

Gender in Conflict: The Semiotics of Afghan Women Visual Coverage after ‘Taliban Offensive 2021’ in Newswires

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Introduction

Gender studies are a branch of interdisciplinary studies that has received increasing attention in the last decade. This field has developed through the new social movements, in addition to conflicts and wars. So, the identity and the role of gender in conflict zones create a new dimension in framing the events and defining them. Violence leads to sub-issues related to the visual framing of women, such as; their social rights, psychological effects and trauma as well as political and economic pressures that make women vulnerable to exploitation methods and repressive practices. Terrorist and extremist groups, led by ISIS, for example, have practiced many methods of suppressing the freedoms of women in besieged areas, in addition to recruiting others, and arguments that contradict the teachings of the Islamic religion and human rights.

Afghan women are living through the worst repressive periods in the history of Afghanistan, since the Taliban announced their alliance with anti-government groups, to launch their armed attack on the Afghan capitals and states. On the 15th of August 2021, the capital Kabul has fallen and the Afghan President, *Ashraf Ghani*, fled to the UAE. The Taliban's extremist policies and discriminatory practices against women are known. The horror of the 1990s has returned back again to the lives of Afghan women, threatening their future.

This study is an attempt to analyze the semiotics determines of Afghan women pictures in the visual coverage after 'Taliban offensive 2021' in three major newswires; AFP, AP and EPA. The visual coverage in newswire represented the Afghan women as a mother, refugee, immigrant, protester, peacemaker, advocator, soldier, and NHS worker, and all these roles stand against discrimination and inferiority.

Literature Review

Afghan women in' war 'and' conflict'

Mechanisms such as the UNSC Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security have been made massive efforts, both in policies and practice, to address the gendered consequences of war and prevent "gender oppression" as a noticeable feature of war (Yadav, 2021, p.450). The Security Council has adopted 10 resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS): Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019). Women's International League of Peace and Freedom mentioned that these resolutions together form the international policy framework on WPS and were adopted in response to persistent advocacy from civil society. As obligatory resolutions, Member States and relevant actors including UN system entities and parties to conflict should carry out these resolutions, which lead work to enhance and protect the rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.(Peacewomen.org). Security Council resolutions 2596 (2021) on 17 September 2021, 2593 (2021) on 30 August 2021, regarding peace and security for Afghan women, the Security Council set specific regulations considering the situation in Afghanistan in order to protect Afghan women. After Taliban offensive (2021), and the fall of Kabul on 15 August 2021, the Security Council announced the following: Resolution 2596 (2021), adopted by the Security Council at its 8862nd meeting, on 17 September 2021, emphasizing the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, and upholding human rights, including for women, children and minorities" (UN Security Council Resolution 2596, 2021, p.1). All these policies and institutional responses deal with various women issues including peace-making initiatives and protection from

violence during armed conflict, as these reactions focus on 'gender-sensitive' areas of intervention in conflict and post-conflict (Renzulli, 2017, p.210)

The male war has turned women into a natural element upon which to signify victory, by domination, aggression, violence, and exploitation (Handrahan, 2002, pp.69). The 'war' is not a political struggle conducted through organized violence, it is mainly a transformative social situation, and nevertheless researchers have focused on violence in war and neglected the 'agency of ordinary people' (Yadav, 2021, p.451; Lubkemann, 2008b, 454). The author argues that wartime social existence should be investigated within a much broader framework than that of 'coping with violence'. Lubkemann (2008a) argues that the war studies focused on specific categories such as 'refugee', 'victim' and 'combatant' or 'perpetrator', he indicates that a change from analyzing violence to the social condition in war is a necessity to understand socially constructed and culturally framed meanings of diverse violent practices.

After the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the US administration justified the war by 'liberating' Afghan women. Media researchers have investigated the media coverage of the Afghan war and focused on understanding how Afghan women's repression under the Taliban and their subsequent so-called 'liberation' played out visually in Western news media (Mitra, 2020, p.801). Fahmy (2004), Mitra (2014), Rasul and McDowell, (2015), Davies (2016), and Mitra (2020) argue that Violence Against Women in Afghanistan, is portrayed as "being perpetrated in a direct form by the Taliban enemy alone against weak and oppressed women who are in need of being liberated from the burqa" which was found to be the top visual metaphor engaged with the un-critical media coverage of the so-called war to liberate women. Fahmy analyzed both "visual news frames in English- and Arabic-language transnational press of the 9/11 attack" and "the Afghan War and Photojournalists' and Photo Editors' Attitudes and Perceptions: The Visual Coverage of 9/11 and the Afghan War". These research studies explore the graphic portrayal in addition to human-interest vs technical frame and the anti-war vs the pro-war frame. Findings indicated that imagery and perceive that the context of news influences the selection of editorial photographs, furthermore, the coverage focused on 'anti-war' and highlighted visuals portraying the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan (Fahmy, 2005, p. 146, 2010, p. 695). Laustsen, (2008) assumed that the pictures in conflict may be seen as part of a cruel and harsh form, as pictures provoked significant debate.

Handrahan (2004), defined how conflict can put women at risk, as a consequence of a combination of "national and gendered identities and women's disadvantageous location within global and local power structures" (p.429). The study Viterna (2013), *'Women in War'*, came up with a significant result that most women considered their

experience during the war as “an interlude—a temporary by-product of war rather than a first major stride on a path toward the radical transformation of their identity and the structure of gender relations in society”. In patriarchal society, the conflict in Afghanistan has led to a terrible loss of a ‘male guardian’; husband, father, or brother which has serious repercussions on women’s lives because Afghan women rarely made their own decisions (Mannell, et.al., 2021, p.1869:1870). Destitute women are suffering in Afghanistan, ‘widows’ in particular, whereas the international community considers the most urgent task to end these situation is rebuilding the country (Daulatzai, 2006, p.299). Khattak (2004) mention significant points; (1) the violence cannot be justified by ‘liberation’ of Afghan women, (2) this ‘liberation’ cannot be through the removal of the Taliban, (3) women cannot be used as a resource that is mobilized against a colonizer. Therefore, it can be said media studies have portrayed Afghan women as helpless victims, weeping over dead bodies to be liberated by Western military and humanitarian interventions (Ross-Sheriff, 2006, p.207). To sum up, there are two possibilities in Afghanistan; (1) Afghan women movements will continue defending their political and social rights, and calling for peace, (2) the voices of Afghan women will be muted (p.213:214).

Timeline of Taliban offensive 2021

May 2021:

As U.S. troops began withdrawing, the Taliban mobilized. The Afghan government retained control of all the capitals of the 34 provinces, but the Taliban began to advance in the rural districts. Taliban consolidated control of the main highways, isolated government bases, and more rural districts fell. The visual coverage in the newswires during May 2021 portrayed displaced people live in tents due to conflicts and security forces operation against Taliban militants.

June 2021:

The besieged Afghan forces realized that the government promises of providing more reinforcements and supplies would not happen. With low morale, they began to abandon checkpoints and bases on masse. Simultaneously, Taliban continued their slow advance, increasingly taking control of some government areas and other contested ones. During June 2021, the three newswires; AFP, AP, and EPA presented portrayals of these themes; a protest for evacuation of the Afghan soldiers from restive areas, Cash assistance to families in need, displaced people in shelters, outskirts of Lashkargah.

July 2021:

Joe Biden, the US President, announced that the 31st of August 2021 will be the date for the withdrawal ending the U.S. forces from Afghanistan. In a speech, he said

Washington had “achieved its goals” in combating the terrorist threat Afghanistan not to “build a nation,” but that is the “responsibility” of the Afghans, expressing his confidence in the ability of the Afghan army to confront Taliban fighters. Afghan village chiefs send Taliban message to the Afghan soldiers wither to surrender or die. Several soldiers and policemen surrendered and handed over their weapons in exchange for safety guarantees. Therefore, the visual coverage in the newswires illustrate three major themes; Expressing solidarity security forces in Herat, protest for women rights in Kabul, and war-displaced people, poverty, hunger and disease.

August 2021:

Taliban fighters intensified the siege of a number of provincial capitals, and government forces and officials began to abandon the fortified compounds from which they ran the affairs of the province. After nearly 20 years of war, the first provincial capital fell, Zarang, a small and remote city of and within a week, 14 other capitals collapsed. The US Department of Defense announced that an additional 3,000 troops were deployed to Afghanistan- 48 hours before the fall of Kabul - to help with evacuations. Taliban captured strategically Kandahar and Helmand along with Herat on the Iranian border. The fall of Kunduz and Lajar paved the way directly to Kabul. On the 15th of August, Kabul fighters arrive on the outskirts of Kabul and hold negotiations for the transfer of power; as an Afghan official confirmed that President *Ashraf Ghani* stole money from Afghanistan’s state budget then fled the country, immediately after Taliban reached the outskirts of Kabul. The visual coverage in the newswires during August 2021 focused on the evacuation of Kabul airport, Afghan refugee arrival in Europe and the US, covering the demonstrations inside and outside Afghanistan which calling for human rights and denouncing Taliban terrorism, homeless and displaced families living in temporary shelters, and picturing the daily life in Kabul after Taliban’s takeover.

Theoretical Background

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory has developed as a minor part of a great feminist movement struggling to challenge traditions, systems, methodologies, and priorities in all facets of life (Lay & Daley, 2007, p.49). Feminist theory focuses on women issues and confronts gender-based injustice, it calls for “placing gender differences at the center of any investigation and recommends considering the result of these differences in any given context” (Hirudayaraj & Shields, 2019, p.322). Flax (1987) suggested that there is an essential goal of feminist theory analyzes gender relations which is: “how gender relations are constituted” (p.622). Feminism is a political movement leads to equality, minimizes gender divisions and assesses women conditions. Feminist theory could have stuck

in political strategies and conceptual dilemmas if it does not aware of the intellectual and political resources it counts on (Lorber, 2000, p.81; Coleman, 2008, p.85-86). For Flax, 'Feminist theory' is appropriate within two, more inclusive, categories with which have special affinity: (1) the analysis of social relations and (2) postmodern philosophy (p.623). Feminist perspectives on citizenship diverge, *'Feminism and Citizenship'* by Rian Voet highlighted the feminist notion of citizenship and developed it through theories of citizenship, along with examining the relationship between political theory and gender (Voet, 1998, Mottier, 2004). Voet presented a model for active citizenship based on gender equality through; (1) Public Participation, (2) Political Subjectivity, (3) Paid Work, and (4) Gender Equality Perspective (Jubran, 2005, p.5:6). Nicholas and Budgeon (2021) explain that:

some decontextualised declarations such as 'smash the patriarchy' may not be understood as political in terms of traditional consciousness raising, they still have an important affirmative and motivational role for young feminists, with urgent 'performative and community-forming functions within feminist communities online, through mobilising a shared feminist vocabulary' (p.160).

In contrast, the philosophies of feminist theories have turned from women's liberation callings into women's exploitation and oppression discussions. Radical feminism avows that women's oppression arises from social rules and institutional structures constructed from male supremacy and patriarchy, in other words, it is a feminist theory sequence that starts from 'conflict in gender', and discrimination against women (Vukoičić, 2013, p.35). Radical feminism's theoretical slogan is "patriarchy, or men's pervasive oppression and exploitation of women", It argues that patriarchy is very hard to exterminate (Lorber, 1997, p.16). The belief that women are different and inferior is extremely deep-seated in most men's consciousness. Others define radical feminism as a group of common beliefs gripped by self-identified 'radical feminists', such as a politics based on women's lived experiences, an emphasis on the gender-based division (Duriesmith & Meger. 2020. p.6). Briefly, the various and conflicting forms of 'feminism', help understand the big changing in the world as well as in transforming the self and its relations to others (Wilén, 2021, p. 269).

Regarding Afghan women conditions, both 'liberal and radical feminism' presented in; calling for gender equality (liberal), and getting rid of traditional gender roles (radical). A photo taken by *Wali Sabawoon* (AP), represented Afghan women responded to Taliban's forced dress code by anti-Taliban feminist movement, calling for their educational, political rights and their freedom of speech and dress codes. They demand equal rights

in jobs in both public and private sectors. Afghan Women take part in a protest to demand their rights under Taliban rule in downtown area of Kabul, Afghanistan, on September 3, 2021. Another example, a photo taken by *Saul Loeb* (AFP), for Professor *Bahar Jalali*, an Afghan academic, launched a Campaign '#DoNotTouchMyClothes' via social media hashtag to raise the awareness of the colorful charming traditional Afghan dresses. *Bahar Jalali* wears an Afghan traditional dress in her home in Glenwood, Maryland, on September 24, 2021.

From other side, 'anti-feminism' is a strong phenomenon in Afghan society. To clarify, a photo taken by *Aamir Qureshi* (AFP), showing Female students wearing Neqab, hold Taliban flags as they listen to a speaker before a pro-Taliban rally at the *Shaheed Rabbani Education University* in Kabul, on September 11, 2021. *Qureshi* also provide many photographs of Armed Taliban fighters escort veiled women as they march during a pro-Taliban rally outside *Shaheed Rabbani Education University*. The pro-Taliban female students were raising banners that say "We are satisfied with attitude and behavior of *Mujahideens*", "we don't want co-education", "Women who left Afghanistan cannot represent us". Noteworthy, That Taliban regime, which imposed its dress code on Afghan women, obliterated any images of women in beauty salons, women clothes stores, or advertising. For instance, a photo taken by *Wakil Kohsar* (AFP), A Taliban fighter walks past a beauty salon with images of women defaced using spray paint in *Shar-e-New* in Kabul on, August 18, 2021. 20 years after their former regime, to oversee the implementation of hardline Islamic rule in Afghanistan, Taliban are bringing back the vice and virtue. An EPA photograph, in Kabul, September 18, 2021, pictured an Afghan woman, wearing burqa passes by the building of former Ministry of Women Affairs which is now replaced with the conservative Ministry of Vice and Virtue.

Pierre Bourdieu Theory

While the Max Weber theory stated that "an organization must have a defined hierarchical structure and clear rules, regulations, and lines of authority which govern it", Bourdieu developed sociology for scrutinizing the processes of domination and accumulation counting on Marx and Weber scientific contributions (Baczko & Dorronsoro, 2021 p.2). Bourdieu (1990) presented 'Social Practice Theory' with basic concepts: (Habitus) associated with social and cultural domination, (Field) expressing the theoretical and institutional structure of the society, and (Cultural Capital) measured by values and social considerations (p.52:148). Social action according to Bourdieu is neither completely specified nor completely arbitrary. The notion of habitus is crucial here, social actions are not completely determined or arbitrary; instead, habitus

generates and shapes our actions according to the rules and internal logic of the field (Adkins, 2003, p.23; Yadav, 2021, p.452).

Baczko and Dorronsoro (2021) argued that Bourdieu's work provides conceptual instruments for thinking about change and remains heuristic for understanding the dynamics of wars and they used Bourdieu's theory to go beyond Bourdieu, because he hardly tackled the collapses of social orders and never interpreted war as a scientific object, even if he pointed out the theoretical interest in an inverse sociogenesis of the state. While their work on war-ridden societies such as Syria and Afghanistan, they came up against series of intimately empirical and theoretical problems that led them to test different sociological paradigms (p.3).

Swartz and Zolberg (2005) demonstrate the usefulness of Bourdieu's concept of field for political as well as cultural analysis as recent studies employ Bourdieu's view of culture as a form of social capital (p.7). Bourdieu uses cultural capital as a methodological framework for studying various social phenomena, as the social capital plays an important role in determining the social map of any society, because it divides society into the poor/rich, dominant/dependent, holders/heirs. Both cultural capital and symbolic capital are employed in the conflict between social powers with the aim of monopolizing cultural violence in society, in other words, monopolizing the ability to conceal the meanings and principles of social reality and exploit them according to the interests of these powers (Bourdieu, 1990, p.122:123; Abdelwahab, 2003, p.131:132). According to Yadav (2021), "conflict played the role of a catalyst and became a vehicle for change for women, creating an enabling environment for them to exercise agency, even amid hardship and vulnerability. Shared practices were challenged due to a mismatch between field and habitus that occurred due to a crisis created by the armed conflict, which led to a wider social transformation" (p.459).

Ronald Barthes Approach

In the early twentieth century, the term Semiotics or "semiology" was first used by the Swiss linguist "Ferdinand de Saussure", It is the science of signs which is concerned with the general properties of sign language and other signal forms that allowed the propagation of perspectives and paved the way to other cultural phenomena that upraised the study of signs through its denotative and connotative meanings and levels (Chappman & Christopher, 2009, p.41). Barthes (1968) in '*Elements of semiology*' define the sign as a combination of a signifier and a signified, through analyzing, researchers could extract its connotations and the mediated significance which is accordingly based

on functional order of culture and ideology (p.35). Barthes suggests that semiology therefore aims to take any system of signs, whatever their substances and limits 'semiological systems'; (objects, gestures, pictorial images, musical sounds) and he calls these 'semiological signs', whose origin is utilitarian and functional, sign-functions (Barthes, 1982, p.1:35). Berger (1994) explained the comparison of 'connotation' and 'denotation' (p.86) as following:

Table 1. Berger's Comparison of Connotation and Denotation (Berger, 1995, p.86; Nadira, 2018, p.15)

Connotation	Denotation
Figurate	literature
Signified	Signifier
Inferred/ conclusion	Evident
Suggest meaning/ giving impression about meaning	Describes/ explanation
Realm of myth	Realm of existence

In consequence, there are four levels of visual analyzing; denotative system (the literal or manifest), stylistic-semiotic systems (conventions such as close-ups signifying intimacy), connotative systems (the culture-bound ideas or concepts attached to the people, things or events depicted), and ideological representations (how images are employed as instruments of power) (Barthes, 1982, p.31:51), Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011, p.53:57, Krstić, Parry & Aiello, 2020, p.172). Bouzida (2014) emphasizes that media studies need an original semiological research endeavors as the Barthesian perspective in the qualitative analysis level in order to go beyond the "text" or the "image" and open to immeasurable interpretations to explain how meaning is created through complex semiotic interaction. Semiotics in media studies uses varied texts including: images, adverts, and films to provide the recipients with knowledge, all these different media forms produce meaningful texts within its messages whether verbal or non-verbal (p.1002: 1003). According to Fan (2006), "The discussion of semiotic approach reinforced by various examples illustrates that the semiotic model can be a tangible theoretical and practical tool to help students and practitioners study and analyze the use of visual and verbal elements in technical communication" (p.121). The current study suggests an explanation of somatic analyses according to Ronald Barth Approach on following picture:

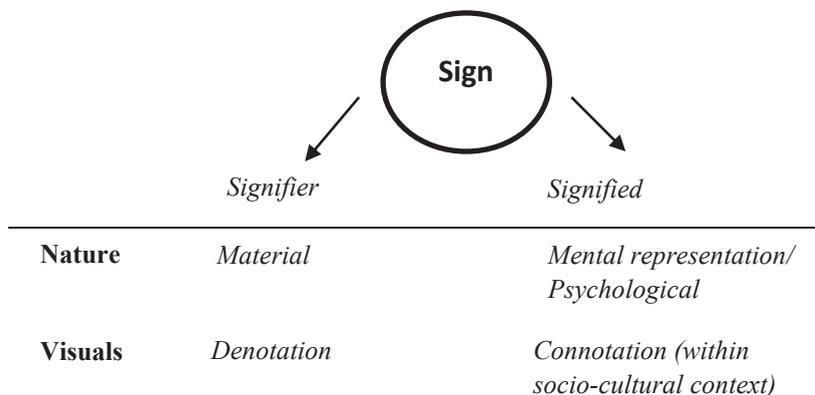


Figure 1: Signification level according to Ronald Barthes Approach

Regarding Afghan women pictures in war and conflict, many iconic photographs contribute a documentary, ideological and emotional impact. It should be noted that Zarzycka and Kleppe (2013) assumed “Whereas photographic icons witness historical moments, reproduce ideology, and model political identity and citizenship, the all-encompassing quality of the photographic trope tends to increasingly crowd out the politicized and the activist dimension, appealing to a broader cultural consensus of meaning” (p.979). Various iconic photographs symbolize a certain trope such as; “a dying soldier, a poverty-stricken mother with her children, charred human remains”, on the other hand not every image/photograph depending on a trope/metaphor acquires the status of an icon (Zarzycka & Kleppe, 2013, p.979). Visual coverage is a complex analyzing process of the explicit and hidden meanings within the social-political and social-culture contexts. The power of photographs encourages media researchers to suggest that different cultural and political perspectives media generate different ‘visually framed’ images of war and conflict (Entman, 1993, p.52; Fahmy, 2012, p.172, Cullinane, 2010, p.3).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Questions:

RQ1: How did the newswires photographs portray of the Afghan women?

RQ2: What roles did the Afghan women play and in which themes?

RQ3: What are the semiotics of Afghan women visual coverage and its interpretation?

Hypotheses:

RH1: There are differences between newswires in regard of portraying of the Afghan women.

Methodology

The data was collected from the newswires editorial images of AFP, AP and EPA. The 'single photograph' is the unit of analysis of this analytical study. This study conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis of 1591 items during a full 6 months from 1 May, 2021 to 31 October, 2021. The researcher chose three major newswires belonging to three different countries; AFP (France) $N=794$, AP (USA) $N=597$, and EPA (Germany) $N=200$. To clarify, the three countries played a potential role in evacuating the Afghan families from conflict zones and fallen cities which have been dominated by the Taliban and welcomed them as refugees. This study uses a descriptive and analytical methodology to examine the general characteristics of the Afghan Women Visual Coverage after 'Taliban Offensive 2021' in Newswires, and all images of Afghan women were coded. The majority picture more than one woman and display the main and dominant role of Afghan women in war and conflict. Using the title and caption provided additional information and clarification to understand the image and its context. Thus, each single photograph was coded according to the following variables:

1. Newswire: The categories for this item were; AFP, AP, and EPA.
2. Types of editorial photography: The categories for this item were; news photography, feature photography, and portrait.
3. Camera angle: The categories for this item were; low, equal, and high angle.
4. Type of shot: The categories for this item were; close-up, medium, and long shot.
5. Focus: The categories for this item were; foreground and back ground.
6. Engagement: The categories for this item were; frontality, profile, and back.
7. Body coverage: The categories for this item were; Covering entire body (wearing Burqa), showing eyes (wearing Neqab), showing face (wearing scarf), and showing face and hair.
8. Women's role: The categories for this item were; protester, Taliban rally participant, Advocate/ peace maker, Refugee, evacuees, Immigrant, Teacher, University student, Athlete, Solider, NHS workers, Scientist, Founder/ business woman, Airport worker, Journalist/ reporter, Needy/poor, Homeless/ displaced, Injured/ victim, Wife/ mother, Patient, Worshipers/ prayers, Pedestrians, Passenger/traveler, Bank client, and Shopper/ seller.

9. Theme: The categories for this item were; fleeing from Afghanistan, calling for human/women's rights, protesting against the Taliban, fighting against the Taliban, Supporting Afghan Army, evacuate Afghan soldier, pro-Taliban women rally, anti- Pakistan demonstrations, Taliban terrorism, Taliban dominance, USAID Supplies, WFP Aid, German aid, poverty, hunger and disease, economic crisis/ cash crunch, gender segregation, women work, and daily life.

The methods of this research will also be a semiotic analysis of 10 chosen photos, searching for themes, gaining an emotional understanding of the images, and showing challenge ideological narratives. For deeper understanding, this study will use semiotic analysis to set the photos in a specific cultural context and examine repeated patterns and meanings. Depending on Ronald Barthes Approach, the study will apply the semiotic analysis according to the following:

- Denotative system (the literal or manifest).
- Stylistic-semiotic systems (conventions such as close-ups signifying intimacy).
- Connotative systems (the culture-bound ideas or concepts. attached to wither people, things or events depicted).
- Ideological representations (how images are employed as instruments of power).

In addition to the semiotic analysis of the selected photos, the researcher has conducted an analysis of the newswire's narration for each photo, which gave more information about the agency coverage style and attitude.

The difficulties that the researcher faced could be explained and as the following: the pictures taken by professional photographers of war zones and conflicts that pose a threat to their lives are considered important pictures with a high financial cost, which made it difficult to obtain pictures from their source. So, the researcher referred to the website where the pictures were published. Therefore, the researcher recommended the need to support image research that is concerned with studying the effects of war on gender and how to provide visual coverage of conflict areas, and the need to support these studies by universities and research institutions as research projects for social, media, political and anthropological studies, and suggested to pay increasing attention to visual and international communication studies.

Findings

Results of the study have revealed interesting data about the portrayal of Afghan women in newswires after Taliban offensive 2021. This study is comprised of a descriptive analysis through using both types of statistics: descriptive statistics (data

distribution and summary statistics) through using frequencies and percentages and inferential statistics; (Chi-Square) to find whether there is a significant correlation between variables. The researcher used tables to show the findings obtained through the content analyzes.

Examining the first research question on how the newswires visual coverage portrays the Afghan women after Taliban offensive 2021, the researcher defined visual variables as well as the body coverage.

Table 2. Comparisons of frequencies and percentages on the type of photos in news-wires visual coverage of Afghan women after 'Taliban offensive 2021'

Type	AFP		AP		EPA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Portrait	29	3.7	23	3.9	9	4.5
Feature	248	31.2	157	26.3	67	33.5
News	517	65.1	417	69.8	124	62

* N=1591

As displayed in (table 2), 'news photography' is in the lead of photo type as the visual coverage of Afghan women is shown in three newswires, followed by 'feature photography' as the second type, then 'portrait' as the third type. This can be explained in the context of the importance of the news image in covering wars and conflicts, in addition to the documentary role that the image will play in the future. To clarify, news photography' covers urgent events and incidents, so publication may not be postponed. Conflicts and wars, as is the case with the coverage of the Taliban attack requires timely publication of breaking news images (see figure 2 & figure 5). Regarding 'feature photography', sometimes the photographer covers some visual stories during the field work in the conflict zones. This visual coverage presents non-urgent and less important issues than news photos. Some of feature photos cover social and economic issues (see figure 8). Finally, 'portrait' photography which may be taken during the coverage of conflicts and wars pictures the people features and emotions, the majority reflects sadness and fear. These photos create an effective communication with the audience. For instance, the EPA published some portraits of displaced women as families evacuated from districts where fighting is going on between Afghan security forces and the Taliban.

Table 3. Comparisons of frequencies and percentages on the type of camera angle in newswires visual coverage of Afghan women after ‘Taliban Offensive 2021

Angle	AFP		AP		EPA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Low	92	11.6	53	8.9	19	9.5
Equal	604	76.1	516	86.4	155	77.5
High	98	12.3	28	4.7	26	13

* N=1591

The table shows that the visual coverage of Afghan women depends on ‘equal’ camera angle in the first rank as a way of expressing reality (see figure 6), while there are differences regarding ‘high’ and ‘low’ camera angle. To clarify the AFP and EPA use the ‘high’ camera angle, in the second rank, to show weakness (see figure 7). on the other hand, the AP rely on the ‘low’ camera angle, in the second rank, in portraying Afghan women to show their strength and give an impression of empowerment.

Table 4. Comparisons of frequencies and percentages on the type of shot in newswires visual coverage of Afghan women after ‘Taliban Offensive 2021

Shot	AFP		AP		EPA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Close up	67	8.4	43	7.2	32	16
Medium	194	24.4	163	27.3	64	32
Long	533	76.1	391	65.5	104	52

* N=1591

Regarding the shot type, the table indicates that the ‘long’ shot come into the first rank, as all the newswires depends on, to present a whole complete photo composition in events context which contributes a clear understanding of images. The newswires used ‘long’ shots in the visual coverage of the protests, fleeing from Afghanistan, and evacuation of the citizens. While ‘close up’ and ‘medium’ shots were used in images which reflect human interests and feelings.

Table 5. Comparisons of frequencies and percentages on the focus in news-wires visual coverage of Afghan women after ‘Taliban Offensive 2021

Focus	AFP		AP		EPA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Foreground	739	93	502	84	154	77
background	55	7	95	16	46	23

* N=1591

As displayed in (table 5), the majority of Afghan women photographs in the newswires of the study represented ‘foreground’ as the highest percentage of the focus in photography. It gives an important indication that there was a growing interest in representing portrayals of the Afghan women in particular after Taliban’s takeover.

Table 6. Comparisons of frequencies and percentages on the engagement in newswires visual coverage of Afghan women after ‘Taliban Offensive 2021

Engagement	AFP		AP		EPA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Frontality	327	41.2	354	59.3	88	44
Profile	345	43.5	191	32	87	43.5
back	122	15.4	52	8.7	25	12.5

* N=1591

According to (table 6), there are differences between the three newswires regarding the engagement. The AFP visual coverage focused on ‘profile’ in picturing Afghan women by 43.5% (see figure 2), then ‘frontality’ as the Afghan women were looking directly to the camera by 42.2% (see figure 3), while only 15.4% of the AFP photographs ‘back’ engagement in picturing Afghan women. The AP and EPA visual coverage focused on ‘frontality’ in picturing Afghan women by 59.3% and 44% respectively (see figure 11), then ‘profile’ by 32% and 43.5% respectively, while ‘back’ engagement in picturing Afghan women came in in the last rank by 8.7% and 12.5%.

Table 7. Comparisons of frequencies and percentages on the body coverage in news-wires visual coverage of Afghan women after ‘Taliban Offensive 2021

Body Coverage	AFP		AP		EPA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%

Covering entire body	190	23.9	69	11.6	66	33
Showing eyes	28	3.5	16	2.7	9	4.5
Showing face	528	66.5	438	73.4	124	62
Showing face and hair	48	6	74	12.4	1	0.5

* N=1591

As shown in (table 7), 'showing face' is the highest in all the newswires regarding the visual coverage of Afghan women after Taliban offensive, which may indicate that the majority of the Afghan women wither fleeing from Afghanistan, so that they do not succumb to the extremist radical ideology dominance of Taliban, or citizens who refuse to wear burqa. In contrast, defiant Afghan women held a rare protest on September 2, 2021, in Herat, saying they were willing to accept the all-encompassing burqa if their daughters could still go to school under Taliban role.

To answer the second research question, the researcher coded various roles that Afghan women play and in many themes.

Table 8. Comparisons of frequencies and percentages on the role of the Afghan women in newswires visual coverage after 'Taliban Offensive 2021

Role of the Afghan Women	AFP		AP		EPA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Internal protester	57	7.2	12	2	35	17.5
Refugee protester	57	7.2	7	1.2	11	5.5
Immigrant protester	47	5.9	183	30.7	7	3.5
Advocator/ peace maker	12	1.5	25	4.2	22	11
Teacher	6	0.8	4	0.7	4	2
Refugee	227	28.6	245	41	8	4
Homeless/ displaced	6	0.8	41	6.9	39	19.5
Wife/ mother	74	9.3	28	4.7	24	12
Immigrant	21	2.6	-	-	4	2
Needy/poor	27	3.4	14	2.3	19	9.5
NHS workers	14	1.8	3	0.5	-	-
Solider	-	-	-	-	1	5.
University student	6	0.8	-	-	5	2.5
Athlete	29	3.7	15	2.5	2	1

Shopper/ seller	36	4.5	8	1.3	3	1.5
Pedestrians	31	3.9	3	0.5	14	7
Passenger/traveler	57	7.2	1	0.8	1	0.5
Journalist/ reporter	-	-	3	0.5	1	0.5
Patient	2	0.3	-	-	-	-
Worshipers/ prayers	9	1.1	5	0.8	-	-
Bank client	10	1.3	-	-	-	-
Scientist	3	0.4	-	-	-	-
Founder/ business woman	1	0.1	-	-	-	-
Taliban rally participant	26	3.3	-	-	-	-
Airport worker	3	0.4	-	-	-	-
Injured/ victim	3	0.4	-	-	-	-
evacuees	30	3.8	-	-	-	-

* N=1591

The table illustrates some interesting results, regarding the role of the Afghan women visual coverage in the three newswires. Based on the data in (table.8), it is noticeable that there are significant differences; the AFP presented more diverse roles for Afghan women than the AP and EPA, whereas the EPA was distinguished by presenting the Afghan women as a soldier in the Afghan army during coverage of the events in Herat.

The AFP focused on six major roles of Afghan women by 65 percent of photographs which are 'Refugee', 'Wife/ mother', 'Passenger/traveler', 'Internal protester' (see figure 5), 'Refugee protester', and 'Immigrant protester' (see figure 4). The AP focused on three major roles of Afghan women by 79 percent of photographs which are 'Immigrant protester', 'Refugee' (see figure 6), and 'Homeless/ displaced' (see figure 7). Finally, the EPA focused on three major roles of Afghan women by approximately 49 percent of photographs which are 'Homeless/ displaced', 'Internal protester' (see figure 11), and 'Wife/ mother'. In general, the least noticeable roles in all the pictures of the three newswires were those related to the representation of Afghan women in the workplace, such as 'NHS workers', 'Soldier', 'University student', 'Journalist/ reporter', 'Bank client', 'Scientist', 'Founder/ business woman', and 'Airport worker'. The previous result may be explained by the repressive policies of the Taliban and its prohibition of women's work in Afghanistan after taking control since August 2021.

Table 9. Comparisons of frequencies and percentages on the themes in newswires visual coverage of Afghan women after ‘Taliban Offensive 2021

Themes	AFP		AP		EPA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fleeting from Afghanistan	341	42.9	260	43.6	34	17
Calling for human/women’s rights	82	10.3	119	19.9	30	15
Protesting against Taliban	74	9.3	86	14.4	16	8
Pro-Taliban women rally	26	3.3	-	-	13	6.5
Taliban terrorism	19	2.4	6	1	5	2.5
Taliban Dominance	3	0.4	6	1	9	4.5
USAID Supplies	-	-	-	-	4	2
WFP Aid	1	0.1	-	-	8	4
Poverty, hunger and disease	65	8.2	70	11.7	40	20
Daily life	147	18.5	28	4.7	17	8.5
German aid	-	-	-	-	9	4.5
Fighting against Taliban	-	-	-	-	1	0.5
Supporting Afghan Army	-	-	-	-	6	3
Evacuate Afghan soldiers	-	-	-	-	4	2
Educational gender segregation	4	0.5	-	-	3	1.5
Economic crisis/ cash crunch	10	1.3	-	-	1	0.5
Women work	3	0.4	-	-	-	-
Anti- Pakistan demonstrations	19	2.4	22	3.7	-	-

* N=1591

The AFP focused through the visual coverage of Afghan woman on three major themes respectively are; fleeing from Afghanistan, daily life, and calling for human/women’s rights, while the main themes regarding the AP coverage respectively are; fleeing from Afghanistan, calling for human/women’s rights, and protesting against Taliban. That’s why ‘refugee’ as a role of Afghan woman came in the first rank for both the AFP and AP. Referring to the EPA newswire, the main themes and roles were slightly different from the previous mentioned newswires. It covered the following themes; poverty, hunger and disease in the first rank, followed by Fleeing from Afghanistan in the second rank, then calling for human/women’s rights in the third rank. Based on the data which illustrated in (table.8) ‘homeless/ displaced’ is the dominance role of Afghan women by 19.5% according to the EPA.

To investigate the research hypotheses, Chi-squared test is used to measure differences

between newswires in regard of portraying of the Afghan women.

Table 10. The differences between the newswires of the study regarding the portrayal of the Afghan women

portraying of the Afghan women	Chi-Square value	Degrees of Freedom	P value
Type of Photographs	6.078	4	0.193
Camera Angle	31.067	4	*0.000
Type of shot	22.898	4	*0.000
Focus	49.634	2	*0.000
Engagement	48.612	4	*0.000
Body coverage	81.913	6	*0.000
The role of Afghan women	719.500	62	*0.000
Themes	438.666	34	*0.000

* Sig. as the value of p is less than 0.05

The table shows that there are statistically significant differences between the newswires of the study regarding the portrayal of the Afghan women regarding the following variables; camera angle, type of shot, focus, engagement, body coverage, the role of Afghan women, and themes. The three newswires; AFP, AP, and EPA, were differed in terms of the themes and roles in which the images of the Afghan women were presented after the Taliban attack 2021, in addition to what changed during that period in dress codes and body coverage. To serve those themes and roles, the images were framed through different camera angles, varying types of shot, focus and engagement. That may help clarify the differences among the newswires despite the political and military ideology of them is relatively similar, as the forces of the United States, France and Germany participated in evacuating citizens from Afghanistan and hosted them in refugee shelters.

To investigate the third research question, the study conducted a semiotic analysis of the chosen photos in order to explain what the semiotics of Afghan women visual coverage is and provide an interpretation.

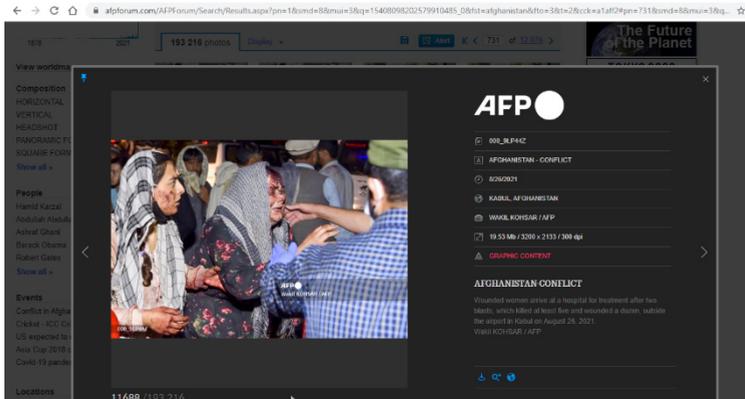
Photo no.1: Wounded Women

Figure 2: Two wounded Afghan women in Kabul. Source: afpforum.com

A photo taken by *Wakil Kohsars* (AFP), on August 26, 2021, portrays two wounded Afghan women who arrived at a hospital for treatment after two blasts, which killed at least 95 and wounded 140 of Afghan people, outside the airport in Kabul. The two wounded Afghan women, wearing headscarves, their faces, palms and clothes stained with blood, they are standing, asking the medical rescue teams for help in front of a Kabul hospital at night. The elderly woman in the middle, the young woman on the left, and the medical rescue members are on the right. The elderly woman who is crying out in pain is the focal point of the photograph as the other persons in the photo composition extend a hand of help and looking directly to her. The picture expresses fear and suffering, darkness, danger, and the brutality and terror of the Taliban. This image derived its powerful impact from the facial expressions of the elderly woman in the focal point of the image expressing the feeling of pain, the fear and shock as reflected in the features of the other woman, in addition to blood stains as an evidence of violence and human rights violations. The equal shooting angle and the medium shot contributed a strong effect that addressed the viewer, despite it is missing eye-to-eye contact, it added a sense of the viewer perception as if he/she is inside the incident, which caused a strong interaction and touch the feelings and emotions of the viewer.

The category of this photo is 'Afghanistan-Conflict'. Regarding the news narration: "wounded women arrive at a hospital for treatment after two blasts, which killed at least five and wounded a dozen, outside the airport in Kabul on August 26,2021." The verbal narration focused on describing the event and providing information related to

the aftermath of the explosion and the death toll and injuries, while the visual narrative focused on panic and chaos among the wounded citizens and the rescue teams after the incident.

Photo no :2.Victim of Landmines

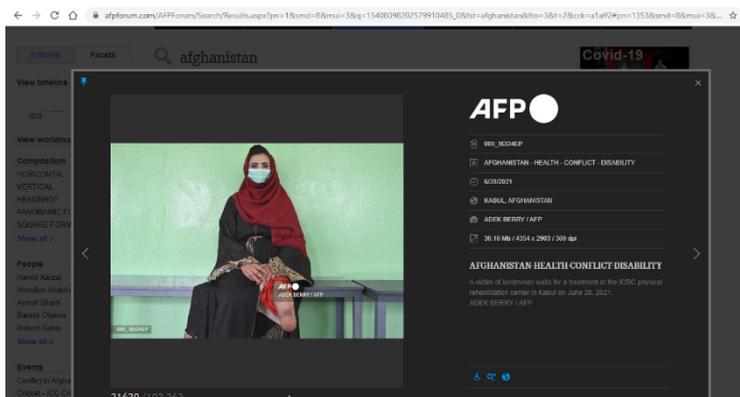


Figure 3: A victim of landmines. Source: afpforum.com

A photo taken by *Adek Berry* (AFP), on June 28, 2021, portrays a victim of landmines waits for a treatment at the ICRC physical rehabilitation center in Kabul. This image is picturing an Afghan lady in her thirties revealing her left leg amputated from the knee. The low camera angle is giving her an impression of empowerment, presenting her as brave woman on her way to overcome the disability. This woman in the focal point of the photograph as her body is open towards the photographer. Her eyes reflect her internal psychological strength and courage. This photo is a glaring example of the brutality and violence of Taliban in their conflict with the Afghan government that use prohibited landmines in accordance with the 'Mine Ban Treaty' and the international agreement banning antipersonnel mines.

The category of this photo includes 'Afghanistan-Health- Conflict- Disability'. Regarding the news narration: "A victim of landmines waits for a treatment at the ICRC physical rehabilitation center in Kabul on June 28, 2021." The verbal narration focused on the details of the place, time and event, while the visual narration focused on the 'character' as a 'victim' of Taliban violence.

Photo no :3.A Weeping Woman

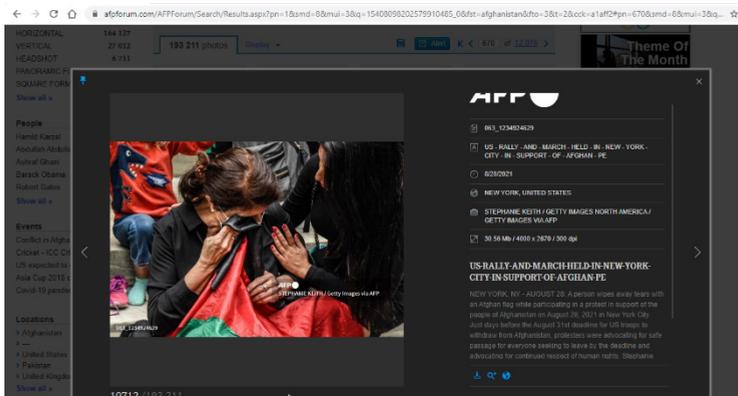


Figure 4: A woman wipes away tears with an Afghan flag. Source: afpforum.com

A photo taken by *Stephanie Keith* (AFP), on August 28, 2021, portrays a woman wipes away tears with an Afghan flag while participating in a protest in support of people of Afghanistan in New York City. She is an Afghan immigrant advocating for safe passage for everyone seeking to leave Afghanistan by the deadline for US troops to withdraw from Afghanistan, and calling for respect of human rights. She is an elderly woman, showing face and hair, sitting on the stairs of a building and beside her in the right a young lady who bent down and patted the other woman shoulder. Both women were wearing black clothes as a sign of mourning and grief. The 'Afghan flag' is the focal point as the elderly woman wipes away tears with. So, all that composition in one medium shot from an equal angle has an effective communication with the viewer in an effort to evoke his feelings and sympathy for the event or issue.

The category of this photo is 'US rally and march'. Regarding the news narration: "New York, NY- August 28: A person wipes away tears with an Afghan flag while practicing in a protest in support of the people of Afghanistan on August 28, 2021 in New York City. Just days before the August 31st deadline for US troops to withdraw from Afghanistan protesters were advocating for safe passage for everyone seeking to leave by the deadline and advocating for continued respect of human rights."

The verbal narration focused on explaining the nature of the event, the participants, the place, and the time, in addition to provide a background information on the events in Afghanistan. For the visual narrative, it focused on the manifestations of sadness and

ideologies, and unlike goals.

The category if this photo is 'Afghanistan-Conflict-protest'. Regarding the news narration: "Afghan women shout slogans next to Taliban fighter during an anti-Pakistan demonstration near the Pakistan embassy in Kabul on September 7, 2021. the Taliban on September 7, 2021 fired shots into the air to disperse crowds who had gathered for an anti-Pakistan rally in the capital, the latest protest since the hardline Islamist movement swept to power last month."

The image theme is demonstration and protest, as one of the political and civil rights that Afghan women exercised in opposition to the control of the Taliban and Pakistan's interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, as the latter is one of the biggest supporters of terrorist groups in the region. This image reflects the 'liberal feminism', which advocates its political, social and economic rights without the slightest fear, and strives with will and determination to achieve its goals despite the dominance radical ideology regime in Afghanistan.

Photo no› :5.Dear World

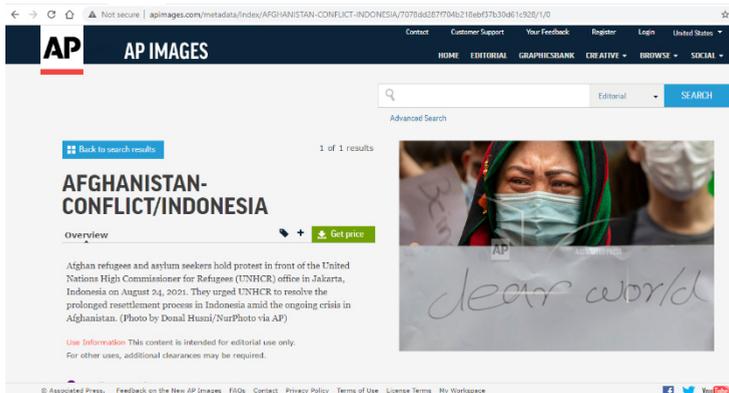


Figure 6: A protest in front of UNHCR office in Jakarta. Source: apimages.com

A photo taken by *Donal Husni* (AP), on September 24, 2021, portrays an Afghan refugee and asylum seekers hold protest in front of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Jakarta, Indonesia, argued to resolve the prolonged resettlement process in Indonesia amid the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan. The composition of the image is so simple; normal shot and close-up angle. An Afghan woman wears a headscarves colored with black, red and green, cries while participating in the protest

and holds a sign with the phrase 'dear world' written on it. The rest of the sign do not appear but her facial expressions of sadness are touching the viewer soul. The phrase 'dear world' while her tears are falling together, they constitute an implicit meaning that evoke sympathy with this Afghan woman and her case.

The category of this photo is 'Afghanistan conflict/Indonesia'. Regarding the news narration: "Afghan refugee and asylum seekers hold protest in front of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) office in Jakarta, Indonesia amid the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan."

The main theme of this photo was 'demonstration and protest', but at its core contained a powerful expression of the 'tragedy and trauma' experienced by Afghan refugees. Therefore, the verbal and visual narration reflected two important aspects, which are the conditions of the refugees and addressing the world to take steps to evacuate civilians from Afghanistan.

Photo no.6: Beg for Alms



Figure 7: A burqa-clad Afghan woman and two children beg for alms, considered as the picture of the month. Source: apimages.com

A photo taken by *Bernat Armangue* (AP), on August 24, 2021, portrays a burqa-clad Afghan woman and two children beg for alms during Friday prayers in Kabul. On the left there is an Afghan woman with her two children bowing her head begging in the street, while on the right there is a row of prostrating worshipers. High angle places the viewer in the position of strength where he/she sees objects or people from a 'high angle'. This

image expresses weakness, submission, and the need for help from the Creator and also from the creation in pursuit of spiritual power or a livelihood.

The category of this photo is “religion”, this photo considered ‘picture of the month’ on apimages.com. Regarding the news narration: “Aburqa-clad Afghan woman and two children beg for alms during Friday prayers in Kabul, Afghanistan, Friday, Sept.24, 2021.”

Although the website classified the image under the category of religious images, it includes human dimensions. The religious aspect is represented in the prostration of the worshipers at the time of Friday prayer, and their bowing in supplication to the Creator. On the other hand, the Afghan woman and her children represent weakness and bow to people asking for help, and a few crumbs to satisfy their hunger.

Photo no.7: Bread Donations

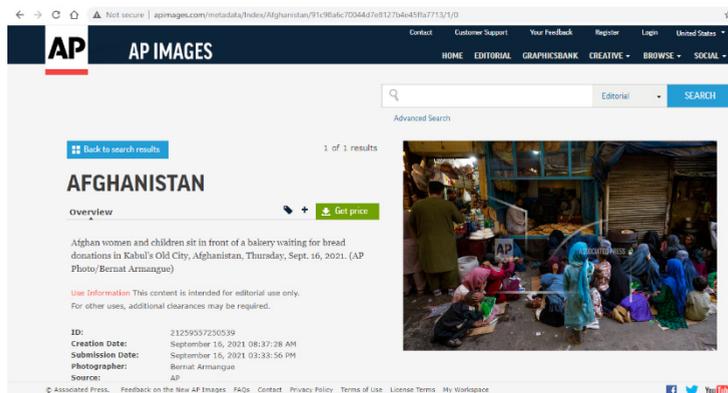


Figure 8: Bread donations in Kabul's old city. Source: apimages.com

A photo taken by *Bernat Armangué* (AP), on September 16, 2021, portrays Afghan women and children sits in front of a bakery waiting for bread donations in Kabul's old city. A long shot picturing a dozens of poor burqa-clad Afghan women and children suffering from hunger and poverty were waiting for any bread donations because the basic necessities of life are missing in Afghanistan after the war. High put the viewer in a position of power and strength and the pictured women in a position of weakness and need. The non-verbal communication is very affective; ‘facepalm’ gestures of some of those women express frustration, disappointment and embarrassment.

The category of this photo is “Global”, this photo considered ‘picture of the week’ on

apimages.com. Regarding the news narration: “Afghan women and children sit in front of a bakery waiting for bread donations in Kabul’s Old City, Afghanistan, Thursday, Sept.16, 2021.”

The verbal and visual narrative of this picture reflects the economic and social repercussions of the wars and internal conflicts in Afghanistan. The arrival of extremist terrorist groups to power threatens the lives of citizens not only through direct violent crimes, but also the inhuman life and the suffering because of poverty, hunger and destitution.

Photo no :8.Newborn Suffering



Figure 9: Sofia cradles her 2-month-old baby considered as the picture of the week, Abdul. Source: apimages.com

A photo taken by *Felipe Dana* (AP), on October 5, 2021, portrays an Afghan mother, Sofia, cradles her 2-month-old baby who Fighting disease to stay alive. This image was taken from a high angle, and expresses weakness, disease, suffering, poverty and destitution resulting from of the lack of basic human rights under the Taliban’s rule in Afghanistan. The United Nations has warned that the economic crisis threatened to push 97 percent of the 40 million people into poverty by mid-2022.

The category of this photo is “Global”, this photo considered ‘picture of the week’ on apimages.com. Regarding the news narration, “Sofia cradles her 2-month-old baby, Abdul, as he undergoes treatment at the malnutrition ward of the Indira Gandhi Children’s Hospital in Kabul. Health workers in the hospital dashed back and forth caring for gasping premature newborns and others suffering from severe malnutrition

and other diseases.”

The verbal and visual narration focused on the “human concerns”, by highlighting the human and health tragedy that befell Afghan children due to poverty and hunger. The image touches the human feelings and stirs emotions and sympathy in the audience towards the crisis. It influences the formation of their awareness of the implications of the Taliban’s seizure of power in Afghanistan.

Photo no.9: A victim of the airport bomb blast

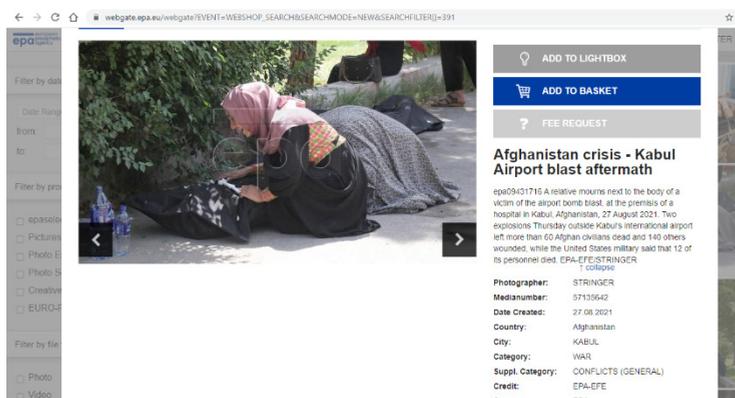


Figure 10: A victim of the airport bomb blast in Kabul. Source: webgate.epa.eu

A photo taken by (EPA), on October 5, 2021, portrays a relative mourns next to the body of a victim of the airport bomb blast, in front of the building of a hospital in Kabul. Two women mourn the death of one of their relatives a victim of the explosion. The picture expresses sadness and pain and indicates the violence and bloody terrorist actions of Taliban.

The category of this photo is “Afghanistan crisis- Conflict”. Regarding the news narration, “Afghanistan crisis – Kabul Airport blast aftermath: A relative mourns next to the body of a victim of the airport bomb blast, at the premises of a hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan, 27 August 2021. Two explosions Thursday outside Kabul’s international airport left more than 60 Afghan civilians dead and 140 others wounded, while the United States military said that 12 of its personnel died”.

The narration focused on the description of the event, the participants in it, and the background of the event, and provided information and statistics on the number of

victims and injuries. Thus, the 'victim' frame is strongly evident through the verbal and visual narrative. Also, the EPA highlighted 'human rights violations' committed by the Taliban against citizens and civilians.

Photo no :10.Stop the War



Figure 11: A solo protester in Kabul. Source: webgate.epa.eu

A photo taken by *Felipe Dana* (EPA), on October 5, 2021, portrays an Afghan girl holds a placard reading in Dari 'Stop the war- Stop killing brothers' on a road in Kabul. A humanitarian crisis and alleged widespread human rights violations are among the top challenges Afghanistan faces a month after the Taliban's lightning-fast capture of Kabul. The economic crisis threatened to push 97 percent of the 40 million people into poverty by mid-2022, the United Nations has warned. A solo protester roams the streets in search of an answer to her and a fulfillment of her call, her tears indicate that it is impossible.

The category of this photo is "Afghanistan crisis- Conflict". Regarding the news narration, "An Afghan girl holds a placard reading in Dari 'Stop the War - Stop killing the brothers' on a road in Kabul, Afghanistan, 15 September 2021. A humanitarian crisis and alleged widespread human rights violations are among the top challenges Afghanistan faces a month after the Taliban's lightning-fast capture of Kabul. The economic crisis threatened to push 97 percent of the 40 million people into poverty by mid-2022, the United Nations has warned".

Therefore, it is noticeable that the narration focused on the description of the picture, the nature of the situation, the place, the time, and then added a background to the events and developments of the situation in Afghanistan. The narration tried to frame the human aspects and concerns of the event that the picture expresses. It can be

concluded that the EPA was keen to highlight the humanitarian aspects; human rights and human feelings.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to content analyze and semiotics analyze of Afghan women pictures of the visual coverage in three major newswires; AFP, AP and EPA after the 'Taliban offensive 2021'. Although there were differences between the news agencies, the visual and verbal narration of the Afghan women conditions under the Taliban's repressive rule succeeded in creating a direct communication with the viewer. Using some visual cues and symbols in depicting Afghan women helped provide some authentic meanings such as empowerment, grief, weakness and fear. The result showed that the equal camera angle, the foreground focus, medium and close-up shots and showing the women faces were the content elements which framed the non-verbal signs. As visual determines, Afghan women visual coverage reflects the emotions and feeling in particular pain and anger which are connected to their roles such as victims, protesters, and homeless. Among the visual elements that were observable through the analysis of symbols and connotations; the Afghan flag, headscarves, burqas, fists, tears, and facial expressions were the most detectable through the coverage.

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