

Research Report:

The Level of Coverage of the Issues of Radicalization in the Regional Media in Tajikistan

Dushanbe – 2012

The present study was carried out in the framework of the International Scientific Conference of Young Scientists "The radicalization of young people in Tajikistan: the reasons and ways to counter" which was held on December 4-5, 2012, in the hotel "Tajikistan", Dushanbe.

The research was funded by:

**Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia - Tajikistan
and the Foreign Ministry of Denmark.**

The opinions of the author(s) of publication may not necessarily coincide with those of the organizers of the study.

The study was conducted by public organization "Media Consulting."

Study period: November - December 2012

Implementers:

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A. Methods and components of the study

The study was conducted using a questionnaire survey of regional journalists in four regions of the country: Sughd, Khatlon region, Kulob Districts and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO).

In this study 60 journalists were interviewed- 15 people from each of the regions.

B. Results of the survey

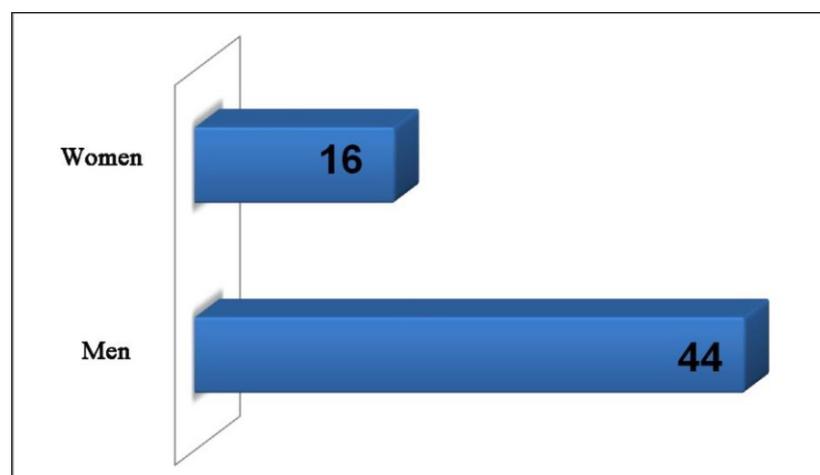
Much has been said on the subject of the growth of radicalization in society. It should be mentioned that radical ideas are not only born, but also can be promoted and prevented. It is natural that the press, as mass media, can be used both to promote/implement ideas of radicalization of the masses, as well as work towards preventing them.

What are the regional media outlets in Tajikistan like, and how much are they willing to cover the problems of radicalization? All of this can be found by reading the results of our questionnaire.

To get started, let us read the questions that clearly characterize the respondents.

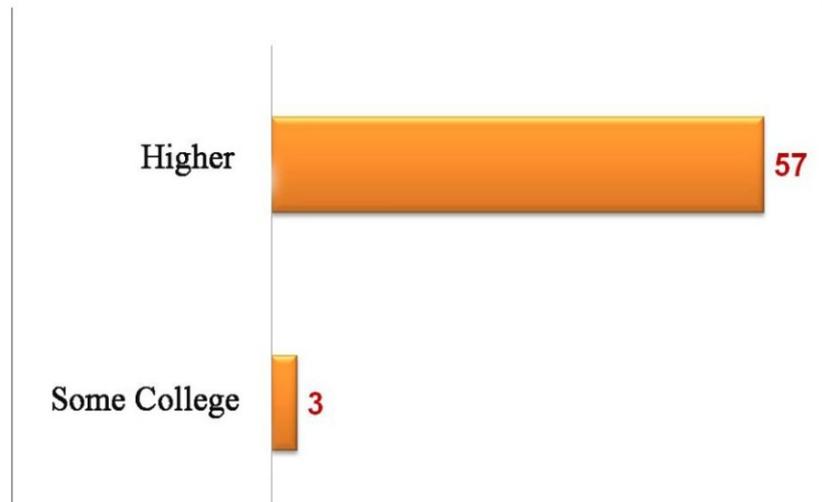
I. Gender:

We did not focus on gender equality in our survey, so, as you can see the numbers are different. However, the regional media differ in that the women are much less present in the editorial boards than the men.



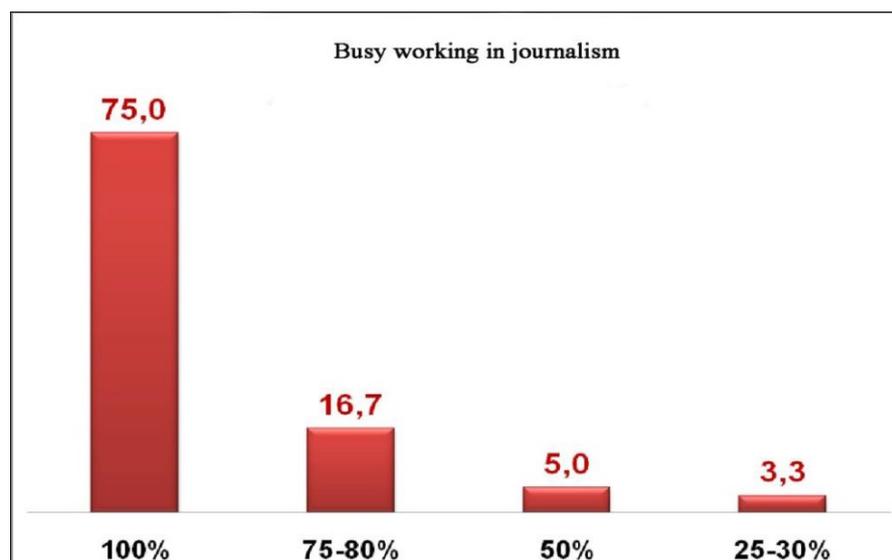
II. Education:

While interviewing experienced journalists, a priority was given to experienced representatives of the profession, who already have a level of authority and recognition in the regional media. This was done so that they could give well-informed answers to the questions in the survey. Of course, the results showed that most of the respondents have a university education.



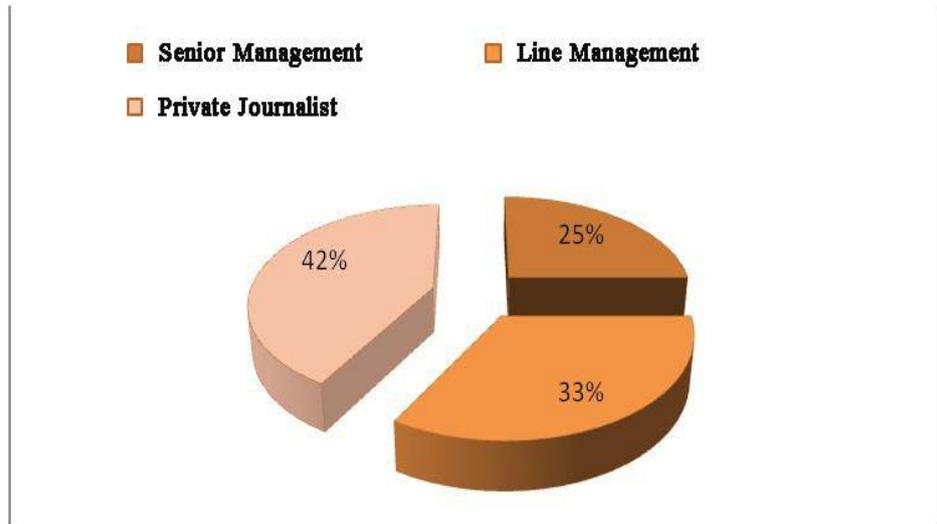
III. Are you employed primarily as a journalist?:

We can see that almost 92% of interviewed experienced journalists name journalism their main occupation. Only 8% of interviewed journalists spend half or less than of their time for journalism.



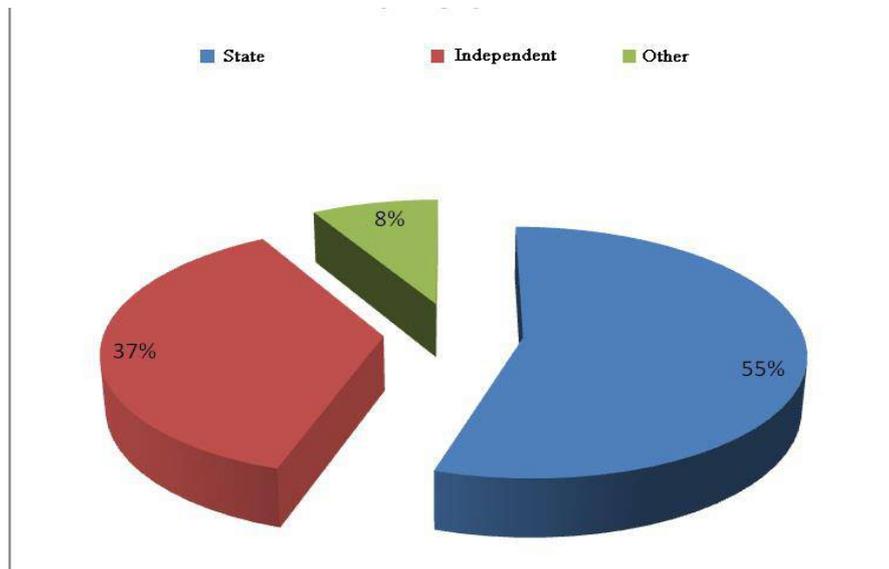
IV. You occupy what position?:

The majority of interviewed - 58% - hold leadership positions in their media. They were: senior management - 25% and middle managers - 33%. The remaining 42% worked as ordinary journalists.



V. Is your Mass Media outlet is independent of state-run?:

Since it is difficult to build and maintain one's own business for independent mass media in the regions, most of the respondents (55%) work for the state media. Representatives of the independent press constituted 37% of respondents; others in the media industry made up 8%

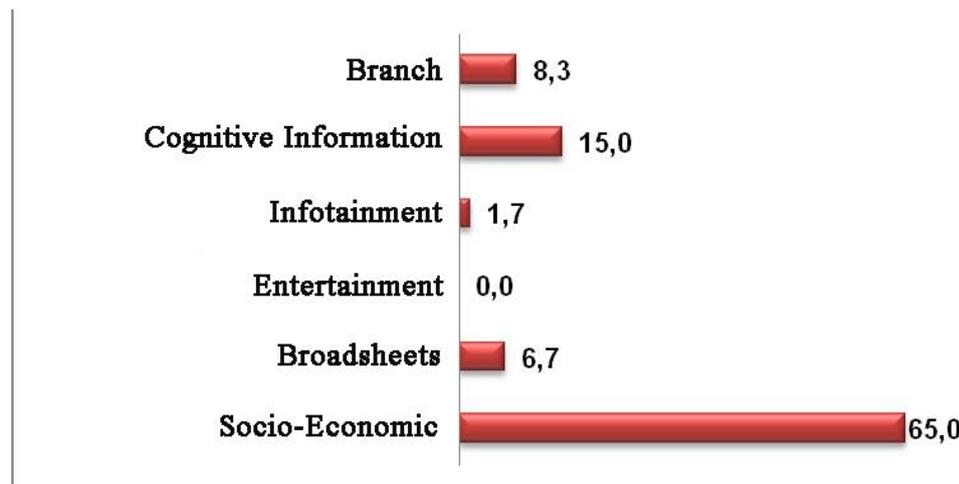


VI. Mass Media profile:

The majority of respondents - 65% - positioning their media as a socio-political new outlet. Slightly more than 20% specialize on providing niche information: News - 6.7%; Infotainment - 1.7%; Information and cognitive - 15%.

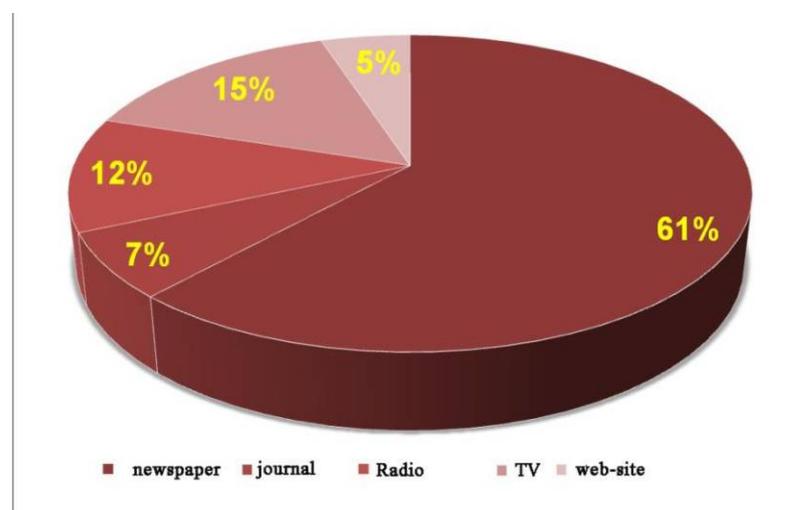
8.3% refer to media industry, representing the interests of various organizations (public relations).

There was not a single journalist representing solely entertainment Mass Media.



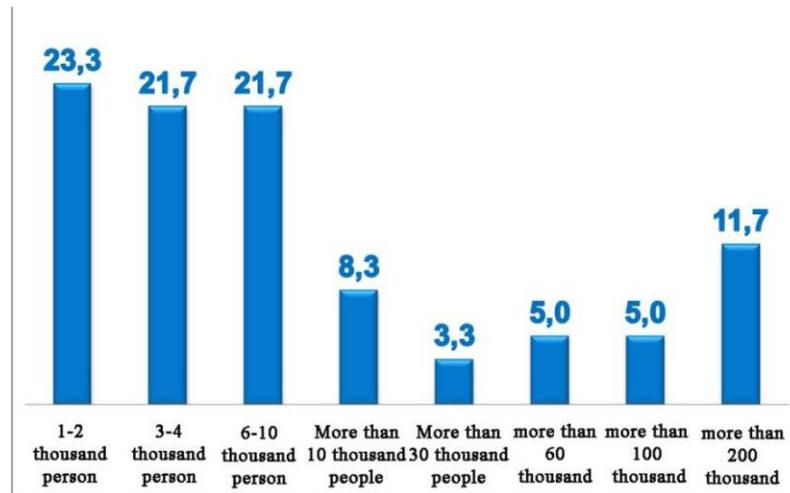
VII. You work in (on):

Most respondents were employees of print media (newspaper - 61%;magazines - 7%). This is due primarily to the fact that due to the lack of electricity in the regions the electronic media are not very well developed. Thus, most of the journalists, even if they work for TV or radio stations, prefer to be an employee of relatively stable print media.The remaining respondents represented electronic media (radio - 12% TV - 15%, Internet - 5%).



VIII. The audience of your Mass Media:

66.7% of respondents (the first three columns), has a very limited range of customers - from 1 to 10 thousand people. The remaining 33.3% of the respondents indicated that their audience is much wider - from 30 thousand to 200 thousand.



IX. To what extent is your Mass Media independent?:

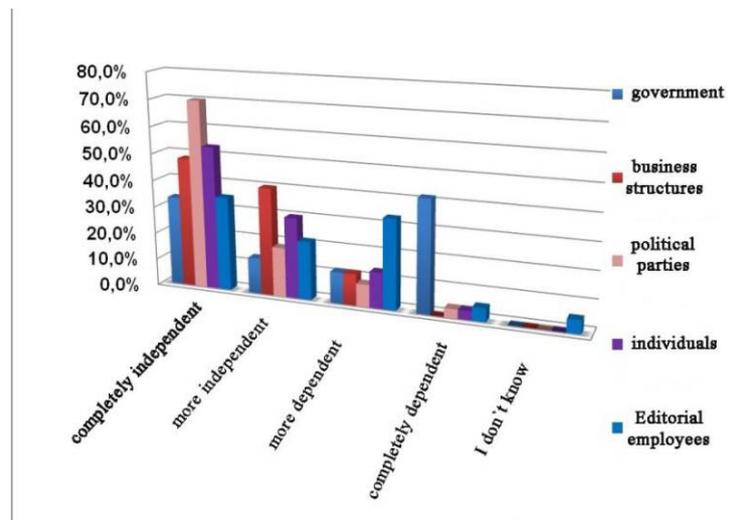
From whom/what are the media outlets dependent? We chose five categories of organizations and people on whose intervention the work of Tajik media may depend. They are as following:

1. Governments / local authorities.
2. Businesses.
3. Political parties.
4. Individuals.
5. Editorial staff.

However, much of the media stated that their media "is entirely independent" on all above listed stakeholders.

33.3% of respondents indicated "More dependent," meaning that their media are significantly affected by the editorial staff.

42% of respondents stated that their media is "totally dependent", meaning dependence on the government. This figure is not a matter of concern, but only indicates that those respondents are employees of media, which are subordinate to local / regional authorities.



X. How do you understand these terms?:

To the question, "How do you understand the terms "radicalization", "religious radicalization", "Localism" [ed.: *mestnichestvo* or *maballagaroi*], "nationalist radicalization" and "Social-economical Radicalization"?" we provided four possible answers:

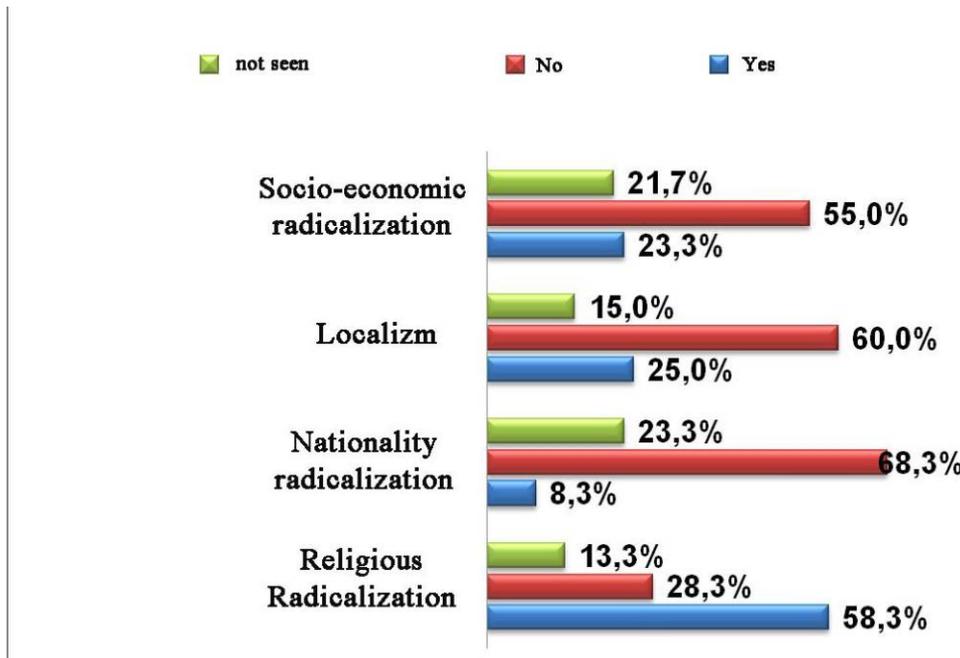
1. I know what it is and I can say that these processes occur in my area/region.
2. I know what it is and I can say that there is no such process in my area / region.
3. I do not fully understand what it is, but I think that these processes take place in my area / region.
4. I do not understand this term.

As it turned out, the terms "radicalization", "religious radicalization," "Localism" were clear to the majority (48% to 63%) of respondents, from which it can be concluded that these processes in their region are quite active. Our respondents are less aware (20%) of the terms of the "nationalist radicalization" and "Socio-economical radicalization."

Approximately 20% to 30% said that they understand the meaning of these terms, but they think that such processes in their region are not observed.

A small number of respondents (8% -20%) indicated that don't quite understand the meaning of these terms, but suppose that these processes are taking place in their region.

The rest of the respondents (15-35%) said they did not understand the meaning of these terms.

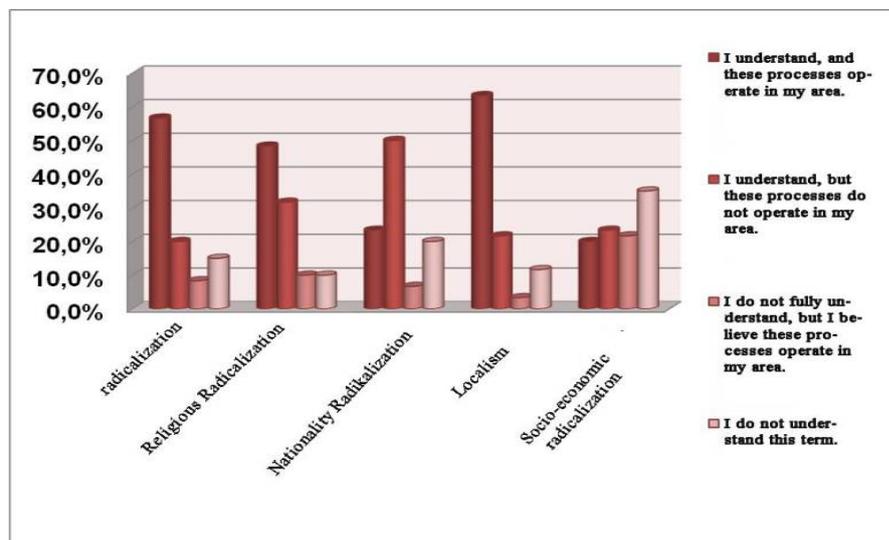


XI. If radicalization is reflected in your Media at the local level?

The next slide shows the results of the answers to the question "Does your media reflect radicalization at the local level (by the categories of radicalization)."

Possible answers: 1. Yes; 2. No; 3. Did not see.

The largest number of participants (almost 30% to 70%) indicated "NO", which means that issues of radicalization in their region are not covered at all. Nevertheless, some members of the media, the number of which varied from 8% to 53% (depending on the category of radicalization) answered "Yes", meaning that their media pays attention to radicalization.



The rest of the respondents simply said they did not observed their media outlets covering something like that at all.

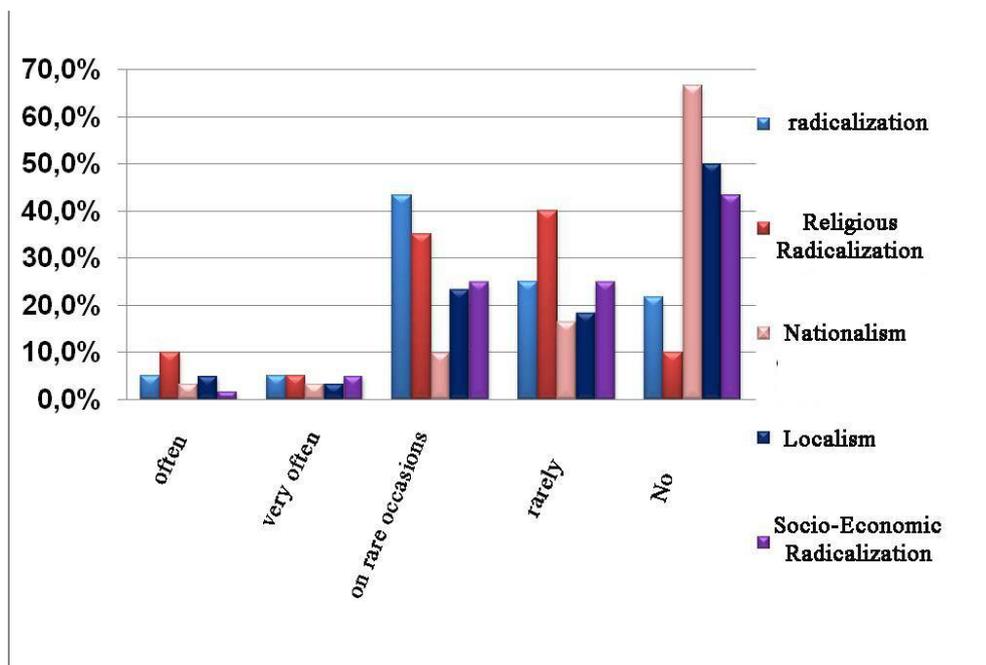
XII. How often issues of radicalization are covered by your Mass Media?

Based on the previous question, the next one was: "How often do you cover specified categories of radicalization in your media?"

Unfortunately, only 2% to 10% of the respondents indicated a frequent coverage of this issue. The answer "very common" also counted poor results - about 3% -5% of the respondents. 10% to 43% of the respondents indicated options of "Rare" and "very rarely".

The rest indicated that the issues of radicalization are "Generally not covered", and it became obvious that the least attention was paid to the "nationalistic radicalization", which means that our media probably believe that our people are particularly tolerant to the people of non- titular nationalities living in the country (e.g., Uzbeks, Russians, etc.).

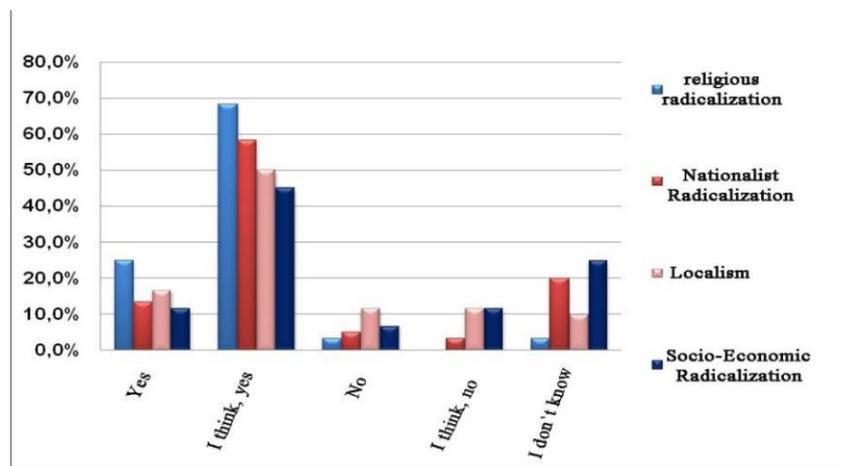
Based on the results of the answers to this question, we can safely say that the work on the coverage or prevention of the problems of radicalization in the regional media is not carried out at all. Therefore, there are favorable conditions for radical ideas in the regions to be actively spread.



XIII. Can your local Mass Media reduce the level of radicalization?:

Interesting responses were received, in my opinion, to the question: "Can the local oblast (provincial) and regional media reduce levels of: (listed categories of radicalization)?"

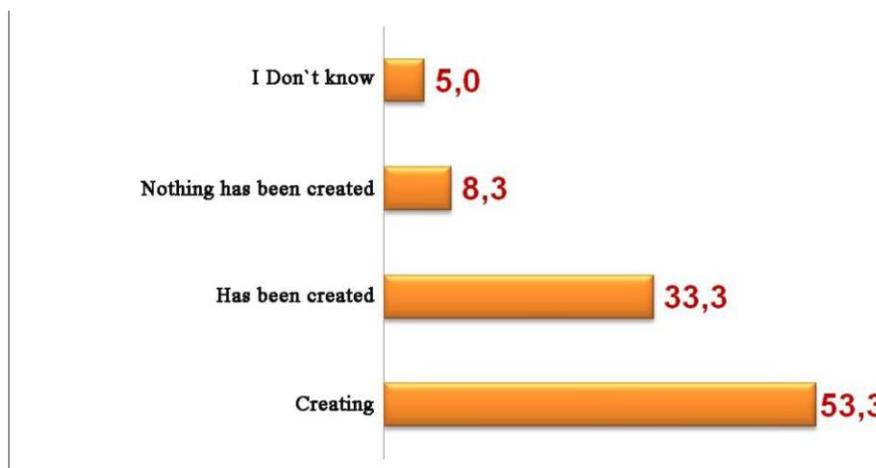
As we can see from the slide, more respondents (45% -68%) answered "I think so." That means they understand that the media - is a power, but the word "I think" implies that the answer were not very confident. Only 11%-25% of the respondents answered a confident "Yes". 3% to 12% respondents indicated "No" and "I do not think so" answering the question on the role of Mass Media in reducing radicalization. The rest of respondents were unable to answer this question.



XIV. Does your Mass Media create public opinion in your region?

We also found it useful to find out "Does your media create public opinion in your region?" in order to determine the possible extent of the impact of media in the society. Slightly more than a half of respondents - 53% - said that their media is capable of doing so.

Another 33% unsurely indicated "has been created." 8.3% indicated "does not create", and 3% undecided.



XV. Which Mass Media is able to create the largest public opinion in your region (list not more than two types of media outlets)?

The last question of this small study was: "Which media is able to create the largest public opinion in your region?"

The options "Newspapers" - 42% and "Television" - 38% received the highest results. Although television is the most popular media in the world, it does not refer to Tajikistan yet. There are several reasons for that:

1. there is an energy limit in the regions for 6-8 months each year;
2. weak economic activity and, as a consequence, no content for local TV stations;
3. and stiff competition with the central and satellite channels.

Despite the fact that Internet penetration in Tajikistan is still very low, yet the percentage of preference for it is (14%) more than the radio, which is only 11%.



VI. Conclusions and recommendations

This study makes it possible to make firm conclusions, the most important of which is the fact that under the existing circumstances the regional press remains a powerful weapon in combating all forms of radicalization, but the work in this direction is weak or completely non-existent.

In addition, it should be noted that the regional media are in a very difficult position. This conclusion is based on the number of print runs - 1-10 thousand copies. Also, the electronic media, with access to a mass audience, cannot take advantage of it because of the lack of electricity and the weak economic situation in the regions.

If the situation continues, it is possible that some of the publications that are on the brink of possible disappearance will be simply closed. These problems have not arisen just today, and the situation is worsening every year.

Poor work in countering radicalization through the media, and in some cases the lack of work in general, makes it possible for radically minded forces to promote their ideas through other means of influence: working with vulnerable groups, radical literature, pamphlets, sermons, and training abroad, etc.

Without analyzing all of these points, the issue of countering radicalization in the region can be put in a serious doubt. There is a lack of a clear work plan, structure and professional human resources, limited editions, limited access to the audience - in essence, these media outlets cannot be a model of successful organization of counter-radicalization.

General recommendations:

- **Work plan and human resources:** There is a need to develop a clear plan of work to prevent radicalization. For this the best human resources potential must be involved.
- **Consolidation of government, the media, the MoD and the civil society efforts:** Journalists work to prevent radicalization cannot be productive if it does not engage the civil society. Unfortunately, such people are treated with suspicion in the regions. And the activities of international organizations are much more passive than they could be. To effectively counter the threats of radicalization a consolidation of forces and capabilities of government media, international organizations and civil society is needed.
- **Financial support of the works on radicalization:** Professional journalistic staff is the main value of the media. Their professionalism determines a correct selection and literate presentation of information material, which later would become one of the links of rich content material as a whole. To attract strong journalistic staff the appropriate financial injections from the government are needed.
- **Empowerment (expanding opportunities):** Media outlets, which are subject to local authorities, and which make up a large part of the regional media, do not have their own budgets and are directly dependent on the whims of the local authorities. It is necessary to expand the credentials of the board for an independent expenditure. Also, it is necessary to give the media rights to raise

additional funds, which will strengthen the state media and their staff, as well as improve the quality of their content.

- **Education and the expansion of the media audience:**Regional media needs the cooperation of all kinds of media, regardless of the form of ownership, and the active work of the population to improve the quality of journalistic content. This will help attract more media consumers - the target audience that would get the correct information about the radicalization and its prevention.



Information on the implementers of the project

NGO «Media-consulting» – was established in 2008 (re-registered in 2010). The organization's mission is to provide professional, skilled assistance to local media by providing the required research (diagnosis), advice, recommendations and assistance in the development of documents, projects, training, capacity building, and etc.

The plans of the organization include implication of the experience of professional and managerial work in all types of media - newspapers, TV or radio, and provide services for media consulting to all visitors, regardless of ownership, and the nature of their activities.

Currently, the NGO "Media Consulting" has conducted on a large amount of consulting, research and project activities in the field of media. The activities of the NGO "Media Consulting" are not limited to these types of work. Range of services to the organization is constantly expanding.