of Qur'anic culture they may also point, equally selectively, to the Muslim culture. Politicians who wish to win mass support are likely to glorify the Muslim culture in their own constituency rather than elsewhere within Pakistan as Syed has mentioned.

A Sindhi politician would surely sound esoteric and irrelevant to his audiences if he were to praise the grandeur of the great Badshahi Mosque in Lahore and proclaim that this pride of Muslim architecture belonged to all Pakistanis. He might do better if he were to deplore Aurangzeb's "poor" judgement in locating the mosque in Lahore instead of in Hyderabad (Syed, 1984:117).

It is perhaps the position of women in Pakistani society which provides the best example of the potential conflict and confusion between the religion and culture. According to

Willmer, in India

Social custom had suffocated true Islamic values and prevented women from taking their rightful place in society. (Willmer, 1996:583).

This has been a long and ongoing debate which other authors such as Amina Wadud-Muhsin's in her book 'Qur'an and Women' (1992) have attempted to address. The Qur'an and Hadis point to the equality of women with men and their ability to function in society outside, as well as inside, the home. Willmer maintained that the association with Hindu culture had repressed these values, restricting the freedom of women. The position of women has remained relatively unchanged, however, as Pakistan has continued this discrimination under the umbrella of Islam, as compatible with Saudi Arabia, instead of under the orientation of Hindu India. Their 'rightful place in society' is not necessarily a place that the women wished to take, particularly those in a stronger position to force the issue, namely the elite. It was the elite who could potentially benefit from the existing structure of authority and, therefore, as Jalal (1991) maintains, they had more to lose should that order be threatened by a change in the status of women.

To Pakistani women who are neither poor nor unlettered, submission can be socially rewarding. So long as they do not transgress social norms, women from the middle and upper strata in rural and urban areas alike are accorded respect as well as a modicum of privileges within the sphere of the family and, depending upon their generational and marital status, also in the wider social networks. (Jalal, 1991:78)

Islamic symbolism in relation to women was and is easily mobilised as a political tool, as we have already seen and therefore, while physical moves into the public sphere have been and continue to be suppressed, the ideological place of women is crucial. The extent to which women appeared on the television during General Ziaul Haq's Martial Law years was severely restricted as a consequence of his Islamisation process.<sup>13</sup>

In the next section we consider what it means to be a Muslim in Pakistan. It is important to consider that notions of religious identity are different for different people and over time

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<sup>13</sup>See Chapter 6 for details.

*these notions may change by outside pressure. We see, for example, that the Ahmadis were Muslims until 1975 when their official status was changed. We also see how, with the changes in emphasis placed on Islamic ideology, other members of the Pakistani community have been forced to reevaluate their own religious identities.*

### ***Being a Muslim in Pakistan***

One of the first things by which I was struck upon my arrival in Pakistan was that the worst critics of the Muslims of Pakistan were apparently the Muslims of Pakistan themselves. While people may, and do, acknowledge that they are not themselves good Muslims they frequently criticise others for being worse. The elite generally accuse the masses of not understanding their religion properly, following misguided maulvis and mixing Islam with folklore and tradition.

*What nation could be more unfortunate than one which was created in the name of religion, yet 80 per cent of its inhabitants do not understand even a fraction of Islam? ... our religion is explained to us by unlettered people who interpret it in their own narrow way. (The News on Friday - 3.3.1995)*

*At the other end of the spectrum, however, the masses often accuse the elite of ignoring their religion and being too liberal and westernised. It is the western influences which are largely attributed to the fall from grace of the elite by some elites as well as the masses. However, regardless of the extent of the piety (or not) of an individual, the majority of my informants placed their Muslim religious identity above their Pakistani national identity.*

*According to Government statistics published on the Internet the Muslim population of Pakistan is 95% while the remaining 5% are 'others' (<http://www.gov.pak>). This low percentage of non-Muslims is hardly surprising for two reasons. First, Pakistan was created from the Muslim majority areas of India and second, Partition was marked by the mass migration of Muslims towards Pakistan and Hindus towards post-Partition India. Partition came with expectations by both the new and old occupants of the then new nation of Pakistan, not least of which was self-determination for the Muslim population in a nation*

run for and by Muslims.

The 'others' have a minority status within Pakistan which frequently manifests itself in lower status. The Christian population, which is the most significant proportion of the 5% is frequently associated with, and can often be found in, low status occupations such as sweepers (people who sweep the floors and clean the bathrooms). These 'others' must also include the Ahmadis who were decreed non-Muslims due to their belief that the Prophet Mohammad is not the final prophet under Z A Bhutto's legislation of the 10 September 1975. However, in contrast, they are frequently associated with better social positions and financial security. It was in 1948 that an Islamic party, Majlis-e-Ahrar<sup>14</sup>, demanded the expulsion of the Ahmadis from the pale of Islam.

Interpreting the Objectives Resolution as a commitment that Pakistan would be an Islamic state, and believing that in such a state the roles and rights of non-Muslims would necessarily be different from those of Muslims, other ulema subsequently joined the Ahrar in calling upon the government to declare the Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority and discharge their members from key government posts. (Syed, 1984:89)

It should be noted, as Syed points out, that the political elites did nothing to curb the violence and discrimination levied against the Ahmadi community as they did not wish to be seen to be favouring, or protecting a sect that denied that Mohammad was the last Prophet.<sup>15</sup>

Despite Mohammad Ali Jinnah's assurances at the time of Partition that

'We are starting the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one caste or creed and another' this was quickly contradicted. A spokesperson for Jamaat-i-Islami even described Jinnah's address as a "creature of the devil". (Syed, 1984:90)

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<sup>14</sup>The Majlis-e-Ahrar party opposed the Pakistan movement and criticised the Muslim League and its leadership prior to Partition.

<sup>15</sup>A correlation can be made here to the way the television and newspapers present Islam now, not drawing upon differences between the sects but rather presenting images of Islam to which all sects may relate. See chapter 6.

The distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim is not the only one which can divide the population along religious lines. Sectarianism becomes an increasingly significant issue with the distancing of a more significant 'other' - in this case, Hindus. With Partition and the creation of Pakistan came a manufactured but acknowledged divide between Muslims and Hindus and therefore social, political and economic inequalities could no longer be significantly attributed to religious identity. The majority of Hindus who resided in the area which became Pakistan left at the time of Partition.

The total number of displaced Muslims now estimated by the ILO [International Labour Organization] was 7.2 million for Pakistan, but the number of non-Muslims from Pakistan to India was still higher than Pakistan, that is, 7.4 million at the time of Partition. (Islam, 1969: 13)

Prior to Partition, living in a multi-cultural or, perhaps more accurately, a multi-religious, country, difference could be clearly stated in terms of general religious denominations such as Muslim and Hindu (and Sikh). Post-Partition, in a country with a 95% Muslim majority population, further segmentation became necessary in order to differentiate and perhaps account for the unequal distribution of wealth and power. Sectarian difference could supply one of these markers.

Detailed descriptions of the religious differences between the Muslim sects does not fall within the scope of this thesis and its general model of interpretative patterns generated through the interaction of Muslim and Pakistani identities. On the contrary, as we shall see in the chapters relating specifically to the print and electronic media in Pakistan, there are policies of avoidance of the discussion of sectarian issues by the government and private media institutions as publicising the topic is considered dangerous.<sup>16</sup> However, as with other news issues, sectarian violence has its phases in and out of fashion and therefore may or may not be reported according to the political and economic expediency of such articles. As I show in Chapter 3, the Pakistani government has been known to issue press 'advices' encouraging or discouraging the reporting of certain stories or topics. This said, upon my arrival in Pakistan in March 1995 there was a brief period when sectarian concerns and violence were significantly reported in the newspapers. It was also a subject which

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<sup>16</sup>See 'Islam and the Press' in Chapter 4 and 'Religious Programming' in Chapter 6 for a further discussion.

attracted a reasonable amount of attention in private conversation, no doubt as a consequence of the media interest. After a relatively short time, however, media interest apparently declined and, as a consequence, it became a subject of diminished public discussion.<sup>17</sup>

The Pakistani print and electronic media rely upon events within society (both within Pakistan and the world at large) for their content. The material that passes through the media are necessarily generated from within a society and therefore are affected by that society and its cultural ideologies. The changes in Pakistan's regimes affect the projection of Islam. In order to harness the power potential of Islam to legitimise political rule the media is used by different administrations to present to the nation its ideological position. If the administrations are successful in their use of the media apparatus then they are in a position to present to the Pakistani population an image of Pakistan as they perceive. At the same time the government can legitimate that image through public presentation via the newspapers and television. There are limitations to the extent of this ideological reinterpretation or manipulation as it is not simply religious denomination which stipulates the Muslim identity of the group or individual, but it is the interpretation of that identity by the communities and the individuals that manifests itself in day to day activities. We consider this issue in the media chapters which follow but we should contextualise the topic at this stage.

One could assume that religious duties remain the same over time and place, or at most, concede that only the interpretation of those duties change. However, this does not appear to be the case as, with a change in emphasis of Islam by the political administrations, so too come changes in the legal structure of society which can affect these duties. Examples of this are the banning of alcohol consumption for Muslims<sup>18</sup> and gambling during the Z A Bhutto administration and changing the weekly holiday from Sunday to Friday.<sup>19</sup> The expectation by and of the Muslim population changes with the political position on Islam within Pakistan. The population is, at different times, made aware of its duties as Muslim, duties which were not previously known to them or presented under an alternative interpretation. This can lead to confusion and insecurity of one's personal life as a Muslim

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<sup>17</sup>See Chapter 4.

<sup>18</sup>The Christian population is entitled, on the production of identification, to purchase and consume alcohol.

<sup>19</sup>This has, during the Nawaz Shariff government of 1997 changed back to Sunday.

as Metcalf illustrates through an article she reproduces which was published in *The Pakistan Times* in 1983.

By the grace of Almighty God I was born in a Muslim home like any other Pakistani Muslim but during my life of over 50 years I have never experienced so much controversy on Islam as I am experiencing now for the last 3-4 years. It has almost become a matter of routine to read in the Press, see on TV, and hear on the Radio what is Islamic and what is not. One starts thinking whether our ancestors and we have so far been living an Islamic or un-Islamic life. (The Pakistan Times, 21.2.83: Quoted in Metcalf,1987:150)<sup>20</sup>

The position of women has, as previously mentioned, frequently been the subject of this kind of reinterpretation. Women are given more or less freedom, socially and politically, depending upon the status of Islamic ideology within the nation at the time. For example, during a time when the country was more religiously conservative and looking towards the Middle East the Friday sermons may tell the attendants that women should not drive or that they should not mix with members of the opposite sex. There may be political motivation behind these moves but they also have very real effects on the women. I was told of incidents where women had been stoned if seen driving a car during the Zia years. Although such incidents were, in reality, unlikely, it is important that people cited these examples and this can be linked to a construction of a different past 'moral world'. In another conversation with my landlady, again over preparations for our evening meal, she told me that it was always clear when a Friday sermon was about women and was something that the women themselves would not like, as the volume of the speakers would be turned down so that the women who were in their homes could not hear what was being said.

The 'guidelines' for being a Muslim in Pakistan have changed for men also, but it is the women who have been most affected by government policy such as those of General Ziaul Haq and his Islamisation process. One is always a Muslim but the criteria for whether one is a good Muslim or not is open to reinterpretation. Therefore a Muslim woman may,

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<sup>20</sup>It should perhaps be noted that this article was written during the Islamisation period of the Ziaul Haq administration.

during one decade, be considered a 'good Muslim' if she dresses modestly in a shalwar kameez and dupatta and drives to the home of a member of her extended family. The following decade she may be considered a 'bad Muslim' because she does not wear a burqa and she drives a car, indeed her reputation could be diminished simply by leaving the house. Men may be confused by the reinterpretation of Islam and may be led, like the writer to *The Pakistan Times* cited above, to question their own interpretations of the Qur'an, however this is, for the most part, personal scrutiny of their actions rather than the public scrutiny to which women are subjected.

### **Islamabad's Elite**

'Culture', as we have seen, is an extremely fluid term meaning different things to different people at different times. It is the tools which people possess such as their wealth and family background, as well as their language abilities, which give them the ability to interpret their 'culture' in different ways through exposure to different contexts. However, one thing which should not be forgotten is that the elite of any country are usually a little different from the rest of the population; they have different codes and, to some extent, have a 'culture' of their own. This is not to suggest that the rest of the population are all exactly the same, they too have class as well as regional and ethnic differences.

The city within which a population live is relevant to the inhabitants world view, at least to some extent. In the case of Islamabad, being a relatively recently built city and due to the nature of its existence, namely being the political centre, the majority of its inhabitants do not originate from the city and have therefore migrated there either temporarily, for the duration of their post, or on a more permanent basis.

With Partition of Pakistan from India in 1947 Karachi and Lahore became the capital cities of the newly founded nation; but construction on the city of Islamabad started in 1959-1960 as the brainchild of Ayub Khan. The significant cities within Pakistan prior to the building of Islamabad were provincial and therefore had the potential, if they became national capitals, to favouring their own regions over the others. Islamabad is a separate district, technically not part of the Punjab, by which it is surrounded, or any other province. This was done for several reasons but the most significant was to keep the balance of power between the various

provinces relatively neutral. This was not the only reason, however, for the building of Islamabad. Lahore was considered to be too close to India and consequently would be under threat of invasion should relations deteriorate. Karachi was, on the one hand, too far from the most populous province of the Punjab and on the other, had difficulties of its own in relation to the Muhajar/Sindhi divide. All in all the building of a new capital was thought to be the answer.

Islamabad is the new capital of Pakistan ... Selected by a Commission especially set up for this purpose, the site is the table-land of the Potwar plateau, near Rawalpindi. Spread over an area of 351 square miles it is an expanse of natural terraces and meadows rising 1,700 to 2,000 feet above sea level. (Pakistan Publications, 1967:534)

The general feeling appeared to be that Islamabad was just a place where one lived, the inhabitants identifying with other cities, villages or provinces. A frequent remark which I heard from informants was

Islamabad is very different from the other cities of Pakistan - nobody comes from Islamabad.

I met only one person who actually said that she came from Islamabad and she did so because she had grown up there and had lived in the city more or less from the time it was first built. Some of my informants came from villages, usually in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) or the Punjab, where their families were frequently the landowners in the area, or they came from one of the provincial capitals, most commonly Lahore or Karachi. Although my informants originated from all of the provinces, there were relatively few from Balochistan.

Following the (slightly adapted) old adage that you can 'take the man out of the country but you cannot take the country out of the man' this applies equally well to 'province' in this case. The perceived connection by individuals with their province or city of origin in the case of the majority, if not all, Pakistanis I met was extremely strong, both for themselves and those they came into contact with. People who originated from Karachi, for example, were often thought to be (and often were) more liberal or 'westernised' than Pakistanis from different regions. On the other hand, people from NWFP and the Tribal Areas were thought to be extremely

conservative especially in relation to the movements of their women and again there was some evidence to support this. There seemed to be a certain amount of snobbery attached to these provincial, or more accurately in this respect, ethnic groups, especially in respect of the Pathans.

The focus of this research is predominantly on the elite of the Pakistan/Islamabad population. These people make up a very small percentage of the total Pakistani population (not more than 5% and more likely 1-2%). The majority had travelled abroad, thereby obtaining first hand knowledge of the West and consequently having a knowledge-base within which to contextualise print and electronic media representations.

The most relevant criteria in relation to this thesis, by which to distinguish the elite from the majority of the remaining population of Pakistan are literacy and education on the one hand and English language ability on the other. It is access to these resources and abilities which allows the further access to the print and electronic media, particularly in relation to satellite and English language newspapers and imported programming aired on national television. A general examination of these issues is therefore necessary in order to further understand the population upon whom we are concentrating. It is also at this point that we consider the relevance of gender as this greatly effects how people watch television, particularly imported programming watched through video or satellite.

### Literacy and education

Since the birth of Islam literacy and education have been important issues to Muslims. The Qur'an is a written text which contains the word of God. They are not the words of the Prophet as he was simply the instrument through which God gave his final gift to his people - the Qur'an. It is said that God offered this final miracle to his people in order that they would believe in him for he would send no more prophets. A written text makes for an advantage for those who can read because they are able to have a direct understanding of the Qur'an. The Qur'an has now been translated into numerous languages including both English and Urdu but it is still generally preferred that believers read the Book in Arabic as this was the chosen language of God.

Although the Prophet himself was not literate he would memorise the *Surahs*<sup>21</sup> sent by God and then, after having recovered from his trance-like state he would request others to commit those *Surahs* to memory also and, whenever possible, to write them down (Lings, 1983). It is said by many that the Prophet held great store by the ability to read as well as education generally and sayings of the Holy Prophet include,

‘The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Muslim male and female.’

‘He who leaveth home in search of knowledge walketh in the path of Allah.’

‘The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr.’ (Quoted in Zafar, 1989:235)

During the wars that preceded the taking of Mecca the Prophet instructed that those captives who could and would teach ten Muslims to read were to earn their freedom (Lings, 1983). Despite the above some of the more radical Muslims groups do not accept that God or the Prophet intended that universal literacy should become a reality, particularly not in the case of women.

There is also a gender bias in the literacy figures which is not apparent on a look solely at the general literacy rates. Women are, by and large, considerably less well educated than men, with 24% of women being literate as opposed to 49% of men (according to the already questioned statistics). There are regional variations in respect of these figures also, with Balochistan and NWFP having significantly lower rates of female literacy than in the other provinces of Sindh and Punjab. The most significant explanation for this is the stand taken by some of the more hard line Mullahs who have more power in these rural dominated locations than in the more urbanised provinces. An example of the situation is given by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan:

When an education movement in Kaghan Valley [NWFP] began to gather momentum a mullah spoilt it by issuing a fatwa that it was un-

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<sup>21</sup>Surah is a term used exclusively for the chapters of the Qur’an, of which there are one hundred and fourteen.

Islamic. (HRCP, 1995:184)

The community within which I did my fieldwork was literate and educated, at least to some degree, although this is not the norm for Pakistan. It is difficult to be sure of the exact literacy figures for Pakistan but, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and their figures for 1995, the literacy rate has been placed at 36%, which was the lowest in South Asia. The growth in literacy rates during 1996 have also been put at no more than 0.45% by the Human Rights Commission. According to statistics from the Human Development Report, ((1993) quoted by Saha (1996)) adult literacy in 1990 was placed at 34.8%, second only to Nepal at the bottom of the literacy table in terms of the percentage of literate adults. The mean years of schooling was placed at 1.9 by Saha and put Pakistan at the bottom of the table, coming below both Nepal and Bangladesh. The measures used for the calculation of these figures is unclear, but it has been suggested that the figures include people who can write their name only and that if literacy were to include abilities to read and write to a slightly higher level, the figures would be considerably lower. If the matter arose, almost none of my informants would refer to the literacy statistics issued by the government, but, instead, would refer to figures far lower, usually around 20%. As the editor of of *The News* put it

We claim we are 32% literacy but precisely it has never crossed 23%.

The media, particularly the print media, often carried stories relating to the public concern over these literacy figures. At the time of the industry's strike action over government tax measures newspapers pointed to literacy rates as a reason for reducing taxes rather than increasing them. This cannot be seen as a purely altruistic move as the industry's own circulation figures were sorely effected by the poor literacy levels.

In principle, there should be minimal or no import duty whatsoever on newsprint and paper in a country with less than 30 per cent literacy. (*Dawn* 8.7.96: 13)

An unofficial explanation for the strange and apparently short-sighted taxation proposal being offered is that at least for the newspapers the 5 per cent tax levied on sale would be refundable against the higher duty paid at the import stage. Even if this explanation is accepted, two highly

retrogressive implications remain. One, that the enhanced import duty would adversely affect the economy of newspapers, and two, that in the case of the magazine and books, it would act as a deterrent against spread of knowledge. What all this adds up to is a deliberate attempt to curb access to knowledge in a country where the literacy rate is among the lowest in the world. (*The Nation* 16.6.96: 6)

During 1995, Imran Khan talked of appalling literacy rates and presented his agenda for change. When he announced his engagement and his subsequent marriage to Jemima Goldsmith they both said that it was their intention that Jemima should become the leader in the battle to improve education and literacy within Pakistan.

Jemima Goldsmith, who is to marry cricket celebrity Imran Khan on June 20 this year, will head the National Education Movement (NEM) ... A decision to give a vital role to Jemima Goldsmith, now Haika Khan, was taken in a meeting of group of seven. (*The News* 17.5.95: 11)

There were talks and newspaper articles in relation to the literacy campaign first of all by the Khans and later by the government. Before the Khans' campaign was officially launched the government began advertising its own literacy campaign with banners hung around the Islamabad Blue Area and Zero Point, both in English and Urdu<sup>22</sup>. After a few months, however, the publicity in relation to the issue ceased on both sides. The campaign for increased literacy had apparently come to an end.

Education in Pakistan is not free and although the costs are mostly nominal for the government-run primary schools they can be prohibitive for the poorest families when one takes into consideration the additional expenses attached, such as stationery and books etc. One must also consider the possibility that the potential income generated by these children can be significant to the running of a household. These two factors individually, let alone combined, serve as a disincentive for families to educate their children.

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<sup>22</sup>There is a certain irony in a poster campaign in words rather than pictures launching a drive to increase literacy.

## English Language

Throughout the course of this thesis there is a heavy concentration on the English language media, both that which originates from Pakistan itself in the form of English language newspapers, and that which is imported from outside the country such as agency news articles imported television programming and satellite. The specifics of this will be examined more deeply in the chapters which follow. However, at this point, it is necessary to contextualise, first, the relevance of the English language within Pakistan and, second the category of people with whom we are dealing in relation to linguistic ability and thereby their accessibility to these facilities.

The history of the English language in Pakistan originated prior to the formation of the nation. English provided an alternative to the use of either Urdu or Bengali. Not only did it circumvent the language dilemma, but it also aided the establishment of the official apparatus (ie. the government and bureaucracy) of the country. The creation of Pakistan necessitated the institution of a state apparatus independent of British India and it needed to be staffed. The ruling elite had been trained to do their official work in English, and therefore, to switch into one or both of the other languages would have caused considerable difficulties. The Pakistan Movement had used the Urdu language as a symbol of unity but this also made it a language with political connotations, particularly when opposed to Bengali. Urdu had been a language of the Muslims and therefore was put forward as the national language of Pakistan.

The ideal gained ground that the defence of Urdu was a *sine qua non* for anyone in India calling himself a Muslim, and thus was Urdu tied inextricably, in the minds of many, with the concept of an Indian Muslim identity. (Rashid, 1983:74).

With Independence, however, came a realisation of the complications involved in such an undertaking. The Muslim majority province of Bengal, which became part of Pakistan at the time of Partition, had a prominent regional language of Bengali and which was understood by a numerically larger group than those who understood Urdu. As such they made a claim for Bengali to become the national language. The Urdu speakers were unhappy with this however, and insisted on their language becoming the national language, as they had assumed it would during the struggle for independence. The majority of the population were more or less

uninterested in the language issue as they spoke regional languages and had little or no understanding of either Urdu or Bengali. These languages were important to the ruling elite however as the balance of power between East and West Pakistan could be effected as a consequence of the political significance of a regional language being elevated to the status of the national language.

It was not until after the separation of East and West Pakistan in 1971 that the dispute over the national language eased slightly as the Bengali component to the debate was removed. This proved to be a brief respite, however, as 1972 saw the language riots in Sindh.

Urdu has been the cause of more divisiveness in Pakistan than any other component of this “national” culture. (Syed, 1984:118).

The issue still remained more complicated than simply a change in the status of the Urdu and English languages. English remained embedded in the nation, with the Constitution and the body of law both written in the language. So much of the mechanics of the country, not simply of the official, legal and government but also the technological, economic and social, were deeply embedded within the English language for use, record and communication.

Although introduced in this country through an historical accident, English has become a pattern of life, and its cultural influence continues to be strong. (Haque, 1993:15)

Despite changes within Pakistan and the increasing importance of Urdu as a national language the status of English has not been allowed to decline too greatly. The significance of the English language in international affairs - political and economic - has ensured that English has maintained a relatively high status despite Urdu having taken priority as the national language. There are still complications in the use of any official language, not least because of the literacy rates previously discussed. However, it is important to take into consideration that, for those receiving an education, the medium of instruction for the majority of government-run primary schools, as well as for the higher levels of educational institutions, is Urdu. For many, if not most, Pakistanis this was not their mother tongue. They have regional languages and dialects which they use on a daily basis and are often significantly different from Urdu. This means that the children must learn a second language if they are to gain some form of education. The

problem was enhanced by the Punjab government's decision to start teaching in English from Class 1 with the intention of improving the quality of education.<sup>23</sup> If we take into consideration that, in order to read the Qur'an for religious instruction, the children must also be educated in Arabic, we can see that those children who receive any education are, in fact, potentially having to grapple with up to four languages. Reverting back to the literacy figures, we can assume that the majority of students have only a minimal understanding of anything other than their *spoken* mother tongue, due to their limited access to educational facilities.

Notwithstanding the move made by the Punjab government to institute the teaching of classes in English, it is apparent that the extent to which the majority of the population is *competent* and, perhaps more importantly, *comfortable*, in this language is extremely low. If we take into consideration that the participation rate at the higher secondary education level is 29.1% and that far from all of this is conducted in English, I think it reasonable to assume that not more than 15% of the population, and probably considerably less, can be placed within this category.

It is not the content of the conversation or writing alone which is different in various countries using the same language, there are additional differences in relation to the way the language is used. According to Marckwardt

[Language] is the product of the society which employs it, and as it is employed it is engaged in a continual process of re-creation. If this is the case, we may reasonably expect a language to reflect the culture, the folkways, the characteristic psychology of the people who use it.  
(Marckwardt, 1958/1980:9-10)

In the same way as people may be heard to refer to 'American' or 'American English' so too could we refer to a 'Pakistani English'. By this we mean that, although the language used is English, it is used in a manner that can be related to a specific country, and the usage involves drawing upon a different word base within the English language to say the same thing. Audrey Kennedy, in her article 'Of Dacoits and Desperados: Crime Reporting in Pakistani English' refers to the differences in the use of language in relation to crime reporting. She suggests that:

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<sup>23</sup>Whether one can improve the quality of education by changing the language of instruction is a dubious theory but one which we shall not be examining in this thesis.

In Pakistan, English has traditionally been learned by studying seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century British literature. This probably accounts for a number of outmoded words and phrases not in current use in other varieties of English. These sources might also provide the euphemisms that Pakistani newspapers often prefer due to cultural constraints and taboos on the use of explicit references to sexual matters. (Kennedy, 1993:76-77)

With the increasing access to sources of modern English - whether it be British or American in origin - especially through television and video, there becomes, at the same time, an increased awareness of the uses of modern English. This is not, however, to suggest that the Pakistani English will simply merge into all other forms of English, but rather to suggest that the source base for the Pakistani English will also change, and that therefore the use of the language will be affected by both internal and external forces.

Within Pakistan itself, as in other countries which regularly use more than one language, there is lexical borrowing. Urdu, the numerous other indigenous languages of Pakistan and religious terminology, provide lexicons which the English users may call upon when there is no English equivalent or simply because the Urdu is the preferred term. An example of this which occurs in almost everybody's daily conversation could be 'Inshallah', I never heard anybody ever say 'God willing' instead of 'Inshallah'. This has been referred to as the 'Urduization' of English by Baumgardner, Kennedy and Shamim in their article 'The Urduization of English in Pakistan' (1993:83-174).

In conclusion therefore, and following Platt, Weber and Ho (1984:198) not only are a government's language and educational policies significant to the changes and usage of English (in this instance in Pakistan), but also to the attitudes of the speakers. While reference is made to the 'English language' in Pakistan it must be born in mind that this is Pakistani English and it is this which may affect the use and understanding of English from international sources.

Literacy per se and education in the English language greatly (and obviously) effect access to print and electronic media resources. At the most basic level, there is a financial cost involved in obtaining an education and therefore, potentially, the more money available the

greater the opportunities in this respect. Wealth, by extension, enables the purchase of daily newspapers and magazines and investment in a television, video cassette recorders and satellite dishes. However, one must not forget the gender differential. The extent to which girls receive an education is invariably less than that of boys.

In this final section we consider the position of elite girls and women within Pakistani society as this, perhaps above all else, effects presentation and viewing patterns of television programming. We have encountered various references to gender during the course of this chapter already, however, we now consider, among other things, the prohibitions placed upon the mixing between unrelated males and females and the restrictions on the movement of women.

### Gender differences

To accept one's destiny as the wife and mother who is of necessity concerned with daily problems, and to submit oneself to one's social position and duties with awareness that this is in reality submitting oneself to the Divine Will have led many Muslim women to an intensely contemplative inner life amidst, and integrated into, the type of active life imposed upon her by the hands of destiny. (Nasr, 1988:73).

There are differences in relation to the position of women within Pakistani society according to ethnic group and therefore it is, to some extent, difficult to talk in terms of Pakistan generally. However, there are far more similarities between the elite of different groups than there are amongst the lower classes and the elites within the same ethnic groups. As this thesis concentrates primarily upon the elite it is worth bearing this distinction in mind. Having said this, Pathan women whom I knew, but who lived in Islamabad often told me that life was much easier for them in the city than in NWFP where their movements were restricted far more and where, if they did leave the house, they were expected to cover themselves to a greater degree, than in Islamabad, with a headscarf or even a burqa. However there were still constraints in Islamabad on the movement of women, especially the unmarried younger ones.

Sabra Bano suggests in her 'ideal roles' model of the place of women within Pakistani society as recognised by the conservative elements of the society to be as follows:

Pakistan's socio-economic circumstances have tended to encourage an emphasis on the primacy of women's conjugal and parental roles. Such roles are particularly advocated by religious parties, conservative groups and extreme fundamentalist organisations, all of which believe that women's mobility should be restricted to the household, and who argue that women's behaviour should closely observe the practice of *chadar* and *char devari* (they should be veiled and remain inside their house). These groups contend that a woman's place is in the home and believe that, as a married woman, her main purpose in life is to bear children and to perform domestic tasks such as cooking, washing, and cleaning (Bano, 1997:190-1).

While this model does not apply so readily to the notions of the role of women as perceived by the majority of elites in Islamabad it does have a significant effect on the women although perhaps more indirectly than directly.

Gossip, or the threat of gossip plays a central role in the curtailment of movement of women within Pakistani society as it does elsewhere<sup>24</sup>. Max Gluckman (1963) has described gossip and scandal as amongst the most important social and cultural phenomena (1963: 307). Gluckman goes on to discuss, using the work of others on the subject, and concludes that

For small groups alone, my conclusion is that we might formulate a law to say, the more exclusive a social group is, the more will its members indulge in gossip and scandal about one another. (Gluckman, 1963: 315)

Whether this 'law' can be applied in the case of Pakistan is a matter of debate as gossip and slander are both tools used by groups of differing ethnic, social and economic standing.

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<sup>24</sup>See, for example, work carried out in relation to the Mediterranean such as that of du Boulay (1974) on Greece, Gilmore (1978) on Spain and Davis (1973) on Italy.

However, there can be no doubt that the elite of Pakistan are a small and exclusive group and gossip is undoubtedly used as a means of control, particular in relation to the restriction of movement by women.

One informant who was unmarried and in her early twenties told me that her movements were restricted largely because of neighbourhood gossip. She had spent the majority of her childhood living outside of Pakistan, either with her parents in Saudi Arabia or at boarding school in England and had therefore spent the majority of her childhood outside of Pakistan. On return to Pakistan to live on a permanent basis she found her movements considerably restricted, more than had been the case in previous years. Once in Pakistan she was rarely allowed out at night with girl friends to restaurants or even to their houses and, when she was allowed out, it was usually only for a very short time. It should be mentioned at this point that it was relatively uncommon for women to have friends outside of the family circle. Those friendships which did exist outside of the family were almost always limited to people of the same gender, only the exceptionally liberal were seen out with people of the opposite sex. Visiting became easier once the mothers of my informants' friends became acquainted with one another and the acceptability of the family had been assessed and approved. It is of no small significance that the informant mentioned above was of marriageable age and therefore public opinion with respect to her piety could not be in question if her family was to receive proposals for an arranged marriage.

I was told by several girls that friendship became easier once families were familiar with one another and could be relied upon to protect the girls' reputations. It was the community that could make or break a girl's, and her family's, reputation by the gossip which was circulated and therefore it was important to the families to maintain a tight rein on the activities of their daughters. We can see the similarity to the Italian example. Honour and gossip are linked by Davis in his book 'Land and Family in Pristicci'. He maintains that

It is primarily on their relations with their women that men's honour is assessed: and it is assessed by women. It is women who do the gossiping, who observe and comment ... The men are not there; and they rely for their information on their wives. (Davis 1973: 72)

These restrictions on the movement of unmarried women were not applied to boys and unmarried men. They were allowed a far greater degree of freedom as it was not they who carry the reputation of their families on their shoulders in this respect. Boys were allowed to enjoy a wider circle of friends which extended beyond the family from an earlier age. An informant told me that when she was 16 she had been invited to attend a sleep-over at a friend's house which her mother had not allowed her to attend. A few days later her brother, 3 or 4 years her junior, had been given permission to go to a friend's house to stay for the weekend. The girl pointed out this apparent contradiction to her mother who maintained that the circumstances were entirely different for boys and girls and that was the reason for allowing one to go out and not the other. The girl said that she had stopped speaking to her mother until she had given in and allowed her to go. When I asked if she had actually attended the sleep-over my informant told me that she, of course she had as it was necessary to make the stand in order for her not to have to fight the battle so hard on any future occasion.

One can, to some extent, correlate the public and private spheres of religious worship with the freedom of movement allowed for women. Women, unlike men, do not go to the mosques for their prayers and therefore do not have the opportunity to extend their social circles through such interaction. While it is not compulsory for men to perform *namaz* (prayer) at the mosque, except on a Friday for *Namaz-i-Zuhr*<sup>25</sup>, some may choose to give more of their prayers at the mosque and therefore may become more involved in the community. Having said this, however, the majority of men with whom I came into contact did not go to the mosque on a regular basis (sometimes not even on a Friday) and most people, men or women, did not perform all of the five '*Farz Namaz*' (obligatory prayers). I would therefore suggest that the public role of men with regard to mosque attendance may not be the reality of the religious situation on the ground for the elite.

The extent of the freedom allowed to women can, to some extent, be judged by the clothing that they wear. For example, those women who are seen on the streets of Peshawar often, if not usually, wear a burqa which is 'the veil or covering used for the seclusion of women when walking abroad' (Hughes, 1885:48): covering all but the women's eyes and even those may be concealed by a netting. At the very least, women in NWFP wear a veil over

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<sup>25</sup>The prayer which 'starts as soon as the sun crosses the meridian or say, just after noon when the shadow of things becomes equal to their originals. The time for this namaz expires when the shadow of an object doubles its original.' (Zafar, 1989:119/120)

their heads concealing their hair. This type of dress is rarely seen in Islamabad, particularly among the elite. The usual clothing among the elite is the shalwar kameez (baggy trousers and a loose, long shirt) with a dupatta (cloth draped over the shoulders used to cover the chest). Strictly speaking, the dupatta should be draped down between the shoulders and the elbows in order that the cloth covers the chest, however, frequently women wear it hanging only around the neck. Imran Khan, in one of his articles published in the national press, pointed to the importance of dress for women by saying that

Modest clothing gives women respect and dignity and raises their status above animals. (*The News on Friday* 3.3.95: 6)

Informants of mine who had roots in the North West Frontier Province would change their style of clothing when going to NWFP as they maintained that the villagers and general population of the area would not understand their liberal attitude towards dress and consequently would assume that it was a reflection of the woman's moral character rather than an alternative manifestation of the same interpretation of the Qur'an to dress modestly. On an occasion when I went with a friend and her family to Peshawar and the Khyber Pass this change of dress pattern was most striking. Ordinarily my friend only wore jeans and a baggy shirt and almost never wore a shalwar kameez. For our trip she wore, not only the shalwar kameez, but also used her dupatta to cover her head.

Once children pass beyond the age of puberty they tend to mix more or less exclusively with members of their own sex with the possible exception of extended family members, although even then, this is restricted when they are of similar ages and therefore possible marriage partners. Some changes are occurring among the elite however, with the increased education of women. Many of the higher education institutions, due to the small number of women attending, necessitate mixed sex colleges thereby students were forced into meeting and interacting with members of the opposite sex, at least to some degree.<sup>26</sup>

Whether or not the elite women get jobs after completing their education (remaining unemployed is not uncommon<sup>27</sup>) it is common for them to have undertaken some form of

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<sup>26</sup>This is itself a deterrent to some parents for sending their daughters to gain a higher education and a catch-22 situation arises. With the low attendance of women there can be few single sex colleges but as long as there are few colleges, parents are deterred from continuing the education of their daughters.

internship at one company or another during the course of their studies and therefore they will have had the opportunity to have had some contact with members of the opposite sex beyond their usual family circle. Although many of the educational facilities for the elite and their work places, have a mixed sex environments it should be pointed out that despite the opportunity existing to mix with members of the opposite sex, it is not necessarily taken up, particularly among the more conservative students and employees. It was still the case that the majority of people would remain within their own gender groups when socialising, restricting interaction with members of the opposite sex to those occasions when necessity demanded.

During my stay in Pakistan I came across a relatively large number of cases where daughters had had to fight for their higher education while sons were *expected* to continue to at least undergraduate level. On one occasion an A level student of the college where I worked brought her mother to see me so that I would try to convince her that continuing her daughter's education would be a good idea. The student's father wanted his daughter to marry and, as the student did not want to, she asked me to speak to her mother who would, in turn, speak to her father.<sup>28</sup> It was also common for daughters, should they be allowed to continue into further education to do so only at institutions within the city of their family (although that may not be the same city as their parents) while sons from the same family would have relatively little difficulty gaining consent to study in Britain or the United States, assuming the capital was available to fund such an education. One exception to this may be in relation to the eldest son of a family who is relied upon to some degree and is therefore forced to stay within the country in order to remain near his family.

Amongst the elite it was becoming more acceptable for girls to receive a higher rate of education although this was not necessarily with the intention of gaining employment afterwards but instead the motivation was to increase her chances of a better, higher educated, marriage partner. Bano describes this relatively recent change of attitude by saying

As urban residence has reshaped life styles, strict religious beliefs and traditional practices have had less influence on many people. Once a

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<sup>27</sup>See Lyon and Fischer (1997:176) which, while referring to women of the lower classes living in Greentown is still pertinent to the cultural attitude towards all working women, especially outside of the home.

<sup>28</sup>The student was eventually allowed to continue with her education.

daughter's education was considered unimportant, even morally suspect, but now a woman with a career has become a desirable bride. (Bano, 1997:194)

It was told to me on more than one occasion that if a girl were too highly educated it could limit her chances of obtaining a marriage proposal. On the other hand, there was an increasing demand for a wife of the same intellectual level as her husband, therefore giving the husband a wife who he could talk to and would be able to understand some of his problems.

While the education of women meant an education outside of the home, this did not necessarily mean their emancipation. After the 1920's larger numbers of upper and middle class urban Muslim women began attending English medium schools and colleges although nothing changed for the female rural masses. According to Jalal

Far from diminishing the role of the family in shaping the social outlook of Muslim women, the new educational trends heightened it further still. Even the most enlightened of Muslim families conceded that education for women was a worthwhile pursuit only if it enhanced their roles within the natal and the marital family. (Jalal, 1991:82)

The majority of marriages which take place in Pakistan are arranged: proposals are received from the man's family and the woman's family decide whether the match is suitable. Among the elite the girl often had some say as to whether or not she was happy with the potential marriage and although she would not take part in the selection of a husband she had the power of veto. One informant told me that her parents had been very keen on a marriage proposal received from one family and were unhappy at her refusal to accept although they had conceded to her decision, however reluctantly. This same informant told me that her mother would not allow her father to marry their daughters to Pathans as she had had a miserable life. The mother maintained that the Pathan men's expectations of their wives was excessive and, therefore, she was not willing to allow her daughters to suffer in the same way. The father had agreed to this on the condition that, if his daughters were not to marry into his family, then neither should they marry into the mother's. This was an exceptional example as the majority of girls were married into the family, however distantly

related.

The living circumstances after marriage are obviously of interest to the potential bride and a subject that may be discussed prior to the marriage. It is reasonably common for couples to live in a patrilocal, joint family system at least for the first few years of their marriage. For the wealthier among the elite this could mean that the couple may be given a portion of the house including a living area rather than simply a room of their own. Depending upon the size of the house, there was usually a dining room, a room set aside for the entertainment of guests and a room used for the general recreation of the family which included a television. In those houses which followed the joint family system it was apparently usual for the younger couple to have a television (often including a video and a satellite receiver if the household already had a dish) in their own room or portion of the house thereby giving them increased privacy and choice over viewing. This meant that the couple could have more choice about the amount of contact they had with the family.

## **Conclusion**

Single or married: young or old: male or female: educated or uneducated: rich or poor - all these various factors effect access to and interpretation of, the print and electronic media. This chapter has attempted to highlight (briefly) certain aspects of Pakistani history, life amongst the elite and religious ideology in order to contextualise the ethnographic chapters which follow. If we refer again to the quote which began this chapter we can begin to consider this now in relation to the media in Pakistan.

O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another (Qur'an XLIX:13)

Newspaper readers and television audiences have a view of the world which they take with them into any reading and viewing environment. Publications and programming are also tailored to the social and religious context within which they are received. In the remainder of this thesis we shall see how and what newspapers publish or refrain from publishing, the pressures placed upon them and the duties they see themselves as carrying. In relation

to the electronic media also we examine the criteria of censorship policies imposed by the governments of Pakistan and those imposed by the audiences directly upon their own viewing choices.

The issues discussed above in relation to national and religious identity, literacy, education, English language ability and gender all effect reading and viewing choices and understanding. It is hoped that through an examination of the print and electronic media notions of national and religious identity and their consequences in Pakistan add to our understanding of these issues as well as to an anthropological perspective on the position and role of media within Pakistani society.

# *Chapter Three*

## THE FOURTH PILLAR OF THE STATE?

### I

[The government] then subjected the press outside its executive control to Draconian laws compiled under the omnibus Press and Publications Ordinance (PPO). It already had complete control over the radio and soon it was blessed with the all powerful tool of manipulation - the TV. And the newspapers which toed the government line were favoured with larger newsprint quotas and generous advertisements. Those which did not were deprived of both. For more than 30 years the press in Pakistan was subjected to the worst kind of suppression. Freedom of the press took a back seat to everything else. But while the controlled press kept on feeding the general public the falsehood of “Sab Achcha Hai” [Sir is alright] on a daily basis, the country suffered one debacle after another on all fronts. (*Dawn* 24.9.95: 8)

In this and the next chapter we examine the role of the print media in Pakistan as understood by the newspaper industry, the government and the readers. We look at: if, why and how the industry's imagined role and actual role are not the same. We begin by taking a brief look at what makes 'news' and how news, passed through the newspapers, acquires its status as information we want or need to know. There is a power to be gained by those who have control over the *making* of news and we examine how governments have influenced the press through the imposition of censorship of various forms and highlighted through the above cited newspaper article. We concentrate particularly on the Press and Publications Ordinance of Ayub Khan's era and the different constraints applied during Ziaul Haq's Martial Law years as, in Pakistan, these times are widely viewed as the most oppressive in relation to freedom of the press.

While press laws represent a direct approach to the censorship of news, advertising plays a more subtle, but equally important censorship role. The press is an industry which must make a profit to remain viable. We therefore examine the means by which governments and private industry can control and manipulate newspaper content through the financial pressure they can bring to bear through advertising revenue. We shall see how 65% of the industry's revenue is obtained from the Press Information Department which distributes the government advertisements.

The two disputes discussed at the end of this chapter provide examples of two means by which the government attempt to control the press and its news. The first relates to direct government action through the banning of six Karachi based Urdu evening newspapers. The second concentrates on market forces (although affected by the government) through the use of taxes and their affects on newspaper prices. Both these examples demonstrate that, despite considerable constraints imposed upon press freedom in Pakistan (and discussed throughout this chapter), on occasion the press is able to wield some power of its own, in these cases, in the form of strikes or the threat of strike action.

In both this and the following chapter we examine how sturdy the foundations of the fourth pillar are, or are thought to be. It is relatively common to hear the Pakistani press refer to itself as the 'Fourth Pillar of the State'; taking its cue from Macaulay (and following him, Fleet

Street) who said that

The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the realm. (quoted in Baistow, 1985:1)

The press sees itself as the fearless defender of the public interest, eternally vigilant in a pursuit of truth, the exposure of corruption and the abuse of power. This is obviously not unique to the Pakistani press and a number of writers have discussed the contradictions in this view even in the most 'democratic' countries such as Britain and the United States (eg. Weaver, 1994; Baistow, 1985;). The constraints upon the print media within Pakistan have altered under different administrations. While the codes of censorship according to which the press are expected to conduct themselves have remained more or less constant, the extent to which they have been imposed have changed. This is particularly apparent from the pre-publication censorship imposed during Ziaul Haq's Martial Law Administration and the otherwise usual self censorship which various other administrations had allowed.

The focus of this analysis is on the English language press for two main reasons. The first is that the majority of my informants read these newspapers as well as or instead of the Urdu ones (see Table and comments in following chapter for analysis of newspaper purchase). The second reason is that the English language press are regarded as the *newspapers* while the Urdu press frequently, and more or less unanimously, is condemned for being dominated by sensationalism and 'yellow journalism'.

Certainly within the columns of the English Press a wide range of news and opinion is represented but the Urdu Press tends to give limited or little exposure to that part of opinion and analysis which is described as liberal and progressive. (*Dawn* 8.7.96: 13)

There was also a class differential in the newspapers, with the English language newspapers catering exclusively for an elite readership. There is a correlation here between the elite press in Pakistan and elsewhere as we can see from Jones's reference to the British press.

The newspapers designed for the wealthier minority, whether their opinions be conservative or liberal, offer different news items from those selected by the mass-circulation press. (Jones, 1970:27)

While this comment was written in relation to British newspapers it applies equally well to the Pakistani press with the distinction between the two classes of press being made on the basis of language: having established a language difference, the content difference is implied.

This chapter concentrates on the political significance of the newspaper industry in Pakistan, especially its role as an identity definer. We examine the means by which the governments attempt to manipulate the press in order to legitimate their political actions and their own position within society by deciding what it is that the people ought to know and what they ought not to know. Governments are alone not in their manipulation of the 'news' as, at the same time, the print media provides the reader with a *version* of news, news which it has selected as being appropriate for their readership. This selection process takes place on the grounds that, in relation to the newspapers being considered throughout this thesis, the readers are elite Pakistanis and, more likely than not, Muslim. There are assumptions which the newspaper industry and government will therefore draw upon as a consequence. Both institutions, the government and the press, have ideas of how society should be.

During the course of the print media chapters the three books of Zamir Niazi - 'The Press in Chains' (1986), 'The Press Under Siege' (1992) and 'The Web of Censorship' (1994) - have been used for source material. I would suggest that the ideology behind these books is based upon the assumption that the newspaper industry *can* become the 'fourth pillar of the state' which is, as I hope to demonstrate, improbable. The focus of Niazi's work has been on the government and political restrictions upon the media. I would argue that the bias of the press would continue even after the lifting of political pressures: whether in the form of acts of violence, of parliament or of censorship. Niazi, assumes that once these restrictions are discontinued the press bias will disappear. The evidence drawn from Herman & Chomsky (1994(1988)), Weaver (1994), Tuchman (1978), Jones (1970) and others demonstrates that this is far from the reality. The assumptions that Niazi makes in relation to the existence of democratic society are as idealistic as his notions of a free press. However, despite this flaw

with the ideology behind Niazi's writings, the examples he use are based on actual Acts of parliament, violence and censorship as they have occurred in Pakistan therefore his writings provide some valuable primary source material which I will draw upon from time to time.

## **'News' and the Freedom of the Press**

Perhaps, first an explanation should be put forward as to the reason behind the writing of the word 'news' within quote marks. We assume many things with the use of such a word, not least of which is its applicability to the contents of a newspaper. According to the Oxford Paperback dictionary 'news' has three meanings: '1. information about recent events, 2. a broadcast report of this, 3. newsworthy information, *when a man bites a dog, that's news*'.

What is it that is being told in the 'information about recent events'? And what is 'newsworthy information'? The mention of *all* recent events in relation to *everything, everywhere* is obviously an impossibility, therefore the *selection* of stories must be made. The criteria for story selection are manifold. Why should 'man bites dog' be news? Who is interested? It may be an unusual event, but why, when so much else is likely to be happening, should that be newsworthy? There are also angles which can be taken in relation to such a story - the psychiatric disposition of the man, animal rights issues, eating habits of different societies etc etc. The choice of 'angle' is open to the journalist, the editor and/or the proprietor of the newspaper and is a decision as to 'what makes news'.

One of the means of getting round the restrictions of space, time and applicability under the general heading of 'news' is to publish and read specialised newspapers or magazines providing information on specific topics. Therefore if you require the latest 'news' about computers or cars etc you may buy a magazine which examines these subjects. However, these are not thought of in the same light as *newspapers* as they do not contain the sort of information, or 'news', that we have become accustomed to reading. However, in the same way as there are 'special interest' journals so there are 'special perspective' journals. Publications issued by particular groups - eg. a Socialist Party in a capitalist society - which openly align themselves to a political position and therefore are expected to produce news with this angle and stories which are relevant to the concepts and causes espoused by that group.

Many would describe their expectations of newspapers as containing current affairs of a local and international nature from a more or less neutral perspective. Restricting the content to this only or coming from a professed perspective however, still requires a substantial amount of editing and reductive selection. It is therefore necessary to have a basic model within which one can work and 'fit in' the items of news value that somehow meet these requirements. 'Suppression' of facts has more negative connotations than 'selection', but this may, equally as well, be what the press does.

By having permanent correspondents in particular places implies a selection of priority news items. Daily events in the United States of America are considered important enough to warrant permanent correspondent in the country (frequently in more than one city) while other nations, including Pakistan will have journalists descending on the country only when a specific story is sought. During my stay in Pakistan this was particularly evident when Imran Khan and Jemima Goldsmith married and when Princess Diana visited the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust Hospital.

As Jones puts the issues I have introduced above 'The news is what newspapers choose to tell us about.' (Jones, 1970:27). While this statement may be succinct and puts us into the right frame of mind with regard to the origins of the news content of newspapers, it is a little too succinct. For example, not all newspapers choose to tell us the same news and even those stories that get into all the newspapers may not be told in the same way, with the same prominence or the same emphasis. How a story is told can be as important as whether a story is told at all (Weaver, 1994). This includes where a story is placed within a newspaper as well as the writing technique employed. A front page story gives the impression of importance. The length of a story, whether it contains pictures and the size of its heading can also give the story a certain importance and credibility, whether it be justified or not. The awareness of this significance in Pakistan can be seen in relation to the censorship imposed when news items were instructed to be used, and sometimes in which place and of which size. An example of this is an 'advice' sent to the newspapers on the 11th August 1980 which read "Nazir Abbasi, a student leader of Jamshoro died in prison. The item may be taken as a filler or with a small headline' (Niazi, 1994:193). Another example is '28 May 1981: Crime reports should be taken on inside pages (not more than two column headlines)' (Niazi, 1994:203). The system of

'press advice', as it existed during the Martial Law days, was explained to me by an editor from *The Nation*. He stated that it was

Indirect censorship in the form of - the term which was used was 'press advice' - although there was no pre-censorship but the Press Information Department would, from time to time, issue an advice to the newspapers, 'don't do this', 'don't publish this news' or 'do not highlight this' or 'publish this news and give it prominence' - things like that. This is called 'press advice' which technically was advice but it means that you HAD to do it.

If all the newspapers were to say the same thing, in the same way there would of course be no difference between them and therefore little point in publishing more than one for everybody to read. Consequently, we assume that different readers have different expectations of the contents of a newspaper they buy as the owner of the *Muslim* pointed out in some detail<sup>1</sup>. In the same way as a *Sun* reader has different expectations from the publication to the *Times* reader, so the *Dawn* reader wants something different from a *Jang* reader.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, to some extent, the definition of news changes according to the newspaper the reader chooses to read. However, this implies more choice than actually exists as each of the publications, regardless of their orientation and decision with regard to 'what newspapers choose to tell us about' still means that newspapers must select news from the vast quantity of potential material available to them. A key indication that the choice of articles is selected is the fact that the majority of newspapers, whether they fall within a similar category of journalism or not, tend to relay more or less the same stories. There must be some continuity otherwise 'news' itself becomes discredited. It is the continuity itself which provides the 'news' with its legitimacy. As Herman and Chomsky have said

In most cases, however, media leaders do similar things because they see the world through the same lenses, are subject to similar constraints and incentives, and thus feature stories or maintain silence together in

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter 4

<sup>2</sup>The comparison cannot be drawn too closely as there is a potential language barrier for the Pakistani population in reading an English language newspaper. A point I shall return to later.

tacit collective action and leader-follower behaviour. (Herman & Chomsky, 1994(1984):xii)

Even if all the news items were not the same the usual agreement on main stories implies that these are credible and, at the same time, gives credence to those stories which are not run by all the newspapers as, by knowing what is 'news' implies that the other stories are also 'news'.

All those events that happen daily with large or small implications to various numbers of the world's population are only news if they 'make the news'. Events are simply events until they are given an official status by publication, at which point they become 'news'. Fashion affects news as much as it affects what people wear. A war, famine or drought may not end as a day to day reality for the people who are caught up in it and suffering as a consequence, but when the newspapers decide that it is 'old news' and people have become bored with it (whether or not they have) it ceases to *be* news any longer.

But perhaps what is worse is that these trends are encouraged from the top. Perhaps the Big Bosses are afraid to experiment with new trends where high politics (not so high in Pakistan) is pushed off the front page and where statement journalism is banned. The whole thing has become a vicious circle where meaningless political statements and worthless stories are given prestigious news spots for fear that if a rival paper flashes them, it would become more attractive for the readers. Thus "missing a story" becomes the greatest pressure on a reporter, whereas it might just be a blessing in disguise not only for the newspaper but also for the reader.

Lost somewhere in this rat race for power, prestige and the glamour of being close to those who matter or might matter in the near future, are the basic and fundamental problems of Pakistan. Problems which are not usually found in the Presidency, Parliament, Secretariat, Foreign Office or the GHQ. But then if they are not found in these places, they are not worth reporting, or at least not on the front pages. Or so it would

seem.

Pakistani Press therefore, loses on two counts: first, it can only speak to a very, very limited audience. And second, its internal compulsions/trends/ priorities force it to focus primarily on a very myopic angle of Pakistani life, thereby isolating it as well as its readers from the heart of Pakistan - the heart which is found in far away rural areas and small towns where real Pakistanis live in unreal conditions. But then what do they care about the newspapers and their self-inflicted idiosyncrasies? (*The Nation* 22.6.95: 9)

Rafique's book 'Benazir & British Press 1986-1990' complains of the fleeting and superficial interest taken in the significant events of Pakistan with the death of General Ziaul Haq and the return from exile of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's daughter, Benazir, together with her move into the political arena. Rafique is indignant that the serious matters of Pakistani politics were overshadowed by the media's interest in a young, attractive, wealthy and westernised woman running for the public office of Prime Minister.

The British press [The Times and Guardian] coverage remained limited to individual dramatic events rather than a regular continuous assessment of Bhutto's government. In short, the coverage of Pakistan throughout 1988-1990, suggested that the British quality press was guilty of the oft-repeated weakness - its limited attention span, and an addition to the stereotyped. (Rafique, 1994:16)

It is the naivety of this comment which is most apparent as it assumes an 'ideal' function of the press: to cover a story from every aspect until it is finished from the origin to end, rather than when the newspapers have decided that its newsworthiness has come to an end.

One factor which should be taken into consideration when understanding such an opinion of the western presses failure is the comparatively greater significance of 'important' British or American events within Pakistan than visa versa. The reasons for this are partly because the origins of the press are elsewhere (this applies particularly to ex-colonial nations), but largely

because the developed world is assumed to have importance in Pakistani domestic affairs through its economic dominance. Therefore, whether or not events happening in the West directly affect Pakistan, there is an assumption of a need to know because of the importance of the West and it therefore constitutes 'newsworthy information'. An extreme example which demonstrates the apparent importance of news which has no direct political or economic significance to Pakistan, is the OJ Simpson trial. On the day that the verdict was reached in the USA, within the English language press of Pakistan, it received front page coverage with a four column wide photograph and article. Why should this be news in Pakistan? One reason was that it was on the Star Plus satellite channel programmes such as Hard Copy, every day of the week for months and the target audience of the English language press was assumed to have some access to satellite television. Despite this however, the print media assumed an interest and assumed that the OJ Simpson trial was news - taking priority over every other event which happened at the same time, nationally and internationally. The news *was* the OJ Simpson trial results because that was the story the newspapers chose to write.

We start from the basis that there are two main elements to the news in Pakistan and elsewhere: those things which are 'supposed' to be told to us and those which the reader is 'expected' to want to hear about. Both of these elements are assumed by the editor/owner and restricted by what is 'allowed' to be told to the reader, either as a direct consequence of the self-censorship imposed by the press or by what is imposed upon it from outside forces. It is these things which will be examined through this and the following chapter and can be applied also to the electronic media.

Throughout the succeeding chapters I often follow the arguments put forward by Tuchman in her book 'Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality' where she argues for the interpretive approach to news, a sympathy implied in the title of the overall thesis.

It emphasizes the activities of newswriters and news organisations, rather than social norms, as it does not presuppose that the social structure produces clearly delineated norms defining what is newsworthy. Instead, it argues, as newswriters simultaneously invoke and apply norms, they define them. ... Similarly, this approach argues,

news does not mirror society. It helps to constitute it as a shared social phenomenon, for in the process of describing an event, news defines and shapes that event (Tuchman, 1978:183/4).

The freedom of the press is usually thought to mean its ability to publish anything which it believes to be of relevance and consequently constitutes 'news'. The following chapter, and chapters, will be looking at the restrictions imposed upon this freedom within Pakistan, both direct and indirect. However, it should be acknowledged prior to this undertaking that a 'free press' still retains its restrictions, perhaps not by direct government intervention, but by other, equally restricting constraints or ambitions to which the press are bound.

Newspapers form part of an industry and, like any industry it must make money in order to remain a viable proposition. It is, of course, an industry with a difference as it does not deal in a concrete commodity, but rather in information or, as it frequently likes to say, 'truth'. Any industry needs to take into consideration the market forces and, as the saying goes, 'you don't bite the hand that feeds you.' As will be apparent from the above as well as the following, parallels can be drawn between some of the arguments made in this thesis and those put forward by Herman and Chomsky in 'Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media' (1994(1988)) and my arguments comfortably fit into their propaganda model.

When organisations such as the Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International or others talk about the lack of freedom of the press in countries such as Pakistan it is not so much the restrictions as mentioned above to which they are referring. They refer instead to the government imposed censorship restrictions or acts of violence used to intimidate the members of the press and dictate the content of the newspapers. We now move on to examine these issues as they manifest themselves in Pakistan.

### **The Newspaper Industry's Development since Partition**

The print media of Pakistan enjoys relatively more freedom to publish political and general criticism than does the electronic media which is state owned and state controlled as will be evidenced throughout the course of the following chapters.

The press, the pulpit and the public platform generally remained free of formal constraints other than those prescribed by the law and the constitution. ...Contratins on freedom when it occurred or was perceived to occur did so through selective aplication of an existing law, imposition of new taxation, withholding of official advertising, quiet pressurisation or persuasion of journalist and limitation on access to information. ... The electronic media were one major area of direct control. They remained state-controlled, and there was no pretence that the state in this case was politically neutral. (HRCP 1996: 91-2)

However, the extent of the 'freedom' of the press has fluctuated greatly in the 50 years since Partition and independence. While the Urdu press has been, and continues to be, frequently punished for its sensationalism and unbalanced reporting and we shall specifically examine one instance of this in relation to the banning of six Karachi Urdu evening newspapers, the English language press has also suffered at the hands of the welders of the blue pencil or baton<sup>3</sup>. In examining the history (in brief) of Pakistan's newspaper industry I hope to demonstrate the means by which the governments of various times have attempted to enhance their own positions and mould the notions of identity, particularly in the form of nationalism and Islam.

It was told to me on a number of occasions that General Ziaul Haq carried a newspaper under his arm and whenever he was questioned about the restrictions he placed upon the freedom of the press in Pakistan (by foreign reporters) he would waive the newspaper in the air saying that if he really restricted the freedom of the press they would not be able to say the things they had about him and Pakistan. As the owner of the *Muslim* put it

When Ziaul Haq was the Dictator, Chief Martial Law Administrator ...  
he used to carry a newspaper under his arm and whenever the foreign  
journalists used to come and say 'Well President Zia, Martial Law is

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<sup>3</sup>A blue pencil is apparently what was used by the government censor personnel when making amendments to proposed publications.

there, what about democracy President, when are you going to bring in elections.’ He used to pick up the newspaper, hold it up and he says ‘Look, what do you mean there is no democracy. If there was no democracy do you think ... look what this newspaper has written against me and you are saying there is no democracy, you’re saying there’s no freedom ... you see these people have totally spanked me to death and you are saying there is no democracy.’

Despite this display, few were convinced by Zia’s protestations and the evidence suggests to the contrary. However, in order to appreciate the position of the press in Pakistan before and after the military dictatorship of General Ziaul Haq, it is necessary to begin our examination even before the creation of Pakistan.

The history of Pakistan may be short, but the history of the newspaper industry is long, much longer than that of television. It is this that should be born in mind when considering the print media. The restrictions on the freedom of the press began well before the creation of Pakistan, with the Acts imposed by the British colonial power in India such as the Press Acts of 1857 and 1910 as well as numerous interventions and restrictions imposed from time to time (Niazi, 1986:9-19).

During the period of colonial rule, and before the creation of Pakistan, it was commonly believed according to Niazi, within India and amongst the members of its press, that Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a defender of the freedom of the press. Jinnah, so Niazi tells us, believed freedom to be an important right of the press, but more importantly, of the people. In pre-Partition years he defended the rights of newspapers and individuals who were threatened under the laws imposed upon the press by the British. Jinnah argued in defence of Benjamin Guy Horniman, editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, when he was given orders of deportation, writing to E S Montague, Secretary of State for India, London and raising the matter in the Indian Legislative Council. Such action brought Jinnah into conflict with Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Home Secretary, who had taken action against Horniman under the Defence of India Rules.

In a remark defending the freedom of the press Jinnah said:-

If you give me the freedom of speech I have the freedom to publish it, otherwise the privilege is useless ... We have complete freedom to make any speech that we like, express any opinion we like; and we are liable to any action outside by any court, civil or criminal ... It is the privilege of the newspaper to have the proceedings published and so long as they are true, fair and faithful, it is not liable to action. (quoted in Hasan, 1976:16)

However, it should be born in mind that Jinnah had some interest in the status of press freedom and consider that he

Felt the need of having a well-organised and powerful Press at his disposal for advocating and advancing the cause of the All-India Muslim League. (Niazi,1986:31)

Jinnah recognised the potential for the use of the press as a propaganda tool even collecting money for the “League Press Fund” which provided the capital to begin, what is now not only Pakistan’s most popular English language newspaper, but probably also its most prestigious. As an editor from *The Nation* told me

Undoubtedly everyone would agree, the Dawn is the premier newspaper of Karachi and Sindh. It is a very old, established paper and status orientated paper and a very conservative paper but it is a very established paper.

*Dawn*, and its sister Urdu newspaper *Manshoor*, were published under the direct supervision of Jinnah. While *Dawn* was the official mouth piece of the All-India Muslim League, with Jinnah as Trustee, Jinnah maintained that he did not interfere with editorial policy although adding, at a news conference address in Delhi on 15 November 1946, that he would interfere if there were a serious departure from Muslim League policy (Niazi, 1986:33).

Separation of publisher’s and editor’s powers serves to cushion against

pressures to conform to the interests of power and money. M.A. Jinnah understood this requirement of good journalism. Despite the exegesis of leading a political struggle, neither *Dawn's* founder nor its publisher assumed the mantle of editorship. (*Dawn* 26.1.96: 13)

How free then can we regard the ideology behind this newspaper or indeed the press generally? There is the implication from the above comment that the press is a political tool which, while being allowed to criticise and comment, at the same time must remain a loyal ally. It is perhaps this attitude which has been 'reinterpreted' by later governments and leaders in an attempt to cajole the press into publishing only what *they* wish.

On 11 September 1948 Jinnah died and with him much of the freedom the press had managed to enjoy in the, then, brief history of Pakistan. Since that time Pakistan has seen varying amounts of censorship and it is only the memories of Jinnah's press policies, which have frequently been called upon, that have provided a beacon of hope for the press of the day - whichever day that may be. Freedom of the press has been restricted through the imposition of Parliamentary Acts which have gradually been coming into force since the death of Jinnah, but also ones which were in place and carried over from the pre-Partition, colonial era which can perhaps again bring into question the true extent of Jinnah's dedication to press freedom. While the pre-Partition British Acts were not utilized by Jinnah, he did not remove them from Pakistan's legislative books and therefore they could, and would, be implemented by future Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Despite the potential potency of these already existing Acts of Parliament, the most significant curb on the freedom of the press was a legislation introduced after Partition and after the death of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The Press and Publications Ordinance of 1960 enacted by General Ayub Khan is commonly referred to by the press itself as the 'blackest law'. This Ordinance allowed the government to ask for security deposits from the owners of printing presses publishing newspapers (or books) which contained objectionable material as defined by the Ordinance. These security deposits, once demanded from a printing press, could be forfeited and establishments could be closed down if the newspaper (or book) again published material that:-

(a) contain reports of crimes of violence or sex, produced in a manner which was likely to excite unhealthy curiosity or urge to imitation or which might incite interference in the administration of law or with the maintenance of law and order or which might encourage non-payment of taxes, including land revenue, (b) incite or encourage the commission of an offence of murder or any offence involving violence or amounted to an abetment of the same, (c) directly or indirectly condemn the creation of Pakistan or advocate the curtailment or the abolition of the sovereignty of Pakistan in respect of all or any of its territories, (d) bring into hatred or contempt the Government established by law in Pakistan or any class or section of the citizens of Pakistan and (e) create feelings of enmity between the people of the two wings of Pakistan. (Niazi, 1986:97)

Sections (c) and (e) particularly affected publishers in East Pakistan and illustrates Ayub Khan's concern over the already sensitive situation between East and West Pakistan although the split did not actually occur until 1971.

In September of 1963 the Press and Publications Ordinance was amended, further limiting the freedom of the press taking the conditions already imposed onto the next level. As published in *Dawn* (3 September, 1963), the motivation behind the Ordinance amendments was

To make the Press *conform* to recognised principles of journalism and patriotism, to encourage feelings of responsibility and not to place any unreasonable fetters on the Press and finally to allow the Press to grow and help to maintain healthy journalism. (quoted in Niazi, 1986:98-9)

According to an official publication of Pakistan's Ayub government, due to

Some critical reaction to the new provisions of the Ordinance, the Government volunteered a one-month moratorium on it, beginning from September 11, 1963. During this period the press was asked to discuss

its grievances with representatives of the Government with a view to making suitable amendments in the Ordinance. (Pakistan Publications, 1967: 549)

Following a meeting of various representatives 'substantial' modifications were made to the Ordinance. It was the amended version of the Ordinance, as imposed, to which the protests were still directed.

General Ayub Khan's era was frequently presented as the most oppressive with regard to legislation against the freedom of the press due to the Press and Publications (Amendment) Ordinance 1963.

In a nation of 100 million people, he [Ayub Khan] had permitted only about a hundred closely supervised papers to circulate a total of a half-million copies daily. (Hohenberg, 1971:388)

However, this was not the end of the problems and restrictions to the press and when General Aga Mohammad Yahya Khan was handed power on 25 March 1969 he had, within a month, clamped down censorship even tighter than Ayub Khan.

It was General Ziaul Haq's years of military dictatorship, however, which were commonly presented by the press as the most oppressed time for press freedom generally in Pakistan. Despite words of democracy and apparent outward signs of press freedom, the Chief Martial Law Administrator kept an extremely tight reign on press freedom. It was with him that censorship reached new heights and extended limits. Of course, as should be clear at this point, Zia was not the first to issue press advices, stipulate articles that should and should not be published, or punish transgressors of his limitations, through legal channels or otherwise. It was, however, this time which was particularly noted for the extensive use of the censors blue pencil - even the word 'censorship' was ordered to be censored - and, later, the imposed and extensive use of the industry's own self-censorship. Unlike Niazi's other two books which cover incidents during the majority of the life of Pakistan, his final book, 'The Web of Censorship', is dedicated almost exclusively to the Martial Law era of General Ziaul Haq.

General Ziaul Haq imposed his martial law on 5th July 1977 and on the 7th July issued brief guidelines to the press saying he would not clamp censorship on the press, despite his reservations, as he believed the press would impose its own restraints. However, on the 11th July 1977 a more detailed set of guidelines were given in a speech made by the CMLA in Rawalpindi. Although the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) issued a memo asking editors to kill the publication of the guidelines in their newspaper, by this time everyone connected with the print media knew what was expected of them (see Appendix IV). The guidelines, although being relatively short, imposed far reaching restrictions on what the press was expected to print.

A little over two years and three months after taking power in Pakistan, General Ziaul Haq imposed pre-censorship on all written material. It has been suggested that one reason which may have prompted this further restriction on the press was the fact that it was, by this time, becoming increasingly apparent that the promised democratic elections were not going to happen (Niazi, 1994). However, Zia had always made it clear that he was sceptical about having an unguided press and said that he had his

Own ideas about the role of the Press, but final shape to all this will be given after due consultation with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and representatives of the newspapers. (Niazi, 1994:5)

So it was that on the 16th October 1979 that precensorship was imposed on all printed material.

During the initial period of pre-censorship whereby the newspaper would be submitted to the censors prior to publication, those articles or parts of articles which were deemed inappropriate would be struck out by the censor and the newspapers would leave blank spaces in their place. This had the potentially subversive affect of allowing the public to know that the blue pencil had been used, if not allowing them to know what had been said. It was not long, however, before the CMLA put an end to this small show of rebellion and ordered that no blank spaces should be left. This marked the beginning of a new era in self censorship. Editor/owners did not wish to rewrite or produce too many new articles in the event that the original paper would, after the censorship had taken place, have too many blank spaces to fill with alternative 'news'.

Blanket pre-censorship of all printed material continued for over two years - 17 October 1979 to 31 December 1981 - two years, two months and 26 days to be exact. After this time precensorship was removed and the print media was expected to self censor. This perhaps had a worse affect on the media than the precensorship as it was through self censorship that the newspaper journalists, editors and owners had to try to second guess what they thought the authorities would allow and therefore frequently erred on the side of safety. The affect of this self-censorship has continued to be felt long after the end of the Zia era as it became a hard habit for the press to break.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps a benefit of such blatant and far reaching censorship was that everybody knew of its existence. As we can see from the following quote taken from *The News* at the time of the banning of the 6 Karachi Urdu evening newspapers this same scepticism applied especially to the news presented through the radio and television.

If the government thinks it can use Pakistan Television and Radio Pakistan to plug the information gap created by the ban on the Urdu evening newspapers, it is sadly mistaken. For the vast majority of people, not just in Karachi but in the country as a whole, PTV and Radio Pakistan long ago ceased to have any credibility. Indeed, even things that are true tend to be disbelieved by people if they are reported on the government-controlled electronic media. (*The News* 3.7.95: 9)

Censorship and propaganda as it lives in more 'democratic' societies has the potential of being far more subversive as there is an expectation of truth by the reader.

In countries where the levers of power are in the hands of a state bureaucracy, the monopolistic control over the media, often supplemented by official censorship, makes it clear that the media serve the ends of a dominant elite. It is much more difficult to see a propaganda system at work where the media are private and formal

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<sup>4</sup>See Chapter 4.

ensorship is absent. (Herman & Chomsky, 1994:1)

Censorship of this institutionalised kind was, however, not the only restriction on the writings of the men and women of the press. Acts of violence against the press had been known prior to the mid to late 1980's, but their instances had been relatively few in comparison with those which took place afterwards. According to Niazi in his list of major incidents of ransacking of newspaper offices, snatching and burning of newspaper bundles, disturbing distribution of dailies and periodicals, show of muscle power and long sieges of offices of thirty six such incidents only nine occurred between 1952 and 1982 (Niazi, 1992: 249). The remaining twenty seven incidents occurred in the four and a half year period between January 2 1987 and October 1991. The 1987 incident was when a mob of some 1500 students of *deeni madrasahs* and Afghan refugees descended on the Peshawar offices of the *Frontier Post* after taking offence at a reproduction of an illustration based on the Biblical interpretation of the Genesis and the "Tree of Knowledge" drawn by Lucas Cranach in the 16th century (Niazi 1992:54). The 1991 incident was against *Herald* (a magazine associated with the daily *Dawn*) which allegedly entailed the CIA (Criminal Investigation Agency) seizing all copies of the October issue of *Herald* because it carried a cover story relating to CIA torture and acts of violence (Niazi, 1992:221).

There was, for example, an incident between Imran Khan and a journalist. Imran slapped the journalist for asking him what he regarded as impertinent questions after the Skauket Khanam Memorial Hospital had been the subject of a bomb attack. As the editorial comment from *The News on Friday* points out

There are better and more educated ways to deal with impertinence of the kind noisy newsmen subject public figures to than to use fists of fury.  
(*The News on Friday* 19.4.96: 7)

A notable feature of the attacks on the press is that the majority of them came, directly or indirectly, from political quarters of some leaning or another, including those from the Islamicists. The complaints which usually acted as forerunners to acts of violent or destructive protest were often either against something which had already been published (or was expected to be published) or due to a perceived lack of adequate publicity which the group felt it should

be getting. An editor from *The News*, during the course of our interview, maintained that it was dangerous to publish material educating Pakistani's about Islamic ideology and explained his desire for avoiding the subject.

In each mosque there is a different Islamic education, a different Islam preached. In Pakistan there is a Islam, there is an Iranian Islam, you see there is no Islam [global]. Similarly, if an article is published in a newspaper by one author who happens to be a Sunni, or a Shi'i, there will be so much of criticism, there will be so much of strong reaction that you never know when [a group] will come here and bang everything, it has happened, it is a very common phenomena. You write something that some group of Muslims think is against us and they will come and bloody bang your office. Therefore you will not carry anything.

A general conclusion which can be drawn from these incidents therefore is that, on the one hand, the groups involved were keen to have newspapers as propaganda tools, to be called upon whenever required to sing their praises and advertise their ideology and positive works. On the other hand, newspapers and journals should not criticise the group or publish any material which would be, directly or indirectly, detrimental to their cause.

Society must realise that the press has to be a vehicle of frank discourse. If it is told that it can discuss Kashmir, or nuclear option, or Karachi, or Islamic laws only within the paradigm determined by the rules of the day or by the armed clergy, then all talk of ethical, responsible or effective journalism will be meaningless. (*The News on Friday* 16.6.95: 11)



Political restrictions and violence are not the only considerations for the owners and editors of newspapers when publishing their newspapers. A key factor in the economic viability of newspapers is the selling of advertising space. Advertisements enable the income of newspapers to increase directly through the fee paid by the company to the newspaper. Income can also be affected indirectly. By injecting some of the profit from advertising revenue back

into the publications the industry can offer newspapers with reduced cover prices thereby raising circulation and, in turn, boosting profits. Under usual circumstances it is important for newspapers to already have good circulation figures in order to attract more advertising as advertisers are concerned to sell their products to the largest possible audience. This is not always the case, however, as we can see in relation to newspaper advertising in Pakistan.

### **The Incentive of Advertising**

Government advertising in Pakistan in the media in general and the Press in particular has increased substantially in recent years as an ironic counterpoint to privatisation and deregulation. From simple tender notices to specially designed full page, colour advertisements, from deputy commissioners placing announcements about district development to chief ministers welcoming the Prime Minister to the inauguration of a road, advertising from the federal and provincial governments as well as state corporations and local bodies has grown notably to become a major factor in determining relations between the government and the Press.

By styling itself as the 'Fourth Pillar of the State' the print media in Pakistan presents itself as having a political role. The intention is to function as a monitor on the actions of the government and present the 'news' to the people, in the interests of the people. The print media ideally presents itself as a fearless defender of the public interest, eternally vigilant in the pursuit of truth, the exposure of corruption and the abuse of power. Printed in *The Nation* was the text of the Lahore High Court Judgement in a defamation case heard against the newspaper. This points out the role of newspapers assume as the fourth pillar of the State but also suggests that reporters are sometimes lapse in verifying their information

No doubt the fourth pillar of the State has carved out its place in the society by exposing fearlessly the evils which afflict it and one of them is the good use or bad to which people put the powers placed at their disposal as trust. In doing so what however, is sometimes not kept in view by the reporters to be absolutely sure of the facts and how to ascertain or check before publishing them, lest they should cause

irreparable loss to the person concerned. (*The Nation* 28.3.96: 5)

As we have already seen, control of the print media in Pakistan is maintained on an official level through acts of Parliament and censorship, but it is also maintained on an unofficial level through intimidation and the 'encouragement' of self censorship. However, there are still more avenues of coercion open to those who would influence the press (including the government). Advertising space and its revenue acts as a forerunner to this alternative means of media (electronic as well as print) constraint.

Advertising is a significant feature in the control of the print media imposed by the government. The advertising rates for government departments are considerably lower than the commercial rates

Highly subsidised government advertisement rates, which is presently 1/6th value of the commercial advertisement rates available to private sector. This forced government subsidy on the government advertisement rates was imposed in the General Ziaul Haq regime. (*The Nation* 6.12.95: 1)

However, the government still supplies the majority of the advertising revenue to the newspaper companies. According to figures given to me by employees of different newspapers within the English language print media, approximately 65% of newspaper revenue comes from government advertising. As the editor of *The News* told me,

In PID [Press Information Department] there is a department which is called the Advertisement Allocation Department or some such - I don't know, it is the advertisement department anyway. ... Some say it forms 80% of the entire revenue but, precisely speaking it is 65%.

Advertising revenue is especially important in Pakistan as the circulations of the newspapers are relatively low due to literacy rates etc, a point to which I shall return later.

The significance of these figures is financially obvious and, as such, provide a government with a certain amount of leverage to influence the portrayal of the 'news'. The threat of withdrawal of advertising can considerably affect a newspaper's chances of survival. It is the threat of withdrawal of advertising which can encourage the press to tow the government line for fear of losing a significant portion of their revenue.

Official advertisements are the teeth of the PID [Press Information Department]. All government departments send their ads to the PID, which then distributes them among the newspapers as it sees fit. A little tilt in policy can make millions flow to one paper while depriving another. This, above all, makes newspaper owners vulnerable to government pressure. (*The News on Friday* 16.6.95:10)

Government advertisement, a major source of Press revenue in Pakistan, is also used to manipulate editorial and news policy. Above all, the sword of taxation damocles hangs over publishers, a truly ironic instrument of harassment in tax-evading hands. (*Dawn* 26.1.96: 13)

In the same way it is possible for a government to carry a newspaper, to some extent, through placing advertisements within a little read newspaper therefore maintaining an otherwise financially inviable prospect. *The Pakistan Times* is perhaps the best example of this and worth examining in the context of this chapter as a whole as it demonstrates well the effects of various constraints imposed at different times since the creation of Pakistan.

*The Pakistan Times*, along with *Imrose* (Karachi), *Imrose* (Lahore) and the weekly *Lailo Nahar* (Lahore) were published and owned by the Progressive Papers Limited (PPL). During the first twelve years of independence the group had, often alone, consistently fought for the freedom of the press and for the interests of the masses as opposed to those of the ruling elite.

The PPL papers served the cause of Pakistan's progress and people's interest - not those of the ruling clique or any other elite group. (Niazi, 1985:85)

This did not make PPL a friend of the rulers and, although surviving attacks from Liaquat Ali Khan (Prime Minister), Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Khan Mamdot, Mian Mumtaz Daultana (the two former chief ministers of the Punjab) and Sadar Abdur Rashid, chief minister of One Unit, it was on 18th April 1959 that the administration of General Ayub Khan finally managed to quash the dissenting voice of the PPL. The group had already, during this latest administration, been subjected to 'special treatment' entailing, first pre-censorship and then an advisory system involving daily discussions with Government advisers. However, on the 18th April the newspaper offices were taken over by the Government under Section II of the Pakistan Security Act which was amended through an Ordinance issued by the President two days earlier. This amendment had enlarged the scope of Section II of the Security Act so as to enable the Government to change the management of newspapers (instead of banning them outright) if the newspapers were deemed to publish or contain materials likely to endanger the defence, external affairs or security of Pakistan. As a consequence,

The once proud group of newspapers became the tame voice of successive governments. (Niazi, 1986:83)

After five years (to the day) the PPL group was attached to the newly established National Press Trust (NPT). The Government publication, 'Twenty Years of Pakistan 1947-1967' described the establishment of this Trust as

An event of special importance ... Government gave support to the idea because it promised, more than individual ownership, to raise the standard of journalism and editorial policy... It now owns eleven publications. (Pakistan Publications, 1968:542/3)

Although the Trust was officially an independent institution, the member newspapers acted as the mouthpieces of the Establishment. With the increasing tightness of the control over *The Pakistan Times* its popularity decreased rapidly although it was aided in its survival through the advertising revenue generated from governmental departments. It was on the 22 May 1996 however that *The Pakistan Times* finally closed, the newspapers noting that this was another sacrifice because of press restrictions in Pakistan.

The Pakistan Times is no more anyone's headache. It is just an epitaph in the graveyard of the Press in Pakistan. (*Dawn Magazine*, 31.5.96:3)

Advertising revenue incentive is not particular to Pakistan, but the extent to which the government has a propaganda interest is perhaps more prominent than in many other countries. The government is not alone, however, in its concern to use the media tool through advertising. Commercial advertisers are also an important consideration for the newspaper publishers as commercial revenue too is of considerable interest to the owners.

One indicator of the newspaper proprietors' regard for profit is the fact that out of about 16 awards presented annually by the All Pakistan Newspapers Society to advertisers and advertising agencies, at least 10 are for volume of commercial space used in the Press. A minority of awards are given for creative excellence (*Dawn*, 8.7.96). This is a unique practice which possibly has no parallel in other countries. It is, one could speculate, the equivalent of awarding journalists for the sheer number of the words published in their articles rather than for the investigative skill or writing ability demonstrated.

Weaver has suggested that

The fact that the news firm's business relies primarily on selling audiences to advertisers rather than selling information to readers or viewers - is a root source of the culture of lying. (Weaver, 1994:29)

In Pakistan the governments take priority when owners and editors consider their newspaper's editorial policy whether it be in relation to advertising or some other aspect of publication. One cannot place responsibility for the state of the Pakistani media solely at the door of the governments as there are other agents at work. However, it is the governments which are the most significant players at present and, until they step back and allow the press its freedom, some other force such as, for example, companies offering advertising revenue, will not be in such a strong position to restrain it.

In the following section we draw upon two incidents affecting the Pakistani press which occurred during the period of my fieldwork. These incidents led to strike action (and the threat of extended strike action) by the majority of newspapers of Pakistan. Through these examples it is possible to contextualise much of what has already been examined during the course of this chapter.

## **Two Recent Disputes**

The two disputes discussed below provide examples of different means by which the government exercises control over the press and its news. The first relates to direct government action through the banning of six Urdu evening newspapers while the second concentrates on market forces (although affected by the government) through the use of taxes and their effects on newspaper prices.

A key point to note, and illustrated through the following examples, is the need of the government for the press. The government, for the most part, sees and uses the press as a tool through which to present its propaganda to the nation. However, the need, by the government, for this tool gives the print media some power. A strike by the press means that the government is refused the right to any publicity throughout the strike's duration. Therefore, it is in the interests of the government to end any dispute which may lead to strike action as quickly as possible. Settlement of such a dispute must, inevitably, lead to some compromise by the government and therefore result in some potential benefits for the press.

The boycott of government meetings was a frequently used tool by newspaper personnel. Reporters would walk out of the press galleries to show protest over issues of unfair treatment, low pay and the like. These displays of defiance lasted until a representative of the House gave a required apology or assured support in whatever matter.

Traditionally the Press Gallery had been a part and parcel of the Parliament. Whenever it came into conflict with the Parliament the proceedings always stopped until the press had been appeased. There was always an effort from the government to find a solution. The press

being the fourth pillar of the state, the idea had always been to take them along. (*The Nation* 21.8.95:1)

The fact that some member of the House always seemed to rush out and clear up the problem with the reporters appears to support the claim that the government (and the opposition) may not like the press, but they need it and, as a result, may be made to pay for this need.

#### 1. Banning of Six Karachi Urdu Evenings<sup>5</sup>

Urdu newspapers, as previously mentioned, are generally regarded as being the primary source of yellow journalism in Pakistan. They concentrate on the sensational news items, increasing the already present sensationalism in their published stories. This opinion was undisputed by the 'quality' English language newspapers which saw themselves as the 'true' upholders of the fourth pillar. This said, restraints placed upon the Urdu press affected the freedom of the English language press as there were no legal or administrative policy differences between them. Therefore the English press was not prepared to accept silently the two month suspension of six Karachi Urdu Evenings which was enforced in early July 1995.<sup>6</sup>

In order to understand the significance of the banning of the Karachi based Urdu newspapers it is necessary to look briefly at the situation of the city of Karachi as it existed, or perhaps more accurately, as it was reported to exist.

Karachi was a city in chaos, a battle zone, some areas within which it was unsafe to travel. The root of this situation was the struggle for control of the city. Karachi has been a divided city almost since the birth of Pakistan, but the situation has escalated during, and after, the times of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Ziaul Haq. The contentious nature of the city arises out of the divide, both politically and economically, between the Mohajirs (immigrants) and the Sindhis. The Sindhis see the city as the capital of the Sindh province and a significant city

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<sup>5</sup>The term 'eveninger' is one that is used within Pakistan in relation to the newspapers which, not surprisingly, come out in the evening.

<sup>6</sup>The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Yearbook said that there were seven newspapers banned, but the majority of the literature within the print media itself during the time, referred only to six.

within the nation as a whole, being the country's only port. The Mohajirs, on the other hand see Karachi as independent of Sindh and some would like it to be an independent state, separate even from the main body of Pakistan. This is unacceptable to the government as Karachi is Pakistan's economic centre and is strategically positioned due to the port. The Mohajir position is unacceptable to the Sindh population also as Karachi is the capital of their province.

There was an added problem effecting the tranquillity of Karachi stemming from language and work distribution. The Mohajirs speak Urdu and this is the language, together with English, of industry, government and other prestigious national institutions which puts them in a better overall economic position than the indigenous Sindh and Sindhi speaking population. This economic divide has therefore contributed to the disharmony which exists within the region and which has escalated, particularly since the Language Riots of 1972. (See Appendix V for statistics relating to the death and injury toll in Karachi for 1995.)

This is obviously an extremely brief background to the situation of Karachi and no doubt an entire thesis could be written on the subject. However, we do not want to drift too far from the point and the above description should be sufficient to contextualise the government banning of the Karachi newspapers.

In an attempt to curtail the organised violence in Karachi, early in 1995 the government first banned the six evening newspapers and then imposed the banning of mobile telephones and pagers within the confines of the city.

After the ban on Urdu eveningers, the suspension of all cellular telephones and paging systems in the city during the night of Saturday-Sunday was greatly unsettling. It amounted to penalizing many thousands of subscribers for the administration's failure to trace out a small number of terrorists using this facility. (*The News* 4.7.95: 7)

However, one of the key problems to the government, as regards the reaction of the public, was that the law enforcement agencies were accredited with causing a significant number of the deaths and injuries (again see Appendix V), but they were not the ones being targeted through the bannings. Rather, although a small number of terrorists were thought to have utilised the

new technologies, it was generally the industries and private businesses which suffered most and not the perpetrators of the crimes. It was at least partially as a consequence of the role the Urdu evening newspapers had played in condemning of law enforcement agencies for their role in the Karachi situation, that the government had imposed the ban.

When the government announced the banning of the six Urdu evening newspapers there was an unanimous outcry from both the Urdu and the English language print media throughout Pakistan. The English print media was flooded with articles pertaining both to the current situation of the press and the history of its struggle to gain and maintain a significant status as the fourth pillar of the state. I collected some thirty-one articles (five from *Dawn* and thirteen from *The Nation* and *The News* respectively) published between the 30th June 1995 and 5th July 1995.

The government maintained that the sensationalism printed within the Urdu press, and particularly these six newspapers, was serving merely to accentuate the problems of Karachi. It complained that the newspapers' high pressure competition for street sales had led them to one-upmanship through more and more lurid headlines and picture displays.<sup>7</sup> Sindh Chief Minister Abdullah Shah accused the eveningers of sensationalising the Karachi situation for the six months prior to the ban. Governor Kamal Azfar followed Shah by declaring a ban to be imperative, saying that there was unrest amongst the people due to sensational stories published in these evening dailies. These newspapers therefore were seen as constituting a threat to the security of the nation and, through this, the government justified their two month suspension. The Order, which was issued against *Awam*, *Qaumi Akhbar*, *Public*, *Aghaz*, *Parcham* and *Evening Special*, read as follows:-

Whereas it has been brought to the notice of the undersigned through Press clippings of your above-cited newspapers and other sources that your newspaper daily ... is printing sensational news which is an activity prejudicial to the maintenance of Public Order.' "I, District Magistrate, am satisfied that circumstances exist to prohibit the

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<sup>7</sup>Even in the English language newspapers in Pakistan contain more explicate photographs of victims of violence than is usual within British newspapers.

publication of the said newspapers, since it is necessary for the purpose of preventing and combating the said activity which is prejudicial to the maintenance of Public Order. “Now therefore, I District Magistrate, in exercise of power conferred upon me under Sub Section 1-1 of Section 6 of the Maintenance of Public Order that the publication of the said newspaper is prohibited for a period of 60 days with effect from June 28, 1995 under Section 6 - of the said Order.” (*The Nation* 30.6.95: 1-4)

The press, while acknowledging that these newspapers were frequently sensationalist in their publications, did not think that the extreme step of banning six newspapers was either justified or constituted a democratic step. Therefore a nationwide strike was called and further action was promised if the government did not retract its suspension order.

This had become an issue which affected far more than the six eveningers in Karachi. This dispute began a stand as a symbol through which the entire national print media, regardless of origin and political affiliations, could voice its protest over the severe restrictions placed upon it.

Karachi's Urdu evening newspapers have become victims of a propaganda war ... The press can be an awkward impediment in the way of governments wanting to secure their power base, as the ban imposed by the government on six Karachi Urdu evening newspapers on Thursday shows (*The News* 3.7.95: 9)

The meeting [of the Joint Action Committee] described the action of banning the six newspapers as most ill-advised and Napoleonic nature with the result that the entire media was forced to react with all the resources at its command to counter this unprecedented attack on freedom of Press and a government which is publicly committed to Press freedom by its own manifesto. (*The Nation* 3.7.95: 1)

The Joint Action Committee declared that the stand taken by it was in

defence of Press freedoms in the country and that there could be no two opinions on the right of a newspaper to publish and serve the cause of democratic practice and fair play in the country. (*Dawn* 3.7.95: 4)

The power of the united press, to some extent, was demonstrated by the lifting of the ban the evening before the strike was due to be held, thereby averting the same. However Benazir Bhutto's government made, not only a new Pakistani record, but a world record, achieved by any elected government in the banning of six newspapers at the same time.

It was suggested by the Pakistani newspapers that the main reason behind this somewhat aggressive move from the government was that the newspapers in question were openly supporting the MQM.

The main complaint against the now banned Urdu papers was the political platform they projected. Most of those openly sided with the MQM and carried stories, photographs and news items that helped to project and publicise the MQM position. (*The Nation* 12.7.95: 7)

The ban came on the eve of a weekly, two-day protest announced by the MQM and synchronised with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's 'final' call to Karachi terrorists to surrender before the law. She was reported to be holding the view that the terrorists were close to giving in as the latest law and order measures had broken their will. The implication, therefore, was that if the Urdu newspapers were banned from reporting to the contrary, the public would assume the news to be true and the government would be seen to be getting the upper hand over the terrorists.

The trouble (for the government) with newspapers in Sindh was that few of them supported the ruling party. The only morning Karachi Urdu daily which supported the PPP during Zia's years had become pro-MQM. Those newspapers which were independent, and not with any readily identifiable political tilt, were also highly critical of the PPP government in Sindh. Willingly, or otherwise, they too were not equally critical of the MQM. It has been suggested that the MQM are not beyond pressurising the newspapers of Karachi into, if not outrightly

supporting them, at least not criticising them to the extent that they criticised the government (*The Nation*, 12.7.95).

Most, if not all, Sindhi dailies of Karachi and Hyderabad were highly critical of ruling party and government leaders. They espoused the Sindhi cause and refused to tow the government line. This situation was frustrating for the ruling party and government leaders in Sindh who continued to claim public support for themselves both in rural and urban areas of the province. As for the government's allegations against the banned papers that they were the prime culprits in sensationalising the Karachi situation, it was a partial truth only, with sensationalism also arising out of the government supporting newspapers, but their angle was obviously pro-government and therefore played down the situation in Karachi.

On the evening of 4th July 1995 Sindh Chief Minister Syed Abdullah Shah announced the immediate lifting of the ban in deference to the plea made by the Council of Joint Action (CJA) of the newspapers. The convenor of the CJA, Mazhar Abbas, then withdrew the strike call of the newspapers scheduled for the following day, the 5th July. Not only did the government have to back down on the issue, but it also suffered some public embarrassment. Its loudly proclaimed commitment to the freedom of the press was now, more than ever, distrusted. The act also demonstrated that, when pushed, the press could unite itself in a common interest. As *The News* said:

All factions of owners, editors, working journalists and press workers have come together in this protest in a striking show of unanimity. And to underline the ultimate irony of this development the strike is being observed on July 5—the anniversary of the imposition of the martial law of Gen Zia and the overthrow of the first PPP government. (*The News* 4.7.95: 7)

and

The protest of the independent media over the closure of Karachi's Urdu eveningers was not about the defence of any alleged impropriety

committed by the targeted publications, but was informed with the fourth estate's determination to resist the arbitrary infringement by the executive on its inherent right to the freedom of expression. (*The News*, 16.7.95:7)

It was perhaps this victory over the government that gave the press the confidence needed to unite a second time a year later, to fight a battle against newsprint prices.

## 2. Newsprint Prices

Pakistan is a nation of over 130 million people, but only about 15 million citizens regularly read newspapers and magazines (*Dawn* 8.7.96: 13). However, different people will give you different figures. According to the owner of the *Muslim*

You have a population of 120 million and I think our entire newspaper circulation, all over, would probably range maximum, 2.5 million, no more than that.

The cost of approximately Rs10<sup>8</sup>, although a relatively small amount of money could be prohibitive for much of the population, particularly when one considers this to be a daily outlay and that the *official* minimum wages, as set in mid 1995, were Rs1,750 per month for unskilled labour and Rs2,200 for the highly skilled (Human Rights Commission 1996:14).

The prohibitive cost of newspapers to many people perpetuated the need of the newspaper owners to maintain their newspapers at the prohibitive cost in order to meet their expenses and maintain a profit margin. The cost of the newspapers needed to remain high, and perhaps rise, due to the relatively low circulation which was generated, to some extent, by the fact that people could not afford the prices as they stood. The circulation of newspapers was also constrained by the literacy rate, with approximately 64% of the population unable to read, they are unable also to buy newspapers therefore production costs are concentrated in the reduced circulation. The expansion of the market was not growing fast enough to compete with

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<sup>8</sup>During the period of my stay in Pakistan the rupee there was a considerable devaluation from approximately Rs50 to the pound sterling to Rs60 to the pound sterling.

inflation which was affecting the raw materials needed in order to produce the newspapers (including labour), but which could not be passed on to the reader for fear that they would not be able to tolerate the additional expense.

With Pakistan having one of the lowest levels in the world of popular access to print media, there is an urgent need for government to enhance literacy and vigorously promote reading of newspapers, magazines and books to spread and share the enormous expansion of human knowledge. And to enable the application of that knowledge for economic advancement. Electronic media are complements to the print media but are not their substitutes. From a purely self-centred viewpoint as well, a government ignores the health of the Press at its own peril. (*Dawn* 8.7.96: 13)

It was suggested by a number of my informants as well as the newspapers themselves that the government was happy to maintain the low distribution of newspapers as they had less control of the news content of the print media than over the electronic media. Below are some quotes which illustrate this perspective. The first is from .. followed by quotes from interviews with the owner of *The Muslim* and an editor from *The Nation*.

The representatives of the hawkers attending the meeting and deplored in the strongest terms the threats given to them and forcible measures adopted by certain political parties in restricting them in the distribution of newspapers. (*The Nation* 3.7.95:p1)

The Pakistan Press law is very repressive - a very repressive press law. Our wages are decided by the government, our advertising is controlled by the government, our newsprint is controlled by the government, our laws are governed by the government.

The other means of pressurising the newspapers are ... you must be aware, are like the newsprint quota and the ads which are there

One of the ways low distribution was perpetuated was to enforce the high prices of the newspapers at source. This was done through the levying of tax, first, on the import of newsprint and second, in the form of sales tax. The industry maintained that, in principle, there should have been minimal, or no, import duty whatsoever on newsprint and paper in a country with less than 30 per cent literacy<sup>9</sup> and the government policy should be to optimize low-cost availability of printed material (*Dawn* 8.7.96).

One of the reasons for the conflict over newsprint import policy was the reluctance of the publishers to print actual figures for daily sale and circulation of newspapers. Due to corrupt or inefficient practices, the circulation figures certified by the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had little credibility. Journals with very limited spread were able to obtain certificates for inflated numbers. This damaged the claims of journals that did enjoy a wider readership. Bogus figures could enable certain proprietors to get licences for newsprint imports in disproportion to their real needs. The discrepancy strengthened the conviction in the Ministry of Finance that some part of the government's revenue shortage could be offset by taxing newspaper proprietors who earned profits from the re-sale of imported newsprint (*Dawn* 8.7.96: 13). Artificially bloated circulation figures fetched newspaper proprietors rich dividends in the form of advertising from governmental institutions at rates and in volumes determined formally by such figures.

The new tax measures on the newspaper sector again united previously divided groups. The separate representative trade bodies in the form of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) and the Pakistan Newspaper and Periodicals Organisation (PNPO) came together to form the Council for Joint Action (CJA) in order to campaign for the withdrawal of the taxes. It was the CJA that called a country wide strike for the 2nd July 1996, almost exactly a year after the previous call, to protest against the imposition of taxes on the industry as part of the 1996-97 budget. They argued that the government's decision to levy a five per cent tax on cover prices was tantamount to giving itself a leverage over newspapers.

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<sup>9</sup>While the official figures for literacy are placed at 36% the majority of people refuse to believe in their accuracy and the print media frequently refers to a 20% literacy level which was substantially accepted as more realistic by my informants.

The steep price rises in newspapers that would result from the wide ranging new taxes imposed by the government are an unacceptable restriction on freedom of the Press as envisaged in Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan. Any attempt whether by financial measures or otherwise to control, limit or reduce the wider circulation of newspapers and to damage the financial autonomy of newspapers cannot be seen as being a reasonable restriction imposed by the government on the workings of Article 19. (*The Nation*, 30.6.96:1)

In putting forward its argument to stop the imposition of the five per cent tax on cover prices the newspapers pointed out that the cost of newsprint had risen considerably on the international market, from \$400 the previous year, to \$1,000 per ton (*The Nation* 13.7.95: 4). These price changes meant that the government was already receiving an increase in revenue through the Import Tax and therefore the additional sales tax was adding to an already increased expenditure required of the print media industry. Therefore, the government, by conceding this point and withdrawing its demand for sales tax, would actually still be gathering sufficient revenue to cover its purported needs.

Newsprint prices were, however, not the sole problem that the newspaper industry saw itself as facing, although it did form part of the larger picture. The Federal Government had intended to link the issuance of newsprint import, licences and release of government advertising to the implementation of the government's Wage Award.<sup>10</sup> The CJA had managed to get a stay on this decision, however, from the Lahore High Court.

The united front again achieved the goals required although this time a strike did take place on the 2nd July. While the government and Benazir Bhutto had repeatedly maintained that it would not alter its budget decision for the fiscal year of 1996-97 it did, ultimately, back down and remove the additional five per cent that the industry had requested. Again, the print media had flexed its muscles by threatening to (and actually did, for a day at least) withdraw its

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<sup>10</sup>The Wage Award was an attempt made by the Government to stipulate the wages of the press community, unpopular with the proprietors of the newspapers and ultimately an Award that saw little practical implementation.

services. There was no great monetary gain for the press industry of Pakistan from the government's backdown but the exercise had shown that government control was not complete and, to some degree at least, both institutions were reliant upon one another.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter, as a whole, has focused on showing how the print media has been affected by various Pakistani governments in their attempts to legitimate their power base. After having considered the question of 'what is news'? and the freedom of the press on an international scale we turned our attention to the development of the press since Partition and the creation of Pakistan in 1947. We have examined the means by which censorship has been imposed to restrict the circulation of certain information, seen as detrimental to the governments' position.

As we have seen, advertising revenue has been extensively utilised by governments to gain power and control over the newspaper industry. As we saw within this section some 65% of the English language newspaper revenue is derived from advertisements supplied by government departments. Consequently, newspapers cannot afford to lose this income. Therefore, while not an official tool such as Acts of Parliament, the distribution or withholding of advertisements is crucial to government control of newspaper content.

Despite the considerable direct and indirect control governments may wield over newspapers and the industry generally, the press have some power of their own which can serve to balance the scales of power, at least to some extent. The two examples of newspaper disputes with the government have attempted to demonstrate the power that a unified press can have, although the action served more to stop the freedom of the press getting worse rather for the position to improve. In Pakistan, while the industry needs the governments' revenue, the governments also need newspapers to publicise their works and achievements.

This chapter has presented a formal view of the print media in Pakistan, however, the next chapter is intended to take a more personal view of the press within Pakistan from two positions; the first considers the view of the press about itself, and the second is the opinion of the public. We concentrate more closely on the interpretation of national and religious identity

not only through the news content of the newspapers, but through the publications as a whole.

# *Chapter Four*

## ‘THE FOURTH PILLAR OF THE STATE’?

### III

*I know people will believe two things, what they read in the newspaper and what they want to believe and that's the way of the world*

Princess Caraboo<sup>1</sup>

To understand how and why censorship exists can only provide a partial picture for understanding of the effects of the media on the Pakistani elite (and masses). It is equally important for us to know how the newspaper industry and readers in turn influence both the media and their understandings of Islam and Pakistan through media interpretation. As has been shown in the previous chapter, the Pakistani press is affected by the government and other outside forces through various means of official and unofficial censorship. In this chapter we attempt to gain an understanding of the extent to which censorship is acknowledged and its power and influence consequently affected.

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<sup>1</sup>Dir. Michael Austin, 1994 (US)

The first two sections of this chapter are dedicated to an examination of how the content of news is presented and how it is received. We attempt to draw upon the contradictions in the Pakistani press. We examine different pressures placed upon the press and its effects upon the quality of journalism, contextualising comments such as one taken from *The Nation* which stated

Sometimes the owners and workers of the print media exercise checks on their freedom - the former for the sake of advertisements or newsprint and the latter for some personal benefits. (*The Nation* 23.6.96: 7)

We also take a brief look at the significance of imported agency articles, considering the fact that these are bought from Western news agencies which are predominantly catering for a Western readership.

The second section, 'Outside view - 'What the People Say'', examines the readership and the means they use to evaluate newspaper news content, how they select which newspaper to read and what they read. The content of newspapers extends well beyond the presentation of news and therefore we take a look at the significance of the overall newspaper content.

The final section examines some of the direct and indirect affects of Islam on the press and how these vary between different newspapers. On the one hand, we look at stories specifically about Islam and how they are presented. Each of the newspapers carry permanent or semi-permanent articles in relation to Islam such as *The Nation's* 'Light of Islam' series. On the other, we examine how newspaper coverage, on various subjects, is influenced by Islam in Pakistan which often means a concentration on 'news' concerning other Muslim nations or events which concern Muslim minority groups within non-Muslim nations.

Restrictions are placed upon the freedom of the press because it matters what people read and know. If a newspaper publishes a story then readers will have access to that information and the spread of such information may not always be desirable to the establishment and private influential forces. The previous chapter concentrated on an examination of the condition of the print media within Pakistan as effected by outside forces to the newspaper industry itself,

namely, the government, through Parliamentary Acts, censorship and advertising; private advertising; acts of violence. It is the intention of this chapter to examine both what the industry, and what the readership, want from and think of, their newspapers. This must be considered, at least in part, in the light of the foregoing chapter in order to contextualise the comments made on both sides of the 'production line'.

How many times do we hear it said, or indeed, say ourselves, 'don't believe what you read in the papers' followed by a reference to a newspaper article we have read and quote as truth? This illustrates the contradictions that everyone is aware of, no matter how vaguely, but which we are unable to deal with due to the practicalities of the receipt of global information with no way to clarify the information locally. In the global, rather than the local setting, it is only possible to obtain information through means exterior to one's own perceptions. One must rely upon the media, as Anderson (1991) tell us in order to 'imagine' one's community as that community extends well beyond the parameters of one's personal contacts and communications. Even the print media itself makes us aware of the fact that the truth is not always given in our newspapers.

The news thus tossed to the public is never the whole truth. It is always tainted and one-sided. (*The News on Friday* 16.6.95: 11)

Also, television dramas and films shown at the cinema or on the television frequently relay stories, fictional or 'factual', which highlight the discrepancies in newspaper reporting, as seen from inside or outside the industry.

The aim of this chapter is to examine what the people on the two sides of the media fence *think* is being done. If, how, and when they rationalise what they produce and read in the context of their own lives, their culture and their nation: their identities. Islam is significant in each of these areas and, although it comes up throughout this chapter I have set aside a section especially to look at the role Islam plays in the press as its importance cannot, and should not, be underestimated.

## Inside View - 'What the Papers Say'

*We are retailers. We don't make the news ,we just sell it.*

The Mean Season<sup>2</sup>

Pakistan's print media presentation of itself is a mass of contradictions. On the one hand it will publish articles condemning the poor skills of the journalists, the constraints placed upon the press and the ability of outside forces to manipulate the news etc. However, on the other hand, it will present itself as the Fourth Pillar of the State and a dedicated group of professionals who are prepared to risk life and limb to be the only presenter of the truth that can be trusted. Both sides of the coin are applicable to all strands of the Pakistani press, but one means for the English language press to quell this apparent contradiction in relation to itself is to point to the Urdu press and accuse them as being the real culprits in relation to the bad side of journalism in Pakistan whilst implying that the English press is doing its best to clean up the mess that has been left in the wake of the Urdu press.

Still, English language eveningers do not stray too far from the course; the Urdu ones have a pronounced tendency to go for broke. This is doing the Press no service. Neither the readers. (*The Nation* 14.7.95: 3)

The print media of Pakistan is acutely aware of both its duties and the restrictions imposed upon it, those imposed by the government and those imposed by the people as can be seen from the following article.

The government of the day has the right to keep the people at large informed about its nation building efforts and its successes in these endeavours. On the other hand the press, being no part of the executive but a separate pillar of the State, has the right to keep the masses informed about the flip side of the governmental coin which sometimes may lead to disclosures not to the liking of the ruling elite. (*Dawn* 24.9.95: 8)

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<sup>2</sup>Dir. Phillip Borsos, 1985 (US)

The government is concerned that the print media provide a forum upon which it can advertise its good deeds to the nation while, at the same time, playing down its failures. Government control over the print media, however, is much less significant than over the electronic, however, what control it has it will frequently exert where possible. While television is solely in the hands of the Government, newspapers are susceptible to other forces of manipulation including the Opposition and religious groups.

The people, to varying degrees, also have expectations of the media. They are, on the one hand, concerned that they receive free and unbiased news pertinent to their daily lives, but on the other hand, they require limitations to this freedom of reporting in order that the religious and cultural taboos are not broken. This has been demonstrated by attacks upon newspaper offices which have broken these spoken or unspoken rules. Then, of course, there are the additional restrictions imposed by the 'customers' of the newspapers in the shape of advertisers. All these things must be taken into consideration as the newspaper industry is a competitive business, truth comes in various shapes and sizes which can be 'sold' in different ways and must be 'bought' for the newspaper to survive.<sup>3</sup>

It is becoming increasingly common in Pakistan for the owners of newspapers to have a more active role in their publications, *sometimes combining both ownership with editorial roles* (*The Nation* and *The News* are examples of such newspapers). As one of the editors of *The Nation* stated during the course of our interview

Of late there has been a tendency in Pakistan that the newspaper owners which you in America call 'publishers', the newspaper owners, they style themselves as the Editor and Editor-in-Chiefs, many of them have nothing to do with the actual taking off of the paper. Some of them, like the Editor-in-Chief of *The News* doesn't do anything at all with journalism, only his name appears on the paper.

It is because of these joint, and perhaps conflicting responsibilities that some have pointed to the increasing constraints on stories through self-censorship and a heavier concentration on appearance rather than content of the newspaper (to be discussed in more detail in the following

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<sup>3</sup>We have already been introduced to this notion in 'News' and the Freedom of the Press in the previous chapter.

pages). As Willis has pointed out in relation to the American press, but which applies equally as well to the press of Pakistan

If a newspaper must worry about where its next dollar is coming from, chances are its publisher will not allow the news staff to go out and alienate - or even disturb - readers and advertisers with hard investigative stories. (Willis, 1988:24)

Despite these limitations within which the industry must work in order to maintain their publications as economically viable propositions, they still maintain the notion of their function as the 'Fourth Pillar of the State'. Numerous articles were published within the pages of the various newspapers grievously pointing out the restrictions imposed upon their publications through official bodies and the restrictions placed upon the Fourth Pillar in general. One example of such an article reads as follows:

The physical and financial losses inflicted on the newspapers by extremists on the one hand and by the government on the other, cannot but be aimed at silencing them or smothering their voice to a degree that they can no longer perform the function of the Fourth Estate. (*The Nation*, 4.7.95: 6).

However, at the same time, the Fourth Pillar was still pointed to and held up (by the press) as a beacon of truly democratic societies. Discussion seemed to be neglected in relation to whether such a concept was applicable, regardless of whether or not such official restrictions were in place. Baistow (1985) makes this point in relation to the British press and it applies equally well to the Pakistani press. It was therefore only a partial discussion, one which presumably was designed to leave the reader comfortable in the knowledge that, once these restrictions were lifted there could, and would, be a 'truthful' and 'democratic' free press.

Despite the 'Opinion Page' articles discussing the restrictions placed upon the print media, the 'news' pages still presented the 'news' as fact: untethered, unrestricted and complete. There were no disclaimers presented to the reader such as 'the reporter was hindered in his research and therefore the contents of this article may not be true and complete'. Presentation of the news was given as the best it could be and better than one would expect under the

circumstances if any acknowledgement was made of there being some shortfalls.

Under the multiple-imposed and self-imposed constraints with which it is bound, the Press in the Islamic Republic, by and large, is doing a fine job and without it the country would be lost. (*The Nation*, 5.8.95: 6)

Whilst most people acknowledge that they have some sort of personal biases in relation to particular issues which may colour their interpretation of events, the newspaper industry rarely, if ever, acknowledge such a flaw, the implication being that a purely objective approach to the news is possible. This ideal is perpetuated by the style of writing used which presents the news as fact. Weaver (1994) makes much of this point in his book 'News and the Culture of Lying' relating to the American print media. Even anthropologists who are concerned to keep their writings as objective as possible, acknowledge the inevitable subjectivity which creeps in as a consequence of human relations of any description (eg. Ellen, 1984). As the news is presented as 'fact', even where a newspaper acknowledges some political allegiance, this is not considered to affect the 'facts' as they stand, despite the owners and journalists being part of the society and identifying with different communities within that society from different perspectives. As individuals, these media personnel are located within the society both by themselves and by others and they cannot stand outside of that in order to remain neutral when writing an article or producing a newspaper.

### Political Orientation

During my fieldwork, as mentioned elsewhere, I regularly consulted three daily newspapers: *Dawn*, *The News* and *The Nation*. These were the highest selling English language daily newspapers in the country respectively and the majority of my informants received at least one of these publications (see Table 4.1).

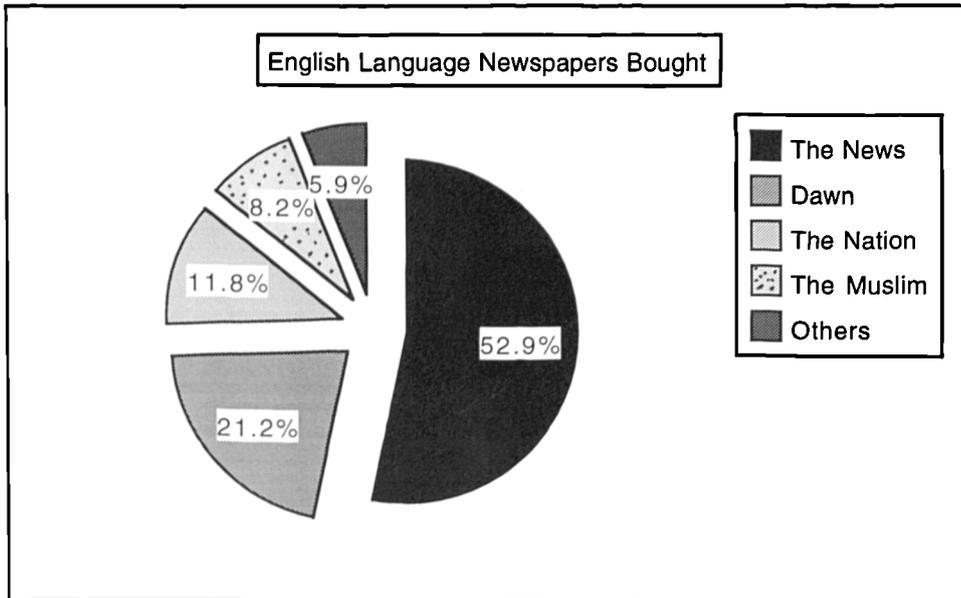


Table 4.1 - English Language Newspapers Bought (Informant Sample: 53)

Both *The News* and *The Nation* were connected with Urdu newspapers, *The News* with *Jang* and *The Nation* with *Nawa-e-Waqt*, these being the highest selling Urdu newspapers. However, in both cases, the English newspapers were distinct in content and orientation from their Urdu counterparts as are, for example, the *Sun* and *The Times*. In both cases the English language newspapers saw themselves as being more neutral than their Urdu counterparts with their political allegiances being less obvious to the reader. The editor from *The Nation* whom I interviewed stated that

I would say *The Nation* maintains - tries to maintain - a balance between the government and the opposition, not necessarily supporting the opposition on all issues. And it is not as critical of the government as *Nawa-e-Waqt* is.

Having said this, however, the political allegiances of the English language press were also frequently known or assumed by the reader. The presentation and affiliation with political parties also enabled a presentation of an ideology and identity as truth.

While it would normally be assumed that a balance of reporting to cover different political factions would be a good thing for the reader and constitute a freedom of information, in

Pakistan this was not necessarily the case. It has been suggested that the giving of space to every party was a means of safeguarding the newspapers own position and therefore not done for the reader, but for the newspapers own self-interest, in order not to be subjected to discriminatory treatment when the governments changed. Therefore, reporting was balanced in as much as it supplied information regarding the different parties but the information itself tended to be positive, or at least minimally critical and hence it tended to favour each of the parties rather than just one.

This helps newspaper establishments safeguard their financial interest in an uncertain and fast changing political scene. (*The News on Friday*, 16.6.95: 10)<sup>4</sup>

Most of the publications were, however, recognised as having some long term political allegiance. As pointed out by *Index on Censorship* in an article published titled 'The Press in Pakistan is Unwell':

All the country's newspapers are, in fact, related in some way to one or other of the political parties. Political alliances, tactical or otherwise, change constantly. Newspaper owners act likewise. This helps explain why newspapers and journalists have become regular victims of the political violence. (*Index on Censorship*, 1991:19)

The industry was, and is, in a position to present an image of Pakistani society through their publications and the majority of the newspapers assume that it was not only their right, but also their responsibility, to present an ideology of Pakistan, stereotyping identity with regard to being a Muslim and being a Pakistani according to their own criteria. When speaking to an employee of *The Nation* he outlined the broad framework of policy taken up by the newspaper (making it clear that these did not necessarily correspond with his own political ideas). These were to:

support democracy, oppose military dictatorship, authoritarian tendencies and ... a nationalist posture which is becoming increasingly

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<sup>4</sup>One should bear in mind that this article was published in *The News*, a newspaper which had a reputation for this very thing.

relevant now after the demise of the Cold War, because ... the issue was very relevant when Third World countries were forced, by circumstances, to join either of the two groups and some people said this had compromised their solidarity. ... The *Nawa-e-Waqt/Nation* group has the image of being a supporter of the ideals of the Pakistan movement, the Muslim League, supporter of the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and his ideas, of the poet Iqbal, the philosophy of Iqbal.

He was suggested, however, that *The Nation's* slant towards the opposition Party of the time, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), was to a lesser degree than *Nawa-e-Waqt*. The reason given for the policy difference maintained between the English and the Urdu branches of the newspaper group was that the readers of the English language newspapers had an expectation of some degree of neutrality and therefore blatant, and perhaps unjustified, support for the PML would be frowned upon. While *Nawa-e-Waqt* showed obvious allegiance towards the PML, *The Nation* tried to maintain a greater degree of balance between the government and the opposition, not necessarily supporting the opposition on all issues and not necessarily criticising the government on all of its issues. It was suggested that the editor of *The Nation*, although the son of the original owner of *Nawa-e-Waqt/Nation* group and the nephew of the present owner, had differing views from the owner and these are, to some extent, projected through *The Nation*.

*The Nation* was not alone in its political tendencies with other newspapers having reputations for allegiances as well. *Dawn*, being a Karachi based publication is strongly influenced by events in Karachi and therefore, some would contend, more favourable towards the MQM despite having its origins in the PML and being its mouthpiece at the time of independence (see previous chapter). It was mentioned to me, both by newspaper workers and readers, that *Dawn* was able to get away with more criticism of any government because it was such a highly respected newspaper and because it was founded by the Quaid-e-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Having said this, it was also thought to be the best and was the most intellectually prestigious of all Pakistan's newspapers.<sup>5</sup>

*The Muslim* was, by and large, a supporter of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) while *The*

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<sup>5</sup>See previous chapter.

*News* was described by one informant as 'the friend of the government - no matter which government that may be'. When this was told to me by people inside as well as outside the news group it was said with some contempt as it was presented as being a case of protecting its own interests over those of the public. It was clearly assumed that it was not a matter of treating all parties the same, but rather, writing favourably about the party in power at any given time, even if this meant contradicting previously presented views. Therefore 'no policy' meant a 'friendly policy to the government.'

The newspaper publishers were business men who wanted to sell their product, at the same time as making a profit. Therefore, as we have seen, the newspapers usually formed some allegiance with differing political parties in order to ensure advertising and avoid the oppressive pressures of the government and other influential bodies. However, the print media also need to tailor their publications to the tastes of their readers. The taste of the English reading public of Pakistan was assumed to be different to that of the Urdu readers and therefore, in order to be accepted by the English readership there had to be a policy difference between the publications in the two languages. Part of this taste was assumed to mean the requirements of an apparently more neutral press.

It was also explained to me by the editor of *The Nation* that the journalists who worked on English language publications, including *The Nation*, often had a different orientation from the Urdu journalists, tending to be 'more liberal'.

The people who work in the English language newspapers, and also *The Nation*, they are of a different orientation from the Urdu journalists, they have a different thinking, a different orientation. Most of the people who work [in the] English language have, I would say, a liberal orientation.

This was an extension of the assumptions relating to the reader of English language publications and relates predominantly to education. Those journalists who could work on an English newspaper are likely to have a greater degree of education than those who work for an Urdu newspaper and were likely to come from a more affluent background as education, particularly in the English language, was associated with income and status. Linked to this was the assumption of a more liberal and tolerant attitude attributed to education.

Since the introduction of *The News* on Pakistan’s print media scene, it has eaten into the sales of *The Muslim* more than any other competitor. One must attribute this, partially at least, to the fact that both these newspapers are Islamabad/Rawalpindi based while *The Nation* has its origins in Lahore and *Dawn* in Karachi and therefore *The News* and *The Muslim* have the same ‘local’ news orientation and are more direct competitors. Bearing in mind that Islamabad is, for the most part, a city of immigrants who have their origins elsewhere and indeed the elite generally are far more mobile than the masses, ‘local’ news from other regions was seen as an important component of Pakistani newspapers.

The owner of *The Muslim*, during the course of our interview, attributed the decline in sales of his newspaper in favour of *The News* to the fact that *The News* frequently disregarded the Islamic cultural heritage of its readers and was consequently catering to the readers’ baser instincts. However, the significant difference in sales figures cannot be solely attributed to the relative liberalism of *The News* or the conservatism of *The Muslim* (see Table 4.2). The quality of the presentation of the two newspapers was quite different with *The News* having better quality newsprint, and printing ink, regularly using colour. *The Muslim*, on the other hand, had a relatively amateurish appearance with the ink often smudged and the print askew as well as a poor display of the articles.

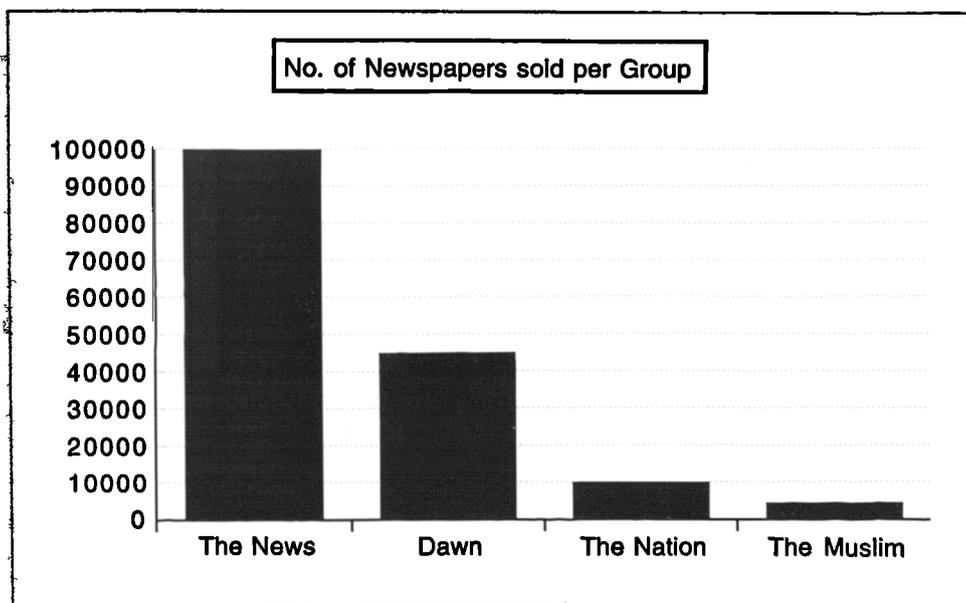


Table 4.2 - No. of Newspapers sold per News Group (source: Editor of *The News* who provided actual sales figures)

The quality of the newspapers' presentation is important for their sales as it, to some extent, distinguishes them where the quality of the journalism cannot so readily do. It is the way that a newspaper is laid out; the way the headlines are printed, the preferences given to different types of pictures, choice of vocabulary etc, which can allow the reader some insight into the standards imposed upon the journalists. If we take a British example, we can compare the presentation of the *Sun* to that of *The Times* and, before having read one word, we have some idea of what style of reporting can be expected and how an article will be presented.

### The Quality of Journalism

With the imposition of long bouts of martial law in Pakistan, freedom of the Press was killed, professional journalism was crushed and a breed of journalists was created who represented triumph of money over mind. The Press itself generally appeared losing its mission and developing a tendency to become a big business. Its raison d'etre of informing, educating and entertaining the readers was mainly geared to increasing the circulation and attracting the advertisement. It is true that the Press cannot succeed in its mission if it is not a business success, but in an undeveloped country like Pakistan the Press cannot afford to involve itself too much in politics at the cost of genuine economic development. (*The Pakistan Times* 7.3.95: 6)

The layout quality of the different newspapers varied noticeably. *Dawn* was more sombre in its presentation therefore directing the readers to the content rather than allowing them to be distracted by a more colourful and 'friendly' layout as given by *The News*. *The Nation* fell in the middle of these two publications. However, each of these newspapers existed within a country whose journalistic tradition has been questionable due to the constraints placed upon it as we have seen throughout the course of this and the previous chapter. The following is an example of an incident which I witnessed during an interview with one informant which points to some of the constraints and shortfalls which the Pakistani press are subjected to.

The interview I held with an editor of *The Nation*, which I have already had cause to mention, was at one stage, interrupted by the entrance of a member of the staff from the Jordanian

Embassy. I was surprised that I was not asked to leave the room although, in fact, my presence was hardly acknowledged at all. The diplomat had come to complain about a story which *The Nation* had printed in relation to an incident which had occurred between himself and a member of the Islamabad constabulary. The incident had involved the embassy car being pulled over for a driving offence, followed by the diplomat exchanging harsh words with the police and striking an officer after having been pressured to leave his diplomatic car to speak with the police captain who was seated in the police car parked behind.<sup>6</sup> Although it appeared that the basis of the story was correct the Jordanian diplomat was unhappy that the article had not been completely accurate as he maintained that he had not struck the police officer and he wished a letter of apology to be published in the newspaper together with a letter from the Embassy itself setting out the facts of the incident. There was much apologising done on the side of the newspaper and a promise to publish the apology while there was much reference to Muslim brotherhood and the need for good relations on the other side, thereby informing the editor that this was not simply a matter of journalism, but of international unity and mutual identity through Islam. On the diplomat leaving the room my informant turned to me (the first time my presence had been acknowledged since the diplomat first entered the room) and said that he was wrong not to have checked the story completely, but he had done a little checking and it appeared to be true and, besides, he said 'I would believe anything of these people'. This may not be as much of a contradiction in relation to the 'Muslim brotherhood' identity as could initially be suspected. Referring again to the point made previously in this thesis, the worst critics of Muslims are indeed Muslims especially where their interpretation of the Qur'an and Islamic identity differs.

It was sometimes acknowledged in articles published in the newspapers that the reporting skills of some journalists, and the expectations of those skills by some newspapers, left a lot to be desired. Statement journalism was one flaw which was often pointed to, whereby the journalist simply accepts, word for word, a statement issued by a Minister, or his office, and reprinted that as his own article without doing any further research on the subject or offering a balanced report.

Journalism is too sacred a profession to embroil itself in the filth of politics of confrontation. Instead of statement orientated journalism, the

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<sup>6</sup>When relaying this story to some foreign diplomats in Pakistan I was informed that 'of course a diplomat would not leave his car, no matter what he had done'.

main agenda of our mediemen should be to produce full-of-substance material on how to bring about a real social, economic and political change in Pakistan. (*The Nation*, 23.6.96: 7)

This journalistic trend began in earnest during the Martial Law era of General Ziaul Haq, but the tradition has continued, as was explained to me by a number of sources as well as articles in the newspapers, as a result of many journalists having been culturalised into this style of reporting by spending most of their careers working under Martial Law and it being a hard habit to break as it was effortless. This type of reporting had advantages for both the journalist and the Minister who provides the statement. For the journalist not only was it an easy way to produce work, but it might offer him an opportunity to win a political ally who could prove to be useful in the future. For the Minister supplying the statement, it was frequently a publication of his own view and was often a chance to malign the opposition. Statement journalism therefore allowed a Minister to identify an ideology and national or religious identity, presenting it, through the newspapers which printed it verbatim, to the reading public as truth.

As written in *The News* in relation to criticism made by Benazir Bhutto at an APNS conference

Largely it [the print media] has admitted its weakness, but at the same time defended its right to print statements without first establishing the authenticity of its contents. (*The News*, 12.12.95)

As with other aspects of the shortfalls of the print media in Pakistan, the Urdu newspapers were frequently saddled with the lion's share of responsibility of introducing and perpetuating statement journalism. However, it was sometimes more subtly acknowledged that the English press also resorted to statement journalism. This was done by acknowledging its existence on the one hand while, at the same time, distancing itself from such practices. One of the more forthright articles condemning statement journalism came from *The Pakistan Times* renowned, as mentioned in the previous chapter, for being the mouthpiece of the government whereby it stated that

The Press in Pakistan at present generally presents a sad spectacle of

having become a statements gazette (*The Pakistan Times*, 7.3.95)

The continuation of the practice of statement journalism cannot, however, be solely attributed to the constraints on the freedom of the press. The majority of Pakistan's newspapers are working with limited budgets due, in part, to the low literacy rates and the relatively high expenses incurred in the purchase of newsprint and the payment of taxes (discussed in the previous chapter). One of the affects of these high expenses and limited circulation was that the pay of the journalists is relatively low. One of the consequences of this problem was that a number of journalists made little effort to obtain the best story possible and resorted to statement journalism. Another reason for a reliance on statement journalism was that investigative journalism could be dangerous to the personal safety of a reporter in Pakistan who would be paid no better for such stories and may indeed have lost his post if the editor or owner were pressured from outside to fire him, or felt it would be beneficial for him to do so.

Corruption apart, journalists seem to have been diverted from their path by the fear of falling foul of militant extremists. In view of the collapse of the security cover that the state is expected to provide to journalists, it has become difficult to advise them to report the truth against any mafia they may uncover. And how does one protect a journalist who is taken off a beat and even threatened with dismissal because the proprietor or the editor does not want a patron's misdeeds exposed? (*The News on Friday* 16.6.95: 11)

The other side of this particular coin, as it was suggested by newspaper articles and informants, was that journalists accepted statements, publishing them as given in order to receive benefits from the issuing Minister, either in the form of financial reward or references, recommendations and the like. A reason given by the press for the government issue of plots of land to journalists was that it was a means of winning the favour, and consequently the support, of reporters.

Of course not all journalists are susceptible to bribery and corruption and many of them have been arrested, beaten, threatened, subjected to the 'midnight knock'<sup>7</sup> and even murdered due

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<sup>7</sup>The 'midnight knock' is the term used for a visit received from members of the constabulary which may result in an arrest, search, threat or the like, usually occurring after an article has been published showing the initiator of the 'knock' in a bad light.

to their diligence in reporting. It should, however, be taken into account that the majority of these acts against the newspaper personnel have been explained in the context of mis- or malicious-reporting, some of which complaints may have been true. On the other hand some of these attacks were carried out due to, what was perceived as a lack of reporting. Groups which felt themselves deserving of more media attention than they received sometimes used violence and intimidation to attempt to coerce the newspapers to publicise (positive) aspects of their movements (Niazi, 1992).

The implications of the limited budgets of Pakistan's newspapers was not limited to the reporting techniques of journalists. Financial constraints also meant that many of the newspapers' stories were acquired through news agencies, both national and international, as they could not afford the cost of additional permanent correspondents where there would be irregular news stories. These agencies have the benefit of allowing the spread of information which would otherwise be impossible if the newspapers were to rely on their own sources both at home and abroad. Many newspapers in Pakistan had reporters located in the capital cities of each province - Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and Islamabad - and some had journalists in London, Washington and Delhi, but the rest of the country and world was left uncovered.<sup>8</sup>

The Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) is the main wire service through which national news is passed on to the newspapers. However, while this has the benefit of giving the newspapers information that they do not have the resources to report directly it has been suggested that the agency does not fulfil its duty adequately, predominantly because it is a government owned and controlled institution.

Contributing to the propaganda deluge is the government-owned Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) news agency, which provides much of the so called 'news' that appears in newspapers. A great deal of this reportage, too consists of little more than statements by government functionaries. (*The News*, 3.7.95: 1)

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<sup>8</sup>It should be mentioned here that a far greater number of articles are purchased from the international news agencies in Pakistan than is the case in Britain largely due to the economic restrictions on the Pakistani newspapers whereby it is financially impossible for them to maintain either temporary or permanent correspondents abroad (O'Brien, 1980).

Until recently all stories purchased from agency sources outside of Pakistan had to come through the APP. This meant that all stories coming from Reuters and AFP (some 80% of the total news carried in the newspapers according to my informant from *The News*) could be censored as the government thought necessary, before distribution to the various newspaper bodies. As my informant from *The Nation* stated

We get direct news stories from the AFP and Reuters. Until then the APP, the official news agents in Pakistan had a monopoly over foreign news. All the foreign news from various agencies like AFP, AP or Reuters would come to the APP and then the APP distribute the news - selective news - to the various newspapers. Now since, for instance, a paper like *The Nation*, we have in our office a direct AFP news service so there is no government control over foreign news.

Despite the potential significance of the lifting of this requirement there was, to my knowledge, no mention of it in the newspapers and one day there simply appeared the Reuters accreditation rather than the previous APP one. When I mentioned the change to newspaper personnel I was surprised by their apparent lack of interest and dismissal of the subject. I had assumed that it would be seen as a great victory in the struggle for press freedom, but it appeared to generate no excitement of any kind and the event went by unmarked.

There are, of course, criticisms levied against the press services such as an imbalance of news flow, a western bias, and a lack of 'good' or positive news relating to the Pakistan and the Third World generally (Zamora et al, 1979).

Much of the criticism of the existing global information order has fallen upon the world news agencies ... sometimes they are charged with being too concerned with what their clients in the richer nations want, with considering news as just a commodity, with using news values which emphasize conflict and which treat material sensationally. They are also accused of gathering the news in a manner which is culturally biased towards the cultures of the news-gatherers from the industrialized nations who were trained there. (Hester, 1979:85)

However, these complaints, while being justifiable, can be levied against all aspects of the media, whether from international news agencies or from national sources. It would appear that the Third World press, such as that of Pakistan have convinced themselves that there is such a thing as a free and unbiased press and that this should be a part of the 'democratic' West, neglecting the reality whereby the apparatus of control may be different, but the effects are the same (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). There is no such thing as an unbiased press (Lichtenberg, 1996). Pakistani newspapers, at the same time as apparently holding these views have, however, levied complaints about the biased and inaccurate portrayal of Pakistan and its society in the western media. One such example was in relation of the marriage of Imran Khan and Jemima Goldsmith. In this instance there was much complaint over the portrayal of Pakistan and the significance of Muslim as well as Pakistani identity all tied to the fact that a young, attractive, wealthy European woman had married a man twice her age, converted to Islam and moved to Lahore. The Pakistani press complained about British press for using inappropriate and (as it maintained) incorrect stereotypes, accusing them of "Islam and Pakistan Bashing". The following are some of the story headlines and extracts from different articles which provide examples of the Pakistani press's reaction to the British press.

'Pakistan bashing in Imran's marriage' - *Daily Mail* in its report aimed at Pakistan bashing on the pretext of discussing Imran-Jemima marriage. (*The Nation* 20.5.95: 1)

'Welcome Haiqa'<sup>9</sup> - All the discouraging remarks about Imran Khan's marriage by the British Press wise-guys, frightening the poor bride with a very black picture of harsh Pakistani medieval society are born out of jealousy, arrogancy and racial poppy-cock. (*Dawn* 25.5.95: 10)

'Media madness on Imran Khan's marriage' - For many [British newspapers] it was yet another opportunity to bash Islam and, according to some writers, the inhuman way it treats women. (*The Nation* 27.5.95: 11)

Imtiaz Alam, a writer for *The News* took a slightly different stand when considering the

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<sup>9</sup>This was the Muslim name assumed, by the press, to have been given Jemima Goldsmith although it quickly fell into disuse and no one was ever sure whether she took a Muslim name and what that name actually was.

reaction of both the Britain and Pakistan press to the marriage of Imran Khan and Jemima Goldsmith. In his article 'A man, a marriage and society' he comments on the stereotypes applied by journalists from both countries. An extract from his article reads as follows:

A clash of cultural values is visible in the most debated marriage in the context of mutually exclusive values of the modern and the traditional societies.

The media in England, apart from tabloid garbage, is understandably worried from the obvious prospects of curtailment of cultural and personal freedoms enjoyed by ever-grinning Goldsmith in a free society when she migrates to a prohibitive culture of segregation of her bridegroom. The Press in Pakistan, on the other hand, is filled with such reactions which are overwhelmingly sexist, utilitarian, anti-semitic, male-chauvinist. (*The News*, 22.5.95: 7)

When examining the content and significance of newspapers we need to go well beyond their 'news' content. The 'news' is only a part of a newspaper and it should not be forgotten that publications sell themselves on more than this alone. They sell their newspapers on other grounds also, where, whether there is a bias or not matters little, or rather, matters differently. For example what is good or bad fashion is a matter of personal taste and whether one cricket side or another is good is regarded more as personal opinion as opposed to bias. We now turn our attention to these matters to examine the overall importance of the news in the newspapers.

#### How important is 'news' in a newspaper?

From the time and effort which goes into the *presentation* of the 'news' there is at least some justification in assuming that it is not 'the news' which sells (or is assumed to sell) the newspaper, but rather how that news is presented. The style of publications are designed to appeal to the reader both from perspective and from appearance. The fact that the reader may want to know the news is apparently almost incidental and, therefore, the newspaper must 'look good' and contain many items other than news in order to cover the whole spectrum of possible readers.

Newspapers such as *The News* and *The Muslim* were assuming the readers wanted certain things from their newspapers other than 'news'. *The Muslim* assumed that its readers wanted a family newspaper with a conservative perspective. While *The News* also provided a family newspaper with cartoons and a children's section, at the same time it was attempting to provide material for the more liberal male readership<sup>10</sup>. *The News*, therefore, selected news stories and corresponding photographs which were frequently designed to appeal to the male reader.

As was explained to me by the owner of *The Muslim*, newspapers are divided into different sections and contain a relatively wide variety of 'entertainment' as well as 'news' in order to appeal to a wider readership.

The children want their own items of interest, the housewife or the working woman, she wants her items of interest. The husband wants his items of interest and within their own items of interest there are scripts - he may be interested in sports or politics, so maybe if you give them good enough politics, maybe he wants sports and he will choose a newspaper that gives him both.... So you have got to cater to everybody, that is a realisation that all newspapers are coming to. There has got to be sobriety, you give them humour, you give them everything and a newspaper would not feel itself complete unless it gives all sections.

The sections include such items as horoscopes, cartoons, puzzles, fashion tips, children's sections, gossip about film stars and singers etc etc. The different content of newspapers also serve as a means of perpetuating religious and cultural identity. Fashion was based within the cultural setting and therefore Pakistan's media concentrate predominantly on the latest styles and materials of shalwar kameez and kurta. Gossip about the stars focused, not only on Pakistani actors and singers, but also their lives in relation to Pakistani society, its pressures and their views. In an interview with a model called Hina Khan, she commented that she had not taken up a career in film acting because

Its respectable to act for TV plays on the contrary for the silver screen it's not and for me it's almost impossible to accomplish their demands.

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<sup>10</sup>It is apparently assumed that the 'news' section of newspapers will be read by a predominantly male readership and therefore the sensibilities of women and children are not considered to the same extent as for television.

I don't want to spoil my reputation and I wouldn't like that 'filmy actress' is stamped on me'.

Plates 3 and 4 are two cartoons, Gogi and Hearsay, which draw upon aspects of Pakistani society. The first picks up on cheating in exams as well as the elite inability with the Urdu language (two points which have come up earlier in this thesis). The 'sharing of knowledge' refers to the ability of students to ask other students for the answers and look at their papers for the answers. It is common for the elite to have poor Urdu skills and therefore the student who had been sitting Pak Studies and Islamiat with students completing their papers in Urdu had found it impossible to cheat as she was not able to read their answers. The second cartoon, by Nasir Javeed, makes fun of the notoriety of Pakistani corruption.

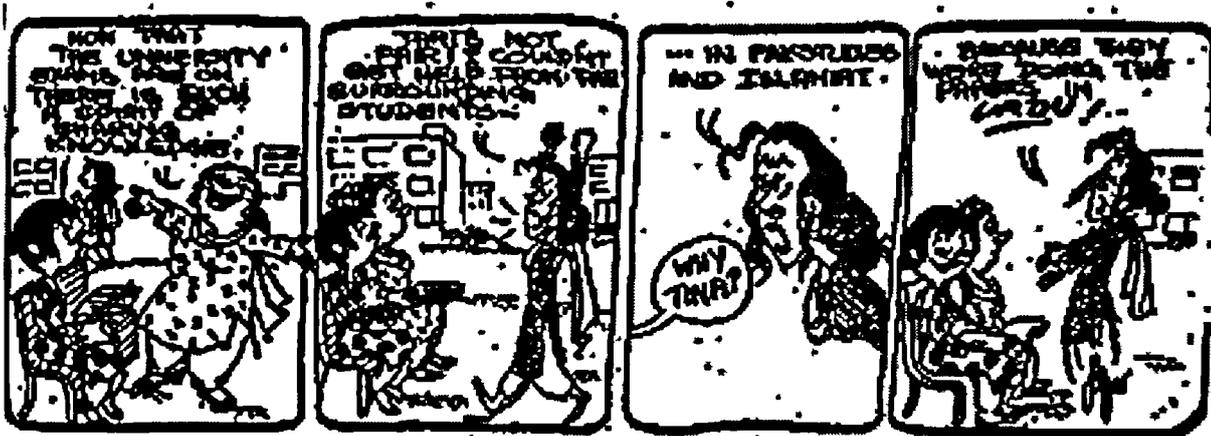


Plate 3 - 'Gogi' by Nigar Nazar (*The News on Friday* 21.6.96: 38)

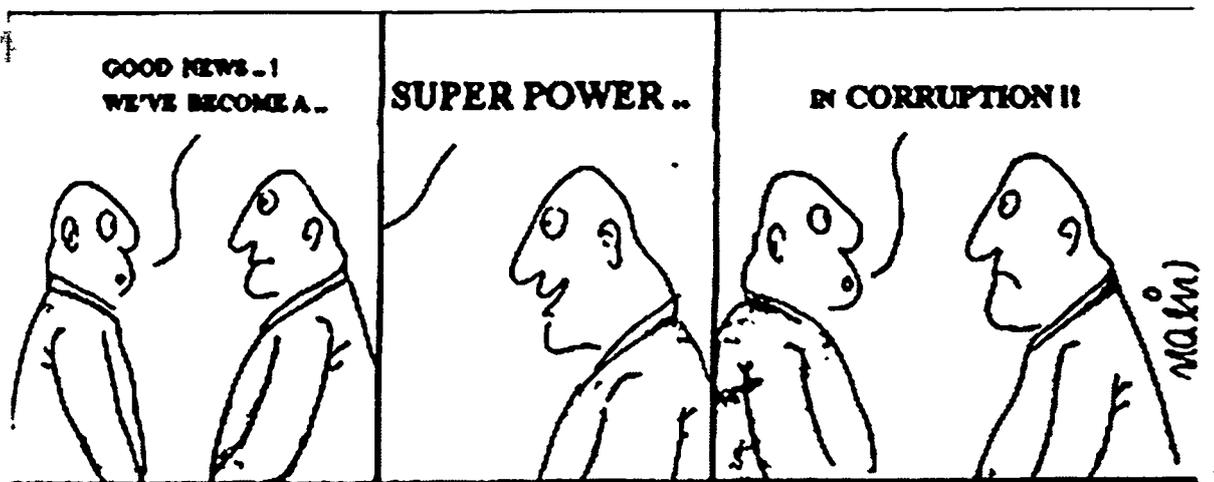


Plate 4 - 'Hearsay' by Nasir Javeed (*The News on Friday* 19.7.96: 38)

Frequently, when discussion took place with regard to newspapers and journalism the emphasis was on the 'news' aspect of the content of those pages. The reality is that the news is only a partial consideration firstly when production is taking place and secondly to the readers themselves. The appeal must be to all potential readers on as many subjects as possible. In the following section we go on to take a more detailed look at what it is that the readers say about the newspapers.

### **Outside View - 'What the People Say'**

It should be restated at this point that it is not only the elite press that we are talking about in this thesis, but also the elite people, many of whom constitute, in some form or another, the rulers of the nation, or at least those people with access to the ears of the rulers. It is, of course, common that these two components coexist, as Merrill (1968) says the elite press

Is aimed at the educated citizen who is aware of, and concerned about, the central issues of his time, and undoubtedly it is read by more opinion leaders than other types of newspapers. (Merrill, 1968:11).

The English language press of Pakistan is directed at a relatively small and select portion of the population classified largely by the language and price of the newspapers. Therefore when I talk here of what 'the people say' I am talking almost exclusively about what the 'elite' people say and not the masses of Pakistan. As we saw from Table 4.2, there is only a relatively small number of English language newspapers sold and, as we can see from Table 4.3, many of these newspapers are bought by the same people.

While it is possible to 'observe' people's reactions to television, it is much more difficult to do so with newspapers. Setting aside the issue of whether or not it would be acceptable to look over a person's shoulder as they read, it would be hard to identify what the person chose to read on a page. In this instance, therefore, it has been far more necessary to rely on what people have said, either in everyday conversation, in the questionnaire, or in interviews, rather than observation, as was the case with television. However, to some extent at least, letters to the editors have been a helpful additional source of information. These letters are also used by

the editors to cater their newspapers more accurately to the demands of their readers and therefore the newspapers that I was reading were, at least in part, influenced by correspondence from the readers. Letters to newspapers are significant not only in Pakistan, but elsewhere also and have been a source of influence for the press for decades. As Tunstall states

Letters to the Editor feature goes back to the origins of newspapers and is important to the editor who gets a quick return flow of comment about his editorial pronouncements. (Tunstall, 1996:222)

With all the discussion in the newspapers and between different groups of friends and family, especially among the elite who have personal contacts and connections within the corridors of power, it was commonly acknowledged that the news which appeared within the pages of the daily press was frequently far from accurate. As Abramson has pointed out in relation to criticisms of the British press but which applies as well to comments by Pakistanis in relation to their national press

Popular criticism of the press wavers between fearing its power and bemoaning its impotence. (Abramson, 1990:239)

But where else could people go if they wanted at least some idea of what was going on in the country beyond their own sphere of contact and personal knowledge? Newspapers published stories in relation to the opposition, Karachi and accidents with significant injuries and fatalities - stories the government were not anxious to be told and which were, therefore, suppressed from television broadcasts. The limitations upon the press were known to exist even during the era of the 'freedom of the press' spokeswoman, Benazir Bhutto. However, the extent to which newspapers were able to present the news, in some form or another, was at least more extensive than the electronic alternatives. There was no real alternative for the seeker of national news. When answering a question on whether he relied upon newspapers for his news, one informant in his early twenties said

Yes, especially as far as domestic issues are concerned, more so when it comes to finding out what is happening in the North West Frontier Province.

Television news broadcasts are, almost universally, seen as a competitor of the newspaper. If we are to accept this as true we must then look at the case of Pakistan in the light of this. Bearing in mind that the focus of this research is centred upon the elite, it must then take into consideration satellite television as a significant part of the equation, as well as national television news broadcasts. In the first instance we must consider the PTV news. This was, almost unanimously, distrusted by the (elite) viewers with regard to national news. The proportion of international news aired by PTV was very low, therefore many viewers found it too inadequate to bother viewing. With regard to the international news broadcasts received either through terrestrial antenna or satellite dish, the coverage of Pakistani domestic issues was extremely limited.<sup>11</sup> Newspapers therefore had the monopoly on the home news information market as there was nowhere else to obtain the information.

It is easy to say that 'one cannot believe what one reads in the newspapers', it is very much harder to know *what* one cannot believe. With the contradictions in the reporting about itself by the print media already highlighted in this chapter, it is difficult for an individual who does not see the censorship, the press advices, the statements etc, to *know* what news has been affected by outside forces. Sometimes it may be possible to get a feel for which political perspective a journalist or newspaper may have sympathies, but to what extent this effects the portrayal of the news and consequently how much it can be relied upon is difficult, if not impossible, to know. Therefore, one can say with absolute certainty that the elite were aware that there was much in their newspapers which could not be trusted as it was not reliable, but the extent to which this knowledge could be usefully applied to what one read is very much less certain. In his writings on the British press Seymour-Ure states that

People in 1945-95 were not the puppets of the media barons, jerking at every tug of the string. Nor equally, can we seriously believe that popular attitudes were entirely unmoved by the media. The problem is to know where in between, in particular cases, the balance of influence and autonomy lay. (Seymore-Ure, 1996:271)

The severe measures against press freedom taken by the various administrations in Pakistan have not saved any government or dictator from losing office in the long run. It may be true to say that it has delayed the process by slowing down the dissemination of information, but,

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<sup>11</sup>See Chapter 5 for more detailed discussion.

ultimately, if reports do not mirror, at least partially, how the people are suffering and how they are feeling, the people are not fooled by what they read in the newspapers. What one reads, whether true or not, must fit in with what one 'knows' in order to be given credence. As one informant told me,

I was always told by my parents that I should never rely only on the Pakistani press because they only print the official version and never give the balanced coverage to the real issues of the day. My father's family is from an area and party that The Establishment (Islamabad) has regarded as being 'Anti-State elements' and were always harassed by the National Press Trust papers and the police.

The governments may use the print media as a means of legitimating their power, but ultimately, if the representation does not correspond to the situation as the people are experiencing it, the power can only be temporary.

Readers, among the elite, may and often do use relatives and friends to verify information that they have access to. I often heard talk of information which informants had found out through more direct means and its comparison with what was read in the newspapers. This 'gossip' would then get spread around as an alternative to what was read in the newspapers to those people within the network. As one informant told me

One also comes to hear of different news through friends and relatives.

This use of gossip could therefore serve to perpetuate the knowledge that the content of newspapers could not be trusted. However, where else does one turn when there was no other source of information? Periodicals are an obvious alternative source of news. Pakistani publications such as the monthlies *Newline* and *Herald* and the weekly newspaper *The Friday Times* were taken up by some of my informants together with British and American weeklies *Economist*, *Time* and *Newsweek*. Of the 53 informants who completed the questionnaire only 28 received one of the above periodicals on a regular basis. Therefore Table 4.3 below relates only to those 28 informant and their households. As will be apparent from the figures, the majority of informants received more than one periodical and, in fact, only 8 households received 1 of the magazines or weekly newspapers.

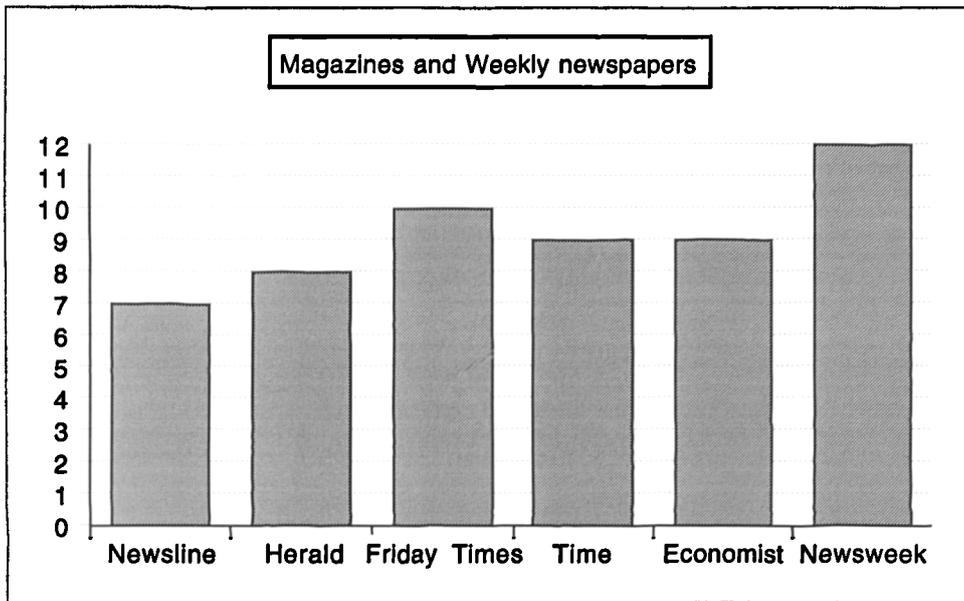


Table 4.3 - Magazines and Weekly Newspapers (28 households from 53 responses)

A number of my informants had a preference for newspapers produced by their home province, therefore if they originated from Karachi they tended to purchase *Dawn* while, if they originated from Lahore they often purchased *The Nation*. Each of the newspapers had a regional bias with a greater concentration on news from their Provincial capital and therefore readers were more able to keep abreast of local news if they purchased these newspapers.

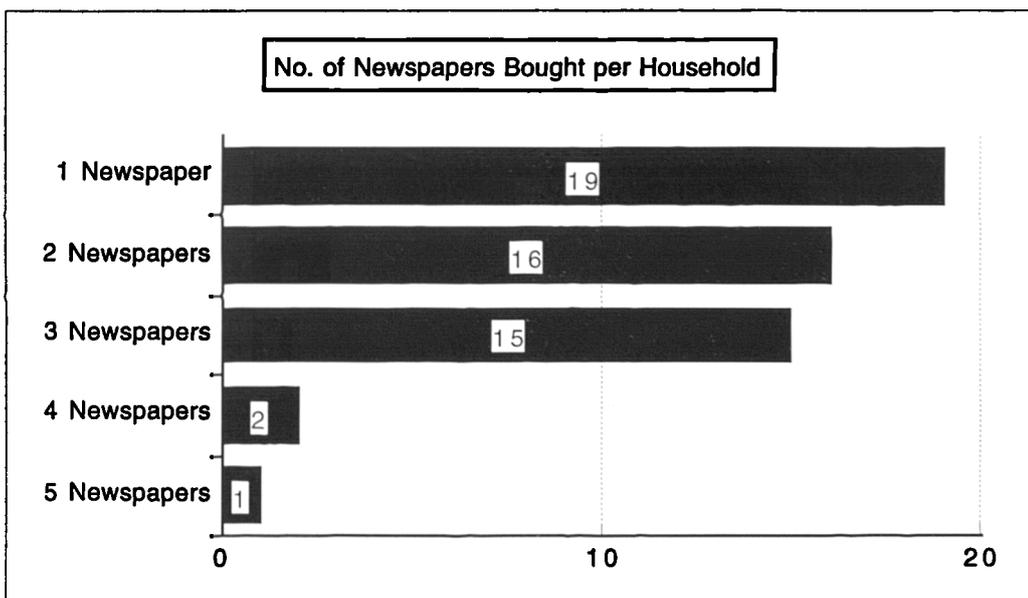


Table 4.4 - No. of Newspapers Bought per Household - Sample: 53

This said, many households bought more than one newspaper and, in this instance, the newspapers usually seemed to be from the city where they lived, namely Islamabad, the second newspaper coming from their Province of origin. This can perhaps, in part at least, explain why more than 50% of the sample readership (as shown in Table 4.4) received more than one newspaper per day.

As has been mentioned, there is a wide variety of newspapers, both in English and Urdu, from which readers can choose. Despite the fact that, as we have seen, informants maintained Urdu newspapers carried sensationalist stories, from my survey I discovered that some 20 informants of a total of 53 in the sample obtained Urdu newspapers, although only one of these took only an Urdu newspaper with no additional English newspaper (see Table 4.5).

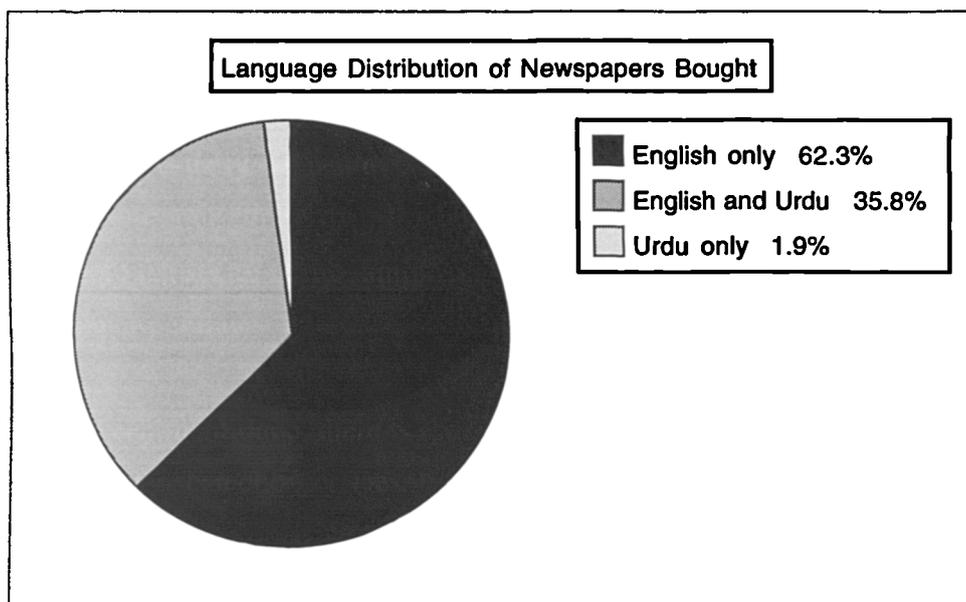


Table 4.5 - Language Distribution of Newspapers Bought: Sample size - 53

The layout of Urdu newspapers was distinctive from that of the English newspapers. The Urdu papers, I was told by the editor of *The News*, were apparently designed to catch the interest of the reader at first glance. The front pages of Urdu newspapers were crammed with headlines and a sentence or two in relation to the story although those sentences are frequently misleading in order to show the stories in their most sensational light. The difference in the quality of reporting between the two languages has already been discussed in some length,

therefore all that remains is to mention at this point that the elite were aware of this difference. However, one informant suggested that it was because the Urdu newspapers covered different news and from a different perspective to the English newspapers that he and other people bought them perhaps, finding some additional entertainment in the sensational portrayal of the story. Knowledge of 'Yellow journalism' does not necessarily put the reader off buying the newspaper (as we can see by the sales figures of the Sun in Britain), but the elite are increasingly exposed to lighter material even in the English language newspapers recognised as being of superior intellectual quality. According to research done in relation to the British press

Both upmarket and midmarket papers have for the last 150 years been adding more light material; but it has probably always been the light material which attracted most readers. (Tunstall, 1996:216)

Although the time span is obviously much shorter in the case of Pakistan (the country having only been created in 1947), much the same trend has been occurring there as has already been mentioned in the previous section.

As previously mentioned, editors and owners were very anxious to make their newspapers appeal to 'all' the family and therefore they fill their pages, especially the weekend ones, with far more than just 'news'. The newspapers took a position from which to present their newspapers and work to a 'type' of person for each of the sections, therefore having 'women's articles', 'children's articles' and 'men's articles'. This classification of sections meant an equivalent classification of the reader on equally broad lines. Readerships are assumed to be known through the newspapers sold and the probability of readership distribution as a consequence. According to Abramson (1990) this can lead to oversimplification, stereotyping and even contempt. The following quote from Lord Northcliffe illustrates all three of these faults:

We must face the fact that comparatively few people have a passion for truth as a principle or care about public events continuously when these do not obviously effect their own lives. People want to be pleased, and truth is not always pleasing. ... Newspapers have always depended on their public, and the public hands out fortunes, not to those who presented the truest possible picture of public events, but to the showman who can provide the most

entertaining kaleidoscope. (quoted in Martin, 1947:67)

These over-simplifications in relation to the classification of an audience/readership, while doubtless necessary to some extent to meet production deadlines, do not take into consideration the diversity of the specific groups, let alone the 'news' reading group which is most certainly not all male. Research done by Shaw (1996) and others has shown that men and women, young and old process information differently. Shaw's work relates to distant violence and, more specifically, the Gulf War. He maintained that men were more likely than women (36% to 21%) to approve 'strongly' of the war; women more likely (57% to 36%) to agree that they were 'worried' by the war. (Shaw, 1996). Shaw also pointed to an age differential whereby older men, like women, did not share the 'excitement' or 'fascination' with war which some younger men acknowledged. The majority of older people experienced the events of war through previous experiences. Similarities can be pointed to in Pakistan although the events which people can call upon are more recent with Partition and the wars with India. It is therefore misleading to think of the 'news' readership as a codifiable whole when assessing how 'news' information will be received.

It has been suggested by Tunstall (1996) and others that the patterns of readership have changed in Britain with people being much more likely to buy different newspapers from the stand than having the same one delivered to the home each day. This trend did not seem to have taken shape in Pakistan with each of my informants having at least the majority of their newspapers delivered. The owner of *The Muslim* said that children would frequently buy the same newspaper as their parents. He maintained that this was the reason it was important to appeal to the young readership from an early age in order, first to get them into the habit of buying a newspaper and second, to ensure that they would buy that newspaper.

Newspapers are very addictive, somebody who starts reading a newspaper in childhood, is normally that newspaper he carries on with. The newspaper that he has been reading and enjoying while he was in his parents' house, that would probably be his choice because he is so used to the newspaper, he is so used to it every morning, the information that is presented in the newspaper, the style of the newspaper, the message of the newspaper. He is your potential buyer. We can't ignore the younger age groups.

This implies a different pattern to the British example, perhaps affected in part by each respondent to my questionnaire having their newspapers delivered to their home.

The responses to my questionnaire suggested that the content of the newspaper were read selectively with readers regularly choosing to read only particular sections of the newspaper while either skimming or ignoring the rest of the newspaper's contents. The 'news' itself was often low on the list of preferences of what the reader liked to read with sports and the leisure sections having a much higher readership. A complaint which was made quite regularly in relation to the content of Pakistani newspapers, for example, was the over-emphasis on politics and not enough alternative 'news'. As one female informant from a household which received three newspapers (*The News, Jang* and *Dawn*) told me

Newspapers (Pakistani) are sometimes quite boring and un-imaginative as they concentrate on purely politics, ignoring articles on entertainment, the environment and people outside the political scenario.

Regardless of the story subjects, Islamic religion and ideology was implicit in most and explicit in some of the newspaper articles. It is to this that we now turn drawing upon both sides of the press production line.

## **Islam and the Press**

Islam has a two fold impact on the press, firstly by the stories on Islam itself and secondly, how it influences other news which is published. The freedom of the press worldwide, as previously mentioned, is always subjected to provisos and quid pro quos and therefore it is given more or less freedom according to the country within which it operates, but still within more or less well defined limits. These limits are not, however, restricted only to government and private pressures, but depend equally upon the society and its values and culture, within which the newspapers are being printed. This would come under the Code of Ethics. In Pakistan these limits extend significantly into the realms of Islam. There should be nothing published against the religion or in contradiction to the rules established under the Qur'an. This restriction or condition on publications is expected from both the institutions outside the

newspaper industry and the readership.

It has been a matter of some debate in Pakistan as to whether journalism should be self-controlled under a written Code of Ethics. The newspaper industry as a whole tended to avoid this move as it was seen as unnecessary and could potentially be used by outside forces as a means of further suppressing the freedom of the press. The subject of a Code of Ethics came up most prominently in relation to the banning of the six Karachi evening newspapers when the press associations suggested that the implementation of a Code of Ethics could be used to reduce the amount of sensationalist articles published in Urdu newspapers. However, to my knowledge, once the newspapers were reinstated and the strike averted, talk of a Code of Ethics died down and nothing further was done about it.

On the whole, it was the contention of the newspaper industry that a Code of Ethics was not needed as the personnel knew the limits within which they could and must work.

While it may be true that sometimes Press freedom is taken to be a licence for libel by some, but for the most part self-discipline and morality govern the members of the Fourth Estate. (*The Nation*, 7.12.95: 6)

Although Islam is not explicitly mentioned in this quote, it is implicitly referred to in as much as 'self-discipline and morality' are qualities associated with the religion and these must be considered in relation to the reader of any Pakistani newspaper also. While a reporter may be liberal in his interpretation of Islam or be a non-practising Muslim himself, he must take into consideration that the reader may be of a very much more religiously conservative persuasion and therefore consideration must be given to the way a story is presented; photographs, language, etc. However, the boundaries of Islam are a subjective matter and therefore the limits are ill defined and change not only according to the regimes (as considered in more detail elsewhere), but also according to the ownership of the newspapers and the staff employed.

Whilst a story may have nothing directly to do with Islam it is, or can be, affected by the religion indirectly. As the name suggests, *The Muslim* is conscious of its Islamic heritage, emphasising the presence of Islam in news items and examining issues pertinent to a Muslim population. *The Muslim* held the majority market within the Islamabad/Rawalpindi area until

about 1994, but once *The News* became fully established after its launch on 11 February 1991 it began, increasingly, to encroach on the sales figures of *The Muslim* and during my fieldwork period *The News* was the largest English language circulator in Pakistan. The sales of *The Muslim* had dropped from a best circulation of 20,000 copies to 4,000 copies in 1996. The explanation for this offered by the owner of *The Muslim* was that *The News* was appealing to the population's baser instincts, emphasising the sensational rather than the news and the religion. He insisted that he was not prepared to make such moral concessions as *The News* in order to maintain or increase his readership maintaining that he was providing what his readers wanted, although the figures in Table 4.2 suggest otherwise.

There was some support for the argument that *The News* was a more liberal newspaper than most English language papers, both by comments made by the readers and from the content of *The News* itself. For example, *The News* followed the Miss World contest, including the preliminary rounds leading to the main event.<sup>12</sup> This coverage confined itself more or less exclusively to the printing of photographs of the contestants, predominantly in the swimsuit round. This public display of the female body was not generally acceptable in the media as could be seen by comparing this with television broadcasts. The main reason, for example, for the satellite programme 'Baywatch' being unacceptable was that the women were dressed, for the most part, only in swimsuits.<sup>13</sup>

Another example of the liberalism of *The News* was the choice of photograph selected to accompany an article in relation to Nelson Mandela's meeting with Miss World, a story covered by each of the three main newspapers. The first newspaper I saw on that day was *The News* and I was surprised by the photograph carried which was of a kiss between Mandela and Miss World<sup>14</sup>. I decided, at this point, that the explanation must be that this was the only photograph available. However, I later saw *The Nation* and *Dawn* and both carried a different photograph in which there was no physical contact between the two of any kind. When I questioned the editor of *The News* about his choice (he had selected the photograph) he simply said that he thought that it was the best and most interesting photograph although he

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<sup>12</sup>This is a contest that Pakistani women do not participate in and therefore Pakistani readers have no national interest in the event.

<sup>13</sup>While the Qur'an condemns both men and women who dress provocatively, it is the women who are the focus of the majority of condemnation and restriction in this respect within Pakistani society. (S XXIV, 30-31)

<sup>14</sup>All kissing is usually censored and therefore this was the first time in about a year that I had seen such a photograph.

did seem a little embarrassed that I had picked up on it and answered the query with a knowing smile. These things have nothing directly to do with news itself. Whether a newspaper shows a photograph of Nelson Mandela kissing Miss World or not has no 'news' value in its own right (unless they were having an affair of course and then it would be 'the news'), but it may attract a readership who want news dressed up in something more 'human interest'.

Despite this more liberal attitude towards its publication *The News* carried, along with the other newspapers, regular articles pertaining to Islam and the Muslim population. I would suggest a correlation between the liberal or perhaps more accurately 'vulgar' (vulgar in the Pakistani sense at least, which is far stricter than we find in the West) content of *The News* and a higher proportion of direct coverage of Islam. Islam could, in this instance, be used as a means to balance opinion towards the newspaper and the owners would be able to point to the religious content in order to appease readers who may be offended by some of the other stories and photographs. Every day the news also carried a quote on the Opinion pages entitled 'The Holy Qur'an'. Examples of these are

Say: 'Allah is one, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him.' (Surah Al-Ikhias) (*The News* 25.5.95: 7)

Surely the vengeance of your Lord is severe. It is He who creates and restores (His creation). And He is Forgiving and Loving. His is the Glorious Throne. And He does what He wishes. Have you not heard the story of the warriors of Pharaoh and the Thamoud? Yet the unbelievers deny it. Allah surrounds them all. Indeed this is a glorious Qur'aan in a guarded tablet. (Surah Al-Buruj, Verses 12-22) (*The News* 29.4.95: 7)

Say: 'I will pray to my Lord and associate none with him.' Say: 'I have no control over any good or evil that befalls you.' Say: 'None can protect me from Allah, nor can I find any refuge besides Him. (My mission is) only to make known His message; those that disobey Allah and His Apostle shall abide forever in the fire of Hell.' (Surah Al-Jinn, Verses 20-23) (*The News* 8.4.95: 7)

*The Nation* carried articles, in relation to Islam, on a more regular basis than either *Dawn* and *The News*, despite the fact, as was told to me by my informant from within the newspaper's editorial staff

*The Nation*, I would say, has been supporting an enlightened and liberal view of Islam as represented by Iqbal and Jinnah.

*The Nation* also carried a regular Friday feature entitled 'Light of Islam'. This serialised different books over the weeks. During the course of my fieldwork the books which were relayed were 'Tours and Travels of the Great Prophet (PBUH)' and 'Islamic Culture' both by Dr Abdur Rauf.

*Dawn* carried the lowest number articles pertaining to Islam of the three newspapers considered here. However, *Dawn* did have a 'Friday Feature' which was frequently allocated to articles discussing aspects of Islamic ideology. These included articles with titles such as 'Belief in the Hereafter' (16.8.96: 13), 'Mission of the Prophet' (26.7.96: 13), 'Interpreting the Quran' (10.5.96: 13) and 'Comprehending the Creator' (23.6.95: 7).

Each of the newspapers carried Opinion pages containing articles on various subjects of general interest, but not, in themselves, 'news'. Regularly, within these pages, newspapers carried stories relating to Islam - Islam and the West, Islamic fundamentalism, Islam and economics, Islam and modernisation etc. These articles frequently offered explanations as to the relevance of Islam in day to day life within Pakistan and in the international context.

It is notable that many of the articles relating directly to Islam came from an apologetic perspective. The articles frequently aimed at defending Islam in the broader global context, particularly with regard to the West. The following is an example taken from an article entitled 'Islam bashing and the Western press'

While Muslim "bashing" has been going on for many decades, in the last few years, especially since the decline of Communism and the USSR, this phenomena has become quite widespread in the Western Press around the world. Communism and the Soviet threat: these have

been replaced by Islam as a new threat to Western Capitalism and ideology. The most unfortunate part is that the real propaganda is conducted through the "enlightened" press which has been actively involved in a campaign to malign the Muslim community by implicating it in any terrorist act that occurs in western capitals. Islam has been painted as a religion of aggression; Islamic fundamentalism in the Western Press is synonymous with anti-West anti-progress, terror and extremism. Any aspirant for quick publicity or material dividends can find ready and willing editors to publish anything against Islam no matter how absurd the contents may be. (*The Muslim* 2.6.95: 7)

The writers were often anxious to point out that Islam was compatible with the modern, capitalist society, that the West was erroneous in its concern for, or dislike of, Islam and that the Muslim population should not be concerned that modernising would lead to secularisation and atheism. At the same time as placing Islam firmly within the Pakistani political, economic and social context, articles pointed out that it was not necessary for the religion to maintain such a position and were pushing it forward to become far more of a silent partner in the political and economic spheres while retaining high priority in the social sphere only. This follows the patterns of contradiction and confusion about the role of Islam as have existed since the creation of Pakistan and before.<sup>15</sup>

Imran Khan, before launching his political career, made a significant stand in relation to the role of Islam in the public arena<sup>16</sup>. He made much use of the newspapers (in the absence of access to the electronic media<sup>17</sup>) initially to promote the fund raising of the Shauket Khanum Memorial Trust Hospital, later to put across his ideas in relation to Islam and Islamic culture in Pakistan more generally and finally to promote his political career. During the initial period of my fieldwork (before his engagement) he was most well known for his articles concerning Islam and particularly his use of the term 'Brown Sahib' when referring to Pakistanis who were neglecting their own culture in order to mimic westerners. He emphasised the selective interpretation of Islam, the rejection of traditional Pakistani clothing, the West's anti-Islamic sentiment and the benefits generally of traditional Pakistani Islamic society.

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<sup>15</sup>See Chapter 2

<sup>16</sup>See Chapter 2

<sup>17</sup>See Chapter 6

The titles and excerpts from some of Imran Khan's articles to appear in the national newspapers read as follows:

In Pakistan we have selective Islam - At the moment, the worst advertisement for Islam are the Muslim countries with their selective Islam, especially where the religion is used to deprive people of their rights. In fact, a society that obeys the fundamentals of Islam has to be a liberal one. (*Dawn* 10.2.95: 6)

Clothes and national self-esteem - The most important step to take right now is to raise the self-esteem of our people by taking pride in our own culture. Wearing our own clothes would be a move in the right direction because it is most visual. (*The News on Friday* 3.3.95: 6)

Worshippers of false gods - We will gain self-esteem if we learn to stand on our own feet, rather than idol worship. If we do not help ourselves no one is going to help us, and that includes foreign powers and foreign institutions. (*The News on Friday* 7.4.95: 6)

Ghairatmand Musalman - Interestingly, corruption usually occurs in the tribal *jinga* system when our government tries to spread its "civilising" influence. (*The Nation* 27.20.95: 9)

Protecting the family system - Those aspects of Western culture which we seem intent on absorbing into our way of life are not only of little use to us but may ultimately prove to be the downfall of the only institution that is intact in our society - our family system. (*The Nation* 15.12.95: 7)

Many of my informants were resentful of his tone in the articles as they believed him to be a good example of a Brown Sahib, the very type of person he was condemning so brutally in his articles.

All of last year's talk that clearly stemmed from a middle-headed view of

Islam, orientalism and how a woman should conduct herself made him a laughing stock of the very elites that he socially confines himself to. (*The Herald*, May 1996)

Some informants took exception to his presentation of himself as

Following the fundamentals of Islam, rather than becoming a Kalashnikov-wielding fanatic, I have become a tolerant and a giving human being who feels compassion for the under privileged. (*Dawn*, 10.2.1995: 6)

Others felt that he was not qualified to make recommendations on subjects of which he had little command. One example of this was in relation to the tribal Jirga system which Imran was advocating as the way forward for the Pakistani system. Subsequent articles written in reply to Imran's suggestion pointed to the flaws within the system, as it existed within the tribal areas and still more to how it would function in a much larger setting (*The News on Friday*, 26.1.1996: 6).

The Islamic context of the content of the newspaper can manifest itself in yet another way. It is also significant that the balance of the international news weighs, to some extent at least, in favour of other Islamic countries. While there is an Islamic bias with regard to the content of the newspapers one should bear in mind that there are no permanent correspondents in these Islamic countries and therefore the newspapers must rely almost solely upon world news agencies which originate from the West and are frequently written with a mind to selling the articles to richer, usually Western, nations (Hester, 1979). While there may a higher proportion of international news which relates to Islamic countries and issues its interpretation is Western at the point of writing. In this instance therefore, the news will be passing through a three fold process of interpretation, from Islamic (the country of origin the news story) to Western to Islamic (Pakistani), something it is very difficult for the reader to either appreciate or differentiate.

Much international news is centred around events in America and Europe (particularly Britain) which have more or less relevance for the Pakistani population. The articles relating to economics and politics in the West frequently draw on issues which relate, either directly to

Pakistan, or to other Muslim countries. There are also stories published in Pakistan which relate to the Muslim communities living in the West, often focusing on the stereotypes and difficulties a Muslim population must endure living outside of a Muslim country. World news, wherever it originates from, is frequently concerned with Muslims and other Islamic nations.

Religious instruction is not seen, according to the newspaper personnel to whom I spoke, as a function of the newspaper industry.<sup>18</sup> However, the childrens section of newspapers on Fridays in *The Nation* and *The News* and Tuesday for *Dawn*, frequently, if not usually, contained articles relating to religion - educating the children in Islam. The content of the articles varied according to the date and significant events in the Islamic calendar, but, especially in *The Nation*, there were stories carried every week in relation to any aspect of Islam which was thought pertinent to everyday life and important for the moral upbringing of the children.

As with the articles on Islam written for an adult readership, it is necessary for those articles written for a children's readership to avoid confrontation with variations of interpretation. The majority of such articles, therefore, concentrate on direct references from the Qur'an, Sunnah<sup>19</sup> or Hadis<sup>20</sup>. *The Nation*, for example, usually took a different Hadis or Sunnah each week in relation to how people should behave in particular circumstances and with different people and the like, presenting these quotations with no additional comment. Alternatively, or additionally, a saying of the Prophet would be contextualised within a story set in modern day Pakistan, this was especially popular in *The News* childrens magazine.

As can be seen from the above, Islam is a significant player in the deciding, and presentation, of content of a newspaper, both directly and indirectly. Seymour-Ure maintains that

'Religion', distinct from 'Churches', is a hopeless news subject. It

<sup>18</sup>To place the comment within the broader context of Pakistan and Islam, reference should be made to comments made in Chapter 2.

<sup>19</sup>Lit: A path or way; a manner of life, 'its primary use means a way, course, rule, mode or manner of acting or conduct, whether good or bad, approved or disapproved, pursued by former people and who came after them. In its technical sense it is applied to a practice or saying, or the practices or sayings of the Prophet of Islam.' (Zafar, 1989:26)

<sup>20</sup>Lit: Tradition 'information about the Prophet, describing what he said and did and his attitude towards things or done in his presence.' (Zafar, 1989:27)

concerns the boundaries of human understanding - our attempt to encompass the incomprehensible. It has no cycles and 'events' but inherent abstractions and ambiguities. (Seymour-Ure, 1984:2)

The evidence in relation to Pakistan suggests that religion is an unavoidable subject. In Britain and the West, due to the secularisation of the state apparatus, religion is not a part of everyday political, economic and social significance in the way it is in Pakistan, therefore discussion does not need to take place in terms of acceptability in relation to religion as it does in Pakistan. While Britain may concentrate only on the negative aspects of the 'Church' because they fall outside the stereotypes of the clergy (Seymour-Ure, 1984), the Pakistani press is not bound by the same stereotypes or secular persona and therefore can take 'religion' into the wider discussion that can go beyond the negative.

## **Conclusion**

There are many factors beyond Islam alone which affect the print media in Pakistan. Acts of Parliament, such as the Press and Public Ordinance; acts of violence and the need to make a profit through, for example, continued advertisement placements from the government, all have their affects on what stories are presented in the newspapers and how they are presented. Religion has, as we have seen, a significant influence over what one reads and how one understands what one reads in the newspapers.

Throughout the course of this chapter we have considered the views of and about the newspaper industry of Pakistan, first by the industry itself and then the readers. We examined these views in the context of the notion of the newspaper industry being the Fourth Pillar of the State. We saw how self censorship of newspaper personnel was implicit in the publication of newspapers which take on a non-neutral political perspective. We considered too the variations in journalistic quality through the personal interest of owners, editors and journalists. Finally, we examined the extent to which 'news' is actually important in newspaper publication.

Ultimately it is the readers who are being catered for and who will consume the newspapers' content. Consequently we considered their perceived needs and requirements of the print media and then their own mechanisms of consumption control influenced by notions of social

identity as Pakistani Muslims.

No consideration of the print media in Pakistan could be complete without specifically taking into account Islam. The final section of this chapter therefore focused on the presentation and influence of Islam within the press. We have considered not only how Islam is directly portrayed through the press but also the restrictions upon such presentation. Islam is also significant in the selection and presentation of the general content of newspapers and therefore we examined the indirect influence of Islamic ideology and identity on the print media's content. The press must fit their newspapers into the social setting of the country where they are published and that social setting, in Pakistan, is dominated by Islam.

Each of the factors and dimensions of presentation considered in relation to the print media throughout the course of this and the previous chapter are relevant also to the electronic media. Consequently we now turn our attention to television - national, cable, satellite and video - to consider governments, media institutions and Pakistan's elite viewers in relation to their production and consumption, power and control, of the electronic media. The basic pattern of enquiry followed in the electronic media chapters is the same as that of the print chapters. However, while many aspects are similar, there are significant differences which should not be overlooked.

# *Chapter Five*

## THE POLITICS OF TELEVISION

Television is an expensive gadget and the government thinks that if they are spending so much money in that sector they must get some return and because television does not produce anything in terms of material ie. cloth or shoes or any other object the governments want a good profile in return for the money that they have spent and they want to use television as a propaganda machine.

This statement, made by my key informant within the PTV management staff, sets the scene for the examination of the 'politics of television'. In the same way as we have seen that there is a power to be gained for those who have control over the *making* of news carried by the press, in this chapter, we examine the power mechanisms available to the government of Pakistan in relation to the electronic media. We consider 'tactical rules' (Lull, 1982) imposed by different governments.

These rules appear in human interaction as attempts to achieve some

personal or interpersonal objective that exists beyond the immediate context of media consumption. (Lull, 1982:9)

When dealing with the print media the government as we have seen, without direct control over the institution, must rely on alternative means in order to manipulate the content of the newspapers to attempt to legitimate its power base and notions of identity within the country, both political and religious. The situation with regard to the national electronic media is somewhat different. The government is in a position of direct control over what may be presented to the public and how it is presented. The symbolism and terminology through which the electronic media content is presented are, at least to some extent, under the influence of the government. Of course these must be set within the confines of what is acceptable within the nation and must be built around the framework of a pre-existing religious and national identity. An example of the control which is available to Pakistan administrations was General Ziaul Haq's ability to institute the Islamisation process through the electronic media in Pakistan by emphasising the Muslim religion over the Hindu influenced culture, both of which existed in Pakistan, but the balance was altered by the Chief Martial Law Administrator. As one informant maintained

In 1990 there was complete censorship on national TV and satellites were not popular at all. However, as Pakistan is breaking out of the dictatorship shell, censorship is being relaxed in Pakistan movies, TV and drama.

Many of the points made by Durre-Sameen Ahmed's thesis, 'Television in Pakistan: An Ethnographic Study' although written in 1983 - some fifteen years ago - still hold true. Television is still a substantially urban phenomenon, it is still largely controlled by the government and there is still no clear cut policy pertaining to its regulation although, as Ahmed also states

It is incorrect and simplistic to assume that there is a lack of a media policy. If there has been no government document clearly delineating the role of television in Pakistan, it is because in more than thirty years no government has been able to democratically delineate and sustain recognisable features of a national identity. (Ahmed, 1983:470)

Television has been put forward as 'a cultural agent, a provoker and circulator of meanings' (Fiske, 1987:1). As a consequence of this perception attempts are made to utilise the electronic media in order to serve the dominant interests of society. However, I would suggest that the dominant ideology is that largely *because* it presents itself as being such and is legitimated by having a forum from which to portray its own ideology. During the course of this chapter and the following one, we examine the means by which censorship and propaganda are used in order to create and recreate political legitimacy and national and religious identity, particularly important in a country where 'no government has been able to democratically delineate and sustain recognisable features of a national identity' (Ahmed, 1983:470).

We shall examine the way that media policy is instituted, under the guidance of the government, to present its interpretation of national identity. It is the notion of acceptability which plays a crucial role in the appearance or non-appearance of material on television. In the case of religion it is relevant to the criteria of acceptability as allowed by the public and this will be considered in the next chapter, but in relation to politics it is the government which is in a position to dictate the boundaries.

After the initial introduction to the national television channels and cable we move on to an examination of the Censorship Code and the motivation and justifications in relation to political censorship and propaganda. We make particular reference to two clauses from the Censorship Code: Security, Law and Order and International Relations, illustrating differences in censorship techniques and motives. Under the first clause we are particularly interested in censorship as a means of exclusion of political parties and opinions not of the ruling party and the justification that the government applies for such exclusion putting into context the statements of informants such as this one made by a middle aged educated female informant.

I don't like the quality of the National News because it is always used by the ruling party to play 'his master's voice'.

We also look at how this power can be undermined despite the fact that the governments have maintained a greater control over the content of national television than they do over the print media.

Through the Censorship Code clause on International Relations we examine the different

attitudes of government and viewers to the screening of international programmes with particular reference to attitudes towards India and the West.

In the final section of this chapter we examine the political concern over fundamentalism regarding the national and international political scenes and its consequent effects on production as well as its effects on the wider Pakistani society. The contradictory definitions of fundamentalism who have been generated particularly through the western media have caused problems for Pakistani administrations which have been reliant upon Western aid and technology as the issue of Pakistani social identity requires manipulation in order to be acceptable at home and abroad.

While the government has no control over the content of directly received satellite transmissions, it is necessary to consider the implications of satellite broadcasts as these are extensively watched by the elite. Therefore, in the two final sections of this chapter also, consider the impact that satellite television may have on the government ability to create and maintain features of Pakistani identity which serve as demarcations from neighbouring nations but are acceptable to countries of use to and influence within Pakistan.

### **Pakistan's National Television**

Two sections have been set out below which outline the national television channels and the cable channel which function under the control of the government and go through a censorship process. These sections introduce government influence and it is for this reason that satellite and video are not introduced at this point as their selection and censorship are solely at the discretion of the viewer and this is something looked at in the next chapter in relation to religious identity.

#### **1. PTV and STN/NTM**

The Pakistan Television Corporation Limited (PTV) is a public limited company with all its shares being held by the Government of Pakistan (the post as opposed to the party of any given time). The decision to establish a general purpose television service with the participation of

private capital and under the general supervision of the Government of Pakistan was taken in October 1963 during the military dictatorship of General Ayub Khan. Subsequently the Government of Pakistan signed an agreement with Nippon Electronic Company of Japan allowing it to operate two pilot stations in Pakistan. The first of these stations went on air in Lahore on 26 November 1964 and the second in Dacca (at the time, East Pakistan) in December. With the completion of the experimental phase, a private limited company named Television Promoters Limited was set up in 1965, this being converted into a public limited company in 1967. With the introduction of television in Pakistan the Nippon Electronic Company supplied 1,000 sets, of these 200 sets were distributed in Lahore and Dacca each for community viewing and the rest were sold on the open market. According to a statement issued in the Government publication 'Twenty Years of Pakistan: 1947-1967', with the rapid increase in the number of television sets brought into the country and an increasing awareness of the potential for the Government of the electronic media

The Government has decided that from now onward all television sets will be imported on bonus vouchers and no commercial licence will be issued for this item. Individual dealers can import as many sets as they desire on bonus vouchers. On these sets there will be neither any import duty nor purchase tax. (Pakistan Publications, 1967:561)

Television centres were established in Karachi and Rawalpindi/Islamabad in 1967 and in Peshawar and Quetta in 1974. While the transmission area coverage today is given to be 37.5% of the area of Pakistan some 86% of the population are said to have access to these transmissions. The average daily transmission times, although starting at 3 hours a day, six days a week, was, at the time of my fieldwork, 14 hours and 40 minutes per day. The PTV channel went off air for 4 hours during the middle of the day and then again at night. The majority of programmes were relayed on terrestrial microwave network provided by the Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation and the network links PTV's five centres and 32 high powered re-broadcast stations (<http://www.ptv.com.pk>)

Urdu is not the mother tongue of the majority of the Pakistani population (discussed in Chapter 2) and this fact was, to some extent, acknowledged with the regional transmission as PTV broadcasts in 9 languages: Urdu, English, Punjabi, Sindi, Seraiki, Pushto, Hindko, Balochi and Brahvi. The news was also broadcast in 9 languages, but instead of Seraiki, Arabic

transmissions are made. However, the amount of regional language broadcasting was extremely limited and therefore the accessibility of the majority of programmes (news or otherwise) to the majority of the population was still severely restricted. It is due to this problem that statistics such as the 87% population coverage become misleading. If we take into consideration the 36% official literacy rate and relate to this the implied bilingual implications, also taking into consideration the ability of some to understand Urdu through day to day contact with the language rather than exposure through education, we could approximate the national understanding of Urdu at somewhere around the 50-75% mark.<sup>1</sup> With the minimal regional language transmissions available therefore, we can speculate that, in reality, significant access to approximately 25-50% of the population is denied as they are not catered to.

Economic viability must be taken into consideration in relation to the production of regional language programming, not least because PTV is only partially funded by the government. Advertising makes a significant contribution to the finances of PTV with 63% of its income being generated through advertising revenue (see Appendix VI for advertising rates). In contrast to this, only 22% of the Corporation's income comes from licence fees, 8% through the sale of programmes and 7% from miscellaneous sources (<http://www.ptv.com>). There were a limited number of companies which advertised on television and the slots tended to be quite long which often meant that throughout the course of one advertising slot the same advertisement may be shown more than once. Advertising is, however, an issue which I shall return to later in the next chapter and applies equally as well to STN.

PTV's executive head is the Managing Director and there are ten divisions/departments each headed by a full time director. These are News, Current Affairs, Programmes, Sports, International Relations, Engineering, Finance, Administration and Personnel, PTV Academy, and Educational Television (ETV). There are significant implications in having a government supervised television company in a country such as Pakistan as its senior staff members were employed by the government in power at the time ensuring a political allegiance to the ruling party. Their appointments are held as long as they maintain the good will of the government. This was especially true in relation to the appointment of the Managing Director. While other directors of PTV may, and often did, hold their jobs through various administrations the Managing Director was not in such a fortunate position as it was his or her duty to guide the

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<sup>1</sup>To my knowledge official statistics in this respect are not available and therefore this is my own surmise and can, in no way, be taken as wholly accurate and reliable.

subordinate staff to transmit programming appropriate and loyal to the policies of the government. As Pakistan's leading broadsheet newspaper stated

Let it be remembered that PTV, PBC and STN are entirely at the mercy of the rulers. All appointments at the senior levels of both TV and radio corporations are made by government, most often by the chief executive of the government who is the prime minister. In one sense, therefore, a Prime Minister of Pakistan is also proprietor, publisher and editor-in-chief of PTV's Khabarnama and other news bulletins on radio and TV. (*Dawn*, 31.5.96: 13)

The Shalimar Television Network (STN) has been incorporated in this statement as it is only a nominally independent channel whereby it has been allowed to handle its own entertainment programming and advertising but it is obliged to telecast the same news, and sometime political programmes, as those put out by PTV. Network Television Marketing (Pvt) Limited (NTM) is also bound by the same policy as STN and is inherent in the policy package under the STN-NTM contract, which makes it binding for the latter to link its transmission with PTV on occasions of telecasting VIPs speeches or other current affairs programmes.

It is STN which holds the direct contract with the government and it was they that sub-contracted out air time to NTM. It would appear that much of the time little differentiation was made between the networks in relation to their day to day running as informants would refer to the two interchangeably. However, STN relayed satellite transmissions of CNN and BBC World during the day on weekdays. Initially, in 1990 STN began by transmitting only CNN, but later introduced BBC World although the transmission time of CNN continues to be much longer, with only two hours of BBC aired a day, one hour in the morning and the second hour in the evening. NTM provided the programming from the evening onwards and on weekends, some of which were imported and the rest nationally produced. NTM had a staff of only about 300 people and had no studios of its own, with private producers supplying the majority of the material. At the end of 1995 NTM established its 10th channel in Larkana which meant that it then had a range of transmission which included Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Peshawar, Hyderabad, Faisalabad and Quetta.

During the period of my fieldwork a decision was made to extend the licence of NTM for a

further ten years. This reversed a decision of the Moeen Qureshi interim government made in September 1993, to end NTM's monopoly by inviting bids for awarding programmes and advertising rights for four days out of seven. Before the election which brought Benazir Bhutto to power bids were under consideration, but once the election was over the matter was dropped and NTM retained its monopoly. However, it should be born in mind that only three years prior to the Qureshi government moves in relation to the NTM monopoly, the establishment of the station was seen as a breakthrough as it would provide some competition to the entirely government run PTV.

While the monopoly of NTM had not been altered through the introduction of any further national channels, the introduction of a cable network opened up a new choice for those people who may not wish to spend the larger amount of money on satellite television or who wanted 'family viewing' through imposed censorship. However, the reception area of this was extremely limited and it was only accessible to those with a working knowledge of the English language.

## 2. SPTV

Shaheen Pay Television (SPTV) became Pakistan's first cable network in April 1996 when it began transmissions in Karachi and in June it started test transmissions in Islamabad. There was some controversy surrounding the granting of the licence to run a nationwide cable television network by the government on the 14th March 1995. The licence was given to four companies, all of which were backed by Javad Pasha, to run a cable television network and three separate radio stations in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. The controversy ostensibly came out of the fact that the company that had received the official approval to run the cable television network had also been given the government's written assurance that it would have non-terminal exclusivity and the man behind these companies - Javad Pasha - was also connected with STN. The three companies allowed to operate radio stations would have a 10-year renewable Licence each and like their counterparts in the cable television network would also enjoy an exclusive status. There was said to be a link between this decision and the controversial decision in December of the previous year under which the government controlled Shalimar Recording Company (SRC) extended its contract with the Network Television Market (NTM) Pvt Ltd. for another 10 years.

The Shaheen Foundation of the Pakistan Air Force had a fifty percent holding in the cable company, however there were mixed reports and therefore it is difficult to be certain of this figure. On occasion, also, there were said to be foreign investors and at other times this was denied. It is not possible to be accurate about the 'facts' behind the establishment of SPTV as it was the subject of varying and conflicting reports from people both within the company as well as those outside of it. One name frequently associated with the business dealings of Javad Pasha and being in a position to exert some pressure for the granting of its licence to SPTV was Asif Ali Zardari, the husband of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. How true this connection was is impossible to say, but the majority of people seemed prepared to believe it as Mr Zardari had, over the years, won himself the title of 'Mr 10%' due to his corrupt practices.

The issuance of the licence to SPTV never stopped being controversial from the beginning, in March 1995, and on Wednesday 16 July 1997 the offices of SPTV were raided and sealed and the director of the broadcasting company, Muhammad Ali Pasha, along with three other staff members from the office in Karachi were detained by the police (<http://DAWN.com> 17.7.97). This was not wholly unexpected as, since the dismissal of the Benazir Bhutto government, the matter had already been under consideration by the caretaker government, although the licence was not actually cancelled until the government of Nawaz Sharif came to power.

The niche in the market that SPTV hoped to fill was to supply to the Pakistani public a family alternative to satellite television. According to Mohammad Ali Pasha

SPTV executives want to make censored foreign channels available for family viewing to people who want to stay in touch with world happenings, but who disapprove of the West's cultural liberalism. (*The News on Friday*, 12.7.96: 11)

The company was offering free-to-air broadcasts for a year, during which time more channels would be added. Later, viewers would need to install decoders to see SPTV programmes also paying an additional monthly fee of Rs.250.

SPTV transmitted pre-censored satellite channel programmes to those households which had the necessary aerial and lived within the radios of the station satellite. At the time of my

fieldwork there were nine channels being aired which were TNT, the Cartoon Network, Star Sports, ESPN, ABN, NBC, MTV (from the Far East rather than South Asia in order to avoid Indian transmissions), BBC World and the Discovery Channel. There was also a four hour period during the evenings when ABN was taken off the air and Asslaam Alaikum Pakistan was shown in its place. This programme was almost entirely made up of Pakistani cinema songs and dances.

It was said that SPTV would follow the Ministry of Information's Censorship Code, as PTV and NTM already did. However, as one of the directors said

Though the rules are hard and fast, their interpretation is flexible. (*The News on Friday*, 12.7.96: 11)

Although we should bear in mind, when considering this quote, that SPTV was also restricted from producing its own news and current affairs programmes.

We now move on to examine the implications of the above statements by taking a look at the Censorship Code - which is the subject of interpretation by each of the channels - and considering the ways the different channels interpret it, concentrating on the political implications.

### **Power abuse -v- power protection**

*'The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist'*

The Usual Suspects<sup>2</sup>

Despite much effort to obtain a copy, it eventually became clear that the Television Censorship Code was 'unavailable'. However, I did obtain a copy of the Film Censorship Code (Appendix I) and a copy of the recently imposed (14th February 1997) Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 1997<sup>3</sup>. I believe these documents provide considerable

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<sup>2</sup>Dir. Bryan Singer, 1995 (US)

<sup>3</sup>The Ordinance itself was a reaction to the contract given by Benazir Bhutto's dismissed government to Shaheen Pay Television in 1995 and which gave a monopoly of the airwaves to this one company.

Developments since the dismissal of the PPP have meant that SPTV has lost its monopoly and the ground is

insight into the Television Censorship Codes and shed significant light on the Censorship criteria in Pakistan. The importance of the Censorship Codes is reflected as much in what is not said as what is said, particularly bearing in mind the brevity of the documents.

Under the Ordinance, some of the Terms and Conditions to which a Broadcaster who was issued a licence should abide were as follows:-

- (1) promote respect of the sovereignty, security and integrity of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;
- (2) promote respect for the national, cultural and religious values as enshrined in the Objectives Resolution;
- (3) promote respect for the principles of public policy as enshrined in the Constitution;
- (4) ensure that his programmes and advertisements do not encourage violence, terrorism, racial discrimination, religious sectarianism or hatred;
- (5) promote respect for law, order and justice;

These criteria do not refer specifically to 'censorship', but by implication, have a direct affect on what may and may not be shown on television and therefore relate to censorship practices. When compared with the Film Censorship Code it is apparent that there is a direct correlation between the two.

There is a need for the maintenance of religious and political censorship for numerous reasons, the overriding need for the government being its maintenance of power. While the codes themselves remain substantially unchanged, it is the interpretations of these codes which alter over time and administrations. The interpretation of religion affects politics and visa versa. While some separation can be applied to the two types of censorship, they are substantially linked.

Since the introduction of television into Pakistan in 1963 by General Ayub Khan, it has been being prepared for further companies to enter the electronic media arena.

perceived by those in power, and those outside of it, to be a highly influential medium. Indeed, it was suggested to me by Aslam Ahzar, among others, that television was introduced specifically by Ayub Khan for the benefits he assumed available through the ability to promote a positive portrayal of the government (otherwise known as 'propaganda') and things have not changed significantly in this respect. In 1983 Ahmed made the point that General Ziaul Haq's administration was following the same pattern of maximum exposure as they criticised the previous administration of doing, despite denying this

“This government has never beaten its drum like the previous one ... We don't want to lose credibility by over-publicity” (cited in Ahmed, 1983:86)

As the quote that started this chapter suggests, the pattern has remained the same: the opposition party criticising the government for over exposure but, on achieving office, stepping into the shoes of their predecessors.

It is this notion of influence and power which affects the screening of all programmes today, both on the grounds of religion and politics. Religion and politics go hand in hand and cannot be separated to any large degree, therefore it is necessary for the governments to have an eye on both elements when attempting to establish a solid base from which to present themselves as the legitimate power holders of the nation. The key differential between religion and politics in their influence on television is that religion is largely taken into account through notions of acceptability which the general public may feel are necessary (at least the ones who are likely to take violent exception to its neglect). Therefore, while the government may choose to play down or increase the public face of Islam, they have never been in a position to ignore it altogether. On the other hand the significance of politics in television is focused in on the political ambitions of the ruling party rather than the national and international repercussions of the power that television offers the opportunity to wield.

Using Anderson's 'imagined communities', we can see that having control of the electronic media enables the government to present itself as the leaders of that 'imagined community' as well as the constructors of the community. It can attempt to stipulate the composition and agenda of the community and present itself as its head. Legitimation of that position is assumed, and to some extent given, by the ability of the government to present itself as the leader of the community.

Within Pakistan there would seem to be more public recognition of the potential power of the electronic media than in the West and, as such, the power may be seen as more apparent but, on the other hand, less so at the same time. More, because of the government opportunity to utilise television. Less, because everyone is aware of the use that the government makes of it. The following are quotes from various of my informants of different age and gender which illustrate this point:

I would watch BBC or CNN but surely not national news. National news is full of useless government news and news about Prime Minister Benazir.

My idea of news does not include watching feudo [feudal]-psendo leaders uttering downright non-sense with the newsreaders playing the role of announcers. ... National news is depressingly tortuous.

I don't watch the news or at least try not to, I think it's a waste of time because I don't really care how Benazir Bhutto or Leghari spend their day.

[The news on national television is] very bad and boring. I think the news people want to stay on Benazir and Leghari's good side.

The national news lies and doesn't broadcast the whole news.

[I] don't trust national news (it only favours Benazir)

The national news is biased, too restricted to certain political events within the country and hardly offers any international coverage.

National news is only government propaganda.

Of course, there were others of my informants who were less negative in the comments about news broadcasts and the extent of government propaganda with comments such as

The quality of news on the national television is not too bad. PTV has

serious news only they don't broadcast the truth all the time.

However, by far the majority of people maintained a highly sceptical attitude towards national news and current affairs programming. If this is the case, how much good are the government actually doing when they promote themselves to such a degree? An examination of nationally produced news means looking at censorship where there is no post-production censorship, but where the broadcasts are constructed for positive publicity and negative portrayals omitted at source.

If we are to take the quote cited at the beginning of this section and apply 'censorship' in place of 'the devil', the subtleties of censorship practices - 'convincing the world he didn't exist' - cannot be applied to the Pakistani electronic media. The censorship techniques of Pakistan are crude in relation to the editing of imported programming aired on national channels, with scenes being cut with little effort to conceal the editing. Some scenes were cut altogether, leaving a jerky impression, or they were pixelled so the scene was left running, but obscured so that images are unidentifiable<sup>4</sup>, in either event, the audience was made aware of an omission if not the content of the scene. In relation to news broadcasts, these techniques were only applicable to STN and SPTV which run international news transmissions. However it should be noted that the extent of the censorship on the different channels, as well as between them, was frequently inconsistent. On two separate occasions when the BBC World transmissions were carried by STN and SPTV at the same time, there were discrepancies in the interpretation of the Censorship Code in relation to news items pertaining to Pakistan. SPTV was apparently adopting a far stricter policy than STN as it censored the two stories while STN allowed them to run. One of the stories was in relation to bonded labour in the Sindh province and the other was regarding betrothal of child brides. On bringing up this matter with Aslam Ahzar, a former managing director of PTV, he pointed out that STN had been equally as cautious when it first came on air, but it had relaxed its policies as it became confident of its position and more aware of what it could get away with. He suggested that six months would see a change in SPTV policy also, as it too felt more settled and more prepared to push its interpretation of the Censorship Code to the edge of acceptability.

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<sup>4</sup>It is, however, apparently possible to hold a piece of muslin cloth in front of the screen and this has the effect of making the picture properly visible. This technique was told to me by some of my male informants who said that they had used it when they were young and only had access to national television.

When they [SPTV] say 'well if NTM is getting away with it why are we being more royal than the king'. So in the beginning people do tend to be overly cautious ... All of the music and the vulgarity on NTM is a phenomenon only of the last couple of years.

For our purposes, such crude censorship techniques and the general public awareness of the practices employed by the personnel of the electronic media made analysis far simpler. Whether or not, however, it is appropriate to substitute 'censorship' for 'devil' in the quote cited at the beginning of this section, is a separate issue depending upon your point of view in relation to censorship and the situation within which it is being used. To the majority of Pakistanis some form of censorship for vulgarity was perceived as being necessary and therefore quite acceptable (to be examined in the context of religion in the next chapter), but at the same time, its implementation in relation to politics would, for most, if not all, be unacceptable if given a choice. As one male informant in his 20s put it:

In theory certain types of programmes should be subject to censorship based on their content/subject matter. However, I feel that news censorship cannot be justified, yet I feel no pangs of guilt about an individual's freedom of information being restricted/impinged in relation to TV entertainment.

Despite the above informant's contention that 'news censorship cannot be justified' this is, in fact, what the government seek to do through the Censorship Code. In the following two sections we take a look at the Codes in relation to national and international censorship and examine how the government utilises these Codes in order to maintain and enhance its own power position, minimise opposition exposure and the consequences these mechanisms have for the government's power base and for national identity. The following portion of an article taken from *The Nation* points to a discrepancy within PTV's political coverage between the government and the opposition.

The incumbent Federal Minister for Information Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal had conceded on the floor of the National Assembly that the PTV's Khabarnama gave 16 hours and 39 minutes to the government coverage and only 50 minutes and 30 seconds to the opposition in five months, which works out to less than 6 per cent of the time given to the government. (*The*

This examination links up to the tactical rules approach to the study of media discussed in James Lull's article (1982). The two sections from the Censorship Code which are discussed below, and the section on fundamentalism demonstrate the tactical use of rules applied by governments in order to reduce the influence and power of others and elevate their own positions. In order to highlight the official mechanisms used by the Pakistani governments we will pay particular attention to two of the Clauses from the Censorship Code: Security, Law and Order and International Relations.

### **Security, Law and Order**

The Censorship Code's relating to Security, Law and Order is worth citing in its entirety as it shows the extent of the powers allocated to the controlling bodies. Each sub-clause is sufficiently open to allow the broadest interpretation, the political implication of which we shall consider below.

#### **2.I Security, Law and Order**

- a) brings into contempt Pakistan or its people or tends to undermine its integrity or solidarity as an independent state;
- b) violates any provision of the constitution or any law for the time being in force;
- c) promotes or supports sedition, anarchy or violence in the country;
- d) leads to breach of law and order or creates sympathy for violation of laws;
- e) brings into contempt the Armed Forces, Police Force or any other Force as an institution;

- f) portrays the Armed Forces or Police Force in derogatory uniforms or such uniforms as are not in accordance with the approved pattern;
- g) intends to cover up sequences predominantly consisting of violence or crime;

*Government of Pakistan, Central Board of Film Censors*

Soon after Rana Sheikh was first appointed Managing Director of PTV she was quoted in the newspapers as having declared

The conduct of the opposition in the National Assembly is negative and the opposition is not condemning terrorism in Karachi. That is why the opposition cannot be given coverage on the television. (*The News on Friday* - 18.8.95: 12)

This statement led to protests from various quarters of the opposition in relation to the political bias of the electronic media. However, this was not the first time that the opposition had been sidelined in respect of television coverage; it has been a long and continuous situation for the opposition, whichever opposition - since the introduction of the television into Pakistan. Once the opposition gain power they do the same thing to the then non-ruling parties, refusing to allow them access to the electronic media for the presentation of their political views and national ideology. As one informant told me:

I sometimes wonder whether there is a leader of the opposition or not.

The framing of Rana Sheikh's comments within the context of the Censorship Codes allows us to find a potential justification for the censorship of the opposition on television. Indirectly, Rana Sheikh had referred to the section of the Film Board Censorship Code relating to law and order. Within this context the suggestion was that the opposition, in 'not condemning terrorism in Karachi' was, by implication, threatening the security of the nation especially under sections 2.I.c, d) and e) (cited above). It was therefore possible, in relation to these clauses of the Censorship Code, to legitimate a policy of minimal coverage of the opposition. Setting the acts of the opposition within the context of national security enabled the government

to present itself as the defender of the nation at the same time as vilifying the opposition. The Censorship Codes, in these circumstances were used to serve as a tool of exclusion. The power holders were able to restrict the power influences extending beyond their own control by portraying themselves as the only body to be concerned about the security of the nation and therefore the only body with a right to control the power structure.

The above attitude, however, does not take into consideration the interpretation of the act by the viewing population, or by the opposition, of Pakistan national television. By following a policy of exclusion the government was not allowing the public to judge for itself who was right and who was wrong. When reflecting upon the censorship practices of the governments of Pakistan, Aslam Azhar, during the course of our interview, said as follows:-

In terms of the current affairs and the news programmes, it brings every succeeding government into disrepute with the people because the people are not fools, they know perfectly well what is going on. This was the issue on which I resigned from Mr Bhutto's government .... I was the managing director [of PTV] in his government for five years and at the end of the fifth year I resigned saying to him in a cabinet meeting that "your censorship policies on news and current affairs are damaging your government, they are damaging your own interest." No government has seen it any other way. Every political party in opposition yells and screams blue murder about the control on television and does the same when it comes to power.

Despite Azhar's comments that 'the people are not fools, they know perfectly well what is going on', the various governments appear to have convinced themselves that there are benefits to restricting the television exposure of the opposition parties. Power must be preserved and this is best done by using what power one already has to portray oneself and exclude everyone else - the Censorship Code provides a means by which to justify this action.

It is again at this point that we can reintroduce the quote from 'The Usual Suspects' - 'The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist' - and pursue the metaphor further. The extremism to which the government policy of omission was extended, far from making the world think that censorship does not exist, underlined its presence. This point can be especially highlighted with reference to Imran Khan. During the Cricket World

Cup of 1996 there was a trailer for the event run at regular intervals during the course of the day showing highlights from the 1992 World Cup won by Pakistan when Imran Khan was the team's captain. Despite the significant position of Imran Khan during the 1992 tournament, when the trailer was initially broadcast it contained no clips showing the team's captain. There was considerable outrage at the blatant disregard for historical context. As one female informant in her 50s said, the act implied that the government thought the

Pakistani population so stupid as not to know that Imran Khan had been captain of the 1992 Cricket team.

Everyone I came into contact with who was watching the World Cup on PTV or had heard, indirectly, about the trailer was quite indignant about the omission.<sup>5</sup> The situation seemed to be viewed as a reflection of the government's attitude towards the intelligence, or not, of the Pakistani population, bringing the meaning of 'the invention of tradition' more into George Orwell's '1984' terms as opposed to that of Howsbawn and Ranger (1990). The purpose of the omission policy was lost, especially in the Imran case, as it seemed to highlight the extent to which the government was prepared to dismiss segments of history in what it saw as its own best interests.

The commonly believed motivation behind the exclusion of Imran Khan from the television screens was his move into the political arena which caused concern to both the government and the opposition. (There was no voice of protest raised by the opposition in relation to the omission, a fact also noted by many Pakistanis). Imran Khan was later added to the advertisement by the insertion of one small clip with him holding the winning trophy (see Video Appendix 2) although by this time the damage had been done. One can speculate that, if the government had not insisted on this exclusion the link between the team's captain and his (then) current moves into the political arena may not have been made or at least not to the extent which they consequently were.

Imran worked as a commentator for one of the matches, but this was not for PTV directly, rather, it was for another broadcasting company from which PTV bought the rights to screen the match. However, no interest seemed to be taken in this, either by the print media or by the public at large, perhaps because Imran was less than complimentary about the Pakistani team.

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<sup>5</sup>Cricket in Pakistan is an important game and is bound up into the Pakistani cultural identity (eg. Appadurai, 1995; Werbner, 1996).

Alternatively, one could speculate that the 'Advice' system had been brought into play with a request that this not be discussed in the newspapers. This, however, seems unlikely as there had been considerable print media discussion over the absence of Imran in the World Cup trailer. We can again think in terms of power with regard to Imran Khan's blatant exclusion from the official apparatus of that power.

The day-to-day practical applications of the censorship codes varied according to the circumstances of the production and the channel which was airing the programmes (in the Imran case cited above it was PTV). There were two sides to the power aspect of censorship: what one was allowed, or rather, encouraged to show and what one was not allowed to show. What came onto the screen was as important as what did not since there were contradictions implicit in both, not least because of the variations between the different channels in their censorship and the considerable access to alien news broadcasts brought in via satellite, not only directly into private homes, but also through pre- or simultaneously-censored national channels.

The Pakistani elite population generally considered national news productions to be a government propaganda tool and consequently unreliable, as has been mentioned previously. I frequently heard comments such as 'all you can believe is the weather' or 'it's good for a laugh once in a while'. However, before moving on to an examination of the alternative news options available to the English language speakers and elites, it is worth having a look at national news productions.

PTV and STN aired the same national news which was produced by PTV. Internationally this need not necessarily have significant censorship implications but, in the case of Pakistan, it did and perhaps it was the practicalities of minimum effort which encouraged the same broadcast to be shown on both channels. According to a former Managing Director of PTV who was quoted in a national newspaper:

Political leaders know exactly what they want in the news broadcast. Arriving at the TV studio early for a recording some time back, Ms Bhutto asked to see the script for the domestic news bulletin to be aired that night. When she was told that it was still too early, she asked for the script containing the international news, "which she edited quite well." (*The*

*News on Friday, 19.7.96: 27)*

The three lead stories were almost inevitably based on Benazir Bhutto (Prime Minister of the time) and her ministers, President Leghari and Kashmir regardless of the 'news' content of these stories, as long as it showed the government in a good light.<sup>6</sup> Even the PTV management employee identified this pattern:

Right now a kind of feeling has developed about our news and that is that it is propaganda mostly and they project one main subject - the Prime Minister ... and then after the Prime Minister, maybe the President or the four Chief Ministers or government officials.

The ordering of the news in this way gave the government maximum exposure. At the same time news is generally assumed, by this audience, to be given in order of priority and significance, therefore implying that the government was the most significant player in relation to news. I would suggest the power motivation behind this scheduling of the news broadcasts to be as follows: Benazir Bhutto should be the first to be presented on the news as this paralleled her top position in the country. It was necessary to have the deeds of her ministers represented in the number one/two slot as, by doing so, it would reinforce the status, not only of the Prime Minister, but also the ruling party, the PPP. Technically President Leghari was a figurehead for the whole nation and, although strictly speaking, a member of the PPP, he was, with regard to the news, a representative of the nation without obvious political affiliation and therefore, could stand as a symbol which projected a united nation, but at the same time, supported the government. It should be pointed out, however, that there were reasons given for the presentation of seemingly unnewsworthy items relating to relatively mundane tasks of government officials being presented through the national news broadcasts. As my PTV informant told me,

As a matter of fact, sometimes the government also want to apprise the public of what they are doing. They are cutting a tape to inaugurate some road or some bridge. Sometimes they have the feeling that it is not their projection which is the aim but to make people aware that development is

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<sup>6</sup>Discussion with regard to the issue of 'news' has been made in relation to the print media, the same arguments apply equally as well to the electronic media.

coming into their area, that another bridge is coming to that area ... because, you know, our population is not very educated and very few people subscribe to newspapers and there is no other way to reach the public in a nation where only less than 40% of people are literate, this is one way of telling them what is happening in their area. And because now democracy is also gaining roots the government has to get votes every 5 years and, for the last few years, almost every 3 years, so the government wants to create a better image for itself by telling people of their social action programme.

Finally, the appearance of Kashmir as a lead news item could be seen, not only in terms of a concern over the events in Kashmir for Kashmir's sake, but also as a symbol which was set within the news and the government political agenda, to unite the Pakistani nation in opposition to India, consequently providing a front upon which the nation could be united.

After the English language news each evening there was a 'Kashmiri Quiz' broadcast when a question was asked in relation to Kashmir followed by three possible answers. After a pause, the correct answer was given. The content of these multiple choice questions varied from the mundane to the highly political (although, of course, the very fact that there was a Kashmiri Quiz at all was political). Below are three examples which demonstrate the range of questions (also see Video Appendix 3):

Question: The winter capital of Indian Occupied Kashmir is:

- a. Srinagar
- b. Kargil
- c. Jammu

Answer: c)

Question: Kashmir have vowed that they will fight to the last drop of blood for achieving:

- a. Political package
- b. Economic package
- c. Right to self determination according to UN Resolution.

Answer: c)

Question: To pressurise Kashmiris to give up their demand for right to self determination, the Indian forces are:

- a. kidnapping innocent people,
- b. blasting houses of Kashmiris by explosive devices,
- c. Harassing Kashmiris during search operations

Answer: b)

I had assumed that the elite would reject the Kashmiri Quiz as government propaganda, but was made aware that this was not necessarily the case when speaking to one female informant of Kashmiri origin. She commented, at some length, on the 'atrocities' committed by India and the Kashmiri fight for self determination, making remarks such as,

India does not genuinely want peace in Kashmir they just want Kashmir so they will go to all extents to get it.

I would suggest that this example demonstrates that, while people are willing to reject some broadcasts as blatant propaganda they will accept others as fact, according their own beliefs. In this instance, the informant was of Kashmiri origin (on her mother's side) living in Pakistan and as a consequence maintained a self identity which was sympathetic to the Kashmiri struggle for self determination as portrayed by the Pakistani government.

There were, however, side effects to the transparency of the government manipulation of the national news media, frequently serving to push the elite viewers away from Pakistani-produced news and toward the international CNN and BBC which could prove counter-productive to the government's cause. As Sreberny-Mohammadi points out,

News carried by international media channels can open up the range of information and interpretation available to audiences, be a major irritant to governments, challenge state censorship and perhaps help democratic movements. (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996:192)

In the case of the Kashmir issue, the attention paid to this by the BBC and CNN was limited and therefore the extent to which this may have contradicted the Pakistani government's portrayal of events was equally limited. However, one can not disregard the fact that, as in the case of modernism, people generally fit information passed to them through the media within the context of what they 'know'. It becomes apparent from the above that the power which has been referred to in relation to the electronic media is not permanent and it can, in fact, be this power which brings about the holder's downfall. Despite having complete control over the television media, the last three successive governments of Pakistan have been ousted from power before their term in office had been completed.

People believe what they want, which is not necessarily the same as the 'truth'. The news that they believe must fit into their own interpretation of events as well as into their broader interpretations of Islam and Pakistan. Once the government steps outside the criteria of these notions for any prolonged amount of time the people turn to different places for their information such as satellite news transmissions and attempt to filter these international broadcasts with the same tools created through social identity as they would utilise for the interpretation of nationally produced news programming. By exploiting the power potential of the electronic media to excess and forcing the viewers to turn elsewhere for their news the government has, at the same time, handed over at least some its power to foreign forces. The government's legitimacy becomes more obscure as it becomes increasingly removed from the power source until, ultimately, it collapses. However, by forcing the population to turn elsewhere for their news and showing its weaknesses the government does more than alienate its audience, it forces the people to take on another interpretation of 'news' and the propaganda

propagated by a foreign government. Though not all external news agencies are dominated by their governments they do, however, originate out of a foreign ideology, not necessarily wholly compatible with that of Pakistan. As my informant from within the PTV network stated:

Our people are having the opportunity of switching over to other channels and the government also is realising this, that when they switch to other channels the government not only loses the opportunity of giving its own viewpoint but it is subjecting its own population to sometimes alien propaganda which can be very very injurious.

Shalimar Television Network (STN) was not authorised to produce its own news or current affairs programmes as mentioned previously. It was, however, allowed to present (censored) BBC and CNN news broadcasts. Among the elite, the majority of the population now have access to satellite broadcasts of the news, direct and uncensored. However, access to the World Wide Web is limited almost exclusively to employees of international companies and students of some elite schools and colleges (for example the University College did have access). As a consequence of these electronic media facilities the people have access to Western originated news as an alternative to overtly censored national news and current affairs broadcasts.

The majority of my informants were aware of a bias in the foreign news which was most strongly felt in CNN, but still apparent on the BBC.

I mainly watch BBC. They have much better reporters [than CNN] and, in my opinion, are not as biased as CNN.

I prefer BBC because it seems to be less biased than CNN... CNN is very biased towards the West.

One informant told me that he had stopped watching CNN after the Gulf War due to the bias of reporting which, although he had felt before, had become intolerable to him afterwards. During an interview with a BBC reporter in Islamabad, he told me that he was aware of a bias in the news, adding that he attempted to curb this in his own reporting. He illustrated his point

with examples of bias from BBC Television House in relation to Islamic fundamentalism, saying that the management were in search of fundamentalism, whether or not it existed.

I think people are right when they say there is an agenda, it seems that every time a BBC group comes from London, not from a World Service kind of environment but a separate BBC department, they do stories on extremism, on sectarianism, on 'sexy issues' that people in the media associate with Pakistan.

This perspective has been picked up by Gurevitch in his article where he goes on to say that

CNN provides, inevitably, an American perspective on domestic (i.e. US) as well as 'foreign' (i.e. non-US) events. Its newscasts are, by definition, impervious to the process of domestication that characterizes the processing of news stories by editors working within the terminologies and meaning systems of their own societies. The same applies to the BBC World Service, notwithstanding its claim that it presents the news from 'nobody's' point of view. (Gurevitch, 1996:213)

Despite the awareness of foreign news bias, the people were still being exposed to western interpretations and representations of 'the news'. It is perhaps, in some respects, easier for the viewers to appreciate a bias of reporting in international television transmissions than is the case with agency bought articles for the newspapers, due to the obviousness of the foreign source. Newspapers drew little attention to the origins of agency articles and therefore readers were not explicitly aware of the possible 'otherness' of the journalist or the western readership the agency articles were generally aimed at.<sup>7</sup> It is, however, still only possible for the television viewer to filter the news to a certain extent. While it may be possible to 'know' that some CNN representations of the Gulf War were wrong because they conflicted too greatly with the world view held by the Pakistani viewers, there are other events which are not so easily filtered out and therefore there is an inevitable seepage through the filter, of western 'propaganda' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). In the case of CNN transmissions aired on national television through NTM, despite its censorship,

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<sup>7</sup>See Chapter 4

The government was blamed for lending a television to the Americans to propagate their culture and the anti-Islamic propaganda. (*The Nation*, 2.8.96: 21)

If news stories are related, directly or indirectly to Pakistan or Islam then it is relatively easy to impose the filters and identify foreign perspectives or propaganda. However, there are times - the most frequent - when these filters are of relatively little use because there is not a nationally or personally constructed model with which to compare the broadcast. In the same way as members of the Pakistani population have a collective identity through which they can relate to a wider national community and draw lines around it, so too have other nationals who do the same thing. Therefore news stories which originate from British or American sources will draw upon their own national identities in order to contextualise the news for their primary audience.<sup>8</sup> These criteria will exist outside those of the Pakistani viewing public and, on occasions, conflict with them.

One important aspect of news acceptability is the actual acceptance, or not, of what constitutes 'news' according to the foreign channels. There is, as with the print media, great selection of news stories. There are two significant aspects to this selection process by foreign media sources in relation to the Pakistani audience. The first is that there is a discernable pattern in relation to the stories which are or are not covered. There are, for example, relatively few stories carried in relation to Pakistan and other Third World countries unless they have some direct affect upon the country which is producing the news and, as a consequence, it is usual for Britain, Europe and America to dominate western news broadcasts. While this may be of economic interest to Pakistan it is not exclusive, with other countries such as Afghanistan, China and India being of equal or greater importance to Pakistani domestic affairs. Newspapers may, to some extent, fill the gap in reporting, but there continues to be an imbalance and the recognised power of the country can be negatively affected through this lack of presentation.

The second element of the news selection process is how the news which is covered is portrayed. The five 'filters' through which Herman and Chomsky present a 'propaganda model' trace

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<sup>8</sup>Satellite news channels are aimed especially at expatriates living abroad rather than an international audience. This is especially the case with CNN.

The routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interest to get their messages across to the public.' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:2)

Therefore it is a tailored, 'filtered', news which is being presented to the Pakistani audience with a heavy bias towards the interests of non-Pakistanis.

The problems (frequently political) to the government as well as to the audience in relation to these foreign news broadcasts are only one perspective. There are diplomatic considerations to be taken into account which effect government reaction to foreign media presentations and it is these to which we now turn in the following two sections. Restrictions imposed by the Censorship Code making reference to international relations are predominantly concerned with programmes which may or may not originate within Pakistan but which are seen to have a potential affect on the way those countries are viewed by the Pakistani population. Consequently, in the next section we consider, especially, the restrictions placed on Indian films and the motivation behind them. We also examine the extent to which Pakistani governments are concerned to maintain or gain good relations with 'friendly foreign states'. This discussion extends into the final section on Fundamentalism wherein the dealing with western media labelling causes problems of social identity in Pakistan.

## **International Relations**

### **2 II. International Relations**

- a) contains propaganda, in favour of a foreign state bearing on any point of dispute between the state and Pakistan or against a friendly foreign state likely to impair good relations between it and Pakistan;
- b) portrays incidents having a tendency to disparage, malign or misrepresent other nations;

Under the Censorship Code of the Pakistani Film Board there is a section which relates to international relations (2.II), both in respect of those nations which are, by the authorities at least, considered 'friendly' and those considered 'unfriendly' (for full Film Censorship Code see Appendix I).

Under Pakistani television (and film) policy all Indian programming is banned and this has been the case since the war between India and Pakistan in 1965. Pakistan and India have been on unfriendly terms since Partition in 1947 and three wars later relations have not improved. The previously cited example in relation to Kashmir was perhaps the hottest topic of dispute between the two nations at the time of my fieldwork but this was only one among many things which kept Pakistan and India hostile towards one another.

There can be no Indian film, programme, actor, director, producer or any other person who may appear in the credits, appearing on the television or in any cinema house. The extent to which this policy is applied is far reaching in its practical implications. During the interview at the Film Censorship Board offices and the screening of the censored film clips, during the Punjabi film, there was the cutting of a scene which showed a horse rider approaching a sign which read 'India 104 miles', there appeared to be no other motive for cutting the clip than its referral to India. Whether the censorship of this sign could technically be construed as containing 'propaganda, in favour of a foreign state bearing on any point of dispute between the state and Pakistan' is open to question. However, the extent to which the ban on Indian presentation over the television is taken serious, on the other hand, is quite apparent.

Cable companies have to be careful of what channels they select for showing as many of the satellite channels have some Indian influence. Channel V, from the STAR network, was not taken as the music channel of SPTV as its Indian content was substantial. Sreberny-Mohammadi explains this connection between the STAR network and India in order to compete with India's ZEE TV.

ZEE TV, developed by the Indian trading group Essel and broadcasting in Hindi, rapidly became more popular than Murdoch's STAR and the state-sponsored and dull Doordashan. In 1993 Murdoch bought a 49 per cent

share in the company, MTV left, and acknowledging the need to 'indigenize' programming, STAR has developed a Hindi music channel, Channel V. (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996:197)

In order to avoid the kind of extensive censorship which would have been required of Channel V, the music channel which was selected by SPTV was MTV from the Far East. The indigenous music played in this instance was predominantly Indonesian and therefore, theoretically at least, acceptable to Pakistan and a Pakistani audience. Despite being an 'Asian' music channel, more than 50% of music videos aired were western (Banks, 1996).

The overwhelming Indian orientation of STAR Plus (a particular channel belonging to the STAR network) also meant that this channel did not form part of the SPTV channel selection. Many of the advertisements on this channel were Indian made and representative as were a number of the short travel and information programmes. There was another aspect of the programming of this channel which was undoubtedly also taken into consideration when making the decision on whether to purchase screening rights of it or not, and that was the 'vulgarity' content. Programmes such as 'Baywatch' would have required one hundred percent censorship as the costumes alone would have deemed the programmes unsuitable for viewing by the Pakistani public. (The censorship of vulgarity will be considered, in detail, in the next chapter).

Despite attempts to minimize the exposure of the Pakistani population to Indian programming and India generally, the newspapers carry, under the television guide section, timetabling for the most popular of the Indian satellite channels on a daily basis, these included ZEE TV, ZEE Cinema, EL-ZEE TV and Sony TV. There was also a very lively pirate video market of Indian films and music at work. One family of friends went every night to Jinnah market to hire an Indian film. Within Islamabad there were many video shops, Jinnah market alone had four within the main square. Each of the smaller markets attached to the sub-sectors of the city had their own video shops. According to the Director of the Film Censor Board there were approximately 84,000 video shops in Pakistan. These video shops had numerous pirated copies of Western and Indian films. As the Director of the Film Censor Board told me, occasionally there were raids on these video outlets, but these did little to solve the problem. The problem was not simply limited to the access of the public to videos which would not otherwise be available within the country, but also, with an average of 3-400 videos available

in each outlet, there was a considerable loss of revenue, to the film producers as well as the official distributors such as Pakistan's Pulse Global which distributed pre-censored and subtitled Western films.<sup>9</sup>

While the video market may be available predominantly to the wealthier sections of the Pakistani population, access was not completely exclusive to them. Indian films and music were played on the public transport such as the coaches and vans. On two separate trips I made to Lahore by coach, there were different Indian films screened. Language was significant in relation to the showing of these films as Hindi was understandable to many among the lower classes (particularly in the Punjab province) and it was they who travelled by bus and coach. Therefore it was to these audiences that the videos were aimed.

The political motivation behind the non-screening of Indian productions within Pakistan is based on the unfriendly relations existing between the two countries since Partition. It was, so the Director of the Film Censorship Board told me, in part, because of these continuing bad relations that there were periodical raids upon video shops in an attempt to suppress the spread of pirated videos. However, there was another aspect to the raids. The raids could also be seen as an attempt by the State to control the black market with regard to Western films thereby demonstrating a willingness to tackle issues which are of concern to the West.

It was important for Pakistan to be seen to be an ally of the West and therefore not only to confront, periodically, issues such as pirate videos, but also to present the West in a favourable light. While Western nations may be in a position to criticise themselves or their neighbours, Pakistan did not perceive itself to have this luxury. Films, dramas, news etc should not be seen to emphasise the negative elements of western society as stated in the above cited section of the Censorship Code. The concern of the government did not stop there as, not only should it portray the West, for the most part, in a positive light, but national programming should also portray Pakistani society in a moderate and tolerant light to western viewers. In this respect, therefore, the media was seen as a means to represent Pakistani society to the outside, and especially western, world as highlighted by the following quote taken from one of Pakistan's leading English language newspapers.

MNA Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry called upon the STN to recast Pakistani

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<sup>9</sup>See Chapter 7 for statistics on the origins of videos viewed and a discussion on video consumption.

programmes in Arabic, English and Russian languages for the promotion of Pakistani cultural heritage in Middle East, Central Asia and Europe. This would be a positive step to counter the anti-Pakistani propaganda in these regions and also project the Pakistani point of view on different regional and global issues. (*The Nation*, 8.7.96: 3)

The burden this placed upon the Pakistani government is examined in the next section relating to fundamentalism. It is here that we assess the implications of government defending itself and the Pakistani population in relation to western, media presented stereotypes of Islamic - fundamentalist - ideology and the double bind that sees the government playing piggy-in-the-middle (excuse the haram metaphor) between its own population and the powerful West.

## **Fundamentalism**

No discussion which tackles the political significance of Islam to a third world Islamic Republic would be complete without a consideration of 'fundamentalism'. Internationally, Pakistan is perceived as an unstable 'fundamentalist' State and this has repercussions for internal development due to its dependency on hard currency and aid. The extent to which foreign nations and corporations are prepared to invest in Pakistan are affected by media generated perceptions of the political and religious position of the country. We are concerned here with the dilemma faced by Pakistani governments in relation to this label of fundamentalism utilised by the television media of foreign origin and this can be contextualised in Jenkins's comment (following Goffman) in his book, 'Social Identity' that

Although people have (some) control over the signals about themselves which they send to others, we are all at a disadvantage in that we cannot ensure either their 'correct' reception or interpretation, or know with certainty how they are received or interpreted. (Jenkins, 1996: 22)

When examining the fear towards the intolerance of a Muslim population by other Muslims the role played by the Western media must be considered. Equally, the opinions of the western population, both in the public and private arenas must be taken into consideration. To a large extent both groups, Western and Eastern, base their opinions of the Pakistani social identity on

the information supplied to them by the media - electronic and print - which has originated in the West. This presentation includes representations made through different types of programming such as dramas, films, news and documentaries.

The term 'fundamentalist', in relation to Islam, is one which was generated through foreign media use. It was originally a term used to describe a movement within protestantism in the United States in 1920, but this group, on finding the negative connotations of the word to be too strong, dropped it in favour of 'evangelical' (Kepel, 1994:108). Subsequently the term 'fundamentalist' has been adopted by the media to describe radical and intolerant religious groups. However, the word has subsequently become predominantly associated with Muslims.

The problem with the classification of 'fundamentalist' is that it means widely differently things to different people and here we may recall the quote from Jenkins cited above. There are two extremes of interpretation: one conjures up images of violence and intolerance while the other means a return to the Qur'an for guidance and a rejection of the interpretations which have caused people to stray from its purity - a 'back to basics' idea. This latter interpretation has no necessary connection with these intolerant and violent images.<sup>10</sup>

Within the middle ground between the above two extremes there is a mass of confused and intermingled opinion significantly effected, and also created, through the media use of the term fundamentalism. Rather than referring to specific Muslim groups, it has been suggested by some that Muslims as a whole are thought to have violent tendencies. Akbar S Ahmed has said in his book dealing with, in part at least, the presentation of Islam through the media

Words originating in Muslim societies - *jihad*, *fatwa*, *Ayatollah* - become part of the universal journalistic vocabulary. In journalese, they are invested with new and specific meanings far removed from the original: thus fundamentalist becomes the code word for a violent Muslim fanatic. (Ahmed, 1992:39)

Therefore, not only has the term 'fundamentalist' become misappropriated, but its meaning of

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<sup>10</sup>There are questions as to whether one can go 'back to basics' without carrying the ideological baggage accumulated through years of interpretation and whether one can go back with a clear and uncluttered mind but these are issues which are beyond the scope of this thesis.

violent fanatic tended to be associated with Islam and Muslims as a whole, rather than particular groups or individuals. As the BBC correspondent in Pakistan stated

They are termed 'hardline', they are termed 'fundamentalist' as a kind of blanket term for everything under Islam. Every man with a beard has a gun, and it is sexy, it is really sexy for reporters because you can feel the satisfaction that they have when they are using the words, when they are using a phrase. It is like when you use the phrase 'terrorist stories' or 'fundamentalist' and when I hear it I want to say 'so what is a fundamentalist?', I would like to stop the reporter live on air and say 'so, by the way, what is a fundamentalist?' See what I am saying? Because I think in 99 cases like that they will be gasping like a goldfish. Really, I believe that. It is an easy phrase for us to use because it kind of hits the spot with the viewers who are now used to it as a term, it is an all encompassing phrase to explain very quickly for the purposes of quick TV reports, what is going on without really explaining.

Others, within Pakistan, have also referred to fundamentalism and its perceived misappropriation. According to an article written in *The Nation*

The western media has in a very clever way changed the meaning of fundamentalism as illiteracy, bigotry, terrorism and has given it fanatic connotations. They have blown the trumpet of this negative publicity to such an extent that every Muslim has started saying that "I am not a fundamentalist", when in reality fundamentalist Islam is quite different from terrorism and violence. (*The Nation* - 6.2.1996)

The above are just three of many possible examples which demonstrate the awareness by Pakistanis and by academics, of the believed misrepresentations which have subsequently altered the boundaries of the fundamentalist category to incorporate inappropriate classifications. Despite this belief of Western misrepresentation, however, the Pakistani elite population is being exposed to representations of their identity, as Muslim, by the West through access and reliance upon the international news media as mentioned previously. Consequently they are applying these representations to the self as truth, if not completely and

constantly, at least in part and on occasions and subsequently it is members of the elite who are the ones the above writer has mentioned are claiming 'I am not a fundamentalist'.

With the national electronic news media of Pakistan being kept on a very tight leash by the government in power those who have access to other news sources such as BBC and CNN frequently feel that they have no choice, but to rely upon foreign news channels if they are to have any knowledge of current and world events. This has affected the interpretation and subsequent confusion of the term fundamentalism within Pakistan in no small way. It is recognised that the foreign media channels contain a bias as has already been mentioned, but this bias can only be qualitatively evaluated in relation to one's own experience. In relation to fundamentalism (as with other news topics) the extent to which the news item is believed and taken as truth depends upon the context within which it is applied and the subsequent ability people have to evaluate the news.

It is at this point that *there comes a conflict in the classification of Pakistani social identity* which leads to a separation between the collective self in opposition to the personal self (or, as Jenkins would have it, social identity and individual identity) and we see the self becoming the other. It is assumed by the majority of the elite that it is the collective self which falls, at least to some degree, within the western category of 'fundamentalist', while their personal self remains significantly aloof from the 'violent Muslim fanatic' label, perhaps acknowledging, however, that the correct 'eastern' definition of 'fundamentalist' does apply. In this instance the self is divided from the other through levels of class and literacy. The elite assume that there is some truth in what the foreign media is publicising and therefore, while content in the knowledge that it does not apply to them, assume it must, therefore, be applicable to the masses who, in turn, are assumed to believe what the Maulvis (who are largely criticised by the elite as fundamentalists according to Western media definitions) tell them during prayers, particularly in the Friday sermons. It is, by and large therefore, the Maulvis who are accredited with the promotion of radical and violent fundamentalist Islam which the masses, being uneducated, believe, but the elite are able to disregard due to their education and consequent enlightenment. The elite may or may not use the term 'fundamentalist' to classify themselves, but they will, almost without fail, clarify this label towards tolerance and away from violence through comments such as one made to me by an informant that she was

A fundamentalist but when I say this I mean that I follow the Quran and I

pray but I don't agree with what the fanatic groups are doing.

Regardless of the extent of the perceived applicability of the fundamentalist label, however, it must be defended according to either and any meaning. It is the Pakistani cultural identity which is under threat as a consequence of the negative feeling generated through the media use (Parkin (1995) makes such a point in relation to his work on Zanzibar). It is feared that the Pakistani social identity will be undermined until Pakistanis themselves become indistinguishable from the 'other' - a destiny they believe India to be facing, therefore demonstrating the possibility is a reality. As Imran Khan has said

Our government is so keen to tell the Western world that it is not a fundamentalist state, that it is allowing the zealots to try to take us into the 21st century as complete imitators of the Westerners. (*The News on Friday* 15.12.1995)

There is a certain irony in talking of the differences in attitudes to 'fundamentalism' while using the same terminology as it largely seems to confuse the issue for all parties.

The concern over the 'fundamentalist' classification is largely due to the West, particularly in the shape of America, being in a position of power within Pakistan (and many other Third World countries), due to economic dependence in some form or another. The developing world is reliant upon the developed world for its financial and technical assistance. Modernisation is generally perceived to be available only through the West. A side effect of this is that modernization is commonly believed to lead inevitably to westernisation and while modernisation may be sought, the package incorporating westernisation is not so appealing. Fundamentalists, according to Western media definitions, do not want westernisation, but neither do the majority of the Pakistani elite (or any other Pakistani) and therefore they find themselves agreeing with the fundamentalists, but being concerned that this lack of willingness to change or transform their society especially toward secularisation of the private life as well as the public will be negatively interpreted by the West. The connection made between modernisation and westernisation results in a moral dilemma created through the religious identity resulting in the population finding itself superimposing supposedly radical Islamic ideas onto secular matters because they are seen as inextricably linked. It is not Pakistan alone which has been caught up in this confusion over the parameters of the terminology, but the

West also.

Pakistan must be seen to be stable and a reliable investment if it is to gain the economic and technical support required. Concern about 'fundamentalism' within Pakistan therefore exists predominantly because this is a concern of the West. 'Fundamentalism' is thought to represent instability. Fundamentalism is also commonly associated with a dislike and rebelliousness against the West. According to Halliday

The argument, whether made by Islamists or their enemies, that 'Islam' constitutes a strategic challenge to the West is nonsense - not least because of the weak economic conditions of the supposedly menacing countries.  
(Halliday, 1994:91)

The social identity of Pakistan, from the Western point of view is not the same as the notion of Pakistani social identity *within* Pakistan. It is the collective self which is forced to fight against its portrayal by the other. It is the weakness of the Pakistani national identity as well as the State which forces this battle, strength would reduce the need for acceptability from the more powerful other.

The government wants to be seen to be dealing with the perceived 'problem' of fundamentalism, therefore, even if it does not fully believe in the extent of the problem as defined by the foreign media and powers, it must be seen to believe. While domestic broadcasting policies present the government in the central power position, on the international arena the same government must not be seen to be asserting its own power position too strongly for fear of alienating those sources of international and economic power which are relied upon for the day-to-day running of the country. It is for this reason, as we have seen, that Pakistan's electronic media are constrained by the Censorship Code, from criticising 'friendly' (read 'important') foreign powers.

## **Conclusion**

We began this chapter by introducing the national and cable television channels of Pakistan before moving on to examine the means by which censorship is used to create and recreate

political legitimacy. Like the first print chapter, this chapter concentrated on the control mechanisms utilized by the governments over national and cable television. In order to highlight the official mechanisms used by the Pakistani governments we paid particular attention to two of the Clauses from the Censorship Code: Security, Law and Order and International Relations. Through an examination of these Clauses we were able to examine how various administrations utilise the Censorship Code to reinforce their own legitimacy and withhold access to television resources from the opposition parties and India.

The final section of this chapter considered the notion of fundamentalism as presented through the media, both national and international. Through the course of this section and the chapter generally, we have seen that religion plays a significant role in government decisions in relation to the political censorship of national broadcasts due to the concern of the reaction to both domestic and international populations and governments.

The role that Islamic ideology plays in relation to television presentation and viewing extends well beyond the political arena, however, and therefore in the next chapter we look at the role of religion, directly and indirectly, on the structure and attitude towards non-political programming.

# *Chapter Six*

## ELECTRONIC MEDIA: THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

In this chapter we continue our examination of the electronic media, this time moving away from the more specifically political aspects of television programming and focusing instead on the religious context within which it is set. With this change of focus also comes a different dynamic broadly based on the notion that political censorship is 'bad' while censorship applied through religious motivation is 'good'. It is worth repeating the quote cited previously which clearly distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable censorship:-

It is hypocritical of me, but I feel that in theory certain types of programmes should be subject to censorship based on their content/subject matter. However, I feel that news censorship cannot be justified, yet I feel no pangs of guilt about an individual's freedom of information being restricted/infringed in relation to TV entertainment.

A central issue to the study of the effects of Islam upon television presentation and reception is the notion of acceptability through which media presentations are made. As an educated female

middle aged informant said in relation to her own viewing patterns which emphasised the role of Islam:

As a Muslim I like to abide by the restrictions/social norms imposed on me by my religion.

This would appear to be a fairly straightforward statement which could be applied to the majority of practising Pakistani Muslims but, as we shall see, complications arise from different perceptions as to what it is to be a Muslim and the 'restrictions/social norms' that this identity imposes. We will see, for example, the different reactions to Rana Sheikh's introduction of programmes such as Lollywood Top Ten and Palmolive Fashion Show. These were shows which Rana Sheikh put forward as programmes which drew upon Pakistani culture while, on the other hand, critics have protested due to their belief that the programmes run in opposition to Islam and therefore cannot be connected with Pakistani society which is inextricably linked to Islamic ideology.

Extending out for notions of acceptability we go on to examine the power which administrations acquire by their ability to construct the boundaries of social identity and how they do this despite the Censorship Codes remaining the same over time and changing governments. We consider, for example, the extensive censorship of vulgarity imposed by the Martial Law Administration of General Ziaul Haq which reflected and supported his Islamisation process of the 1970s and 1980s. Through the course of this chapter we consider both religious and secular programming in order to develop an understanding of the significance of the role of Islam as it relates to the various programming.

While there is a power attached to the interpretation given to Islam as presented through the media we also consider the restrictions imposed by Islam. In relation to direct Islamic programming, if the television station (and, by default, the government) were seen to be endorsing a particular sect at the expense of another, then there would be the legitimisation of one at the expense of the other. As a consequence the popularity of the government could be effected and, this in turn, could effect the stability of the country. As my informant from the staff of PTV stated

The actual message of Islam, what is Islam, it is not presented in any way

and omits all observation of how does a man perceive his own religion or what is different in Islam which is not found in other religions or why am I a Muslim and why am I not something else. The personal belief and disbelief, this is kept out of television but ... the policy of PTV is that we are very clear on one point at least, that nothing against Islam goes on air ... We [PTV] discuss various issues except Islam because we believe that there are various sects of people. That there are people who have their own beliefs of Islam and who look at Islam in their own particular way and if we allow any particular brand to dominate and we are likely to be offending and we are saying the policy of being very safe.

Advertising agencies must also observe the constraints imposed by the government and Pakistan's Islamic ideology when presenting their products on television. In the same way as vulgarity must be avoided in dramas etc, so too must it be avoided in advertising campaigns. Advertisements can provide us with an insight into Pakistani society and its culture. In this section we look, for example, at bleach cream advertisements which serve as an illustration of the importance of fair skin in Pakistani society. We also see how different people react to advertising policies on television.

In the final section of this chapter we consider the official censorship carried out through interpretations of the Censorship Code by media channels and personnel. In relation to official censorship we take particular notice of the variations in interpretation of the Censorship Codes observed by the two national and one cable television channels which also represent different interpretations of Islam. We will see, for example, that the two national channels, PTV and STN, have quite different censorship policies in relation to dialogue and we will look at the effects this has on the standard of programming aired by the different channels. All programming must be 'acceptable' to the audience. Obviously, particular watching groups may have different notions of what *is* acceptable but governments are obliged to cater to the highest moral common denominator as they perceive it to be.

### **Acceptability?**

Official censorship is not only an attempt to provide a reflection of the Pakistani and Muslim

social identity, but is also an opportunity to construct the boundaries of the social identity. Official censorship is an intended reflection of a criteria, or notion, of acceptability - it is an ideal - an ideal as defined by a particular government. This 'ideal' is made up of political and religious components. While the two components can be separated to some degree, they are inevitably and inextricably intertwined within the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. 'Qur'anic culture', which the censorship policies are intended to reflect, is an active response to this ideal. However it is also an ideal and therefore we are presented with an ideal dealing with an ideal. A transnational Islamic or Qur'anic culture does not exist, but it is through this absence that it can be made to exist. It can be referred to and aimed for, but its contents, like that of acceptability, are able to be harnessed to particular ideologies to confirm their legitimacy and consequently its own.

Through official censorship the onus is on the state rather than the individual to determine the social identity boundaries between the self and the other. However, it should be noted that the state is represented by individuals or groups of censor personnel who, due to the open-ended nature of the censorship codes, are largely forced to interpret those boundaries in the context of Pakistani and Muslim social identity as they perceive them to be. This being the case however it is still the State which is presented as the censor. We will examine this phenomenon under the section of the Practice of Censorship, especially in relation to censorship carried out for SPTV when simultaneous censorship required the censor personnel to make moral judgements relating to programme content on the spot.

During the various administrations since the introduction of television within Pakistan by General Ayub Khan, there have been visible changes in relation to the notions of acceptability within the censorship codes, although these have always focused primarily on politics and sex. This differs from the Brazilian example put forward by Kottak in his study of television and culture in Brazil, where he states that

Brazilian censorship concentrated on politics and violence and paid much less attention to nudity and sex. (Kottak, 1990:22)

Pakistani censorship considers areas of both sex and violence necessary for the censor personnel's scissors, although the censorship of violence is much more lenient. In fact, both Pakistani and Indian films have a heavy emphasis on violence. It would appear that acts of

police and military brutality are censored rather than acts of violence per se. As previously mentioned, during my visit to the Film Censorship Board I was able to watch some censored sections of a Punjabi film which contained numerous clips of police and military violence. One such clip to be censored was the assault by the police on a prisoner as he was being questioned in his cell. It is worth noting, however, that there were differences between cinema and television notions of acceptability and these vary largely due to the notions of audience construction. While cinema films were 'action packed' and contained considerable violence (even after censorship), television drama was far more moderate. Take, for example, a drama produced for NTM 'Gunpoint', which was previewed as the first Pakistani action adventure drama to be made, and was an adaptation of the American film 'Black Rain'<sup>1</sup>. The advertisement for the drama placed in the national newspapers ran as follows:

**License To Thrill!**  
**GUNPOINT**

NTM presents  
 A New  
 Startlingly Different Serial

The dwellers of the criminal world, blinded by power play with human values thinking they are invincible. But even today patriotic law keepers exist, who would sacrifice their lives for the sanctity of law. **GUNPOINT** is an epic clash between right & wrong. Scenes closer to reality, characters full of life & a story that's shockingly different. Superb direction & an extraordinary performance by a star studded cast will make **GUNPOINT** an unforgettable serial.

Directed by :-  
 Farveer Jamal

Starring :-  
 Ruby Lish, Farveer Jamal, Mehak Ali, Mehmood Akhtar, Shazia Rami, Dr. Imrana, Subhan Bakht, Iftikhar Hussain,  
 Faraz Taji, Farid Ali Shah & Ameer Iqbal

Starts Friday 5th July at 7:30 p.m. Only On **NTM**

Plate 5 Licence to Thrill - Gunpoint (*The News on Friday* 5.7.96: 2)

While the violence was not explicit in as much as it was not shown, it was perhaps more implicit by its absence. All events leading up to the shooting of individuals formed part of the drama, however, when a character was shot, for example, the sound of the bullet firing was replaced with a clap of thunder and the picture on the screen changed to a sky scene during an

<sup>1</sup>Dir. Ridley Scott, 1989 (US)

electrical storm (see Video Appendix 4). Needless to say, this allowed the audience to know what was happening without the burden of being exposed to the sight of the shooting.

It is the composition of the audience which is apparently taken into consideration in the making of these dramas, as both the audience and the programmes are notably different from that of the cinema. Pakistani cinema films, whether Urdu, Pushtu or Punjabi, are known for their violence (particularly the Punjabi films) as well as their vulgarity (Pushtu especially), but at the same time the audience is assumed to predominantly comprise men from the lower classes. As a consequence of this audience classification, we can assume that the main criteria for a lower television content of violence is that women and children are not supposed to see violence rather than Muslims generally. Despite the fact that cinema films go through a censorship process the same as television dramas, the acceptability of material in relation to 'sex' and violence are quite different with a greater degree of liberalism allowed on the big screen. As one female informant in her late teens told me,

All I can understand through the strange Urdu movies nowadays is that Pakistanis no longer take pride in what they are, don't take pride in their nationality, nor their religion.

During General Ziaul Haq's regime and 'Islamisation process' he cracked down on what he believed to be media presented vulgarity (as well as political censorship during the Martial Law period as discussed in the previous chapter) and therefore censorship of this kind became much tighter and effected broader categories than it had during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's more liberal administration. While the contrast between these two rulers was relatively sharp, such policy changes have been common throughout the years and regimes of Pakistani history.

Through the use of the electronic media the government is able to represent Pakistani identity as defined by them. Representations of identity, to some extent, lead to the legitimization of that identity. The administration of the time therefore attempts to define the boundaries of acceptability linked to social identity, manifesting its power through imposed demarcations of the boundaries between the self and the other. The elite audience, however, is in a position to reject these representations of acceptability from the national media by turning to satellite and video transmissions which are uncensored. With regard to the international media there is an assumption by the audience that the culture it 'provokes and circulates' is a culture which

belongs to an 'other' and therefore the watching group can impose its own viewing restrictions according to their own perception of acceptability.

Censorship on national television has again been relaxed in recent years and there were visible changes during the Benazir Bhutto administration, although the Codes themselves had stayed the same. With the appointment of Rana Sheikh as Managing Director of the Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV), there was an increase in 'cultural shows' which showed many songs and dances on a more regular basis both of a 'traditional' and 'modern' nature, in the form of shows such as Lollywood Top Ten which will be considered in detail below. There was also the introduction of regular fashion shows. To many Pakistanis these kinds of shows run counter to the behaviour advocated by the Prophet and, almost weekly, letters are published in the newspapers condemning the 'vulgarity' presented on PTV.

PTV and STN in an urge to compete with the Indian satellite channels have tried to rely on music blindfold, and STN has taken a visible lead in this direction. ... These non-sensible music balder-dashes have virtually wiped out quality programmes from, both PTV and STN. (*The Nation*, 19.7.96: 21)

However, it should also be noted that an equal number of letters are published congratulating the television station on its more liberal policies. It is from instances such as this that we can see that notions of 'acceptability' vary according to different viewers. However, because everyone apparently agrees that there are acceptable and unacceptable programmes without actually being unified as to what the boundaries are that the government is given room to manipulate the Censorship Codes according to its own perceptions.

Acceptability of programming is not restricted to entertainment programming. It is also necessary to maintain a balance in relation to religious broadcasts. The government perceives it as essential to maintain good relations with the whole Muslim population, which naturally includes members of different sects as well as people with different depths of beliefs and personal interpretations of the Qur'an. The government does not want to antagonise those sections of the community who may take offence at the discussion of different topics. They are concerned by the reaction of the more radical and intolerant groups which exist within the country who may resort to physical violence after a perceived questioning of their religiosity,

either in relation to their actions or in relation to their practices and interpretations of the Qur'an. The government is concerned with regard to this area of religious debate on, broadly speaking, two levels. One is the national security and safety of the country and the other is its own popularity at the polling stations.

Literacy and education are commonly believed to be root problems in this respect. With the majority of the population unable to read, and more importantly, understand, the Qur'an, either in Urdu or in the original Arabic, most Pakistanis are forced to rely upon the instruction of others. There is an additional problem of the unacceptability of translations (Anderson, 1983 and Lambek, 1995) with the sole legitimate version of the Qur'an being in Arabic. There is also the question of regional language diversity including Punjabi, Sindi, Baluchi and Pushto and breaking down into even greater regional difference. Unfortunately, many of those relied upon for this instruction have an equally limited education and understanding in relation to the actual contents of the Qur'an and themselves rely heavily upon hearsay and notions of cultural traditions. Frequently erroneous assumptions are made in relation to the connection between traditions and Islam. A writer for one of Pakistan's leading English language newspapers wrote

What nation could be more unfortunate than one which was created in the name of religion, yet 80 per cent of its inhabitants do not understand even a fraction of Islam? ... our religion is explained to us by unlettered people who interpret it in their own narrow way. (*The News on Friday* - 3.3.1995: )

It is feared by the government and the elite population that it is these 'unlettered people', the maulvis, who are in a position to incite the illiterate or undereducated masses into intolerant and violent behaviour. Referring again to the quote from my PTV informant

That there are people who have their own beliefs of Islam and who look at Islam in their own particular way and if we allow any particular brand to dominate and we are likely to be offending and we are saying the policy of being very safe.

Religious broadcasts must be acceptable to everyone as no one should be offended by their

content.

## **Religious programming**

Religious broadcasts do exist in Pakistan but their content is limited to a common ground of perceived acceptability to the 'general' public. Productions are limited to those discussions which are considered 'safe' in as much as they can be viewed by all the people of Pakistan, and beyond, who have widely divergent interpretations and practices of the Qur'an and Islam. The productions should not cause friction between these different groups and individuals. Upon gaining access to the media, the people in power tend to avoid allowing judgmental statements and programming about sectarian groups as this could lead to the destabilisation of their power base. What we are therefore predominantly talking about in relation to religious programming is the extent to which Islam is presented rather than which sect is put forward.

It is the power created through the plurality of Islamic discourse, however, which the various groups attempt to tap for themselves by demonstrating that their own particular brand of Islam is the right one. Within Pakistan religious groups assume that access to the electronic media demonstrates that the group has power by being in a position to utilize the media and create more power through presentation and legitimation. It is these discourses which extend into the censorship debate as, by achieving the enforcement of their own perceptions of what censorship should mean onto the censorship codes, they have, by definition, imposed their own ideological stand.

In 1996, on the tenth day of Muharram<sup>2</sup> PTV dedicated the entire day to related religious programming but, although this is predominantly a religious festival observed by the Shi'ah Muslims, it is relevant also to the Sunni and therefore could be seen as acceptable programming to the entire Muslim population without discrimination.

However, Islamic programming goes beyond avoiding the preference of one sect over another,

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<sup>2</sup>'The first ten days of the month [of the Muhammadan year], observed in commemoration of the martyrdom of al-Husain, the second son of Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter, by 'Ali [AL-HUSAIN] These days of lamentation are only observed by the Shi'ah Muslims, but the tenth day of Murarram is observed by the Sunnis in commemoration of its having been the day on which Adam and Eve, heaven and hell, the pen, fate, life and death were created.' (Hughes, 1885:407)

it relates to the legitimation of Islam itself as a 'power' within Pakistani society. It is the place of Islam within the society which can be reinforced or undermined, at least to some degree, through religiously influenced electronic media programming. This has been reflected in the extent to which Islam has influenced and been portrayed within broadcasting during different administrations, most notably those of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Ziaul Haq. It is the implementation of the Censorship Code within Pakistan which reflects the public image of Islam at any given time. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say it is the degree of implementation of the Censorship Codes which reflects the government image of the role Islam should play, either by the government's own interpretation or by public influence.

As has been mentioned previously and will be mentioned again, there is an emphasis on gender in relation to the presentation of women within the media and this extends into the presentation also of religious programming. As one female informant told me

Islam is (mis)portrayed as a conservative religion with gender biases ... religious discussions [should be] more open and frequent with a spectrum of people (more women, children and minorities).

If there were limited or no television coverage of specific Islamic principles in Pakistan, it would be possible to conclude that the place of the religion within the society would be relegated to a position of the personal and individual. I use the word 'relegated' as it would lose its potential for power which has, in part at least, been created through its position within the public sphere. Taking British society and television as an example, religion has been given relatively little air time: on ITV religious programming was given 2 hours 17 minutes (1.6%) in 1990, dropping to 2 hours 14 minutes (or 1.55%) in 1995. Channel 4, in 1990 was airing 1 hour 55 minutes (1.4%) of its time to religious broadcasts, but in 1995 this had dropped to 1 hour 21 minutes (or 0.91%) (*ITC Annual Report & Accounts 1991- 1995*). This could be seen as a reflection of the position of religion within society as articulated by the management of the television networks. It is also the case that censorship practices within Britain are not attributed to Christianity or religion generally. The censorship itself, regardless of its subject, is therefore secular.

With the introduction of Pakistani satellite television in the form of PTV-2, productions were forced to take into account internationally Islamic-orientated opinions as well as national.

Although PTV-2 is predominantly intended as a benefit to those Pakistanis living abroad and also those who can afford satellite, but live outside the national station transmitter areas, the producers must take into consideration the possibility of foreign nationals also wishing to watch the broadcasts. Of course, the more people who watch the channel the better. At present PTV-2 can be picked up in 38 countries, the majority of which are, in some form or another, Islamic (<http://www.ptv.com.pk>).

It should also be taken into account that despite the fact that the other potential non-Pakistani viewers are also Muslims, they still constitute 'the other'. In the case of religion, they may not be so distinctly other as Westerners, but they are, nonetheless, still the other. It was not uncommon for me to hear derogatory remarks about the Saudi Arabians and their interpretation of Islamic laws etc.<sup>3</sup>

PTV-2 must compete with Indian and Western satellite television, both of which show programming considered far too liberal and potentially 'vulgar' for viewing by Muslims. However, it must be, and is, acknowledged by the Pakistani producers that these Western or Western-influenced channels offer strong competition, even for the Muslim viewers. As it is not possible to compete on an 'entertainment' level because of its religious background, PTV-2 concentrated heavily on its religious identity and its ability to present educational and 'decent' programming suitable for an audience of Muslims, regardless of their specific Islamic orientation. It should be mentioned that Pakistani dramas are (according to Pakistani media statements) internationally highly regarded and attract a non-Muslim as well as a Muslim audience.

Despite the various considerations involved in the airing of religious programmes, it would appear from my research that very few of the elite watched these programmes on a regular basis and many, not at all. There did appear to be some class and gender correlation, as well as individual religious fervour, with regard to the likelihood as to whether people would view these broadcasts. While I did not gather any statistics to contrast the viewing patterns of religious programming by different classes, many elite seemed to be of the opinion that the lower classes watched the religious programming more than they did, making comments such as,

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<sup>3</sup>Unlike Saudi Arabia, Hudood amputation practices in Pakistan, failed with doctors unwilling to perform the surgery (Esposito and Voll, 1996:111).

Only the lower classes watch those programmes ... they are just about strictly interpreted “Wahabi” version of “Sunni” Islam.

The elite generally seemed to view very few religious programmes regardless of how religious they thought of themselves or were thought by other people to be. However, women were over 30% more likely than men to watch religious programming (see Table 6.1 below).

	Total Viewers	Watched Religious Programming	Regularly watched religious programming
Men	28	8 (28.57%)	3 (10.7% of total)
Women	25	15 (60%)	4 (16% of total)

Table 6.1 - Gender Differences in the Watching of Religious Broadcasts (Total sample - 53)

Bearing in mind that it is men that have access to the mosques and have a public role in relation to the religion, it is possible to make the connection that the private role of women in relation to religion has extended itself into the television arena.

It should also be mentioned that censorship policy pertaining to Islam is applied to other religions as is referred to in section 2(III) of the Censorship Code, therefore nothing negative can be aired in relation to these other religions. Referring again to the censored clips taken from the Punjabi film which I was shown at the Film Censorship Board, there were two clips which removed material again Hinduism. One of these clips showed Hindu religious statues which were desecrated by gunfire. As this scene was playing, the Director of the Film Censorship Board turned to me and, by way of explanation, said that nothing should be shown against other religions in Pakistani films.

Religious programmes are rarely, if ever, produced which represent the beliefs of other religious groups and therefore Islam is given a higher status by its dominant presence. It is the position of Islam in relation to the other religions of members of the Pakistani nation that

reinforce its power. Perhaps, if this broadcasting did occur, then it would reinforce the position of the other religious groups giving them a legitimacy which is not currently available to them.

To give a non-Islamic, and non-Pakistani example; in recent years British television channels have introduced 'Black programming', television produced by and for the Black population and intended to depict their subculture (it must be a 'subculture' rather than a 'culture' otherwise it would be a more significant threat to the dominant culture). This has been presented as, and perceived as, an acknowledgement that there is indeed a Black subculture within Britain and the acknowledgement has reinforced the subculture itself by its new found security through its legitimation. There is however, an assumption of one unified subculture. It should be born in mind that the origins of the black population of Britain are widely divergent and therefore the 'Black programming' is unlikely to be truly representative of anything other than a ideal or illusion. To acknowledge this, however, could reduce the power of the subgroup by its division and lack of centre. In the same way, ethnic programming in the Pakistani context, in relation both to language and identity, is extremely limited and is, for the most part, restricted to news broadcasts in regional languages.

The containment of the publicity of sectarianism of Islam is maintained on Pakistani television to a large degree through limited presentation. There is, however, as has been shown, a fluctuation in the public presence of Islam itself according to the administration in power and their reliance upon the Islamic banner. While the position of Islam is flexible, at least it does have a position within Pakistani society from which to be flexible. The same cannot be said for the other religious denominations represented by the population of Pakistan. It is Islam which provides the substance of the religious programming that exists and it forms the baseline for guidance in relation to other aired programming. It may be contentious in this public arena, but it does have a status - *the status* - from which all else originates. It may speak in a whisper, but the voice is ultimately that of Islam changing emphasis only with who has access to the microphone. We now turn to the nationally produced or aired programming to examine the influence of Islam in this media domain.

**Programming - By whom, for whom?**

Not long after my arrival in Pakistan there was the appointment of a new Managing Director to PTV, Mrs Rana Sheikh. She brought with her changes in broadcasting policy in the form of an emphasis upon Asian/Pakistani 'culture'.

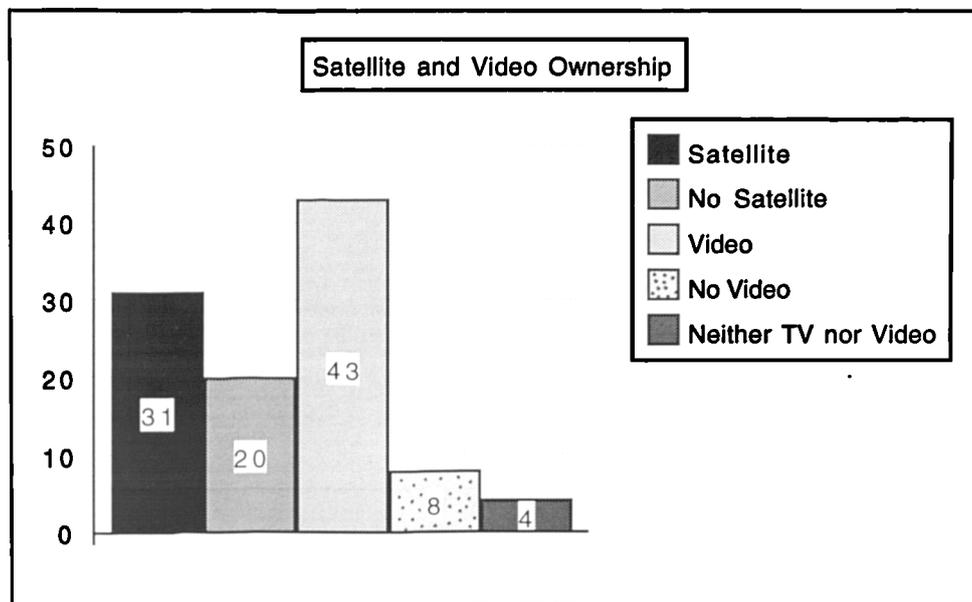


Table 6.2 - Satellite and Video Ownership: Sample of 53 informants

This meant the introduction of new programmes to the channel which were intended to reflect the regional culture and bring the programming up to date in the context of the international scene. With the increasing number of dish antennas being bought, not only by the elite, but also by the middle classes, and, more especially, video accessibility, (see Table 6.2) there had become an increased need for both PTV and STN/NTM to compete with these outside forces.

The cultural programming introduced by Rana Sheikh included new programming such as 'Lollywood Top Ten' and 'Palmolive Fashion Show'. The first of these was a countdown of the ten most popular Urdu films accompanied by a song and dance scene taken from the various films.<sup>4</sup> During the break between each song a female presenter talked to members of the public about their opinions of the songs and introduced the next entry into the chart. One should bear in mind that the majority of people interviewed were male and came from the Urdu educated middle classes. The reasons for this were likely to be that by far the majority of

<sup>4</sup>Lollywood is, as is undoubtedly apparent, the Pakistani - Lahore version of Hollywood.

cinema goers were men and it was the middle classes who were more likely than the lower classes, to be able to afford television, but less likely than the elites to be able to afford satellite television.

While the song was playing, the video showing a caption would come up saying the name of the song, the film it derived from and the actors who were singing. The extent to which the same actors appeared in different films can be realised by the fact that, during one week, an actress, Reema, appeared in five of the ten songs, Babar Ali in four and Rambo and Meera in two. Two of the videos were from the film 'Chief Sahab'<sup>5</sup> and another two came from 'Hawaein'<sup>6</sup>.

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the censorship policies for cinema releases were more lenient than were those for the television broadcasts. As a result, it was occasionally necessary to censor the video clips which accompanied the film chart songs.

The 'Palmolive Fashion Show' was, as the name suggests, a look at the latest styles of shalwar kameez and other fashion tips sponsored by Palmolive. The programme usually comprised of a medley of fashion shoot filming, interviews with the models, catwalk sequences, interviews with the designers and so on. One noticeable thing about the programme was that, while the commentary and questions were in Urdu, a number of the interviewees only spoke broken Urdu. This was indicator that the background of the models and designers was, for the most part, upper middle class and elite while the target audience of the programme was middle class.

The move towards this kind of programming (and that of 'pop' charts) was frequently portrayed as an attempt to compete with the western media. However there has been some controversy over the perceived success of this competition and its affects on Pakistani culture as a consequence. According to one writer's letter to *The News*:

In a bid to compete with international satellite channels, PTV and STN have started emulating them rather than competing with them on merit, thus becoming a tool of cultural invasion. (*The News*, 23.5.96: 6)

Similar things were said by numerous other people including a previous managing director of

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<sup>5</sup>Dir. Javaid Shaikh, 1995 (Pak)

<sup>6</sup>Dir. Syed Noor, 1996 (Pak)

PTV and by Imran Khan, but what was frequently emphasised was how badly this was done.

The dramas produced in Pakistan, originally by PTV, but more recently by NTM also, were considered to be generally of a high quality, in India as well as Pakistan<sup>7</sup>. Most of the people that I came in contact with during the course of my fieldwork had seen a Pakistani drama at some time or another and most maintained that there were some of good quality although not necessarily to their taste. As one informant told me

I like the dramas. Not all, but we have very talented writers and good stories in almost all dramas. The only thing I want is for the censor board to relax because they started showing a really good drama but for some weird reason they stopped showing it after the 7th episode and there wasn't anything unacceptable in it!

Aslam Ahzar who, while an ex-employee of PTV, was frank in his opinions and maintained that PTV had used television as a means of modernisation.

PTV has done some really splendid TV theatre on feudal kings exposing what is evil in the current feudal culture... They have done a lot of very good investigative theatre and documentaries and yes, they have done a lot on things like child labour, they have done plays on the situation of women and the enslavement of women by society.

One such drama was 'Aalamat' which was based around a police woman and her attempts to help a woman and daughter in trouble. Another drama was Arzoo which was advertised as follows:

Arzoo - Wealth is a trap sometimes ... the more you struggle the harder it is to escape.

The story of young woman - her dreams, wishes, and her passion to make them come true.

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<sup>7</sup>This was according to Pakistani sources rather than Indian ones and the extent of accuracy must be considered in this context.

A story of struggle, deception and intrigue. The difference between dreams and reality personified ...

The Pakistani administrations have not been alone in their attempts to utilise the electronic media to introduce modernisation into the country. Other examples of these political attempts to utilise television can be seen through the work of writers such as Armburst (1996) and Abu-Lughod (1995) in relation to Egypt and Lull's (1991) work relating to China. As Armburst has said 'In the twentieth century, mass media has been an important means for disseminating modernist ideology in Egypt.' (Armburst 1996: 7). He goes on to say

While intellectuals allow for European influence on their modernism, they also insist strongly that the roots of their transition to modernity lie in their own culture, and that the essence of Egyptian modernism is to maintain an unbroken link with their own tradition. This is true for all genres in all media. (Armburst, 1996:41)

Regardless of the political and development intentions of the Urdu dramas in Pakistan these were not inevitably well thought of, with some people complaining that they revolved around the culture and romances of the affluent section of the society: the 'Dallas' rather than the 'Eastenders' genre. One informant talked at some length about his reasons for disliking Pakistani dramas which he largely attributed to the lack of realism presented, regardless of whether or not it was the affluent class referred to. He was from the elite, business class and has since moved, with his wife and children to America.

It has been written by a person who is intellectually lesser than our intellect. It's being televised for the class which is happier with what is being written and being exposed to them. We think that we can see beyond these phoney characters and phoney stories because there is not much you can associate them [with] in real life, especially our movies. To begin with, we think there is not even 10% similarity in what they show in the movies and what exists in real life. Television is much closer to real life, but I think the last 15 years I can remember, which is almost half my life, the television writers have a mind block. They cannot think beyond a feudal lord having 3

gunmen standing behind him, a young virtuous man who is tied down with ropes and beaten to death because he probably wants to open a school there or he wants to run elections or his sister has been kidnapped and has been raped by 7 people or whatever. This is the crux of every writer's story and then that writer puts his brain into every character, even the guy polishing the shoes is going to be talking philosophy and the emperor is going to be talking the same philosophy ... The writer is so dominant in every character on television that I think whenever a new serial comes I exactly know what the serial is going to be.

Imran Khan was quite indignant about the lack of respect for Pakistani culture, as he perceived it, in the programming presented on national television. He maintained that

' They should have people sitting on top which reflect our culture, our policies, our media. There's things like Lollywood you know which is supposed to be a copy of Indian programmes. Now that is nothing to do with our culture. 99% of our people would not watch it with their families sitting there. To at least 70-80% of the people it is repulsive, that programme, and they are sickened by it and yet it is shown just because it is a cheap imitation of the elite.

It was the potential conflict between the notions of Pakistani culture and Qur'anic culture which was the root of much of the criticism associated with the policies of Rana Sheikh. The programming policies which she was introducing were not modernist in the sense that they were not improving the position of Pakistan but instead were said to be drawing on the worst of Western society in order to compete with alternative electronic media options.

The Pakistan/Islam cultural dilemma has been specifically considered elsewhere in this thesis, but it must be brought in again at this point in order to understand some of its implications in relation to the electronic media. The two cannot be completely separated, but they cannot be completely united either. With changes in administrations, so too have there been changes in the balance of power between Qur'anic and Pakistani cultures. There have, for example, been changes in the dress codes, especially for women. During the military dictatorship of General Ziaul Haq it became compulsory for women, when they appeared on screen, to do so with their

heads covered. It has continued to be necessary for newsreaders to uphold this tradition, short though such a tradition has been.

There was increased pressure to ban women's photographs in the print media, to limit their presence on television, to require women broadcasters to cover their heads and to wear the *dupatta* (a thin cloth worn over one's garments). (Esposito and Voll, 1996:113)

However when I was told by informants about this policy during General Ziaul Haq's era it was frequently the ludicrous aspects which were highlighted. Several people, men and women alike, pointed out that the actresses were required to 'wear a dupatta covering their heads even if it was while they were sleeping or swimming through a raging river.' The emphasis placed on 'Islamic dress' during a period of religious fervour had extreme consequences in one instance.

A young student slaughtered his mother and sister in the name of Islam. From the statement of the accused, an ex-student of the Engineering University, Lahore, one can gather that the only 'crime' of his mother and sister was that, despite his repeated warnings, they did not wear what he termed 'Islamic' dress. (Khan, 1985:146)

During the course of my fieldwork, it was becoming increasingly common for western clothes to be worn by women on the television screen although this was for the most part, restricted to dramas. This, however, perhaps emphasises the point made earlier that it was the affluent section of society which is most commonly portrayed in the dramas as, while men of the lower classes may wear western clothes to a greater or lesser extent according to their income and whether they can afford the expense (western clothes being far more expensive than the shalwar kameez), it was unusual to see any women other than the elite wearing western clothes (and even then this was still limited).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>When talking of western clothes for women one must read trousers and shirt. The interpretation of the Qur'an in Pakistan is such that some people believe that as long as women are covered from head to toe and their arms are covered (although a baggy t-shirt may be worn) and their shape is not shown then it is acceptable to wear western clothes. This means that a skirt may not be worn because it would reveal the ankles and a shirt should not be tucked in or it would reveal the shape of the body.

The national programming itself does not stand alone as a marker for the interpretation of events within society and an indication of the social and cultural boundaries that exist within Pakistan. Advertising can also play a role in this respect and in many respects attempts to draw upon the 'ideal type' of society more obviously than other programming such as dramas.

## Advertising

Parallels can be drawn between the print and the electronic media in relation to advertising and the potential power struggle between the government and private industries, however, there are some significant differences which arise out of the fact that the newspapers are largely privately run industries while the television channels are partially or completely government controlled. Newspaper industry advertising revenue generated from government sources is used, by the government, to assert some control over those publications which may otherwise be unfriendly towards it. The withdrawal of government advertising could see a drop of up to 65% in revenue for the newspapers and therefore they may be encouraged to take a more moderate line of criticism in order to maintain government good will and consequently its advertising revenue. This was quite dissimilar from the electronic media since the government in Pakistan, as previously mentioned, was in a position to exert almost total control over the programming aired on national television. The government did not need to provide incentive, or threaten its withdrawal of support, to attempt to ensure the favourable portrayal of itself and its policies as it had *carte blanche* control over television's content regardless.

Having said this, it is true that the private companies wishing to advertise on television had some power to influence programming in a similar way to their influence over articles appearing in newspapers. Due to the need for an assured audience the situation must be considered to be the same in Pakistan as it is elsewhere and therefore the argument put forward by Golding and Murdock (1996) that

These needs inevitably tilt programming towards familiar and well-tested formulas and formats and away from risk and innovation, and anchor it in commonsense rather than alternative viewpoints. (Golding and Murdock, 1996:17)

This reference relates equally as well to Pakistan as to the West. The government also wanted their propaganda to be viewed through news and other broadcasts and therefore they were also interested in maintaining a risk free broadcasting policy.



## **Help Save My Life**

**Go on strike & stop  
Advertisement on PTV, NTM & Radio**

As per unanimous resolution passed at the National Convention of the business community held on 15th March, 1995 in Karachi, we call upon the entire business community of Pakistan to observe a general strike on 25th March, 1995 and, in protest, stop all advertisements on electronic media i.e. P.T.V., NTM and all channels of Radio Pakistan with effect from 1st April, 1995 (normal ads) and 15th April, 1995 sponsored ads (for one month). To show sympathies to all the families who have lost their dear ones in the tragic killings.



**The Federation of Pakistan  
Chambers of Commerce & Industry**

Federation House, Main Canton, P.O. Box 13675, Karachi - 75000 (PAKISTAN).  
Phone: (021) 5673601-4, Fax: (021) 5674332, Telex: 25379 FPCCI PK, Cable: FEDCOMERC.

Plate 6 Help Save My Life - Go on strike & stop Advertisement on PTV, NTM & Radio *The News* (19.3.1995: 12)

As we can see from Plate 6 an advertisement was placed in the national press in March 1995 attempting to persuade Pakistan's business community to strike in order to

Show sympathies to all the families who have lost their dear ones in the tragic killings [in Karachi].(*The News* 19.3.1995: 12)

This strike would highlight the position within Karachi at the same time as costing the government valuable advertising revenue. The advertising rates for PTV vary according to which centre is broadcasting the advertisement and the nature of the product which is being advertised as can be seen from the PTV's web site relating to the PTV Rate Card (<http://www.ptv.com.pk>) (see Appendix VI). Bearing in mind that PTV, as well as STN/NTM, is a commercial channel with approximately 63% of its income being generated through advertising (<http://www.ptv.com.pk>), a noticeable feature was that its advertisement transmission times were inconsistent. On commercial networks outside of Pakistan advertisements are aired constantly throughout the day, with different time slots usually being dedicated to different, audience related, products and with different rates according to the expected size of the audience. Globally, companies wish to have their advertisements aired at a time when they believe they will get maximum relevant audience exposure as this makes most economic sense. In Pakistan there was audience related advertising to some extent, but at those times when a larger audience was anticipated, more time was dedicated to the airing of advertisements. It was rare for advertisements to be aired during the early transmissions of the day, but later in the evening there were increasing numbers of advertisements and an increasing time allocation to advertising according to the programme being transmitted. An example of this was the premier screening of the Urdu film 'Sargam'<sup>9</sup>. Urdu films generally run for approximately two hours, but with the inclusion of advertising slots this film ran for over double its screening time. 'Sargam' was screened twice, first on the 29 April 1996 for Eid and again on the 2 June 1996.

A Letter to the Editor printed in *Dawn* in relation to the advertising policy during this programme is worth quoting in its entirety. It complains about the excessive advertising throughout the duration of the film (and PTV organisation generally) and reads as follows:

PTV: treat or torture?

I HEARD with great pleasure the PTV announcement that it would telecast the film, "Sargam" on the night of Eid. Having enjoyed the songs and not seen the film I was looking forward to this treat. But initially the show was to start immediately after Khabarnama, a respectable hour. Then something else was put in that slot and PTV said it would start at 10.30 pm a little late

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<sup>9</sup>Dir. Syed Noor, 1995 (Pak)

for children who might have enjoyed it. It didn't start at 10.30, it started at 11, half an hour late which was not too bad by Pakistan and PTV standards. But then as soon as it started and the viewers became interested, a stream of advertisements took over continuing for a good fifteen minutes, some repeated more than once. This continued for the next four hours, a little bit of 'Sargam' and a lot of ads. I wonder how many saw the end of 'Sargam'. I didn't, and was livid with anger.

PTV personnel must watch foreign channels. The programmes are announced weeks, if not months ahead and they start on time. PTV programmes are not listed correctly even in the day's newspaper, change at the drop of a hat and seldom start on time. Does PTV think the viewers have nothing to do but sit before their sets and hope the right programme will turn up sometime?

The media is supposed to reflect the best in the country and in a country like ours, act as an educator. Instead, it seems to encourage the national genius for wasting time by being unorganised.

We want to attract viewers in the Far-East and the Middle-East. What are we going to show them, advertisements and a two-hour movie stretched to four?

If PTV wants to compete on the international scene it has to learn to maintain international standards. The standard of the advertisements should also be improved. Some of the present ones will lead the viewers to believe that the product is as bad as the advertisement.

DR. R.J. VANIA: Karachi (*Dawn* - 13.5.96: 6)

When one considers the following example of a half page advertisement placed within the national newspapers, it is little wonder that companies were anxious for their television advertisements to be screened during the showing of these films. Such advertising was likely to be viewed by a large audience.

This Eid get into the Rhythm with *Sargam*

As part of PTV's promise to thrill the viewers *non-stop* throughout this Eid, Syed Noor's masterpiece "Sargam" will be telecast on Eid Day after Khabarnama. A tale of two lovers torn apart by a world of deception, "Sargam boast a cast which includes Adnan Sami Khan, Nadeem and Zeba Sami Khan, making it a must-see for all. (*The Nation*, 27.4.86: 12 - emphasis added)

From the breakdown outlined below of the film time and advertising slots we can see why a letter such as that quoted above was not an uncommon complaint. This schedule allows only for the first three hours of the film as this was the length of the video cassette used.

54 minutes	Sargam
21 minutes	Advertisements (55 advert slots containing 29 different adverts some adverts repeated up to 6 times)
5 minutes	Sargam
2.15 minutes	News break (Urdu)
15 minutes	Sargam
6.30 minutes	News break (Urdu)
17 minutes	Advertisements (48 advert slots containing 29 different adverts including 6 adverts not included in the previous slot)
39 minutes	Sargam
8 minutes	Advertisements (26 advert slots containing 22 different adverts including 1 advert not included in the previous slots)
19 minutes	Sargam
4 minutes	Advertisements (30 advert slots containing 23 different adverts including 1 advert not included in the previous slots)

Despite the implications of the above example, timing conditions imposed by advertising companies were also applicable to the allocation of Pakistani advertising slots. It has been suggested that NTM was frequently kept in the dark about PTV's advertisement time slot during Khabarnama. NTM sources quoted in a national newspaper suggested that numerous

advertising companies had offered packages to NTM for release during Khabarnama, but NTM could not comply with the timing conditions of the companies because, it was maintained, PTV never coordinated its Khabarnama mid-break duration. (*The News on Friday*, 12.7.96: 33). This had the affect of economically disadvantaging NTM. During the Khabarnama advertising break on STN/NTM a caption appeared on the otherwise plain blue screen reading

You are watching PTV Khabarnama on STN Shalimar Television Network

This is not to say that advertisements were not aired during these breaks, rather, they were short and did not fill up the whole mid-break slot, thereby resulting in the loss of revenue from a possible 3 or 4 further advertisements.

Up until now we have chiefly considered the economic aspects in relation to advertising and the power potential created through this. However, advertising also has power in that it is set within the boundaries of the society. In the same way as other national programming must be contextualised within the culture of Pakistan (at least to some degree and notwithstanding taste etc), so advertising is also set within the same criteria. In some respects it is possible to draw from the advertising some significant aspects of Pakistani society more easily than from the day-to-day programming. An example of this was the advertising of skin lightening or bleaching cream for women. Within Pakistani society, as in India, the paler the skin the more beautiful the woman. In Gillespie's study of the media use within Indian minority communities in Britain, she points out the significance of skin colour, especially for women, which parallel significantly to the Pakistani example.

Indian [and Pakistani] ads for beauty products play upon such prejudices by promoting bleach products. Such advertisements commonly interrupt Hindi videos and discussions of face products often highlight the importance, to girls, of being fair-skinned (Gillespie, 1995:190).

It should also be borne in mind that illegal Hindi video tapes are readily available in Pakistan and therefore the viewers of such tapes are also exposed to the advertising of bleaching products to which Gillespie refers. An article entitled 'The good, the 'b'ad' and the ugly' written for *The Nation's Friday Review* clearly points out the significance of fair skin in Pakistani society and the means by which the advertising companies use the notion of "fair =

beautiful” to promote their products.

During the commercial break, one’s best defence mechanism is put on test. One gets to hear how dark one can get if one ventures out in sun without a particular company’s sun block. Poor oldies like myself are left wondering how we have never heard of the above concoction and still avoided looking like the dark side of midnight.

Other complexion creams bombard one with powerful slogans and messages such as the surity of losing one’s husband to the lady next door, who uses a facial cream and chooses to stand under one’s window. One’s only hope is to rush and buy the cream, apply it day and night and Viola, one is as fair as one’s neighbour and hubby comes back from the window, how extremely convenient. (*The Nation, Friday Review* 15.3.96: 14)

An example of one of the skin bleaching creams which appeared on the television whilst I was in Pakistan was for Mod Girl Bleach Cream (see Video Appendix 6). This advertisement was made following the Pakistani (and Indian) film style and, in fact, has taken the melody from a famous Indian song by probably India’s most famous singer, Lata Mungather. The advertisement is not strictly Urdu but is a mix of Hindi and Urdu. The gist of the lyrics for the advertisement are:

My dream of becoming a fair person comes true with using Mod Girl  
Bleach Cream

These lyrics clearly play upon the idea that being fair is a good thing.

An example of the reality of the desire to be fair in Pakistani society can be drawn in relation to a friend who went swimming most mornings during the summer months with her mother. Towards the end of the summer she had become quite dark and when a friend of the family came to visit she reprimanded the mother for having allowed the daughter to become so dark and “ugly” and to “look like a peasant”. The continuation of the morning swim sessions was allowed but only with the use of stronger sun screen and the threat that, should the daughter become any darker she would no longer be allowed to go.

Invariably, the actresses used for advertisements in general, as well as in dramas, films etc, were pale therefore further emphasising that “pale is beautiful” throughout its programming and not simply in relation to the bleaching cream. However, through the product advertisement we are made directly aware of the cultural desire to be fair skinned. Through the watching of other programming we may notice a tendency to employ fair actresses, but we may not necessarily pick up on the cultural significance of this.

In the same way as skin lightening cream can tell us something about Pakistani society so too can other advertising. Some of the other advertisements reflect upon the roles of women as mothers and wives. What makes a potential wife acceptable to a future husband is that she uses the same tea as his mother and therefore the mother should be conscious of this when arranging a marriage for him. This advertisements for tea tells us two things about Pakistani society. First, that they have arranged marriages and second that the mother plays a significant role in selecting a bride for her son. The advertising itself is aimed predominately at women either directly or indirectly. It is aimed at telling the women what they should buy for themselves, such as skin lightening cream, but it is for the most part, instructing them on what to buy to keep their families happy.

The advertising, like the dramas, are also set within the culture of Pakistan, but predominantly directed towards the more affluent section of the society and reflecting them. Women were usually presented wearing shalwar kameez, while the children and the men wore western clothes. This was a trend consistent with the practices of the upper middle classes and the elite. This advertising pattern follows a similar trend to the West, as it is assume, that the more affluent classes are the people with the resources to purchase the products

In short, the mass media are interested in attracting audiences with buying power, not audiences per se. (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:16)

‘The steady trend in advertising is to manifest the produce as an integral part of large social purposes and processes.’ (McLuhan, 1964:226). Advertising reinforces the ‘imagined community’ by fitting the products it is attempting to sell within the broader context of that community and exploiting the ‘reality’ it has, together with other aspects of the media, been instrumental in constructing. It is the social ideal that the advertising campaigns attempt to

highlight and within which they attempt to set their products.

Advertising must also comply to the same standards and constraints as the main programming produced within Pakistan and therefore it too imposes self censorship and government enforced pre-production censorship. For example, there were a number of complaints about a shampoo advert which showed a woman washing her hair. Despite the fact that the woman was shown only from the neck up some people still felt the advertisement was vulgar. As with other programming, not all people agreed with this view and, as one writer in *The Nation* stated

After having banned just about everything else, PTV has gone to the barbaric extent of banning the display of women's hair shampoo ads (*The Nation*, 10.11.95: 2).

It was not just the national television networks which were questioned and condemned by the public for their advertisements and their censorship practices. Within weeks of beginning its transmissions SPTV too was facing similar criticisms as a letter, published both in *The News* and *Dawn* illustrates:

Ads showing even a pig, a beer bottle floating in the air ... were promptly displaced from the screen by some other so-called "pak-saaf" [clean] advertisements or clips of other programmes. (*Dawn* 26.6.96: 12 and *The News* 7.7.96: 6)

Despite the manipulation, censorship and considerable complaining that goes on in relation to the advertising within Pakistan (I doubt there are many places worldwide where the people do not complain about advertisements) it is, however, necessary to point out the positive aspects which are attached to it also. PTV was responsible for the airing of public health advertisements in order to increase public awareness. As a writer to *The News* pointed out on a positive note in a letter otherwise condemning 'PTV's hypocrisy'

We see advertisements on PTV teaching our illiterate population the value of human life. The advertisement that tells us the importance of iodised salt, or the advertisement which gives an insight to the dangers of diarrhoea etc. (*The News* 18.7.95: 6)

One of the public health advertisements which appeared regularly on PTV during 1996 was issued by the Pakistan Dairy Association (PDA). This advertisement was extolling the benefits of milk bought in plastic containers (rather than the milk bought from milkmen who delivered to the door taking the milk from a churn and measuring it out into a saucepan or the like). According to PDA, buying the milk in cartons ensured the milk was fresh and, more importantly, that germs were kept out (see Video Appendix 6).

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, during the time of my fieldwork NTM celebrated the continuation of its 'anti smoking' campaign. NTM had, for two years, maintained a policy whereby it refused to accept any advertising contracts or programme sponsorship from tobacco companies. The company had apparently decided that smoking was bad and therefore NTM was not going to contribute to the promotion of the habit. The portrayal of smoking was not restricted by any government legislation, rather, the television company had assumed things about society, and its own 'responsibility' towards society in its productions. The NTM Network had, therefore, imposed its own 'censorship' on its productions by prohibiting the screening of tobacco advertising. In an article published in *The News*, the banning of tobacco advertising and programme sponsorship was put within the context of the power of the media and patriotism pointing out that NTM was willing to sacrifice Rs15 million, not so much for the sake of its viewers but for the sake of the Pakistan.

“No one can deny the forceful impact of electronic media on the young minds and being patriotic Pakistanis we cannot afford to encourage them to smoke”, stated Taher, adding, “we must take out the myth of macho-man and style out of the cigarette smoking He-Man. It must be portrayed for what it really is - a tool of death.” (*The News* 1.6.96: 3)

As we have seen from the above, there are many aspects to advertising. Agencies produce advertisements which are culturally relevant within Pakistani society. The television networks make economic and political decisions in relation to which adverts they will show and when. Both the agencies and the network channels must comply with government standards of acceptability enforced through censorship policies. In the following section we extend our analysis beyond advertising to take a more particular look at the censorship instituted by the government and the practices of the different television channels available within Pakistan

which interpret the Censorship Code.

## The Practice of Censorship

*Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them.*

*Lo! Allah is Aware of what they do.*

Qur'an, 24:30

While the censorship policies of the PTV and STN/NTM networks start from the same point, namely the Censorship Code, they have still maintained a difference which can be relatively easily appreciated by the viewer. Perhaps the most striking difference is with regard to the censorship of language.

The difference in the language editing policy lies in the fact that PTV edits out the scenes containing the offensive language altogether, while on STN/NTM they simply silence the dialogue while keeping the picture running at the relevant point. PTV maintains a stricter policy in this area on the grounds, as was told to me by an informant from the PTV staff, that it believes that simply silencing the dialogue is inadequate and too liberal in itself. An example of one programme screened on STN which demonstrates the consequences of the difference in policy from that of PTV is an episode from a weekly run series, 'Alice', which was screened every Saturday morning. This series required a relatively high amount of dialogue silencing on a regular basis, however, an example of one episode which was shown that had more than the usual amount of censorship was when Alice was hired to sing in a bar which turned out to be used for prostitution purposes and the story revolved around her consequent arrest due to association. The word 'prostitute' and all those related to it were required to be censored according to the interpretation of the television codes by STN (see Video Appendix 7). Bearing in mind that the entire programme was centred around this word and related others the plot became entirely lost and it was almost impossible to figure out what the point of the story was. Due to the considerable cutting which would have been required under the alternative PTV policy, such a programme would, more than likely, have been cut altogether.

The problem of coping with the dialogue is not limited to the extent to which it is censored, but also with the understanding of the English language. The problems which can be experienced

by the censor personnel were demonstrated through an episode of the weekly run American comedy 'Fresh Prince of Bel Air', screened by Network Television Marketing (NTM). One of the words which was not allowed to be aired was 'pig', the argument being that because the animal was haram<sup>10</sup>, the word is too and therefore should not be spoken or listened too. Unfortunately the language ability of the censor personnel was not as high as it might be in relation to the English language and therefore, although they censored all occasions when the word 'pig' was mentioned they did not take out 'hog' which appeared equally frequently within the episode (see Video Appendix 8)<sup>11</sup>.

Censorship at PTV takes place prior to purchase of a film or series also. A number of programmes from an imported series being considered for airing would be viewed to determine its suitability for the Pakistani public and a panel would judge the probable extent to which the programme would require censorship, preferring to keep this to a minimum. This system was not foolproof, however, as was explained by my informant from within the PTV management staff when, judged on the content of the first few episodes of 'Mind Your Language', the series was purchased. After some weeks it was decided that the content of the programmes were unsuitable for Pakistani public viewing and therefore the series had to be cancelled. This decision was apparently largely based on the unsuitable language and thematic content.

The quality of imported English language programming was different between the two national channels with PTV apparently having the larger budget. PTV aired shows such as Star Trax, Time Trax, Dr Quinn Medicine Woman and Earth 2 which were all American high budget productions while STN/NTM aired programmes such as Sydney, Alice, The Sweeney and Target, which were older and less expensive British and American productions. The programmes purchased by PTV were family ones which required no, or almost no, language editing and the censorship required for vulgarity was extremely limited. On the other hand those programmes presented by NTM and STN were produced for a more specific, rather than general, adult audience and consequently required more censorship.

The acceptability of programmes from one channel to the other seemed to differ, with STN screening shows which required relatively more censorship of one form of another, than those

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<sup>10</sup> 'Lit "prohibited". That which is unlawful.' (Hughes, 1885:163)

<sup>11</sup> The censor personnel are not the only ones to have made this mistake. General Ziaul Haq made considerable use of the word 'hog' in one of his speeches.

shown on PTV. During the course of my fieldwork SPTV cable television entered into the equation, but the circumstances of their programming was a little different as almost all of their programming was of foreign - western - origin.

In relation to SPTV transmitted TNT and MTV channels, censorship took place prior to the broadcast of the programmes with satellite transmissions being received directly to the cable centre where they were taped and then those tapes went through a censorship process before being screened to the public. With the other channels the censorship took place simultaneously with 'live' transmission which came via the cable centre, but with no time delay imposed. This meant that as an objectionable scene reached the audience the censor personnel could override the broadcast with a tape of alternative 'Pak saaf' or acceptable adverts or programmes therefore ensuring that the viewers were not exposed to objectionable material. As this censorship could only be done once the scene had begun to be aired, as the censor personnel could not usually know when an objectionable scene was coming, the audience was inevitably exposed to snippets of undesirable scenes. Another problem with this censorship technique was that any dialogue which accompanied the scene was also lost and therefore this meant that occasionally the point of a story could be lost. The use of a pixel machine was not employed by SPTV.

In Video Appendix 9 we can see a clip from a programme about Claudia Shiffer by NBC. During the course of this interview section we can see that the broadcast is interrupted three times. On the first occasion it is because of the showing of a calendar which presents Claudia Shiffer more or less topless, the second is (one must assume) because she is wearing a swimsuit (although that clip is missed and by the time the censor realises, the scene is of her in a hat and evening dress). Finally, the programme is cut when David Copperfield is kissing the hand of Claudia Shiffer<sup>12</sup>. On each occasion that the programme is replaced with 'Pak saaf' material the logo of NBC is run with the commentary

NBC - The First Network for The New Asia

or a trailer for 'Later with Greg Kinnear'.

There were two censor personnel per SPTV channel in order that lapses of concentration could

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<sup>12</sup>Hand kissing was not normally the subject of censorship.

be minimized. However, censorship policies are, as has already been mentioned, not clearly defined. It is not only different networks which have varying interpretations of the Censorship Codes, but it is also the personnel.

A striking feature of the censorship practices of SPTV meant that it was possible to determine, to some extent at least, differences in personality with regard to the extent to which the Censorship Codes were enforced. The personnel were forced, through the circumstances of their position and the Codes themselves to impose their own interpretations of censorship requirements which meant that it became almost the equivalent of sitting in someone's living room and watching satellite TV with them while they held the remote control, turning over as the *vulgar* scene hits the screen. One viewer wrote to two prominent national English language newspapers saying

To our dismay we discovered that even ... an informative and educational programme about heart surgery in the programme, Discovery, was subjected to clumsy and indiscriminate censorship. (*Dawn* - 26.6.1996: 12 and *The News* - 7.7.1996: 6)

Another letter, this time to *The Nation* said

The guidelines of the Central Board of Film Censors, by virtue of their very brevity, lay a heavy burden of interpretation on the Censors. It is important that those who man the Censor Board should be men of good will and good taste, who may be relied upon to interpret the guidelines with understanding and sympathy. *The Nation* (24.5.1996: 7)

Of course what 'good will' and 'good taste' actually are depends upon one's perspective and therefore people react differently to the non-screening of a medical documentary because of nudity and programmes such as 'Beavis and Butthead' which are indeed aired.

Cartoons themselves appear to form an anomaly in as much as while children form the baseline for the Censorship Code the same restrictions for other programming are not applied to cartoons. The frequently voiced criteria for national television censorship was that one should be happy for one's children to see everything which comes on television. There was no

concept similar to the 9pm watershed as practised in Britain. All kissing scenes are cut from television programming with living actors. However, those kissing scenes contained within cartoons remain uncensored. Cartoons such as 'The Flintstones' regularly contain kisses and one cartoon called 'Johnny Quest', in an episode that I watched, contained a passionate kiss (by any standards) which remained untouched. Cartoon violence was also substantial and again remained untouched by the censors' scissors. While I do not want to go into great details on this subject, it is worth noting the apparent contradiction between the censorship applied to living characters and the lack of concern over the content of cartoons even where they too conflict with religious and cultural acceptability. Referring again to the cartoon 'Beavis and Butthead', it was apparently not taken into account by the censor that, whilst this was indeed a cartoon which focused on the exploits of two school boys (Beavis and Butthead), it was adult with respect to the topics. The discussion of sex and sex related subjects frequently formed the basis of the episodes.

The contradictions between the Islamic ideology and the censorship policies continue in relation to the programming which was screened on the television. This was again especially apparent in relation to the SPTV programming. Films shown, while not containing scenes of sexual intimacy which required censorship, often had story lines which ran in opposition to the Pakistani culture. An example of this was a film screened on TNT cable entitled 'Sunday in New York'. The gist of the story was that the sister of a promiscuous airline pilot came to New York to lose her virginity as she felt she was too old (twenty two) to be sexually inexperienced. The extent of the censorship within the film itself was minimal as it contained relatively few sex scenes of any degree of intimacy. However, one was left wondering at the appropriateness of the story line within the Islamic and Pakistani context where, not only is sexual intimacy not publicly displayed, but it is uncommon, even among the liberal elite, for men and women to date before engagement or marriage. Many couples may not meet before the day of the marriage, although one informant told me that, due to the families relatively liberal attitude, she had been able to speak to her husband-to-be over the telephone prior to their marriage.

It is difficult to know how such anomalies could be handled within the electronic media, but what was most striking was that the majority of people seemed unconcerned at the story line itself, but rather it is the visual images attached to any story which could cause offence. 'The Piano' is another illustration of this point where my informant seemed to make little value or

moral judgment over the story, but only over the visual display of 'vulgarity'. It is perhaps the demarcation of the ideology behind the film being western and therefore 'other' that allows the story to be told while the presentation of the scenes of physical intimacy and vulgarity invades the 'self' in the same way as one can hear about vulgarity and talk about it, but one should not be part of it. The Qur'an, as suggested by the quote at the beginning of this section, specifically tells the Muslim that he should not look upon vulgarity but it does not mention listening.

Under usual circumstances the majority of people with whom I came into contact would agree that some form of censorship was necessary. However, to many the censorship imposed upon national television and cable was too heavy and erratic, both with regard to politically and religiously orientated censorship. Below are a selection of quotes from informants of varying ages which provide some insight into different opinions.

It's hypocritical. Like on PTV, newcasters are in dupatta, covered properly and in the short break between news they show many trailers with dancing girls with shorts and all. (Female in her late 20's)

Censorship [is] necessary, but it is taken too far . (Male in his early years)

Programmes should be censored but the ... panel censoring should be sensible. (Male in his 30's)

PTV censorship is well controlled. NTM sometimes overdo it but its generally okay. (Female aged 18 years)

It was frequently maintained that if the family had the resources available and trusted all members of the family to conform to the moral criteria within which they had been brought up, they were more likely to invest in satellite and/or video to avoid the national censorship policies. A number of my informants mentioned that parents were reluctant to allow satellite television into the home when there were young children in the family. As one informant said

My younger brother and sister, they are pretty young, right, you know, and [my parents] think that satellite can poison their minds at such an age

because they are young and immature, they don't know what's right, they don't know what's wrong and in our society ... I mean there are a few things which are considered bad, you know.

These families deferred the purchase of satellite dishes until they felt that their children were old enough to know the difference between their own values and those of alien cultures and, as such, were able to follow patterns of self censorship and remote control use.

## **Conclusion**

As we have seen from this and the previous chapter, there is an attempt by official bodies to harness the media power available. However, it must not be forgotten that the audience is able to interpret and reject programming content which can undermine the intended messages. In the next chapter we look specifically at the audience. It is important for any consideration of the media to examine what the viewers themselves are doing in their various viewing situations and how it is that they cope with and manipulate the material which is being presented to them as well as what they choose to watch.

The elite are of particular interest throughout this study and in relation to their media consumption. We must take into consideration that many of these people have access to satellite and video presentations produced outside of Pakistan and outside the jurisdiction of Pakistani government or social control. An elite Pakistani audience must, therefore, rely upon their own notions of social identity and acceptability when watching and interpreting these programmes. It is to this that we now turn our attention.

# Chapter Seven

## INTERACTIVE AUDIENCES

While some rules of interaction are socially and culturally understood and practiced by a wide range of users, other more intricate forms of rule-based interactions take place in dyads, families, and other social units that share unique methods of symbolic interaction. (Lull, 1982:4-5)

Throughout the course of this thesis we have been examining the construction and application of 'rules' relating to the media within the context of Pakistani national and religious social identity. In this final chapter to consider television we concentrate exclusively on the audience. In the same way as we have seen a habitual and tactical use of rules by official institutions, we now consider a parametric use of rules by audiences through their use and manipulation of accepted rules under different but consistent viewing circumstances.

Other rules involve human interaction that varies contextually within consensually understood boundaries or *parameters*. These rules are

sometimes, but not always, consciously recognised and articulated. They govern social intercourse by defining what actions are appropriate within the latitudes of acceptable behaviour. (Lull, 1982:6 italics in original)

We shall see how a group of family members of varying ages and gender are forced to censor. The following quote from one of my informants gives an impression of the different circumstances when censorship comes into force and the types of programmes which are considered inappropriate for viewing. He said he would censor

If my sister or my parents or elders are also watching, usually if there is any on-screen nudity. However this policy applies to programmes such as Baywatch, Beavis and Butthead, almost anything on MTV. My brother, mother and I have as yet not decided whether the same restrictions should apply to the Simpsons. They say yes, I am undecided.

I am using a slightly different explanation of the rules than Lull has in his work. The rules to which I have referred to so far and the majority of those to which I shall refer relate to censorship, while Lull tends to apply the three rule categories to different spheres of television viewing. According to my use of the terms, there is no real distinction, at the primary level, between habitual and parametric rules but their difference lies in the fact that the habitual rules are those rules relating to the censorship of violence and vulgarity and have remained more or less consistent since the introduction of television in Pakistan. On the other hand parametric rules have their foundations in (or provided the foundation for) the habitual rules but the extent of the application of the rules is varied according to the construction of the audience.

Following Lull (1982:8), the degree of authoritarian control is the distinction between habitual rules and parametric rules with habitual rules being imposed by authority figures (governments, as I have used the term) which 'impose non-negotiable behaviour codes' while the parametric rules are authoritatively prescribed (by parents, older siblings etc) but are negotiable. Within the official apparatus the censorship to which I have largely referred in relation to vulgarity has been governed by habitual rules. It is these same habitual rules which form the basis of the parametric rules as they exist at their highest or purest level but with their change into the realm of the private (unofficial) rather than the public (official) so they are transformed from habitual to parametric.

The previous two chapters have concentrated primarily on censorship practised by the official national structures incorporating those official ideologies imposed by government administrations, but affected by various constituencies within Pakistan. We have seen that censorship policies are as much about increasing political legitimacy as dictating what can or should be watched by Pakistan's population. In this chapter we change our focus and instead concentrate upon audiences. It has been my contention that mechanisms for presenting television programming are socially constructed and intrinsically tied to social identity. National television must cater to a perception of audience social identity with regard to censorship and through the difficulties of qualifying the critical mass of 'television audience', must cater to the highest moral common denominator as defined by the administration of the time (as discussed in the previous chapter). However, not all elite viewing options are limited to national productions and therefore, theoretically, Pakistan's elite population could ignore convention and watch whatever and however they choose. Through the course of this chapter we demonstrate that, through a parametric rules approach to the study of television viewing and the audience, all programming and viewing is subject to rules created through notions of Pakistani and Muslim social identity.

The rules that are applied to the viewing patterns imposed from childhood onwards are easily learned in Pakistan. Young children quickly learn the rules of accepted behaviour in relation to television viewing at home through instruction and guidance of other, usually older, members of the family. One educated female informant who had two teenage children maintained that censorship should be strict and said

I usually like more sober and morally sound programmes to be watched in the presence of children.

The above informant's son completed a questionnaire and he maintained that

We mostly watch TV and videos together. However, what I do in front of my family I would do it behind them too.

The many and various rules which children are expected to learn and follow are well established some of which can be identified outside of Pakistan although I do not wish to carry

out a cross-cultural comparison at this juncture. It is when we consider that television has only been available in Pakistan since 1963 (indeed television's history worldwide is also relatively short) and add to this that satellite and video have been accessible (to the elite) for even less time (no more than ten years, and for most people, within the last five years), it becomes apparent that viewing rules are embedded in the society at large and within social contexts which *have* already been established. Pakistan's national history is only a little older than that of television (we have seen elsewhere in this thesis the problems of the legitimacy of Pakistani identity) and the real foundations for the rules, as with Pakistan itself, in order to gain and maintain legitimacy, claim descent from Islam.

'Self censoring', as I refer to it within this section, is that censorship which has not been done by the government or some other official institution, but rather, that which is carried out by individuals according to their own criteria of acceptability and which is identifiable through the physical action of turning over the channel, fast-forwarding a video or turning off the television. The remote control has therefore proved to be a significant 'part of the furniture' in Pakistan, especially in those homes where the content of programming cannot be relied upon to be 'suitable' viewing.

Self censorship does not simply mean that censoring done for oneself, but also that done for others within the audience such as friends or family. Through the course of this chapter I hope to demonstrate that the term 'self censorship' - or rather the 'self' part of this phrase - is, in fact, misleading as it implies censorship which is done for the individual carrying out censorship whereas, in reality and as the ethnographic evidence will demonstrate, this censorship is in large part, if not in total, done for others. However, it is for the sake of simplicity that I continue with the use of the phrase but emphasise that its application is only related to the act of censorship of material which has not already gone through a pre-airing official censorship process.

It is my intention to demonstrate, in the same way as researchers such as Morley and Lull have done, that television viewing in Pakistan does not occur in a social vacuum and it is because of this that we can consider a rules approach to television viewing relating to Muslim and Pakistani ideology and identity. When considering audience, probably the most prominent figure to have written on the topic is David Morley. His contributions to this subject have included *The Nationwide Audience* (1980) *Family Television* (1986) and *Television*,

*Audience and Cultural Studies* (1992) and these three books form the basis of Morley's innovative and progressive analysis of the television audience. Each publication (and intermittent articles) contains an analysis of his previous research, going on to point out the shortfalls before presenting new findings. A flaw with *The Nationwide Audience* which Morley himself points out in both his following publications, is that the informants were interviewed away from their homes and asked to watch the programme outside the usual viewing environment - the family context. It was this which encouraged Morley to undertake a further study, *Family Television*, in an attempt to examine more accurately the impact of programming within its natural viewing setting. Although the family is undoubtedly the most regular viewing environment, it is not the only one and this consequently affects patterns of the application of rules. Under the section of Group, Peer and Individual below, we attempt to demonstrate that whom one watches television with, if anyone, greatly affects the extent to which the rules of censorship are applied. In fact it *is* who one watches television with which constitutes the basis of the rules of self censorship.

Bearing in mind the accessibility of video and satellite programming to the elite it is essential, for any understanding of elite audiences in Pakistan, to consider the viewing techniques and mechanisms for the control of programming which has had no form of government or official censorship imposed<sup>1</sup>. In this chapter we consider the motivations and implications of these viewing techniques according to the context within which the programming is being viewed. In order to contextualise the rules of censorship, it is perhaps first useful to place television within the Pakistani home, as 'space' can frequently reveal of the importance of social phenomena.

## **Placing Television**

There has been, in recent years, a growing literature on the 'audience' in Europe and the United States and although the following examination of the audience comes from a different perspective to the majority of media studies television analysis, it is worth briefly contextualising television within the household in Pakistan in the same way as other writers have done.

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<sup>1</sup>With the exception of Pulse Global videos which are the official video distributors in Pakistan and have been mentioned in the previous chapter.

The situation regarding the position of the television in the Pakistani household is different from that of India and China as discussed by Lull in *China Turned On* (1991) and contributors, Yadava and Reddi, and Behl, to his volume *World Families Watch Television* (1988). In these countries televisions, so the authors tell us, are often the centre of the household, taking up pride of place and serving as the family focal point.

Notwithstanding class differences, the television set occupies a place of pride in the house.... Invariably, television is fixed in the *drawing room* of the house, where members of the household usually sit to relax and to receive outside visitors, if any. (Yadava and Reddi, 1988: 125 italics in original)

This is not dissimilar from Europe or America, where the television set will generally be placed in the living room which also frequently functions as a guest room. However, in the West there are frequently other (usually portable) sets which may be situated in other rooms such as bedrooms of the house, which are not generally accessible to visitors. This did not appear to be the case in Pakistan. During the eighteen months of my fieldwork, I never saw a television in the reception room reserved for guests and it was never on public display. This was not only the case with the elites but also with the middle class households with which I was familiar. Instead, televisions either occupied the family 'TV room' or was situated in the bedroom of the parents when there was no additional room available to reserve for the television.

One should take into consideration that, in the case of China, Lull is predominantly talking about families with much smaller houses than are to be found among the elite or the upper middle classes of Pakistan. While Lull (1991:56) tells us that many of the families he interviewed were limited to one or two rooms, in the case of the families to whom I refer, there were generally one or two reception rooms in addition to the family bedrooms. In the case where there was only the one reception room, this was reserved for entertaining guests. In such cases the television would usually be situated in the parents' bedroom, although in the second house in which I lived, the television was in the bedroom of the daughters. It was only in the case of more reception rooms that the television may be designated a room of its own. However, a house with a television room was required to be exceptionally large, as there

would need to be space, not only for a reception room for the entertainment of guests but, also one or two additional bedrooms to house overnight guests, which are frequent in Pakistan with relations often staying. This is particularly the case in Islamabad, as the majority of families have their roots elsewhere in Pakistan, and therefore the majority of their relations live in one of the other cities or a villages.

Perhaps, in part at least, because of the positioning of the television, getting to the stage of watching television with informants was a rather drawn out process, as one does not simply invite oneself into another's home and demand to watch television with the family, especially when the television is situated in the parents' bedroom. To become familiar with the 'natural' viewing environment took some time of becoming friends with people so that, when the television or video was put on, it was 'natural' for me to be there. My own preference for television or video viewing was vetoed on several occasions which, despite resulting in my viewing programmes that I did not particularly wish to watch, at least had the benefit of acknowledging that my presence was no longer taken into account more than anyone else's.

Patterns of programme preference were much the same as elsewhere in the world. Women tended to like to watch the dramas, whether Urdu PTV dramas or the English language ones on satellite television. The videos hired also followed similar patterns as elsewhere, with female informants frequently purporting to prefer romantic or comedy films in contrast to the male preference for action and adventure films. Of those forty seven of the fifty three informants who had access to videos and who completed the questionnaire in relation to video genre preference (twenty two of whom were male), only seven said that they watched romance films and only one of these seven was male. Men also invariably stated that they were interested in news, current affairs and sports programming which women often showed less interest in. Morley's 'crude kind of syllogism of masculine/feminine relationships to television' (1992: 156) fits equally as well to the Pakistani preferred viewing pattern.

**MASCULINE**

Activity

Factual programmes

Realistic fiction

**FEMININE**

Watching television

Fictional programmes

Romance

(Morley 1986: 166 and 1992: 156)

The similarities extend further between western and Pakistani audience viewing habits. In Pakistan too, mothers and sisters are more likely to watch programmes with their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons as a means of silent communication (Morley, 1986:36) than are the male members of the family. On one occasion when I went with friends to the television room to watch a programme, their brother was already sitting with his mother watching the cricket. The brother did not move when we came in but the mother turned and told us that they were sitting together watching the cricket, so we would have to come back later if we wanted to watch anything. Although the mother claimed to be a fan of cricket, it was not her usual choice of programming and her glances at her son and her comments told us that she was watching to be near to her son. Female viewers (especially mothers) would cede to the wishes of their husbands and sons if there was sport or news on television which they wished to watch. However, within the Pakistan context there is rarely more than one television per family<sup>2</sup> and therefore, rather than the father or son going elsewhere to watch a preferred programme, or indeed the mothers or sisters, the male members of the household may simply take control of the 'remote' and change the channel (see 'Remote' Control section below).

The amount of time that children watch the television is of concern to parents in Pakistan as it is elsewhere. Homework can serve as a restriction or incentive for television viewing in the same way as it does outside of Pakistan and informants told me that they frequently completed their homework while watching the television. As one informant put it

I study in from of the television because otherwise I don't feel like studying.

Or as another informant said

I watch television when I am studying because I concentrate better with noise around me. If it is too quiet I begin to daydream.

This too relates to the media studies findings that television watching is frequently accompanied by other activities. Of the fifty three people who completed my questionnaire only seventeen said that they did not do something else at the same time. A high proportion of the informants (twenty five) said that they often ate while watching television but other activities included, talking on the telephone or to other people in the room, doing homework, household chores,

<sup>2</sup>Within the elite joint family system, however, it may be the case that each couple and their children may have a television between them.

playing cards and doing crossword puzzles.

According to both Lull (1980) and Morley (1986, 1992), parental control of the television viewing of children amongst the middle classes and the upper middle classes in Britain is likely to be concept orientated, to use Lull's terminology, while the working class are more likely to be socio orientated. The distinction between the two categories is marked by the fact that concept orientated families encourage their children to question the ideas of others and express their own, while socio orientated families are more concerned that their children should get along with others and give into them if there is a conflict of opinion. Socio orientated families are likely to institute very little control over the amount of television watched by the children and when they watch, while concept orientated families are more inclined to regulate viewing patterns and content. It is not possible to make this distinction within Pakistan at present as television access is still limited to a relatively small percentage of the population who can afford the cost. However, it is possible to note that those people who do have access to television within Pakistan and are middle class, upper middle class and elite, appear to follow a concept orientated pattern of restricting the access of children to television. One female informant in her early twenties studying as a degree student at the College where I worked as Registrar, told me in an interview that her parents had decided against getting a satellite dish until the younger children in the family would be able to discriminate between right and wrong.

We don't have a satellite because I have a younger brother and sister at home. I am pretty mature for my age, right, so my parents know that if we had satellite at home I wouldn't get spoiled I wouldn't get influenced because I am pretty mature, my character has already developed, I know the way how to live in this society. But my younger brother and sister, they are pretty young, right, you know, and they think that satellite can poison their minds at such an age because they are young and immature, they don't know what's right, they don't know what's wrong and in our society ... I mean there are a few things which are considered bad, you know. For instance a girl shouldn't be going out on dates. I mean, you should talk to boys and have them as friends is something else but having a relationship and going out on dates and everything you know that is considered bad and everything and then obscenity and vulgarity, you are supposed to avoid all that. And so my parents think that if my younger brother and sister are

exposed to all that, right, you know, it will poison their minds and they will be on the wrong track that way and so they are waiting for them to mature. So that they are mature, so that they themselves can differentiate between what's right and what's wrong - being a Muslim and being a Pakistani.

A little under a year after this interview, however, I discovered that the above family had bought a satellite dish. However, this family had two television sets and the satellite connection was linked only to the television in the parents' bedroom, which still restricted the access to satellite for the younger children in the family.

Although I do not wish to dwell on this aspect of the audiences relationship to television, we can see from this brief examination of the place of television within the Pakistani household that viewing patterns are frequently similar to elsewhere in the world. For a more extensive discussion on the television's position and role within three families in Pakistan's Lahore, I would recommend Ahmed's (1983) ethnographic study.

The work of Morley and others continues to be carried out predominantly through the use of interviews and although his contributions are valuable and many of his findings can be equated with viewing patterns as they occur in Pakistan I would suggest that participant observation is essential to an understanding of the implementation and manipulation of social rules involved in televiewing. The circumstances for the application of parametric rules frequently require verification through observation as informants were often reluctant to acknowledge that they did not follow convention on some occasions. It was only after a protracted period of contact that informants became more open about the circumstances under which censorship practices altered.

### **Group, Peers and Individual**

Censorship patterns, according to the construction of the audience on particular viewing occasions, follow the parametric application of rules. Lull (1982) defines parametric rules by saying that

Parametric rules frame the interactive choice-making behaviours that are

conducted by social actors in order to accomplish immediate tasks. They serve no apparent purpose that exceed the immediate communication context. (Lull, 1982: 8)

The perceived necessity for censorship varies considerably according to who is in the room with whom and it is to this that we now turn. It is my contention that the ethnographic evidence allows us to construct a model of censorship practices according to the composition of the audience. This model is based on the audience in three viewing contexts: individual, peers and group. These audience constructions cover the possible viewing conditions within which Pakistani viewers may watch television and these same categories, I would suggest, are applicable outside of Pakistan and could provide a helpful comparative model in relation to ethnic minority and Muslim groups in the West.

'Group' refers to any collection of viewers comprising one or more variants of age, gender and status. The likelihood is that television viewers watching together will be friends or acquaintances of some sort and indeed, family members viewing television together constitute a group as, although they may be related, they will be of varying ages and sex. It is the group context which is most crucial to the consideration of censorship practices as it is here that we are provided with a blueprint for the model from which to work.

The boundaries of acceptability are expanded or contracted according to the construction of the watching group. Age, gender and status are variables which effect the composition of watching groups and, in turn, effect the censorship practices employed, or rather, the extent to which censorship is considered appropriate. Censorship for the group, therefore, must cater to the highest moral common denominator according to its members in much the same way as the official censorship of national broadcasts must do. On talking to a female friend in her early twenties about censorship, she stated that it was a matter of course and that everyone expected it. She said that if the person who was supposed to be doing the censoring fell asleep someone else immediately jumped up and grabbed the remote control in order to take over the job. She said it was embarrassing to have to sit through scenes of sexual intimacy and she did not want to suffer them, besides she did not think one missed anything of the plot by fast forwarding through them.

The term 'peer', in this context, is being used to refer to an audience made up of any number of

people who are associated in some way (usually through family ties or friendship) who are of equal age, sex, status.<sup>3</sup> This category specifically refers to people who are on relatively intimate terms with one another as, a stranger or acquaintance joining the peer group to watch television would likely change the boundaries of acceptability to which I will presently refer. Watching alone, of course, the individual is not obliged to cater to anybody else's notions of acceptability and therefore may censor programming only for his or her own benefit.

One must be cautious not to offend or break boundaries of acceptability of others and therefore it is almost always best to err on the side of modesty as would be the case with a lesser known person watching television in the peer context. There are no explicit penalties for these rules being broken but there may be consequences affecting a person's reputation which may lead to some form of social sanction. Not implementing censorship while watching television within a group may cause others to speculate on the moral character of the offender. Gossip is a powerful tool for the enforcement of convention and it is in this way, at least in part, that people may be forced to conform within certain circumstances. It was not uncommon to hear people comment disapprovingly about liberal attitudes and, as a consequence, distance themselves from the offending parties as they too may find their own reputations tarnished by association with the individuals.<sup>4</sup> Peers would expect to have a common boundary of acceptability with the other members or at least be aware if anyone amongst them was more conservative. As a consequence there would be no grounds for gossip as the implementation of censorship rules would be (silently) negotiated.

Self censorship of satellite television and video is the reaction by an individual, peers or group, to the confrontation with an 'other' and consequently an acknowledgement of the self. The social identities of the viewers as Muslims and Pakistanis form the boundaries of acceptability and are being utilised to enforce self censorship. Therefore an awareness of the social identity boundaries are being brought into play. The elite are forced to deal with the confrontation of the international other on a more regular basis than the majority of the population as they often have greater access to the international media and they handle this confrontation in different ways.

Rejecting certain programmes or channels due to their content is one form of self-censorship.

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<sup>3</sup>The boundaries of 'equal status' in this case extend specifically to status, gender and age.

<sup>4</sup>The affects of gossip have been briefly discussed in previous chapters.

Some channels are avoided altogether due to content, but others are avoided due to origin. An example of this is that a number of my informants said that they preferred to avoid Indian satellite network channels and videos, at least partially, on the grounds of their dislike of 'the Indians' and a feeling of disloyalty to their nation if they watched Indian programming.

On answering a question in relation to the hiring of Indian videos on my Questionnaire (see Appendix III, page 5), one male informant in his late teens maintained that he 'Strongly condemn[ed] 'anything' Indian.' On an occasion when the informant came into my office at the College for something shortly after I had received his completed questionnaire, I brought up this subject with him and he told me that his father had very strong views on the subject of India (with which my informant said he agreed) and therefore his father had taught him never to watch Indian films or channels. My informant's father was a Commander in the Navy and therefore had been involved in wars against India. Another informant whose father was a retired General from the Army also made comments relating the watching of Indian programming to disloyalty to Pakistan. Other informants who came from different backgrounds also said that they did not allow the watching of, or were not allowed to watch, Indian films but they were most often connected with the bureaucracy. From these examples it would appear that those Pakistanis who were against the viewing of Indian programming for nationalistic reasons were more likely to have connections, either directly or indirectly, with the official establishment of Pakistan and were therefore more personally aware of the antagonism which exists between the two countries.

In the same way as the western media has its own orientation towards the news, so too do the Indian channels (as well as the Pakistani ones as we have already seen) and this was acknowledged, to some extent, by an avoidance of Indian news broadcasts. During the course of my fieldwork,. I did not meet anyone who ever watched Indian news programming, it was either PTV, BBC or CNN. However, the attitude towards entertainment programming was more mixed and despite the above attitude by some, others voiced a preference for watching Indian satellite channels and videos rather than Western ones because of the closeness of the language and because the programming is perceived to be culturally closer to them than the American channels.

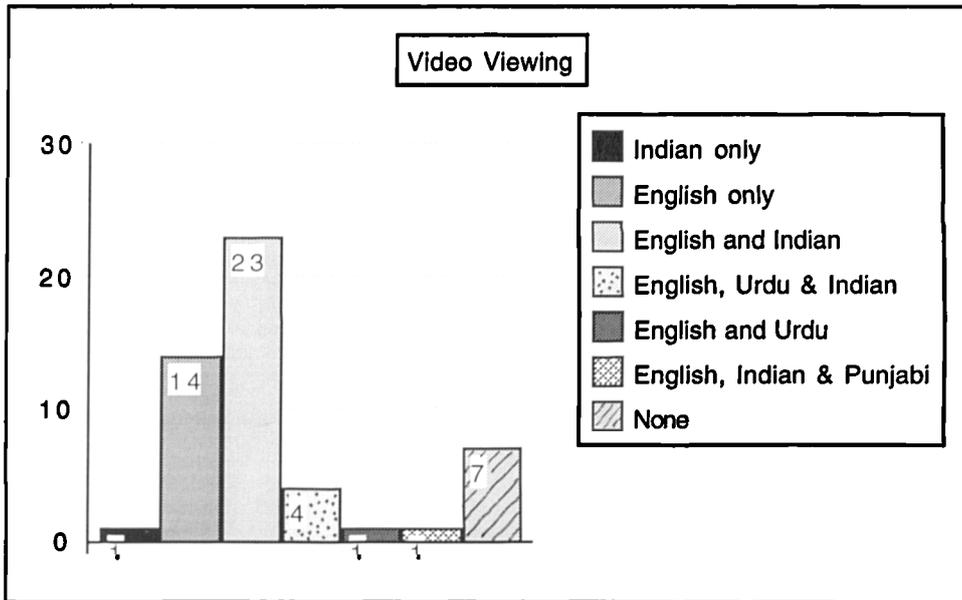


Table 7.1 - Video Viewing (language): (total sample informants: 53)

As can be seen from Table 7.1 the largest number of people from the sample taken, did watch Indian films on video at some time, although notably fewer watched them as regularly as English language movies. The main emphasis of Pakistani viewing of Indian programming (according to my informants) was in relation to the Indian film and music channels which contained no political orientation, but instead had many similarities to the Pakistani culture. Pakistani and Indian films are from a similar genre where the emphasis is on music and dance, the difference being that it was generally accepted that the Indian productions were of a superior quality, if a little more risqué than would be allowed in a Pakistani film.

There are various factors which dictate when, if and how channels are watched, whether it be of Indian origin or western. Family viewing time, when television is to be watched with a group of mixed age and gender, is a likely time for self-censorship based especially on vulgarity. As one male informant in his early twenties told me, if there was anyone outside his own age group or gender watching he was more likely to censor.

If my sister or my parents, or elders are also watching [the television] usually if there is any on-screen nudity [we self-censor].

This is similar to the pronouncement of the Annan Committee in relation to family viewing

habits in Britain.

People watch and listen in the family circle ... so that violations of the taboos of language and behaviour, which exist in every society are witnessed by the whole family ... in each others' presence. These violations are more deeply embarrassing and upsetting than if they had occurred in the privacy of a book, in a club, cinema or theatre. (Annan Committee 1977:246)

In the Pakistani context there are virtually no clubs and the embarrassment would remain the same in the cinema or theatre if there were mixed company. One reason why the cinema, with its more liberal film policies, is commonly regarded as a largely male domain is because the content is frequently regarded as inappropriate for family viewing. However, the above sentiment in relation to family television holds true and it is for this reason that programme and channel selection may be more marked in these circumstances.

Being a Muslim is the most significant criteria for self-censorship and it is a significant factor in relation to the situation within which one watches the television. It is Islam which dictates modesty, especially between the sexes and therefore the circumstances of viewing television dictate the extent to which censorship techniques are employed. It is also apparently assumed that members of an older generation will be more conservative than the younger viewers and therefore censorship will be heavier with inter-generational television viewing. Despite this, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, young children form the baseline for the official Censorship Code indicating a discrepancy between the criteria for official and self-censorship. An explanation for this apparent contraction could be that the older generation are regarded as *knowing* what is unacceptable viewing, while the children must be *instructed* in the art of discriminating between acceptable and unacceptable programming.

There are some scenes which can be easily marked off as being contrary to Islamic regulations and therefore are generally acknowledged as appropriate for censorship purposes. However, peers and the individual can impose personal discretion over the extent to which censorship should or should not be applied. There are apparently relatively large gulfs between different people and their criteria of acceptability.

About three months into my fieldwork in Pakistan I spent one Friday watching a video and chatting with a friend. Her mother joined us at lunch time as we talked about films we had seen. I had been in Pakistan long enough to know that people censored on certain occasions but not long enough to have learned all the intricacies why and when (the how was rather easier to assess). My friend's mother told me that she had watched 'The Piano'<sup>5</sup> because it had won numerous Oscars but had subsequently needed to have "the whole thing in fast forward" referring to the film as "soft porn". I had not known the family very long and had only met my friend's mother on a couple of previous occasions, therefore I was quite startled when it seemed that she seemed to be holding me responsible for the content of 'The Piano'. As a consequence of the required censorship, she was unimpressed that such a film had received so many Oscars and, apart from the role of the little girl, she did not like the actors, especially, she said, Holly Hunter. Bearing in mind the role which Holly Hunter played in the film as a woman who would sell her body for a piano, it was hardly surprising that she was the target of the majority of the enmity from my informant. It had been the Oscars which had encouraged this informant to watch the film, as she had supposed that it must be good because it had won so many awards. However, when the informant had watched the film she found that her basis for watching it was ill-founded as, although the film was considered good by Western standards, it could never be considered good (according to this informant) by Pakistani Muslim standards because it contained too much sex.

On the other hand, this opinion cannot be taken in isolation as there were other examples of people who had watched films which, according to the same criteria, would have been far from acceptable. One of the national newspapers had given a review of 'The Piano' and recommended it when it was due to appear on the satellite channel Sky Movies.

Visually stunning, 'The Piano' is not a film to be missed. (*The News on Friday* - 26.1 1996: p13)

Vulgarity is frequently and almost inevitably the subject of self censorship. According to the Censorship Codes as required to be enforced through the official censorship channels, there should be a control over the violence content of programmes. My observations suggested that the same care and concern was not followed in connection with the self censorship of violence. While I was frequently a witness to the censorship of scenes of sexual intimacy, I was not

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<sup>5</sup>Dir. Jane Campion, 1993 (Aust)

exposed either to the censoring of excessive violence or the complaint of there being too much violence on the satellite television channels or videos. The Brazilian example described by Kottak and mentioned in the previous chapter concentrates censorship on the violence rather than sexual intimacy (Kottak, 1990). As can be seen from Table 7.2, the majority of sample informants, both male and female, preferred thriller, suspense or action films (all coming under the heading of 'dramas', over any other category. Some explanation can be given in relation to the preferred avoidance of sex scenes and hence the preferred avoidance of romance stories which are like to require a higher degree of censorship along these lines. One should bear in mind that, within the Pakistani context, kissing constitutes a sex scene. The video shops provide some guide to the different content of films by referring to 'romances' and 'love stories', a difference I discovered upon hiring a 'love story' which I had mistakenly expected to be a romance. 'Romances', as was subsequently explained to me, were, for the most part, 'clean' entertainment and suitable for family viewing, while 'love stories' contained sex scenes with a greater or lesser degree of explicit material.

Most films, regardless of genre, require some degree of censorship and therefore an alternative to 'avoidance censorship', whereby potentially inappropriate programming is avoided altogether, is to employ the remote control as a censor device. This is a common practice in Pakistan. The remote control is used for channel switching or, in the case of video, fast forwarding. When a scene which is deemed inappropriate reaches the screen the remote control is used to eliminate it as quickly as possible.

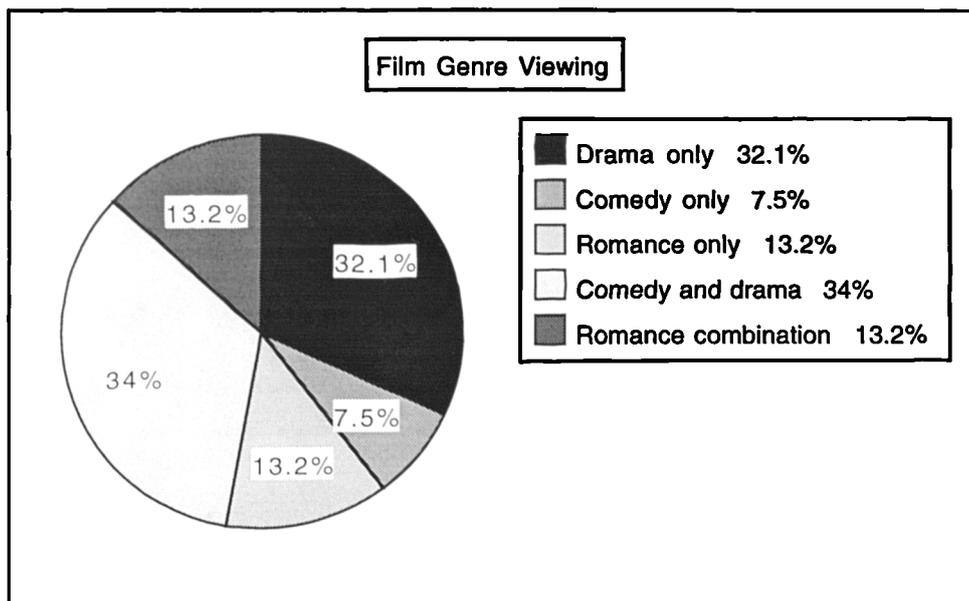


Table 7.2 - Film Genre Viewing: Sample of 53 informants

The video cassette recorders seemed to be used relatively infrequently for time-shift viewing<sup>6</sup>, from observation and conversation it appeared that the television was watched when something was worth viewing (or the television was watched for the sake of it) or alternatively a video was hired to fill the gap when there was nothing of interest on the television. On occasions when I suggested that a programme missed due to some visitors or other interruption to otherwise designated television viewing, could have been recorded and watched later, the reply was generally along the lines of 'I couldn't be bothered with that'. The VCR's primary function therefore seemed to be to watch films hired from the local video store. In this respect, therefore, the VCR could be seen as an equivalent of the cinema without the problems of having to view programming in the public domain, especially for women. It also provided the opportunity to watch alternative (and uncensored) programming than would be available through cinema going etc. It also allowed for social occasions with friends (peers), hiring films for entertainment, or the pretext of entertainment. In peer audience circumstances the censorship of kissing scenes was invariably abandoned, although it was compulsory in group situations. I would suggest that it was largely the embarrassment factor which, at least in part, perpetuated the censorship of such scenes while watching in a group. A peer group of women watching together and seeing a kiss would not be as embarrassed as if a man had been present. The same applies to the costumes, or lack of them. A woman's body would not be a reason for embarrassment between women but it may be if a man were present. This would be one explanation for the switching of channels on one occasion which I witnessed.

On this occasion I was watching 'Baywatch' on Star Plus with two sisters in the television room. The house was large and had a huge reception room for guests as well as an adjoining dining room which had double doors to extend the reception room should more space be required. As this house had more than enough rooms for entertaining and housing overnight guests, it was possible to have a separate room marked off for the television. The television room itself had a three piece suite as well as floor cushions for sitting and also housed the majority of the family's books as well as cupboards for games. We were watching the television when one of the family's male servants came into the room with our lunch. As he entered the room the younger of the sisters grabbed the remote control and quickly turned the channel. On being asked by her sister to explain this unexpected and apparently unwarranted censorship she said that the servant should not be exposed to the sight of women in swimsuits.

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<sup>6</sup>The recording of programming showing on television at one time and viewed at another.

However, an explanation for this censorship could be looked at from different perspectives, in that embarrassment may have been a factor as the servant was male and we were an all female audience but, on the other hand, the censorship could be viewed protection from exposure to such visual material. Although older than the two sisters the servant was, socially, inferior and it was not uncommon to hear comments which suggested that the lower classes needed protecting from themselves. Whatever the motivation or justification for the censorship, the composition of the audience had changed from 'peers' to 'group' and consequently censorship was deemed to be required.

As we could see also from the above example, not all peers have the same notion of what should or should not be censored. I would suggest that the questioning of the action in this case was due to the nominal position of the servant, however. If the father or brother had entered the room, I would have expected the television to be turned over with the full (non-verbal) agreement of the sister but as servants are rarely given much acknowledgement or notice, in this instance, it was more a matter of surprise that the man had been taken into consideration.

The composition of the individual audience is self-evident but its implications must be considered if we are to have a complete model of audience interaction with the electronic media. If someone is watching satellite or a video alone, then the *actual* censorship practised on that occasion will be relevant only to the criteria of acceptability according to that particular person's personal tolerance.

The individual audience member cannot alter the rules of mediated interaction but can only choose to accept or reject the messages as they exist. The proven tendency is for most audience members to stay within the prescribed parameters and exercise choices from the range of allowable alternatives. (Lull, 1982:11)

Needless to say, it was not possible for me (or anyone else) to *know* what it was that individuals were actually censoring in circumstances of solitary viewing. One could speculate that women would self-censor more diligently than men. It was certainly true that women maintained that they censored (at least to some extent) when alone, while male informants tended to be rather more vague about their censorship practices for themselves. However, I

have no evidence for any such statements. It is also true that, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, violence is less objectionable than vulgarity and the 'men's' action films frequently contained fewer sex scenes than do the romance films. As a consequence, the women would be required to censor more frequently than the men simply because of their choice of films.

However, it is equally relevant what people say they censor as, although they may not follow the criteria themselves when alone, we are then able to establish what it is that people feel they *should* be censoring. A cartoon published in *Dawn* (8.7.96: 22) clearly shows that, while obscene programming is disapproved of, given the opportunity, people will watch them (including Maulvis, as shown in this cartoon reproduced in Plate 7).



**'I hate such obscene programmes.'**

Plate 7 - 'I hate such obscene programmes' (*Dawn* 8.7.96: 22)

It is generally acknowledged that censorship required for oneself alone is different from that required within a group or peer situation and therefore people will watch films such as 'Basic Instinct'<sup>7</sup> and 'Threesome'<sup>8</sup> alone while they may not watch them in the company of

<sup>7</sup>Dir. Paul Verhoeven, 1992 (US)

others. On an occasion when I had gone to spend a weekend with a friend in Rawalpindi, we watched, or at least started to watch, 'Threesome'. My friend had been recommended this film by two different people, one male and one female and so she suggested that we watch the film. I had my doubts about the film's content, not only by the title but also by the fact that it was called a 'sex comedy'. We were told by the video shop assistant that the film was rated as a PG13. Unfortunately the remote control for the television we were watching was missing so, for the milder scenes my friend covered her face with her hands. However, for one part of the film, she got up to fast forward the video manually. We only got about 20 minutes through the video before we gave up on it - it was proving to be more trouble than it was worth. When we took the video back to the shop to exchange it for another one, the shop assistant gave a wry little smile when my friend told him that the film was not a PG13. I rather wondered if it was not a standard line to tell people that films were PG13 which were obviously 18 certificate and he liked to see who brought the films back without watching them and who watched them anyway.<sup>9</sup> This incident took place after I had been in Pakistan a little over three months and I was still unfamiliar with the different viewing patterns according to the audience construction and therefore I found it strange that people in Pakistan would actually watch such films, or rather, admit that they had watched them, when they were predominantly sex, orientated and it was such unacceptable viewing. As an informant told me.

If I sit with a group of friends we don't censor, but certain rock videos have to be censored with my grandparents or someone like that around.<sup>10</sup>

Another informant explained that he self-censored at the stage that he rented a video in order not to be forced to impose too much censorship while watching the film.

I tend to self-censor while choosing a film to rent. If only my brother and I are to watch, then I would go for something like Reservoir Dogs<sup>11</sup> (ie a violent, adult-themed independent film). If my parents/sister are also going to watch, then I would get something mainstream Hollywood or Merchant-

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<sup>8</sup>Dir. Andrew Fleming, 1994 (US)

<sup>9</sup>It is only pirated films which keep their certificates such as PG13, as these are not applicable to official Pakistan-bought and aired films, as such films are all censored to a U certificate level.

<sup>10</sup>In the majority of cases friends will be made up of members of the same sex and therefore gender differences would not be taken into account in this group context. This particular informant was a young unmarried girl.

<sup>11</sup>Dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1991 (US)

Ivory type of film (little or no strong language/nudity/violence).

It was entirely possible, if not likely, that representations of personal acceptability of programmes watched in private were tailored, at least to some degree, according to what was believed to be 'required censorship' as a Muslim. Therefore, in presenting perceived criteria for censorship to me, I was not necessarily being told what these people were censoring but rather, what they believed to be necessary censorship for others. The same informant who switched over Baywatch in the previous example told me that she was more aware of her identity, both as a Pakistani and as a Muslim, and of respective notions of acceptability, when I was in the room, implying that the censorship was heavier in my presence. This was highlighted when her sister, after having returned from abroad, complained about the over-conscientiousness and the unnecessary extent of the self-censorship her sister was imposing.

There was, of course, the argument which was recounted to me that, as an individual, the viewer was able to cope with the material presented over the television and therefore they were not being affected by the programme content. It was maintained that a knowledge and acceptance of Islamic ideology could allow the viewer to distance him or herself from the vulgarities of the images. The viewer held a strength of conviction which denied the programme content the ability to effect the viewer with secular, violent and vulgar material. A portion from an interview held with a professional and well-educated 30 year old male informant from a Punjabi landowning family illustrates this point:

Q. When you are personally watching the television or video, do you censor?

A. I used to at one stage. Yes, my parents taught me that when I was growing up.

Q. But you don't any more?

A. Even if I do it, it's always just out of ... let's see now ... I probably do it and not do it because it doesn't make any difference to me. Even if I am watching something, if I don't want it to go in it won't go in. I have reached that stage of life. So you could call it some kind of censorship but it is not the kind of censorship you mean, that is to turn off. It can be turned off but in here [makes a gesture to his head] not out there. So yes, in that respect, yes I do impose self censorship of a kind and it is not just to do with the kind of things that are censored

on PTV for example. Basically they just censor sex in Pakistan. To me it doesn't make any difference but I do censor certain other things.

Q. So you do sit through a sex scene but you will censor other stuff?

A. No, no, no. Even if I sit through a sex scene that doesn't mean I am taking it in.

Q. So over the years you have learnt to 'switch off' [in your mind] then?

A. Exactly, you have to if you watch the media these days, otherwise you will take too much in which [laughs] is not too good for you. By that I mean that I am not afraid to take things in but this is a kind of mental 'switch off'/'switch on' that one develops if one has a strong personality in any case. Everybody is influenced by things - by what you hear, from what you see, from what you feel but then one develops a personality of one's own, then one tends to filter those things.

Regardless of the viewing circumstances, whether viewers are watching in a group, with peers, or alone, there is always an acknowledgement that there are rules to be learnt and followed. These rules are taught to children by example and there is a restriction on what they may watch until they have learnt what is *allowed* to be watched and how.

As we have seen, the remote control is an important tool for the watching - and censoring - of satellite television and video. In the section which follows we take a brief but specific look at the 'control' aspects of the remote.

### **'Remote' control**

Since its introduction, the remote control has become an increasingly important part of the household furniture. In the film 'While You Were Sleeping'<sup>12</sup> it was said that one of the advantages of living alone meant that one had "Sole possession of the remote - very important". Of course, in the majority of cases, particularly in Pakistan where it is extremely uncommon for individuals to live alone and many live in the joint family system, people do not have 'sole

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<sup>12</sup>Dir. Jim Turteltaub, 1995 (US)

possession of the remote' and therefore it can become a symbol of power. From the questionnaire which some of my informants completed, and from my own observations, there is generally a hierarchy of 'remote' - control.

Gender divisions frequently become apparent in the power struggle for the 'remote'. Often a general scramble for the remote exists, but there is usually an override facility whereby the parents or the elder son/brother may enjoy control. This power has different aspects to it. There is the ability to make the deciding decisions as to which programmes should be watched. Possession of the remote also allows 'channel surfing'. Most important, however, was the responsibility for carrying out the censorship. One could make links to the often referred to notion that men are believed to be morally, intellectually and physically superior to women and consequently vested with authority over women and charged with their protection (eg. Mernissi, 1985). However, I think this would be a rather narrow and misleading perspective, particularly bearing in mind that we are talking, in this instance, about a liberal and educated elite. According to information from my informants, the main criteria for charge of the remote control would seem to be awareness of what is and is not considered acceptable viewing and reliability with regard to catering to the highest moral common denominator. As such, this would generally then be any older member of the family who was aware of the religious and cultural confines of social acceptability. On one occasion when I stayed over at a friend's house we were required to watch 'The Bold and the Beautiful'<sup>13</sup> with her grandmother who was a regular viewer of the programme but who was too ill to turn the television on and censor when necessary. The Bold and the Beautiful seemed to be one of the few remaining pleasures of the old lady, although I am not sure the extent to which she was able to enjoy it. Her sight and hearing were both failing and she was aided in everything by a servant. The censorship of the programmes was the only thing that was not entrusted to the servant, possibly because of her inability to understand English. Although there were other (male and/or older) members of the household who could have fulfilled these censorship requirements it was considered unnecessary and my informant was trusted to comply with the rules.

I would suggest that the 'remote' was often taken into the charge of the male members of the family, not by any sense that they were protecting the women from themselves and their sexuality, but rather because the structure of Pakistani culture allows that the men have first claim to most things, should they wish. Having control of the 'remote' allows the possessor to

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<sup>13</sup>An American daytime soap opera

be the one to make the decisions in relation to what should be watched on the television, therefore, if he has control of the remote, allowing husband/father's choice to take priority. Within Pakistan men are household heads and possession of the remote could be seen as a means of articulating this position. As Morley has said

The position of power held by most men ... is based not simply on the biological fact of being men but rather on a social definition of a masculinity. ... Hence, perhaps physical possession of the channel-control device has symbolic importance to them. (Morley, 1992:148)

Morley dedicates relatively little space to the consideration of the use of the remote control but I would suggest that the characteristics of remote control use within Morley's British sample can be paralleled to the use of the remote control as applied in Pakistan.

The implications of censorship and the stipulation of what may or may not be watched in relation to acceptable and unacceptable material is only one consideration embedded in other, more significant, power implications in relation to possession of the remote control. As Morley, following Lull, states

Programme-selection decisions often are complicated interpersonal communication activities involving inter-familial status relations, temporal context, the number of sets available, and rule-based communications conventions. (Morley, 1992:141 and Lull, 1982:802).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we can see that television watching is set within the family dynamics as well as those of the large Pakistani social structure. Interpretations of identity are constant throughout the viewing process. The national government is conscious of what is being presented (as shown in the previous two chapters), and the viewer is conscious of what is being received. Through the process of censorship (whether pre- or post-production), the programming is subjected to a form of Islamisation or, perhaps more accurately, Pakistani'isation, whereby it is made acceptable, at least to some degree, to all parties within the viewing context.

According to Beyer

The outside/inside distinction readily at hand for reinforcing the internal moral codes of communal, and hence territorial, societies becomes at least difficult to maintain over the long run in a world of virtually instant global communication, itself a consequence of institutional specialization. (Beyer, 1990:384)

While censorship varies in its interpretations, its enforcement in some form or another, both through the official codes and personal self-censorship, reinforces the distinctions between ethnic, national and religious groups. 'Instant communications' does not collapse difference, but rather has the potential to expose and reinforce it.

People may draw on these transnational symbols in their struggle to define, test, or transform the boundaries they experience in their lives. (Davis, 1989:17)

The rules approach to the viewing of satellite television and video provides us with important insight into Pakistani Muslim social identity. It is worth reiterating at this point, although it should be apparent by now, that self censorship is, ideologically, a long way from what is happening in the censorship process. It is the '*other*' which is being deleted and it is for *other* people - younger, older or of a different gender - that it is being deleted.

# *Chapter Eight*

## CONCLUSION

The content of the media is not neutral or self-sufficient, but is generated through interpretation of and by society and social ideology. Islam and nationalism are aspects of social knowledge which are intrinsically tied into all levels of the Pakistani social world. Media productions are not only interpreted through Islam and nationalism, but are also created through them. The productions must fit into the society where they are being presented, in this case Pakistan, whether or not they were produced there.

One does not have to look very far before being faced with media presented arguments of *the media's* role (especially television's) in, and indeed instigation of, social change. Throughout the course of this thesis we have come across a number of references to articles which have pointed to the erosion of religious and cultural norms and values as a consequence of the importation of television programming from abroad received via national television channels, video, cable and satellite. Access to foreign programming, with its presentation of foreign (and frequently opposing) ideologies, it is suggested, undermines pre-existing, national and religious ideologies. Such a philosophy must inevitably lead to the conclusion that, removal of

this instrument of foreign ideological invasion would result in the continuation of Pakistani religious and national ideology. Unaffected by outside influence, change would no longer be an issue.

Needless to say, this is a falsehood. Change is a fundamental part of all societies predating the introduction of instruments of mass media. However, it would be equally foolish to declare that relatively widespread access to the mass media has no effect upon religious and national ideologies of a nation. Change may be inevitable in every society, but such changes are influenced by knowledge spread through the media. Changes have occurred within South Asian society. Pakistan itself was created in 1947, and has changed administrations several times since. These various governments have changed and adapted media policy and presentation in order to suit their own interests. However, we have also noted that those changes have always retained a veneer of Islam ideology.

'The media' is in the nature of a two-headed beast - the one is empty and impotent, the other is penetrative and powerful. At its most basic level the media is simply the technological ability for mass communication, an instrument through which news and entertainment can be passed to any number of people who have the financial capability of buying a newspaper, television, VCR or satellite dish. However, these mechanisms are nothing in their own right: they say nothing and do nothing without outside input. The power of the media is not derived in and of itself but rather is an instrument through which, when harnessed by others, can convey information. Televisions and newspapers are only as good as *their* content. Programmes are made and watched, stories are written and read, all through a process of selection, composition and viewing which are carried out by governments, media organisations, the general public and events which are effected and influenced by the time and space within which they exist.

A phrase which perhaps best encapsulates the theory and ethnography portrayed through the study of the role of media presented in this thesis is: public production and private consumption. The perspectives used to illustrate the mechanisms of public production and private consumption throughout the course of this thesis have been that of Islam and Pakistani nationalism. These ideologies hold a significant position within Pakistani society, intrinsically tied to one another and permeating both public and private spheres. We have seen how, through the media, these ideologies have been portrayed, influenced, manipulated and utilised from three different but overlapping perspectives: governments, media institutions and

Islamabad's elite.

The print and electronic media are created and interpreted through what people 'know', and that 'knowledge' is derived, at least in part, through an understanding of what it means to be a Pakistani and what it is to be a Muslim. While knowledge is, in some respects, created through what is presented within media productions, the majority is filtered through a knowledge of society as it is encountered during day to day experiences. A former Managing Director of PTV commented during the course of our interview on the discrepancies between the media presentation and reality of news and current affairs within Pakistan. He maintained that experience and knowledge cannot be undermined by contradictory media presentations. He stated that

In terms of the current affairs and the news programmes it [censorship] brings every succeeding government into disrepute with the people because the people are not fools, they know perfectly well what is going on.

Like change, notions of censorship are frequently represented through opposing perspectives: it is universally good or unequivocally bad. These two apparently contradictory positions are, however, frequently presented in relation to quite different media content.

Censorship is often referred to as good, or necessary, when referring to entertainment programming while the censorship of news and current affairs programming or articles is internationally frowned upon (a quick flick through the web sites of Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org>) or Index on Censorship ([http://www.oneworld.org/index\\_oc/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/index_oc/index.html)) will illustrate this point ). The origins of these perspectives are, at their most fundamental level, that the censorship of entertainment originates from social and cultural norms and values embedded in, and crucial to, the society within which the media productions are being presented. Consequently, the censorship of 'entertainment' is not simply a matter of not allowing the viewer or reader access to particular types of material but is rather the following and reinforcing of the values of the society as they exist - a prohibition of change, at least in this respect. Without such censorship, there would be an undermining of society's social and political foundations.

On the other hand, the censorship of current affairs and political information is seen as depriving the public of their rights: their right to know what is happening in the world around them, the ability to formulate political opinions and so forth. While the censorship of entertainment originates from social knowledge and serves to reinforce social identity, the censorship of political information is thought to undermine society by withholding information needed to reinforce and legitimate social knowledge.

Of course, this simple division between entertainment censorship = good/political censorship = bad neglects a number of considerations crucial to an understanding of the findings presented throughout the course of this thesis. For example, we have seen reference to a number of different interpretations of acceptable and unacceptable viewing/reading (or censorship). The occasions when censorship is required or the degree to which it should be applied vary, for example, according to the construction of the audience. There are also issues of how censorship should be enforced even after it has been established that particular circumstances require it. According to my informants, in the Pakistani context nobody disputed that the censorship of 'vulgarity' was necessary. There were, however, vastly different opinions on the degree to which it should be applied, as the example of 'The Piano' demonstrated, and which methods were most appropriate.

It would appear that public opinion within Pakistan (as well as internationally) is far more united in relation to the condemnation of the implementation of political censorship. As we have seen throughout this thesis (especially in Chapters 3 and 5) much discussion and comment has been made in relation to this subject. While I am not suggesting that much is not justified, I would point out that these objections are perhaps a little constricted. For example, there was little or no condemnation of the lack of Indian television productions aired through Pakistani national channels. Banning Indian programming may have been predominantly presented as originating from cultural differences, but the restriction was deeply embedded in the political sphere. As we saw in Chapter 6 however, a number of informants felt this to be legitimate censorship. There are also news items which are withheld from publication and presentation through a desire to *protect* people from knowledge which may be harmful in relation to the wider political picture.

It has been the intention of this thesis not to contend that censorship, or change, is good or bad, but rather to identify the ideology behind its implementation. Why some censorship (and

change) is considered good and others not is deeply embedded in a nation's social identity. In the case of Pakistan, this is inextricably linked with national identity as a Pakistani, which, in turn, and perhaps more importantly, is itself linked with Islam.

Entertainment or political television programming and newspaper articles are being presented to and received by a Pakistani population - an elite population - whose experiences and knowledge extend well beyond the reaches of media influence. There is a power attached to, and associated with, the media and it is this which has formed the bedrock for analysis of the interpretation of Islam and nationalism through the media within Pakistan as discussed through the course of this thesis.

### **Power and Influence: Governments, Media Institutions and Individuals**

We have examined three concentric perspectives of power and influence over the media: the government, media institutions and Islamabad's elite. Each group has a power and influence over the media and over the other two groups. In each case, this is restricted by the power and influence which the other two groups have over the media and it. Each group has a combination of overt and covert strategies regarding the acceptance or rejection of media presentations whether nationally or internationally produced. These strategies range from Acts of Parliament to acts of violence and include various other mechanisms which operate in between, such as for example, programme and newspaper selection.

We may take, for example, the government institutions. At election time, political parties present themselves and their manifestoes to the public and ask the people to elect their party to political office so that they may represent and fulfil the wishes of the population. Governments are elected on the basis that they offer to undertake tasks stipulated in their manifestoes and desired by the nation's people. Ultimately, therefore, in winning an election the government will become the servant of the people. In fact we talk of 'incumbent' governments thereby making explicit reference to their obligation and duty to the nation. Military dictatorships too, for example, are for the benefit of the nation and its population: an ineffectual or corrupt government is ousted from power by a military force which maintains that it is more able to meet the needs and wishes of the country's population.

When considering the role of the government as highlighted above, we can be in little doubt that the Prime Minister and Ministers are all servants of the people. However, one could be forgiven for thinking that the opposite would often seem to be more accurate in that the government controls the people. Upon election, the government is handed control of the nation and, by extension, its population. It is the government that decides which political, economic and even social course the nation should take. Following this line of reasoning, therefore, not only is the government *not* the servant of the people but the lives of the population are directed and controlled by the government.

Examples can be found to corroborate either of the above perspectives from research presented within this thesis. However, as we can further see from the findings of this thesis, no one perspective allows us to understand adequately the role of the interpretation of Islam and nationalism through the print and electronic media of Pakistan. Throughout the course of this section we outline some of the powers, controls and restrictions placed upon and imposed by, not only the government, but also the media institutions and Pakistan's elite. In the same way that the government can be seen as either the servant or the controller of the people, so too can media institutions and the elite be seen as powerful or impotent. It depends upon one's perspective.

The governments of Pakistan have been able to impose restrictions, make stipulations as to what is and is not acceptable viewing and maintain a high public profile over nationally aired programming. We have seen in Chapter 5 for example, how governments are able to ensure maximum exposure of themselves and minimum exposure of the opposition in their attempts to present themselves as the only party concerned with the welfare of the nation. The Security, Law and Order section of the Television Censorship Code has also been used to restrict coverage of the opposition parties and possible comment against current administrations. As Rana Sheikh said:

The conduct of the opposition in the National Assembly is negative and the opposition is not condemning terrorism in Karachi. That is why the opposition cannot be given coverage on the television. (*The News on Friday* - 18.8.95)

Censorship of the newspaper industry had a different focus. Acts of Parliament such as the

Press and Publications Ordinance 1960 (1963) instituted during the Martial Law Administration of General Ayub Khan (discussed in Chapter 3) were imposed chiefly in order to restrict comment against the government of the time.

While the governments may be able to restrict the access of other political groups to the media, their own power is still limited. National news and entertainment newspapers and television programming go through additional influence and interpretation by the Pakistani public and viewers and readers do not simply accept what they see and read. They, too, utilise their faculties of understanding to interpret the media content to which they are exposed. Within Pakistan the governments are thought to have the most significant proportion of power in respect of the media presentation of symbolism and terminology which are used to support their own power base. There is, as we have seen, some truth in such a conclusion. However, it is the private consumption of the media which impedes the pervasiveness of the government power. There is a power attached to the position of public office, but this is restricted by the power of acceptance or rejection and interpretation held by the public. The people in power are allowed the opportunity to present how *they* want society to be. Those who have control over the media potentially have the opportunity to dictate, to some extent, what the viewer or reader *know*, but not necessarily how they understand that knowledge. As Herman and Chomsky have pointed out, the receivers of this 'propaganda' are not necessarily blind to the manipulation media presentations are being processed through.

In countries where the levers of power are in the hands of a state bureaucracy, the monopolistic control over the media, often supplemented by official censorship, makes it clear that the media serve the ends of a dominant elite. (Herman and Chomsky 1994(1988):1)

This perspective is supported by one of my informants who maintained that

One can argue that when the slant is so obvious it is better, because at least one knows that the information is partial, rather than have a situation where the bias is subtle ... and the people perceive the network as being fair and impartial.

Indeed, many of the elite turn to international news broadcasts (as well as entertainment

programmes) because of this awareness and consequent rejection of politically orientated propaganda as we have seen in Chapter 5 and highlighted by the comment of a professional male in his late twenties who told me that,

I would watch BBC or CNN but surely not national news. National news is full of useless government news and news about Prime Minister Benazir.

However, it is at this point that the viewer may fall into the opposite trap, as suggested above, of being exposed to propaganda which is far more subtle. Information passed through channels such as BBC and CNN is frequently hardly identifiable as biased and indeed may not always contain any bias. As a consequence, viewers may come to accept *all* BBC and CNN news content as *fact*. Ultimately, therefore, by too liberally exerting its power of the national television services the governments of Pakistan have regularly caused viewers to turn elsewhere for their information relating to current affairs. As a result, any power derived through media presentation is transferred from the hands of the national government into the hands of foreign governments. Indeed, despite the restriction of political presentations in relation to national politics, the government has allowed a national channel (STN) to broadcast BBC and CNN satellite transmissions on terrestrial television. This, as has been mentioned in Chapter 5, has raised protest as,

The government was blamed for lending a television to the Americans to propagate their culture and the anti-Islamic propaganda. (*The Nation*, 2.8.96: 21)

Although it is important to acknowledge and even stress these limitations to the political and social power of governments through their access to the media facilities, one should not be too distracted from realising that news is not the only means of presenting a picture of Pakistani society or attempting to manipulate it. Entertainment programming too, serves as a potential means for the government and/or producers to present images of how society ought to be. Many of the dramas on national television and the Pakistani satellite channel, PTV-2, presented topical themes intended to create public awareness and consequently alter people's behaviour appropriately. For example 'Warna' was a drama serial about AIDS, 'Ufaq' was about the factors affecting the country's educational system. 'The Show' was to create awareness about

environmental pollution and 'Sawal Yeh Hai' dealt with the population explosion. However, there are restrictions on the extent to which such programming can be utilised by governments and, as Das (1995) points out in relation to her research in India on soap operas,

In the bureaucratic imagination, the family was to become a compliant surface on which to write the programmes of the state. (Das, 1995:176)

She goes on to demonstrate that this is not the case and that

The capacity of Indian audiences to alter formulaic prescriptions whether for development or for entertainment cannot be underestimated. (Das, 1995: 187)

Lila Abu-Lughod (1995) too, and in the same volume, examines the selective reading of the dramas which appear on Egyptian television in her article 'The Objects of Soap Opera: Egyptian Television and the Cultural Politics of Modernity'. She points out that

Viewers were selective in their appreciation of the messages of these television dramas. They could disagree with the politics; they could marvel at and take pleasure in the defiant characters who lived as they could not. They accepted the moral stances presented only when they resonated with their worlds. (Abu-Lughod, 1995:202)

As Abu-Lughod further points out, television (and the print media also, for that matter) play only a part of the viewers' daily life and experience. The majority of experiences of the Pakistani reader of the screen and newspaper extend well beyond the boundaries of media presentations. They are bound up in the structure of the family and marriage systems, the bureaucracy, political and constabulary corruption etc.

Media presentations of all descriptions presented within Pakistani society are couched in convenient religious and national symbolism and terminology harnessed by the administrations, but cannot dupe the population into believing that their everyday experiences are somehow untrue. Instead, information presented in both news and entertainment programming and newspapers can be undermined by knowledge acquired through those everyday experiences.

In the case of Pakistan, the governments can publish adverts in the newspapers (as mentioned in Chapter 3, some 65% of newspaper advertising comes from government sources) telling how successful they have been in their undertakings during their period of office. It is, however, then possible for the readers to accept, or reject, the validity of these claims according to their own experiences.

The extent of the coverage of Islam both on television and in the newspapers is dictated, to some degree, by the role that the governments wish Islam to play in national identity. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, for example, increased the profile of Islam by making significant use of Islamic symbolism and terminology in order to align Pakistan with the Middle East in the hope of benefiting from their wealth (see Chapter 2). The position of women and their portrayal through the media has frequently been instituted as a means of publicising the administration's stand in relation to Islamic ideology and we have seen a number of such examples throughout this thesis. Perhaps the most striking of these was during the era of General Ziaul Haq when he, like others, was able to utilise the media and women within Pakistani society to legitimate his ideological policy in relation to Islam and Pakistan. Zia restricted the public appearance of women, particularly on the television, in support of his own Islamisation process.

The governments may attempt to limit or extend the freedom of women by exerting different interpretations of Islam but it is up to the groups and individuals as to how they respond to these interpretations. There is an attempt by the administrations to dictate the composition of social identity by manipulating the content of recognised identity criteria such as nationality and religion but there are means of combating this within society as it exists outside the realms of media presentation. Regardless of whether Islam has an increased or reduced coverage, it must always be seen to remain ideologically neutral with regard to Muslim religious sects in order to avoid causing any sectarian strife which could arise if there were the presentation of one sect as more legitimate than another. It is also important for international relations and the receipt of aid, for the government to maintain a neutral and non-radical presentation of Islam (see 'Fundamentalism' section in Chapter 5).

It is the governments which are, despite significantly utilizing their own consciousness in order to present an image of Islam and Pakistani society, apparently neglecting to take into consideration the possibility of the Pakistani population, as individuals, doing the same. As Cohen (1994) points out, politicians are guilty of underestimating the importance of

consciousness. They believe that they can invent people's consciousness for them, maintaining that they know what people think.

Cultural forms, such as language, ritual and other symbolic constructions, are made meaningful and substantial by people's interpretations of them. They are given life by being made meaningful. We may well regard these symbols as being compelling ... But the power they exercise lies in providing us with the means by which to think. The assumption that under normal circumstances they make us think in specific ways is mistaken. It privileges culture over thinking selves, instead of seeing it as the product of the thinking selves. (Cohen, 1994:167)

Governments are not alone in their attitudes towards the public's consciousness. Media institutions too harness their technology of mass communication to present images of Pakistani society (and indeed the world) as they see it. However, there are a number of factors one must take into account when considering media institutions and their power.

If one were to reduce the newspapers industry to its most basic level, we could say that they *sell* information. It is like any other retailer, in as much as it is a money-making enterprise and consequently its aim is to sell the information that the public want to buy. Readers choose which newspapers they wish to buy, making their choice on the basis of style, language, content, perspective - a variety of factors which may all influence the newspaper owners and editors with regard to the presentation of their newspapers. As the owner of the *Muslim* stated during our interview,

The children want their own items of interest, the housewife or the working woman, she wants her items of interest. The husband wants his items of interest and within their own items of interest there are scripts - he may be interested in sports or politics, so maybe if you give them good enough politics, maybe he wants sports and he will choose a newspaper that gives him both.... So you have got to cater to everybody, that is a realisation that all newspapers are coming to. There has got to be sobriety, you give them humour, you give them everything

and a newspaper would not feel itself complete unless it gives all sections.

The media institutions themselves wield a certain amount of power over the media as they are in a position to give or deny access to individuals and institutions, they may choose perspectives and discriminate between which programmes or stories to carry. In the case of newspapers we have examined the notion of their position as the 'Fourth Pillar of the State'. Such a title implies the power of neutrality and objectivity. Chapters 3 and 4 have considered the reality of the position of Pakistan's press from various perspectives. We have seen, for example, that the three newspapers particularly referred to throughout this thesis - *The News*, *The Nation* and *Dawn* - are each believed to follow different religious and political ideological perspectives with *The Nation*, for instance, being a recognised supporter of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML).

While newspapers have been subjected to significantly less direct influence for governments than the national television channels, they have still been restricted directly and indirectly with regard to their content. We have seen, for example, that the period of Martial Law under Ziaul Haq saw the imposition of pre-censorship when all newspapers were obliged to submit their proposed articles of the day for censorship by government officials before the newspaper could be sent to press. There was an initial show of rebellion against this restriction on newspaper content by leaving blank spaces where censored articles should have been. This form of resistance was shortlived, however, as this action also became 'censored' (see Chapter 3). Pre-censorship had only a relatively short history in Pakistan and after approximately two years this was lifted and newspapers were expected to self censor. Direct political sanctions against rebellious newspapers still continued and served as disincentives against the publication of politically unpopular articles. However, there were also powerful incentives for towing the official line. Not least of these was advertising revenue which has played a significant role in the encouragement of self censorship by newspaper owners as, some 65% of the industry's total revenue is derived through official advertisements.

Official advertisements are the teeth of the PID [Press Information Department]. All government departments send their ads to the PID, which then distributes them among the newspapers as it sees fit. A little tilt in policy can make millions flow to one paper while depriving

another. This, above all, makes newspaper owners vulnerable to government pressure. (*The News on Friday* 16.6.95:10)

Advertising revenue has maintained a position of high importance for Pakistan's newspaper industry particularly due to the nation's depressed literacy figures. We saw in Chapter 3 that strike action was threatened because of government proposals to increase the industry's tax levels, a burden the industry felt it could not endure due to the relatively low circulation figures.

Efforts to provide readers with what they want are restricted not only by political stipulations and financial need, but also by Pakistan's religious ideology maintained by both the government and the general public. As we saw in Chapter 4, Islam effects both what is included and excluded from the newspapers. Articles are published which relate to Islamic ideology but these are restricted to universal messages of, for example, the life of the Prophet. Television too is bound by restrictions perceived to be imposed by Islam itself and those imposed through a concern for the reactions of a Muslim population. As my informant from the senior staff of PTV maintained, and which aligns very closely with comments made by the staff of national newspapers with whom I spoke,

The actual message of Islam, what is Islam, it is not presented in any way and omits all observation of how does a man perceive his own religion or what is different in Islam which is not found in other religions or why am I a Muslim and why am I not something else. The personal belief and disbelief, this is kept out of television but ... the policy of PTV is that we are very clear on one point at least, that nothing against Islam goes on air ... We [PTV] discuss various issues except Islam because we believe that there are various sects of people. That there are people who have their own beliefs of Islam and who look at Islam in their own particular way and if we allow any particular brand to dominate and we are likely to be offending and we are saying the policy of being very safe.

The presentation of religious programming and articles is affected by the Islamic ideological division between the doctrines of different sects. However, this is only one effect of Islam upon media productions. Identifiable also are the varying manifestations of the understanding

of Islamic ideology on secular programming. Some interpretations of the Censorship Codes for television were uniformly followed by the different channels, for example, all scenes of sexual intimacy were censored (see Chapter 6). There were other instances, however, such as in relation to dialogue, when the PTV and STN/NTM instituted different practices. While PTV cut the scene containing the offensive dialogue altogether, STN/NTM simply silenced the dialogue while allowing the picture to continue running. In this case, therefore, both channels were following the same notion that it was offensive for a Muslim population to be exposed to 'vulgar' dialogue, but they had interpreted the rules differently. The significance of the Islamic doctrine had not changed, only the interpretation of the application for that doctrine (see Chapter 6).

Nationalism too is an important issue in relation to what is presented in the newspapers and on national television. Stories are presented which are relevant to the Pakistani nation both in relation to internal and external factors. Chapter 6, for example, pointed out that Pakistan's national television channels have been prohibited from airing programming which has any connection with India. However, as we also saw in Chapter 6, the banning of Indian programming by the government and the following of these rules by the media institutions, has not resulted in a complete avoidance of Indian films or satellite channels by the Pakistani general public. Readers and viewers are able to be discretionary in their acceptance or rejection of presentations and selection of programming and newspapers. Consequently, through video and satellite channels the public are able to impose a personal discretion over whether they do or do not watch Indian programming.

The power of the elite consumers of the media does not stop here, however, as there is also competition to the officially sanctioned news and current affairs programmes broadcast on the national channels. For example, through consultation with friends or family who have access to direct sources, media supplied information may be verified (or otherwise). On the other hand national television news broadcasts can be rejected in preference for foreign news programming such as that from BBC and CNN. As we saw in Chapter 5, and as stated by an informant from the PTV senior staff

Our people are having the opportunity of switching over to other channels and the government also is realising this, that when they switch to other channels the government not only loses the opportunity of

giving its own viewpoint but it is subjecting its own population to sometimes alien propaganda which can be very very injurious.

As we have already noted, the international media plays a significant role in the viewing and reading patterns of Pakistan's elite, offering a means of comparing and balancing national media news and entertainment productions. Given the relative importance of satellite television, video and agency news articles to Pakistan's elites, these too must be finally contextualised in relation to Pakistan's social identity.

### **Power and Influence: Other Players**

When aired in Pakistan to a Pakistani audience, internationally produced television programmes and newspaper articles are also subjected to interpretations which contain an Islamic and Pakistani wash, such interpretation being implemented by Pakistan's governments, media institutions and/or individuals. Censorship and selection enable all viewers and readers to retain a degree of self determination in what they understand from the international media in the same way as they do for the national. As we have seen through the course of this thesis, the concern voiced by Imran Khan and others in relation to a westernisation or Indian'isation of Pakistan through foreign media imports therefore neglects to take into consideration the extent to which there is also an Islamisation and Pakistani'isation of all media products which enter into Pakistan.

Implicit in our examination of the interpretation of Islam and nationalism has been the means by which both the administrations and the individuals have drawn upon their own consciousness in order to present and understand media publications and programming. All players in the presentation and reception of the media are affected by their own consciousness. As David Parkin states,

If 'culture' is that long conversation between the generations about how to do things when, where, why and with whom, then consciousness can be regarded as a kind of meta-conversation occurring at times of heightened 'awareness' ...: in the very course of what they are doing, persons here reflect on and justify, evaluate or condemn their actions,

affecting it in the process, and so possibly subverting any initial plan (Parkin, 1995:199).

Administrations, not only within Pakistan, but outside of it also, credit the media and access to it as being a source of power. By assuming this power potential through presentation, however, one is forced also to assume that it is an open field within which anyone with access to the media resources must, by definition, have access to the power (another reason, for instance, for banning Indian productions). The governments of Pakistan are in a position to monopolise the national media, by dictating the content of the news and placing restrictions on entertainment programming. However, once satellite broadcasts enter into the equation, so the governments are forced to acknowledge that alien ideologies are gaining power within the national environment. As long as governments (and the population generally) assume a power, through the media, to dictate national and religious identity, so there will always be concern about the potential influence from international media presentations.

With the Pakistani administrations' assumption that local media institutions have the power to affect national perceptions of their own culture, religion and society, so it is necessary to extend boundaries of control to others who are seen to have a greater influence over these resources in the international field. Despite this notion of power however

The government was blamed for lending a television channel (STN) to the Americans to propagate their culture and anti-Islamic propaganda.  
(*The Nation*, 2.8.96)

Due to a concentration on the Pakistani elite of Islamabad, much consideration has been dedicated to an examination of the English language international media, both in its direct presentation through satellite television and video and via national media sources, electronic and print.

The introduction of the Lollywood Top Ten by Rana Shaikh, considered in Chapter 6, was intended as a reflection of Pakistani culture, but many rejected it as a copy of Indian and western music shows and consequently unIslamic. This, by extension, meant that it was not compatible with Pakistani culture. If we accept that Lollywood Top Ten, and programmes like it, were influenced by India and the West, we must also consider that they were Pakistani

influenced versions of Western shows and therefore can serve to illustrate the Pakistani'isation of the international productions. The music was from Pakistan, the way the music was presented and how the censorship was imposed originated from Pakistan's interpretation of Islam.

Media presentations go through a localisation process, whether imposed officially by the government, or personally, by individuals and groups therefore reinforcing, to some extent at least, the integrity of the local moral world at different levels. This can also be placed in the context of change discussed earlier. Pakistani television productions have changed and doubtless will continue to change but it is our contention that the origins of these changes are as much indigenous to Pakistani Islamic culture as they are to foreign influence.

In Chapter 2 we have considered the localisation of Islam within the Pakistani context and it is therefore this already Pakistani'ised Islam which functions as a tool of interpretation of the international media. We must include agency-bought newspaper articles in this international media. However, the international or, more accurately, western nature of agency-supplied newspaper articles are far harder to assess by the Pakistani reader than are news broadcasts originating from abroad as we saw in Chapters 3 and 4. Television broadcasts, on the other hand, are potentially accessible to a wider audience within Pakistan than are newspapers due to literacy levels and consequently, as Abu-Lughod points out in her article relating to Egypt but which applies equally as well to Pakistan,

More than any other form of mass media, especially in a place where many remain non-literate, television brings a variety of vivid experiences of the non-local into the most local of situations, the home. (Abu-Lughod, 1995:191)

The elite of Pakistan are, for the most part, literate (or at least orally competent) in both Urdu and English and as a consequence of this, together with their financial capability to pay for the newspapers, television and satellite connections, they are in a position to be exposed, more than the average Pakistani, to the media presentations of and by a non-local and non-Muslim population. It is through interpretation and censorship that the viewer and reader are able to synthesize media content into their existing local moral world view and experience. It is arguments, such as those of 'the active audience' put forward by Fiske (1987) and others,

which, once inserted into the international communications debate, suggest that

Diverse audiences bring their own interpretative frameworks and sets of meanings to media texts, thus resisting, reinterpreting and reinventing any foreign 'hegemonic' cultural products. (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996:181)

Therefore presentations of the Gulf War on BBC and CNN were contextualised within the belief that the West was predominantly anti-Muslim. It is worth noting, however, that even national productions and publications can, only to a limited degree, be referred to as 'local'. As Sreberny-Mohammadi puts it:

This 'national' culture may privilege urban lifestyles over rural, may barely represent minority languages and tastes, even disallowing such diversity in the name of 'national unity'; it may produce mediated culture within a narrowly defined ideological framework that fits the politics of the regime of the day. ... National agendas are not coincidental with truly 'local' agendas, and real concerns arise as to whether 'national' media cultures adequately represent ethnic, religious, political and other kinds of diversity. In international relations, the 'national' level may be local vis a vis the global level, but in domestic relations the 'national' is itself a site of struggle, with a variety of 'local' identities and voices in contention (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996:189).

There is a pool of ideological resources in relation to various matters relevant to everyday life and special occasions, from which administrations and individuals may dip and select according to their needs. They are able to interpret in order to fit the selection into a given context. This is not to suggest that the pool never changes, but instead, as Lambek (1995) suggests, there is a growth of knowledge through 'displacement, accommodation and contestations'.

Even when we conduct a synchronic analysis we have to recognize that the repertoire of knowledge available at any given time has its own origins in diverse periods. The growth of knowledge is never simply

cumulative or unilinear, with newer ideas and idioms replacing the old. Instead, there are a series of partial displacements, accommodations and contestations such that the whole is not a consistent, rational system. (Lambek, 1995:260)

This new knowledge is affected by the old. Relating this back to the media, therefore, any affect that the newspapers or television may have in changing society is still embedded in local ideological resources.

## **Conclusion**

It has been my intention to demonstrate that each element - religious, nationalism, governments, media institutions and the elite - can only be understood in the context of 'the media' when considered in relation to each other. Each component effects and is effected by each other component to a greater or lesser degree. This is, however, only one of many possible pictures which may have been put together in relation to Pakistani society and its interaction with the media.

Although there has been some consideration given to the significance of gender in production and viewing contexts throughout this thesis, I would suggest that there is potential for a specific examination of women and their attitudes to and reliance upon the media. A study of this kind may be particularly interesting in relation to those areas considered strict in their attitudes towards women. The North West Frontier Province or Baluchistan may be particularly useful in relation to a study whereby the media is examined as a means of providing information and access to a world about which the viewers and readers may not enter or have limited access.

This study has been primarily concerned with the elite and, as a consequence, has examined relationships between this portion of the Pakistani population and imported and English language media. An examination of the Urdu press and television productions would focus more directly upon the middle and lower classes in Pakistan. The finding produced within the context of this thesis could therefore provide a foundation for a comparative analysis following the class and language differentials outlined herein. For example, as we have seen, the Urdu

press was frequently considered to present news in a sensational and lurid manner while maintaining alliances with radical Islamic groups. The English language press on the other hand was generally regarded as maintaining a moderate position both with regard to the presentation of the news and Islamic groups and ideology. These policy differences were made on the basis of assumptions about the news requirements of the different classes and their interpretation of different aspects of Pakistani society and its religion.

Urdu is but one of a number of languages and dialects used in Pakistan, although it does have a higher official status than, for example, Sindhi. It would be particularly interesting to examine the attitudes of Karachi's Muhajar and Sindhi population in relation to media presentation. One could consider, for example, the nationally produced Urdu or English print and electronic media in relation to the political and economic power of the Muhajars in contrast to the lesser power of the Sindhi population. We have also been introduced to the fact that there are newspaper and television productions using other of Pakistan's languages including Sindhi, and therefore one could examine the effects these have upon the understanding and interpretation of ethnic as well as national and religious ideology.

The work of Ong (1982) has considered differences in relation to world views between literate and oral communities and I would suggest that a such a comparative analysis could be further broken down to examine the understanding of television and its presentations as realised by literate and non-literate communities within Pakistan. We have not considered the role which radio plays within Pakistani society and, particularly with regard to a non-literate community, its significance is likely to far outweigh even that of television as it is a considerably cheaper medium, and potentially accessible to a greater number of people.

An examination of the affects on the media policies of the governments, broadcasting companies and media interpretations by individuals in such a multi-cultural/religious society as compared with those of the more religiously homogeneous Pakistani society, would be of interest. Of interest also would be a comparative study of the differences between media interpretations by Pakistani Muslims living outside of Pakistan as a minority ethnic and religious group and the media interpretations, as presented herein, of Pakistanis living within Pakistan. Exposure to government and media institution influence, for Pakistani immigrants, would be contextualised within foreign 'local moral worlds' which may result in different interpretations of religious and national (Pakistani) identity to those illustrated throughout this

thesis.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulation
APP	Associated Press of Pakistan
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CIA	Criminal Investigation Agency
CMLA	Chief Marshal Law Administrator
CNN	Cable News Network
MQM	Mohajir Qaumi Movement
MTV	Music Television
NPT	National Press Trust
NTM	Network Television Marketing
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
PG	Parental Guidance
PML(N)	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz group)
PPL	Progressive Papers Limited
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PTV	Pakistan Television Corporation
SPTV	Shaheen Pay Television
SRC	Shalimar Recording Company
STN	Shalimar Television Network

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Code of Censorship for Films**

**Government of Pakistan  
Central Board of Film Censors**

**Notification: 9th April 1980**

" IX: Titles:

" Present indecent, obscene or profane titles or which directly, indirectly seek to focus upon or glorify notorious characters in society amounting to the commission of, or incitement to, an offence or which have the effect of conveying hatred or contempt for a certain section of the people on cultural or ethnic grounds".

X. Bestiality:

- a) Exhibits wanton cruelty to animals;
- b) shows exaggerated horror, torture or cruelty;
- c) portrays excessive bleeding, mutilations, chopings ; or
- d) portrays brutal fighting and gruesome murders.

XI. Plagiarism:

Plagiarises version of any other film, local or foreign;

Note :- This sub-paragraph shall not, however, be deemed to prohibit exceptions being made in suitable cases in the local production of well know classic or folk tales, or where the Producer of a film in one of the languages of Pakistan himself produces or authorises another person, in writing, to produce the same film in any other language of Pakistan or where a producer of an old film produces a better version of his own film.

.....

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
CENTRAL BOARD OF FILM CENSORS

\*\*\*\*\*

Islamabad, the 9th April, 1980.

NOTIFICATION

NO. F. 13-28/78, Films; The Federal Government, under power conferred by Section 6(2) of the Motion Pictures Ordinance, 1979 (XLIII) of 1979) have prescribed the following code of Censorship for films:-

- a) The provisions of the Code, while spelling out in detail certain curbs which have to be imposed on the exercise of the freedom of expression in the interest of the majority of cinema audience, shall, nevertheless, leave room for encouragement of artistic expression by expanding creative freedom and at the same time ensuring that the freedom which encourages the artist remains responsible and sensitive to the society at large.
- b) The film maker has the right to contribute towards broadening the viewer's vision of life, by giving him an insight into human impulses and an awareness of the social factors at work, and by indentifying the realities that impinge on contemporary existence such as intolerance, graft, dishonesty, inequality or exploration in their daily manifestations. He should have the right not only to restate truth, in historical or contemporary context, but also to relate it to the life of his audience. Above all, he has the right to pursue to the limit the scope for artistic expression, innovation and experimentation offered by the cinema and to provide for the viewer aesthetic satisfaction on a rising scale.
- c) While judging each film, the authority should keep in view that each film piece, scene, song, incident dialogue has to be examined in the context of the film as a whole, its relevance and appropriateness to the plot or its thematic and artistic justification. Because no two films are alike, it is essential to treat each picture, each incident, each line of dialogue on its own merits. In judging a film, the main consideration should be the impression it is likely to create on an average audience which includes a considerable portion of children, teen-agers, adolescents and young persons of immature judgement and of impressionable age.

15 P...../2.....

- 2 -
- d) In case of imported films, themes which are purely permissive in character and treatment and which come into direct clash with the accepted standards of morality and social values in Pakistan should be discouraged.
- e) The aim of the authority should be to eliminate the public exhibition of a film or any part thereof including an incident, dialogue, song or dance which is likely to -
- i) impair accepted moral standards and social values by glorification of vice or crime;
  - ii) give offence to any section of the public or injure the feelings of any class of persons ; or
  - iii) hurt national sentiments.

2. In the light of the foregoing principles, a film shall be regarded as unsuitable for public exhibition if, directly or indirectly, it -

I. Security, law and order

- a) brings into contempt Pakistan or its people or tends to undermine its integrity or solidarity as an independent state;
- b) violates any provisions of the constitution or any law for the time being in force ;
- c) promotes or supports sedition, anarchy or violence in the country;
- d) leads to breach of law and order or creates sympathy for violation of laws.
- e) brings into contempt the Armed Forces, Police Force or any other Force as an institution;
- f) Portrays the Armed Forces or Police Force in derogatory uniforms or such uniforms as are not in accordance with the approved pattern ;
- g) intends to cover up sequences predominantly consisting of violence or crime;

II. International Relations:

- a) contains propaganda, in favour of a foreign state bearing on any point of dispute between that state and Pakistan or against a friendly foreign state likely to impair good relations between it and Pakistan ;
- b) portrays incidents having a tendency to disparage, malign or misrepresent other nations;

III. Religion :

- a) undermines Islam;
- b) ridicules, disparages or attacks any religion, sect, caste or creed;
- c) causes hatred or strife among religious sects, castes or creeds;
- d) shows ceremonies at places of religious significance such as shrines and mosques in such manner as to cause disrespect to religion;

IV. Immorality and Obscenity:

- a) Glorifies adultery, promiscuousness, lustful passion, lewdness or excessive drinking;
- b) Presents scenes of rape, sexual act or perversion, abortion, childbirth and surgical operation beyond the limits of decency and the unavoidable demands of the plot; Provided that this will not apply to technical or scientific documentaries meant for specialised audiences.
- c) Contains dialogues, songs, speeches, dances, jokes or gestures which are obviously vulgar, obscene or indecent.

V. Nudity:

Displays the living human figure in the nude or in indecorous clothing in an obviously licentious manner with the intent to provoke lustful passion.

VI. Dances:

Displays dances showing indecent or vulgar movements or passions:

VII. Crime:

Glorifies, vice, crime, violence, black-marketing, smuggling bribery, corruption or any other social evil.

VIII. National Sentiments;

- a) shows disrespect to the National flag;
- b) brings into contempt any aspect or national ideology or objective;
- c) fanned racial, sectarian, parochial, linguistic, regional or class hatred;
- d) distorts historical facts, such as, maligning of Pakistan, its traditions or heroes;

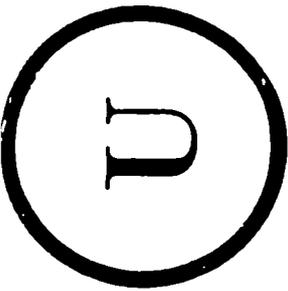
**APPENDIX II**

Central Board of Film Censors

**Certificate for “Lady Punisher - II”**

Dated: 29.1.96

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Form-C



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

# CENTRAL BOARD OF FILM CENSORS

ISLAMABAD

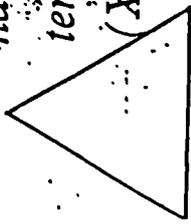
PRODUCED BY: CHANG TSUNG-LUNG, HONG KONG.  
DIRECTED BY: WONG CHEUN-YOUNG.  
STARRING : CHU MAN-HVA, WONG KUNG-LEUNG.

## CERTIFICATE

This is to Certify that the film titled

**"LADY PUNISHER-II"**

has been passed for UNRESTRICTED public exhibition within the territories of Pakistan to which the Motion Pictures Ordinance, 1979 (XLIII of 1979), extends.



Applicant M/s. Saleem Aftab Films Corporation, Lahore  
Produced by Chang Tsung-Lung, Hong Kong.  
Language of the Film English.  
Gauge of the Film 35.M.M.  
Length of the Film as certified 1981 Meters Reels 5-2  
Date of issue 29-1-1996 Date of expiry 28-1-2001

No. of Certificate 40/LP-I/96

*Handwritten signature*  
CHAIRMAN

Central Board of Film Censors.

*Handwritten signature*  
30/1/96  
28/1/96

1. Bare breasts of a woman riding on horse during titles.	9.44	1
2. Kissing of two girls in sea water as well as the pond.	10.36	1
3. Rape scene of the two girls including their bare breasts along with flash back shots retaining the link.	02.79	1 & 5
4. Close up shots of Lady Punisher in bikini focussing her lower abdomen wherever occurring.	46.63	1 & 4
5. Blood splashes on the face of a gangster.	1.21	2
6. In seduction scene of Lady Punisher in jungle where she is rubbing her private parts and shots of gangster kissing her thighs.	26.82	2
7. Shots showing Lady Punisher riding on a man on sofa to seduce him excised along with its flash back shots.	53.95	4 & 5
8. Catching of private parts of a gangster by a woman.	0.61	4
9. Eating of a slice of watermelon by Lady Punisher in a suggestive manner.	8.53	3
	-----	
Total:-	220.34 Meters	

( S. Maqbool Hussain Shah )  
 Central Board of Film Censors,  
 Islamabad.

**APPENDIX III**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

I would be grateful if you would kindly answer all the questions as extensively as possible. If there is not enough room please use extra paper or write on the back of this questionnaire indicating the question related to.

Name .....

How many people live in your household and their relationship to yourself?

.....  
.....

**NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES**

Are any newspapers/magazines delivered to your household? If yes, please state how many and name them

.....  
.....

Are any newspapers/magazines bought off the stands by a member of your household? If yes, please name

.....  
.....

How regularly are newspapers/ magazines bought or delivered?

.....  
.....

Do you read it/them?

.....  
.....

What section/s do you read? If you read more than one section please list in order of

priority/preference.

.....  
.....

What is your opinion of the quality of the newspapers/magazines available?

.....  
.....

Do you rely on the newspapers for your news? Please explain your answer.

.....  
.....  
.....

#### NATIONAL TELEVISION

Do you have access to a television? .....

Is access to the television limited in any way? If yes, please explain.

.....  
.....

How many televisions are available in your house? .....

How often do you watch national television?

.....  
.....

Do you watch TV while doing something else? If so, what and why?

.....  
.....

What programmes do you watch most often? Please list in order of preference and explain reasons.

.....

.....  
.....

Do you watch the news? .....

Do you have a preference as to whether you watch the English or Urdu news? If so, what is your reason?

.....  
.....  
.....

Do you watch BBC or CNN news? If so, which do you prefer and why?

.....  
.....

Given a choice between watching the news by the BBC, CNN or the national news broadcast which would you prefer and why?

.....  
.....  
.....

Do you watch the dramas? .....

Do you think there is a difference between PTV or NTM productions? If so, what and how?

.....  
.....  
.....

Do you watch the religious programmes broadcast? If so, how often?

.....  
.

What is your opinion on the quality of National television in relation to the following:-

**News**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Children's programmes**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Dramas**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Religious broadcasts**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Sports**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Chat shows**

.....  
.....  
.....

**General**

.....  
.....  
.....

All TV channels throughout the world have some sort of an agenda, what do you think is the agenda of PTV and NTM and why?

.....  
.....  
.....

Is there room for improvement on national television? Please explain your answer.

.....  
.....  
.....

If you could change national television in any way what would you do and why?

.....  
.....  
.....

Please list your favourite 5 programmes in order of preference together with an explanation.

.....  
.....  
.....

**VIDEO**

Do you have, or have access to a video?

.....  
.....

Do you record programmes from TV or satellite to watch later?

.....

Which programmes do you or would you record?

.....  
.....

Do you hire videos? .....

How frequently do you hire videos? .....

Of the following different language movies which do you hire most frequently? Please answer

for each language explaining also why you do or don't hire them.

Urdu

.....  
.....  
.....

Punjabi

.....  
.....  
.....

Pushto

.....  
.....  
.....

Indian

.....  
.....  
.....

English

.....  
.....  
.....

Which type of movie do you most enjoy and why?

.....  
.....  
.....

Is there any restriction on those movies which you are allowed to watch? Please answer with a detailed explanation as to why

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Please name the last 5 videos you hired and your opinion of them.

.....  
.....

**SATELLITE**

Is there satellite available in your house? .....

If you have satellite, what were the reasons for purchasing it?

.....

How long have you had your dish/dishes?

.....

How many dishes do you have? .....

Do you have access to satellite, either in your own house or elsewhere? Please state where it is

.....  
.....

How accessible is it to you?

.....  
.....

If you do not have satellite readily available, would you like it and why?

.....  
.....

Of the following satellite channels, please number according to preference using 1 as you

favourite channel.

BBC World ( ), Zee TV ( ), Star Plus ( ), PTV2 ( ), Star Sports ( ), Channel V ( ),  
Cartoon/TNT ( ), Prime Sports ( ), MTV ( ), Sony ( ), ABN ( ), ESPN  
( ), Jain ( ), Canal Plus ( ), Turkman 1 ( ), Russia ( ), CNN ( )

What channel(s) to you watch most frequently?

.....  
.....  
.....

Is this your own choice? If not whose choice is it?

.....  
.....

If you have satellite do you still watch national television? Please explain.

.....  
.....

If you do not have satellite would you still watch national television? Please explain.

.....  
.....  
.....

How much satellite TV do you watch? .....

Please list your favourite 5 programmes and explain.

.....  
.....

**CENSORSHIP**

What is your opinion of censorship on television?

.....  
.....

.....

While watching a video or satellite to you self-censor? If so when and why?

.....  
.....

Do the occasions of censorship vary according to who is in the room? Please explain

.....  
.....  
.....

Who is in charge of the remote control when you are with other people? What is the remote control used for?

.....  
.....  
.....

**GENERAL**

Do you think that the media can and/or does affect culture? Please explain your answer as fully as possible

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Has media affected your view of your own society? Please explain as fully as possible

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Has media affected your view of other societies? Please explain as fully as possible

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Please use this space if you have any further comments in relation to the above questions or the media generally**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **11 July 1977: General Ziaul Haq's Press guidelines**

The journalists should propagate the ideology of Pakistan and rejuvenate amongst the public the sentiments which prompted the creation of Pakistan. They should also arouse patriotic feelings and keep them alive.

The journalists should help the present regime in establishing peace and tranquillity in the country so that there is no tension, and elections are held in a perfectly calm and cool atmosphere.

The newspapers should co-operate with the administration to curb anti-social elements.

The Press should inculcate among students, traders, businessmen and labourers the spirit to work in the best interest of the country and the present regime.

The profession of journalism which is a public institution should not be used as an instrument to serve anti-social ends or interests which are not compatible with this profession, nor should it be used to the detriment of national and public interest.

The following are to be avoided in any form of publication, such as articles, news items, photographs and advertisements: material likely to spread immorality and obscenity, vulgar and derogatory expressions against individuals, institutions, groups, newspapers and other publications; the arousing of sectarian, parochial, regional and provincial passions and prejudices and class hatred; the glamorisation of criminals; incitement to violence; and news and views which are likely to generate heat or violence.

The Press shall refrain from publishing anything likely to bring into hatred or contempt the head of a foreign state.

The Press shall not publish news or comments, photographs or advertisements which may undermine the security of the state or the solidarity of the nation and its ideology.

The Press shall refrain from publishing anything likely to undermine the loyalty or allegiance of the defence forces, civil armed forces and law-enforcing agencies. The Press shall also refrain from involving the defence forces in politics.

The Press shall refrain from dragging the martial law authorities into politics as they have neither any political ambitions nor political leanings. Their sole aim is to hold fair elections.

(Quoted in Niazi, 1994:4-5)

## APPENDIX V

### Press-calculation of the year's casualties in Karachi

	Citizens		Police/Rangers	
	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured
Jan	114	212	15	16
Feb	217	257	14	5
Mar	181	166	16	6
Apr	129	113	20	11
May	164	95	16	4
Jun	286	215	35	6
Jul	278	218	26	11
Aug	147	85	21	3
Sep	197	175	19	13
Oct	151	105	24	22
Nov	139	25	14	14
Dec	104	140	7	10
Total	2,137	1,806	227	121

More than half of the citizens were said to have been killed by the law-enforcement agencies, mostly in what is called 'police encounter', 260 died while in police custody. Over 15% were victims of violence by political or ethnic groups. Those killed included at least 54 women and 40 children.

Quoted in

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (1996) *State of Human Rights in 1995* (p118)

**APPENDIX VI**

**Pakistan Television Corporation Limited Rate List and  
Commercial Rate Card**

**PAKISTAN TELEVISION CORPORATION LIMITED  
RATE LIST IN PAKISTANI RUPEE ( Rs. )**

**SPOT RATES**

Duration of Spot	Karachi Centre	Lahore Centre	Islamabad Centre	Peshawar Centre	Quetta Centre	National Network
07 Seconds	Rs. 3065.00	Rs. 2945.00	Rs. 2365.00	Rs. 615.00	Rs.370.00	Rs.8600.00
15 Seconds	Rs.5905.00 Rs. 10495.00	Rs. 5685.00	Rs. 4570.00	Rs.1170.00	Rs. 680.00	Rs.16570.00
30 Seconds	Rs. 15745.00	Rs.10095.00	Rs. 8100.00	Rs.2075.00	Rs.1170.00	Rs. 29375.00
60 Seconds		Rs.15140.00	Rs.12150.00	Rs.3120.00	Rs. 1755.00	Rs. 44075.00

**SPONSORSHIP CHARGES FOR PTV AND FILM PROGRAMMES**

Duration of Programmes	Commercial Time Allowed	Karachi Centre	Lahore Centre	Islamabad Centre	Peshawar Centre	Quetta Centre	National Network
05 Minutes	15 Seconds	Rs.23215.00	Rs.22090.00	Rs. 17730.00	Rs. 3490.00	Rs. 1830.00	Rs.64915.00
15 Minutes	60 Seconds	Rs.66150.00	Rs.62925.00	Rs. 50495.00	Rs. 9900.00	Rs. 5220.00	Rs.184950.00
25-30Minutes	120 Seconds	Rs.18370.00	Rs.112590.00	Rs. 90365.00	Rs.17720.00	Rs. 9340.00	Rs.330955.00
50-60Minutes	180 Seconds	Rs.81040.00	Rs.172190.00	Rs.138220.00	Rs.46120.00	Rs.25005.00	Rs.534450.00

[click here for more details](#)

## PAKISTAN TELEVISION CORPORATION LIMITED COMMERCIAL RATE CARD

### DISCOUNTS

1. Sponsorships of imported foreign films 30%
2. Advertisements of books 75%
3. Advertisements of newspapers and periodicals 50%
4. (a) Cinema advertisements (film trailers), stage dramas and other approved entertainments 15%
- (b) Cinema advertisements (film trailers of Pakistani feature films) 50%
5. (a) Cash discount admissible on business placed through accredited advertising agencies on normal credit list provided the net value of the schedule is paid in advance of the commencement of transmission of sports or sponsorships 05%
- (b) Cash discount admissible on business placed through accredited advertising agencies but not on normal credit list provided the net value of the schedule is paid in advance of the commencement of transmission of sports or sponsorships 02%  
The cash discounts are applicable if the payment is made in full on a month to month basis e.g. all spots/sponsorships scheduled to be telecast in February should be paid for by January 31.
6. The advertisements of institutions promoting art and culture only 15%
7. Advertisements of fertilizers, speeds, pesticides (used as spray on crops), tractors, tube-wells and various agriculture implements 15%
8. (a) Films/Spots-produced by an advertiser-in the national interest on health, hygiene and other Social/civic problems for educating and informing the general public and
- (b) Sponsorships of PTV's public service and educational programs 30%  
This discount will be subject to approval by PTV. The time schedule will be at the discretion of PTV.
9. Advertisements for computer hardware and software. 30%
10. Advertisements of 'Situation Vacant' and 'Tender Notice' telecast in special commercial chunk before 07.00 p.m. or after 10.30. p.m. in the evening transmission. 40%
11. Sponsorships for musical programmes. 30%
12. Advertisements of products/services which are offered for sale from a single point and are not distributed through several outlets and whose sale is limited to one city/town. 25%
13. Sponsorships of foreign sports films. 30%
14. Sponsorships of current affairs programmes. 30%
15. Sponsorships of repeat telecast of programmes. 30%
16. Spots booked by sponsors which promote a PTV programme as well as their Sponsorships and their organization. 15%
17. Spots booked in mid-breaks of imported foreign films. 30%
18. Sponsorships of programmes which are telecast prior to 07.00 p.m. in the evening transmissions 40%
19. Commercials telecast in mid-breaks of musical programmes or commercials fixed with musical programmes.
20. Spots booked as mid-breaks or fixed before repeat telecast of programmes. 30%
21. Sponsorships of repeat telecast of peak hour drama serials/ series which are put on air prior to 07.00 p.m in the evening transmission. 50%
22. Payments received by PTV directly from foreign advertisers in the form of remittances from

abroad in foreign exchange. 05%

\* No further discounts admissible.

### SPECIAL PACKAGES (Single Transmission)

1. 15 minutes film premiere (feature films). Rs. 100,000 -  
No commercial time allowed.
2. Sponsorship of Pakistani feature films with 60 seconds commercial time. Rs. 90,000 - per sponsor

### SURCHARGES

#### Special Position

1. Before or after a specified programme 200% of the rates
2. Spots inserted in the mid-break in films 200% of the rates
3. Mid-break in live or VTR programmes 225% of the rates
4. Mid-break in News 250% of the rates
5. Sponsorship of partial drama serials of 50 minutes duration produced by PTV Karachi or Lahore Centres and telecast between 07.00 p.m. to 09.00 p.m. 10% of the rates  
Sponsorship of complete serials exempted.

Specially negotiated privileged positions, sponsorship of special programmes, transmission via satellite and live sports coverages, at specially negotiated rates.

If due to any reason a fixed point spot has to be shifted, it will be treated as an ordinary spot and there will be no special surcharge on it.

The rate of bulk purchase discount on aggregate billing in a year applicable/admissible to advertising agencies is subject to notification.

LATE PAYMENT SURCHARGE AT 15% WILL BE CHARGED ON INVOICES NOT PAID BY DUE DATE.

CENTRAL EXCISE DUTY AND OTHER CHARGES LEVIED BY THE GOVERNMENT-CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL - WILL BE BORNE BY THE ADVERTISERS.

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

#### CONTRACTS

1. The contracts are subject to the terms and conditions printed on the back of the prescribed contract form as well as in the brochure "Advertising on Television", and briefly stated here.
2. The copy and material presented for exhibition should confirm to PTV's standards and to all rules and regulations in force at the time.
3. A contract, except in the case of sponsorship, shall refer to only a single product or service of a client.
4. Contracts can be made for a maximum period of 52 weeks and are valid only for the financial year (July ~ June) in which the contract is made.

#### PAYMENT

1. Payment in full is required in advance of transmission, on a month to month basis, e.g. all spots scheduled to be transmitted in February should be paid by 31st January, except by those advertising agencies who are allowed credit for a specified period as the case may be.
2. PTV reserves the right to adjust any payment against any dues of the agency/advertiser.

#### DELIVERY AND CLEARANCE OF MATERIAL

1. All material including films, slides, audio-tapes etc., should be submitted 7 days before the date when transmission is due. A commercial film submitted for telecast must be accompanied by a certificate issued by the Censor Board/PTV-STN Censor Board for commercials clearing it for telecast. A late fee may, at PTV's discretion, be levied on commercial

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