



**Creating Villains and Heroes through Media:
Case Study of Taliban take over after US Withdrawal from Afghanistan**

Hina Shahid,¹ Mahnoor Anwar,² Sadia Shakoor,³ & Fizza Saleem⁴

Abstract:

Taliban take over in Afghanistan and occupation of power corridors is one of most important issues of last year. Researchers want to analyze coverage of coverage of Taliban takeover on international media. For that purpose, researcher has taken *The Economist*, *Hindustan Times* and *British Broadcasting Corporation*. To analyze the coverage of Taliban occupation in Afghanistan researcher used critical discourse analysis technique. This study concluded that both the BBC and The Economist both portrayed the Taliban regime as dangerous as well as greatly highlighted their inability to rule the state. While at the same time, the Hindustan Times Portrayed the situation in a neutral tone but at the same time they brought the distorted narrative of Afghan women being seriously oppressed, while in reality so facts exist to prove this to be true. International media represent the negative image of Taliban along with their religion and discuss the imposition of Shariah in Taliban rule.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Islam, Taliban, media, role, women rights, terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Since the last few decades, Afghanistan has been an important geographical region going through the war and it has been largely discussed in the perspective of war and peace journalism. Afghanistan has been the center of the global debate since the time America announced to leave Afghanistan and especially after the Taliban overtook it on August 15, 2021. Taliban with its allies took over Kabul to complete their resurgence in Afghanistan (Yousaf & Jabarkhail, 2021). The

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Arts and Media, Foundation University Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: hinashahid@fui.edu.pk

² Team Lead, Media Management, GoRings, UK. Email: mahnoor@thegorings.com

³ MPhil Scholar, School of Communication Studies, Punjab University, Lahore. Email: sadia.shakoor555@gmail.com

⁴ MPhil scholar, School of Communication Studies, Punjab University, Lahore. Email: Fizzasaleem300@gmail.com

victory of Taliban and their regain of Islamic emirate is a watershed moment for the global jihadist movement. However, it is being expected that things would be different from the pre 9/11 Taliban era. They are facing many challenges to build a positive image in order to gain acceptance of their rule in Afghanistan by other countries (Pantucci & Basit, 2021). The withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan has several implications for the United States, Afghanistan, regional powers, international media, and global actors (Tariq, Amir & Bano, 2021). Media discussions and coverage of any issue play an important role in determining the perception of the audience and it also shapes the direction of the audience's reaction on that issue.

Since the prehistoric time, it is evident that the power of the media is being harnessed by the powers from Alexander, Darius, Napoleon, Julius Caesar, and Hitler to Mao and Stalin to win public aid for their military actions (Knightly, 2003; Ottosen, 2008). The media reporting that highlights the conflicts is given more coverage and is considered more newsworthy as compared to the news that relates to conflict resolution. This is because of more journalistic value given to the information news (Galtung & Lynch, 2010; Fawcett, 2002; Wolsfeld, 2004), that increases the conflict through stereotyping and creating confusion with the peace system (Bratic, 2006). For this purpose, this research has been conducted to determine the coverage of the news relevant to Afghanistan on different newspapers of Global importance after the Taliban took over Afghanistan.

Agenda setting, priming and farming theories have been used. Qualitative content discourse analysis has been used to analyze the coverage of Afghan issues in the international newspaper. For this purpose, the content has been selected through simple random selection from the Economist, Hindustan times and BBC. This was done to check the dimensions of international coverage of the Afghan issue on the news organizations of global importance especially on the Afghan issue.

The unplanned and hasty withdrawal of US from Afghanistan paved with for the Taliban to takeover instead of the Afghan government. Since this conflict had been going on for decades with no possible outcome, this withdrawal became a notion that could be digested equally by the entire international community. As this conflict/ withdrawal became the most pertinent matter, this gave rise to all major hegemons to frame this situation according to their own benefitting goals and agendas. Thus, pointing to the fact the Western and Indian media has not properly covered the issue and highlighted only those issues which favored their agenda against Taliban like women issues. It is very important to investigate the Afghanistan issue scientifically on international media to see what exactly international media develop stance after Taliban take over.

This study aims at finding out; the initial coverage of *BBC* after recapturing of Afghanistan by Taliban in its discourse. The initial coverage of *Hindustan Times* and *The Economist* after recapturing of Afghanistan by Taliban in their discourse. The agenda and framing set by international media after Taliban take over in Afghanistan. The paper focused on these research questions: How did BBC frame Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse? How did Hindustan Times frame Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse? How did The Economist frame Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse? The objectives of the study included: To find out BBC framing after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse, to find out Hindustan Times framing after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse, to find out The Economist framing after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the media theorists Severin & Tankard (1992), propaganda is done on the conflicting issues to legalize the warfare activities and win public aid. The role of media is no longer unbiased and mere reflection of the event (Lynch, 2008; Lynch & McGoldrick; 2005; Kempf, 2007). Rather, the information is manipulated to get the desired outcomes (Galtung, 2002; Kempf, 2003) according to the specified agenda.

Memories about the role of media are not much fascination in the war between Rwanda and Burundi when the media was involved in propaganda activity, and it worsened the battle situation by being a war tool (Bratic, 2006). Other examples when media could have played better roles and could have rectified the situation include various incidents of mass violence in Eastern Europe during the world wars; and now recently the media coverage in American led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan can also be observed as biased ones. Lots of people could have been saved in these wars only if the media had played a transparent role and it had given peace a chance (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Ottosen, 2008; Bratic, 2006). Despite the fact that media can be used for promoting peace, this is something that is under-practised and not discussed and just merely ignored (Bläsi, 2004). A peace researcher, Syed Abdul Siraj (2006) has maintained that the media is highly obsessed with the conflicting news and that is the point of concern for the media practitioners, peace researchers and conflicting parties, because at times media lead to conflict aggravation (Hussain, 2014). The ethical responsibility of the media requires it to describe the events contextually and transparently while explaining the underlying causes (Galtung, 2002; Kovarik, 2007).

To understand the role of media in the conflicting situations, the dichotomy of peace and war journalism has been largely considered by the researchers (Hussain, 2014).

Wilhelm Kempf (2012) considers it important to reform the content of news media during the war and conflict time. Empirical investigation of many researchers (Lynch, 2005; Siraj, 2006; Lee & Maslog; Spencer, 2006) has shown the preponderance of war journalism which exhibits that currents media practices are inclined towards war and not peace.

Research shows that media content has an influence on the audience, (However, there are different paradigms on the degree of media effect). So, it can be confidently said that the media plays a role either to resolve conflict or exaggerate it. One can neither confirm the powerful media effect nor the negligible effect (Severin & Tankard; 1992). This is the reason that this research has been conducted to see the news coverage of the Afghan issue by the prominent newspapers of the world.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this study is determined by framing theory, which encourages peace journalism according to scholars (for example, Lee, 2010; Siraj, 2008). Frames are mental constructs that help us understand the social order by organizing our thoughts and ideas. Frames, according to Entman (1993), are the most effective tools accessible for knowing and interpreting reality, despite the fact that they are often used unknowingly. Inferences are implied by frames, and each frame points to a different method. As a result, he claims that framing theory relates to the

choosing of a component of reality, its prioritization over others, and the association of these with lexicons to foreshadow a specific reality.

Frames mean inferences, with everybody pointing to unique processes. So, framing concept refers to the choice of a part of reality, prioritizing it over others and associating those with lexicons to portend a selected reality. Utilizing this concept helps to become aware of certain dimensions and processes which might be typically followed with the aid of using media practitioners while protecting conflicts. These encompass ideological, expert and endogenous factors.

This study has been conducted to find the media frames of the portrayal of Afghan Taliban, the condition of women living there and an overall scenario in Afghanistan after the US withdrawal through negative and positive frames.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this research paper researchers used discourse analysis of web images and stories. Though many scholars have used the discourse analysis technique to study media texts and images (Ottosen, 2010; Ross, 2006), this methodology draws on the work of VanDijk. Van Dijk (1998) does not exclusively focus on linguistics (unlike Fairclough and Wodak) but rather connects it with the macro-aspects of social and political contexts, to decipher the underlying notions of ideology and power (1998) in media texts.

Moreover, the Van Dijk (1998) approach is media-centric, due to its emphasis on news headlines and intros and images which characterize the whole perspective. Moreover, the analysis was conducted while keeping in view Galtung's war and peace journalism model and the constructive and destructive coverage models developed by Wilhelm Kempf.

Population and Sampling

This study offers a qualitative analysis of Taliban conflict reporting in Afghanistan. Population of this study is *the economist* magazine's cover images because these images are important part of today's world due to technological advancement. News story is also an important part of media. The news stories of *BBC* and *the Hindustan times* are population of this study.

Sample of this study is the news stories and images that are published from 15 august to 15 September 2021 in *the economist*, *BBC* and *the Hindustan times*. Researcher has selected most popular and viral stories of these three news organizations.

Rational for selecting the Economist

The Economist is an international weekly newspaper printed in magazine-format and published digitally that focuses on current affairs, international business, politics, and technology. This magazine is one of the most well-known magazines of the world. The researchers selected two images from the front page of the Economist on the Afghanistan issue.

Rational for selecting Hindustan Times

Hindustan Times is the Indian newspaper. India invested a lot of revenue on the Afghan war. Moreover, India could be the strategic partner of the US in the coming days because of the countries' mutual agreements COMCASA, BECA AND LMAO in coming years.

BBC has one of the most credible names of broadcasting journalism. It is based in the United Kingdom and has a huge list of most watched programs. The British broadcasting service has its website which is also populated in the north part of the world.

Rational for selecting BBC

The number of news published in the BBC news from August 15, 2020, to September 15, 2020, is 527. The number of news published with images in The Economist during this period of one month is 63. The news stats for Hindustan Times during this period are almost 514. However, the analysis of all this content is beyond the scope of this paper. So, we selected two images from the cover photo of The Economist and 1 news story from Hindustan Times and BBC. The selection of image and news story has been done by checking the relevance and the coverage of the three factors we aim to check in this discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis of Two Images

Sample 1

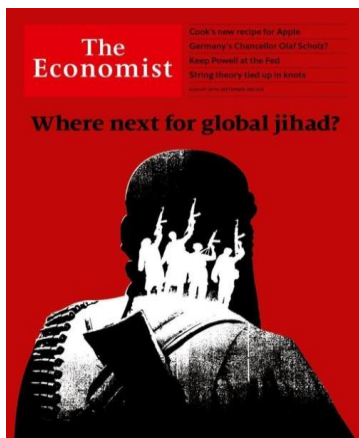


Figure 1

This image has been published in the economist August 2021 edition

Theme

There is possibility that Taliban can spread terrorism to the other parts of the world.

Main parts of image:

1. Dangerous Man (Taliban leader)
2. Four men having Kalashnikov.
3. Magazine on the shoulder of terrorist
4. Brain of a man
5. Taliban victory in Afghanistan
6. Possibility of spread of "Jihadism" (on international media it is called as Terrorism) from Afghanistan to other countries.

Applying Saussure Approach

Signifier: The explicit vocabulary meaning

Signified: The implicit conceptual meaning

Signifier

In this main cover of economist, a man with some dangerous thinking has shown. Man is holding a Kalashnikov with ammo or a magazine of bullets. Man is represented from the backside. Magazine (Ammo) of bullets have shown that he wants to fire on people every time. Four men having Kalashnikovs are showing his thinking process. The cerebellum is at the base and the back of the brain, these men specifically have shown in his cerebellum or main part of brain. Man has formal get up of a terrorist whose intentions are to spread anarchy in other countries in the name of Jihad.

Signified

Figure 1 is a clear depiction and representation of economist (London based magazine) policy that is highly inspired by its state narrative regarding Taliban. There is a possible indication that man or jihadist (according to their mindset) wants to spread terrorism in other countries. It depicts that they are portraying that Taliban after taking over the Afghanistan are heading towards spreading terrorism in other countries as well.

Islamophobia is the possible outcome of the studied image because the man is shown in Muslim attire and the word "Jihad" has also been depicted in a negative way.

This image showed that fact no matter how many states were willing to negotiate with Taliban in past few years their media considered Taliban as the terrorists. This image is also showing that Taliban and Afghanistan are at the centre point of west.

Sample 2



Figure 2

(This image has been published in the economist September 2021 edition)

Theme

Women's oppression by the Taliban is the main concern of this image. Women development can be stopped by the Taliban that was initiated by the United States.

Main parts of image

1. Oppressed Woman
2. Kalashnikov
3. A man of Terrorist attire standing on women forehead
4. Woman feeling burden just she is on gunpoint.
5. Patriarchy
6. Manpower
7. Woman is lying and imagining something.
8. Women empowerment can be compromised in Taliban regime.
9. Women activities are one of the main areas of interest of Taliban.
10. Color combination is depicting the hopelessness.

Signifier

This image shows an oppressed woman laying down with a man on his forehead. The man is in terrorist attire and holding a gun. The woman is shown to fear the man as he is holding a gun. She is shown in deep thinking. The black color depicts a state of fear and hopelessness.

Signified

Women's survival and development can be compromised by the Taliban. The United State tried to give leverage and hope to women, but this new era is very dangerous for women's progress.

Women are half part of the population of the country. This significant part can be affected badly due to Taliban Take over in the country. The Taliban would control the brain of women. Taliban are cruel leaders for women that can create hurdles in women development and then the women are in a state of hopelessness.

The Taliban would control women's thinking progress. Women's progress can be restricted by Taliban new policies. This image is showing patriarchy rule in the country that can be re-initiated in the country. Women would possibly not be able to attend the schools; offices, or the workplace; rather they can stay inside homes and perform household duties.

Nowadays women's progress has become propaganda for the international world and media. Media gives a lot of coverage on women progress waves. Economists can use women's cards to portray the Taliban as the wrong leader by depicting Taliban as cruel people for women.

Women can be oppressed by Kalashnikov that is why women start to fear right after Taliban takeover. Color combination of this picture depicts hopelessness and darkness, which repress possible dark periods for women.

Sample 3**Hindustan Times News Story (16 August 2021)**

The main headline is.

As Taliban Take Control of Afghanistan, a Look at Who's Who of the Leadership.

The writer wants to trigger its readers to accept the fact that the Taliban are the supreme power of Afghanistan. Who's who means writer urges its readers that they are the supreme and notable power of Afghanistan, and they are recognized as the power of Afghanistan. There is no second opinion about who is more powerful in Afghanistan. The writer is very clear about the current power game of Afghanistan. The writer wants to introduce the new government and its notable people.

The writer in its start of news story said, "The Taliban, which means "students" in Pashto language, emerged in 1994 around the city of Kandahar. The first line has a neutral tone, and the author introduced the word Taliban name, its origin. He used the word emerge because they are a strong group."

The author suddenly changed his tone and said it was a piece of cake for the Taliban to seize the Afghanistan power corridors. They are the winners of the war which started 20 years ago. The writer clearly stated the victory of Taliban. Writers argue that American troops invaded and started war, but Taliban take control back, writer declared Taliban as winner of war.

In the next paragraph, the writer clears the previous government status and use the word fled which means Ashraf Ghani was fearful from Taliban that's why he himself left his place. He is not forcefully sent to CARs. He gave the sign of some warning and unpredicted possibility for Afghanistan in coming days. He connects the other line by saying that Afghanistan is no safer and citizens of other countries are trying to leave Afghanistan. This situation reveals that the writer indirectly called the country as unsaved place and represents that everyone is trying to leave the country because of fear of Taliban.

The writer, through the word "Frantic Afghans" represents the fear among residents of Afghanistan as they want to leave Afghanistan at any cost due to uncertainty created at domestic level. The writer wants to say that a panic is created after Taliban take over and everyone wants to leave the country due to fear. Moreover, the writer is not representing the other side of the picture.

The writer quoted the story of Aljazeera, which is a Muslim news website, in which Taliban spokesperson statement is written. He represents the point of view of Taliban. The spokesperson stated that they are happy after they take over the country and their efforts are fruitful, writers do not add something in it. It seems he does not consider it important to write something that would be an additional thing.

In the next line, the writer has said that since US troops have left the country, the incapable Afghan government could not handle the Taliban that is why they took over the power corridors. It can be said that the writer gives the reasons for Taliban overtake one is US withdrawal of troops and the other is mishandling of the Afghan government.

While explaining "who are Taliban?" the writer introduces the current leadership of Afghanistan, but before the writer explains the fact there is much confusion about the Taliban leadership because they consider it as hidden under several barriers. The writer is itself confused about the hierarchy and structure of the Taliban government, which is the main theme of the topic.

The writer says that Haibatullah Akhundzada was appointed as the supreme leader of Taliban in 2016, who was appointed hierarchically on this job. He didn't have an idea about the reason for his appointment. He does not have resources who can inform him about this. He did not write any clue about his background or his warrior history, although he had previously criticized Taliban as a terrible group. He also said that he only delivers messages on Islamic events. Interestingly here he accepted that the Soviet invasion transformed another Taliban leader Mullah Baradar into an insurgent. He represented the Soviet Union invasion for the general public as an unlucky event by which the Taliban emerged.

Mullah Yaqoob, who is the son of founder, Mullah Omar. He used the word powerful for military commission which represents the Taliban's powerful impact on Indian media. He also used a vast network which depicted that the Indian media considered the Taliban as a powerful entity in Afghanistan. He represents mullah Yaqoob as a powerful and responsible leader. He used powerful words for him which represents his personality admiration.

Sirajuddin Haqqani son of Jalaluddin Haqqani is another Taliban leader of Taliban. He is leading the Haqqani network. The US designated means writer said that he himself is not of the view, but the US declared the haqqani network as a terror group. Many media outlets do not use such minor formalities, but he used it to make it clear that he does not have such kind of jihad.

The author after brief introduction of Taliban has said that Taliban rise during the Soviet invasion and after the soviet left, there were civil wars in Afghanistan which were fought by Taliban. They supported US in war against soviet and writer accepted that US take benefit of Taliban to gain victory in afghan war. The US could not get independence without Taliban or mujahedeen. Despite many parties claiming power in Afghanistan they became the sole winner to take the control of Afghanistan.

Writer explains the five years of their power which means the writer wants to suggest that they could get the control over the Afghan power corridor until the next few years with strong control over it.

In the **Modus operandi** paragraph, he used the term **enforced** which might mean he thinks Afghan people did not want that kind of strict Shariah law and Taliban came into power forcefully. Afghans were not ready to accept them and their rules.

He used the term **unpopular** because the writer wants to convey this was not a satisfied act to imposed laws by their own choice. Right after the cold war writers might want to convey that capitalism was more popular among people.

Internationally condemned act means this power control was not ignorable as the Soviet and US already fought there. It might be possible that the writer wants to explain that this could be the reason for 9/11 or many other event of 21 centuries.

Writer compared the Muslim countries Shariah and Taliban form of Shariah. He might be not aware of Islamic laws, but he introduced the term by his personal analysis.

Women issue is the most important discussion of international media since the 1990s. He said that all women in Afghanistan were not safe in Afghanistan.

He writes about many **restrictions of the Taliban government** in case of any violation which depicts that the writer is much concerned about afghan society after Taliban take over.

Writer mentioned that **four countries recognized the Taliban** after the takeover but did not write the names of all countries. He only wrote the name of Pakistan as might be possible he wanted to damage the image of Pakistan. It was better to mention all the countries instead of highlighting Pakistan. On the contrary he mentioned names of UN and US right after it who do not accept Taliban government. Writer believed that no one would accept the Taliban because of the US and UN.

Sample 4

BBC news story (August 16, 2021)

This article is written by the visual journalism team of BBC it means news story along with images representing the crux of the whole news story.

Main headline: The Taliban swept across Afghanistan in just 10 days, taking control of towns and cities across the country.

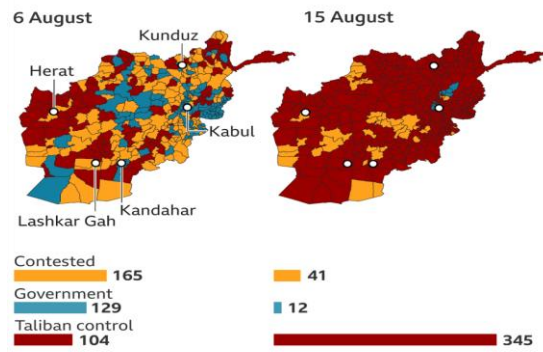
Headline of the news story depicted the powerful image of the Taliban and their shocking take over in Afghanistan in just 10 days. Writer wants to clarify how a power game changed in Afghanistan. Writer presents the Taliban as a strong emerging group of countries.



In this very first image a man is holding a Kalashnikov which represents what the writer believed that new Afghanistan will be of this kind and Taliban will rule over the country with the rifle. The man in this image looks very ambitious, which shows that the writer wanted to create an image of the new government of Afghanistan as a terror government which can create trouble for all the stakeholders of the afghan war.

Under the **US troops depart** paragraph the word Emboldened has been used which means the media wants to highlight the fact that Taliban become powerful after US and other forces lose their control in the area. It might be possible that British media did not second the act of Withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan. This shows the negativity of British media for Afghan forces. New momentum again has the meaning that they are going ahead due to the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan.

How the Taliban swept across Afghanistan



*Contested is where fighting is ongoing or strong Taliban presence
 Source: BBC Research. Districts according to 2005 government boundaries **BBC**

Research based geographical boundaries with easy to understand content in it.

Red color is the color of warning; writers intentionally or intentionally mention the red color as the areas of fear and contaminated areas which show that British media consider Taliban as the warning for the world.

Quick succession means the powerful manner of the overthrow of the Afghan government by Taliban. This Show that writer wants to elaborate that Taliban get the benefit of US forces evocation from Afghanistan. Otherwise this would not have happened.

In the **Afghan forces collapse** section, *BBC* took a stance against Afghan forces strictly as they said that Taliban proved them so efficient that they easily won from Afghan forces. Despite this, Afghan forces developed through huge funding from the international world.

BBC has given each detail of the region which was being overtaken by Afghan forces.

Where the Afghan forces fought the Taliban



Where the Afghan forces fled



In the next paragraph, *BBC* concluded that Afghan forces are weak as compared to Taliban groups. With heavy support from the US and the international world, the Afghan government proved them incapable. Afghan does not try to sustain them and easily give empire to enemies. Moreover, this part is based on facts and figures from where and how Taliban won the 20 years long war.

In the **Humanitarian catastrophe** part, *catastrophe* means that Taliban presence caused a lot of damage to human survival in Afghanistan. Humans cannot make progress and even they cannot be successful in living a normal life. Writer wants to show that the Taliban presence in Afghanistan is a great damage to humanity in Afghanistan. Writer wants to highlight that the Taliban could be a great loss for the people in Afghanistan.

Writer wants to highlight the miserable condition of women in Afghanistan. Women along with their children have shown in a very miserable condition as they are waiting for someone. The writer has failed to explain what the US has done in the past ten years for women.

If Taliban are destructive for the Afghan women, what steps are taken by the US in Afghanistan for the prosperity of women? This is a very thought provoking question for all western media. If the US did something for Afghanistan it must be mentioned in each and every statement.

Writer mentioned in the **Chaos in Kabul** part that Taliban Initially paused their movement for Full control but emergency talk caused a break in their victory. This also shows that the Taliban proved themselves a strong force in Afghanistan. International level Taliban gave a message to the world that they would not stop at any cost. This victory hit the western block.

In the next section, **uncertain future** he mentioned that Afghanistan is a war torn country. It seems that western media is still anxious on Afghanistan's position despite the fact a lot of revenue is spent on this region. A Lot of time and forces are invested in this region they are giving the message that the future is very uncertain of Afghanistan.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After a somewhat generic content discourse analysis of 2 images of the economist and 2 news stories, one from the BBC and other from the Hindustan times, a valuable data set became available which can be presented in addressing the three research questions.

How did BBC Frame Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan in their Discourse?

The news stories have represented the Taliban to be forming an incapable and inept government. They are not considered eligible to make a government in such a big country. Their coverage gives the impression that after the Taliban takeover anarchy has increased in Afghanistan. The major findings of this study are in line with the negative image of Taliban, their association with Kalashnikov, their religion, the terrorism, oppression of women and the debate over who is victorious or loser. Moreover, news story shows that BBC criticized US forces and afghan government as responsible for Taliban success. This shows that the media is highly obsessed with conflicting news and that is the point of concern for the media practitioners (Siraj, 2006).

How did Hindustan Times Frame Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan in their Discourse?

Hindustan Times news story depict Taliban as supreme power in Afghanistan. *Hindustan Times* introduced new afghan government neutrally it means they have accepted their supremacy. The news stories of Hindustan times give a very strong notion that women are being oppressed in Afghanistan. This is the image of the Taliban with respect to women as portrayed in the news. However, the fate of women in Afghanistan especially during the Taliban government is a mystery (Tariq, 2021)

How did The Economist Frame Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan in their Discourse?

The Economist framed Taliban as most powerful party take control over Afghanistan. Taliban are dangerous they could not be maintaining peace in country and terrorist activities will prevail in the country. Islamic phobia is also among findings. After Taliban rule hopelessness and women oppressing culture will increase. They don't enjoy freedom and equality. They are forced to remain at their homes, and to not do any kind of job.

CONCLUSION

With the recent takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban and the withdrawal of American forces, this issue has gained prominence in international media. The way how Taliban are portrayed plays an important role in building narrative. Hence, keeping in mind the framing theory, the coverage of *The Economist*, *BBC* and *Hindustan Times* has been analyzed through critical discourse analysis. The CDA of current study's sample shows that the Taliban have been portrayed on the international media as incapable of forming a peaceful government. There is anarchy everywhere in Afghanistan. Taliban have been portrayed as terrorists who spread violence and fear wherever they go. The news stories and images show an association of Taliban with the Kalashnikov, religion and oppression of women. Women are being deprived of their basic rights. Through this kind of reporting, focusing only on the negative image of Taliban through framing and hiding the reforms they are bringing in Afghanistan shows that international media loves crispy news and it promotes violent and war journalism instead of playing a responsible role of a transparent organization. In short, findings have shown the negative framing of Taliban, the condition of women and circumstances in Afghanistan in these four pieces of news by *The Economist*, *Hindustan Times* and *BBC*.

References:

- After Afghanistan, where next for global jihad? (2021, Aug. 28). *The Economist*.
- As Taliban take control of Afghanistan, a look at who's who of the leadership. (2021, Aug. 16). *Hindustan Times*.
- Baran, S. J., Davis, D. K., & Striby, K. (2012). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment, and future*. Cengage Learning.
- Bratic, V. (2006). Media effects during violent conflicts: Evaluating media contribution to peace building. *Conflict & Communication Online*, 5(1), 1-11.
- Fahmy, S. (2004). Picturing Afghan women: A content analysis of AP wire photographs during the Taliban regime and after the fall of the Taliban regime. *Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands)*, 66(2), 91-112.
- Farooq Yousaf & Moheb Jabarkhail (2021) Afghanistan's future under the Taliban regime: *engagement or isolation?*, *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, DOI: [10.1080/18335330.2021.1982139](https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2021.1982139)
- Fawcett, L. (2002). Why peace journalism isn't news. *Journalism Studies*, 3(2), 213-23.
- Galtung, J. & Lynch, J. (2010). *Reporting Conflict: New Directions in Peace Journalism*. Australia: University of Queensland Press.
- Galtung, J. (2000). *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization*. London: Sage.

- Hussain, S. (2014). Reporting on terror: Why are the voices of peace unheard? *Conflict & Communication, 13*(2), 1-10.
- Hamelink, C. J. (2008). Media between warmongers and peacemakers. *Media, War & Conflict, 1*(1), 77-83.
- Hussain, S. (2016). Media coverage of Taliban: Is peace journalism the solution? *Asia Pacific Media Educator, 26*(1), 31-46.
- Kempf, W. (2007). Peace journalism: A tightrope walks between advocacy journalism and constructive conflict coverage. *Conflict & Communication, 6*(2), 1-9.
- Kempf, W. (Ed.) (2003). *Constructive conflict coverage. A social psychological approach*. The Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Berlin.
- Kovarik, B. (2007). Journalism that gives peace a chance. <http://www.radford.edu/~wkovarik/misc/blog/5journalism.peace2.html>
- Lee, S.T. & Maslog, C.C. (2005). War or peace journalism? Asian newspaper coverage of conflicts. *Journal of Communication, 55*(2), 311-29.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public opinion quarterly, 36*(2), 176-87.
- Lynch, J & McGoldrick, A. (2005). *Peace Journalism*. Hawthorne Press.
- Murphy, M. (2021, Aug. 16). How the Taliban stormed across Afghanistan in ten days? *BBC*.
- Oskarsson, S., & Ottosen, E. (2010). Does oil still hinder democracy? *The Journal of Development Studies, 46*(6), 1067-83.
- Pourzand, N. (1999). The problematic of female education, ethnicity and national identity in Afghanistan (1920-1999). *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice, 43*(1), 73-82.
- Pantucci, R., & Basit, A. (2021). Post-Taliban takeover: How the global jihadist terror threat may evolve. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, 13*(4), 1-7.
- Rottig, T. (2021, March). Have the Taliban changed? *CTC Sentinel, 14*(3), 1-15.
- Rashid, A. (2001). *Taliban: Militant Islam, oil and fundamentalism in Central Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Sex and geopolitics Why nations that fail women fail. (2021, Sep. 11). *The Economist*. <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/09/11/why-nations-that-fail-women-fail>
- Siraj, A. (2006). *Image of Pakistan in the US media. Exploring news framing* (Post-Doc dissertation, University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale, USA).
- Siraj, S. A. (2008). War or peace journalism in elite US newspapers: Exploring news framing in Pakistan-India conflict. *Strategic Studies, 28*(1), 194-222.
- Subhani, M. S., & Sultan, K. (2015). Pakistani newspapers on peace talks with Tahrik e Taliban Pakistan. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies, 1*(1), 47-60.
- Spencer, G. (2005). *The media and peace*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Tariq, M., Amir, M., & Bano, S. (2021). Future threats and opportunities in Afghanistan in the post-us withdrawal scenario. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 15*(7), 766-78.

Date of Publication

January 25, 2023
