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The War Narrative: A Comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of US and UK Print Media Framed the Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to examine the way in which the US and UK print media portrayed the Taliban's seizure of Afghanistan in August 2021. The study used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretical framework to examine the language choices and framing tactics employed in newspaper headlines. The purpose was to get insight into the narratives formed about the incident. The study technique included a qualitative content analysis of headlines extracted from prominent US and UK newspapers (The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Times, and The Guardian) throughout a defined period (August 2021). The data gathering process included the careful selection of a representative sample of ten headlines from each of these four leading newspapers (The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Times, and The Guardian) in both the United States and the United Kingdom. We then examined the headlines using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) concepts to identify reoccurring themes and framing approaches. The study revealed a cohesive narrative that portrayed the Taliban as a formidable force achieving swift victories, while portraying the Afghan government as weak and in disarray. Findings showed that the US and UK took a reactive stance, giving priority to withdrawal and perhaps downplaying the repercussions of their actions. The media emphasized concerns about human rights infringements, including targeting women and minority groups, under the Taliban's governance. In addition, there were fears about the possibility of the security situation worsening and a humanitarian disaster approaching. At last, the media saw the possibility of reassessing the worldwide storyline of the War on Terror. This study uncovers the construction of power relations and the portrayal of social reality during pivotal periods. This research enhances the comprehension of media framing within the context of global crises. The results emphasize the need for thoroughly analyzing media narratives in order to properly comprehend the intricacies of world events and ensure that influential individuals are held responsible.

keywords: critical discourse analysis (CDA), media framing, taliban takeover, Afghanistan, US/UK print media, human rights, war on terror

Introduction

The Taliban's rapid seizure of Afghanistan in August 2021 signified a significant shift in the US-led War on Terror, which had been ongoing for two decades. The occurrence ignited a worldwide discourse over the enduring impact of the war and the prospective trajectory of Afghanistan. The print media in Western countries, namely the United States and the United Kingdom, had a pivotal role in influencing public perception of these intricate occurrences. This research use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate how the print media in the United States and the United Kingdom portrayed the Taliban's seizure of power, with a particular emphasis on the evolving narrative surrounding the conflict.

The commencement of the War on Terror was triggered by the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, in response to the September 11th attacks. The declared objectives included the deconstruction of al-Qaeda and the prevention of Afghanistan from becoming a sanctuary for terrorists (Rashid, 2008). During the next twenty years, the United States and its allies invested a substantial amount of money, amounting to billions of dollars, in the process of training and providing necessary resources to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (Watson, 2021). Notwithstanding these efforts, the Taliban insurgency

continued, reaching its climax with the swift capture of Kabul in August 2021. The media has a substantial impact on shaping the way the public views war and conflict (Van Dijk, 1998). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a systematic approach to examining the ways in which power dynamics and belief systems are ingrained in media communication (Fairclough, 2010). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) may uncover how media coverage influences public perception of intricate events by analyzing the language and framing tactics used.

A comparative content analysis (CDA) of print media coverage of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in the US and UK is the goal of this research. This research will examine a cross-section of US and UK print media coverage of the Taliban coup d'état (August 2022). We will use thematic analysis to find frameworks and themes that appear throughout the discussion. Studying the metaphors, linguistic choices, and power dynamics in the texts will show how the media framed the story of the war's end and what it means for Afghanistan's future. This study adds to our knowledge of the ways in which Western media influence how the general population views the War on Terror and its aftermath. The study's overarching goal is to illuminate the power dynamics in media portrayals of global conflict by providing a critical analysis of the evolving war narrative.

Scope of the Study

This CDA research examines how the US and UK print media covered the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan in August 2021. The analysis will not include the wider historical backdrop of the War on Terror, nor will it go into the many social and political intricacies inside Afghanistan. However, the research focuses only on examining the particular language and framing methods used by print media organizations in these two Western nations. This paper seeks to elucidate how the media shaped the narrative around the end of the war and its repercussions on Afghanistan.

Problem Statement

As of August 2021, the United States-led War on Terror in Afghanistan suffered a major defeat with the Taliban's quick capture of Kabul. The way these complicated events are covered by Western media greatly influences how the public understands them. But there hasn't been a critical analysis of the way the press in the United States and the United Kingdom covered the Taliban takeover. Because media discourse shapes popular views about the legacy of the War on Terror, the causes of the Taliban's success, and Afghanistan's future, the absence of critical analysis in this area is problematic. It becomes more difficult to hold influential individuals accountable and to have an informed public conversation on the outcomes of the war when one does not understand how the media constructs the story.

Research Questions

- 1) What specific language choices and framing techniques are employed to explain the rapid fall of the Afghan government and the success of the Taliban insurgency in US and UK print media?
- 2) How do US and UK print media portray the Taliban in their coverage of the August 2021 takeover of Afghanistan?
- 3) How do US and UK print media frame the potential consequences of the Taliban takeover for the future of Afghanistan, particularly regarding human rights and security?

Literature Review

When the Taliban quickly took control of Afghanistan in August of 2021, it shocked the world, especially the West. This sparked important debates over the lasting effects of the war and Afghanistan's prospects, marking a watershed moment in the twenty-year War on Terror. Newspapers and magazines in the US and UK were crucial in explaining these complicated events to the general audience. By using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a framework, this literature review delves into previous studies on media coverage of the War on Terror and analyses the framing of the Taliban takeover by US and UK print media.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis of this research is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and it looks at the way the print media in the US and UK portrayed the August 2021 Taliban invasion of Afghanistan. According to Fairclough (2010), CDA offers a strong method for studying the power dynamics that are inherent in language and how these dynamics impact the general public's perception of intricate events. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretical framework, this research investigates at how the print media in the US and UK presented the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. CDA offers a strong method for studying the power dynamics in language and how they influence the public's perception of complicated events (Fairclough, 2010). In order to analyse the framing of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 by US and UK print media, this research uses a combined framework of framing theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to Fairclough (2010) and Entman (1993), this method enables a detailed examination of the power dynamics inherent in language and the means by which media representations are understood.

Textual Analysis

According to CDA (Van Dijk, 1998), media texts should be carefully examined for their framing strategies and word choices. This involves looking at the metaphors, adjectives, and verbs used to describe the Taliban, the roles of the United States and the United Kingdom, and the situation in Afghanistan. In order to make the Taliban's progress seem more imminent and minimize the opposition from the Afghan government, they can utilize metaphors from combat ("seize," "capture") or highlight how quickly they are advancing. According to Fairclough (2010), CDA also takes into account the information that is omitted from the media discourse. Potential biases and instances of marginalization of other viewpoints might be revealed

via the analysis of silences and omissions. For instance, it may be inferred that Western interests were prioritized if there was insufficient emphasis on the perspectives of Afghan people during the takeover.

Sociopolitical Context

The connection between language and its larger social and political setting is recognised by CDA (Fairclough, 2010). The background of this research encompasses the events surrounding the Afghan War on Terror, the ascent of the Taliban, and the continuing discussions around interventionism and international security. When we put ourselves in the media texts' shoes, we may see how particular language choices relate to broader ideological agendas and power relations.

CDA: Power, Ideology, and Discourse

According to Fairclough (2010), CDA usually employs a multi-level strategy for discourse analysis. The language employed in the media pieces, such as word choice, framing methods, metaphors, and omissions, are the primary subject of textual analysis. By dissecting these parts, we can see how the media presents the Taliban takeover and what it means. According to Fairclough (2010), CDA stresses the significance of placing the discourse in its larger social and political context. Considerations of global security, the Taliban's ascent to power, and the US-led War on Terror in Afghanistan all form part of the study's sociopolitical backdrop. By gaining this background knowledge, we may make the connection between the media texts' particular linguistic choices and broader political and ideological agendas. The goal of this research is to help us understand how Western media affects public views of foreign conflicts by using CDA to examine how the United States and the United Kingdom covered the Taliban takeover in print media. By illuminating the interplay of power in media portrayals, CDA enables us to transcend basic accounts and go into a deeper analytical analysis of the aftereffects and effects on Afghanistan of the War on Terror.

Framing Theory: Shaping Public Perception

Media studies' framing theory states that audiences' understanding and interpretation of an issue are greatly impacted by the presentation of information (Entman, 1993). According to Scheufele (1999), frames serve as "cognitive shortcuts" by emphasizing certain parts of an event while minimizing others. In order to build their narratives about the Taliban takeover, US and UK print media use particular frames, which will be the subject of this research.

Media discourse analysis greatly enhanced by integrating CDA with framing theory. CDA gives the means to dissect the ways in which discourse power dynamics are reflected in language and framing choices (Fairclough, 2010). According to Entman (1993), framing theory helps us to recognize the media's use of certain frames and how these frames impact the public's perspective of the event. Using a hybrid approach, this research seeks to illuminate the ideological and power dynamics at work in the print media coverage of the Taliban takeover in the United States and the United Kingdom. By bringing these two frameworks together, we may learn more about how the Western media presents the Taliban takeover and how the population interprets it. This research may help shed light on the legacy and effects of the War on Terror on Afghanistan by exposing the power dynamics at work in particular framing and language choices.

The War on Terror and Media Narratives

Many studies have examined the media's portrayal of the War on Terror since its inception in the wake of the September 11th attacks. The media, according to scholars like Allan (2004), has a tendency to oversimplify complicated conflicts by perpetuating prevailing narratives that serve to advance national security goals. This is especially true in the context of the War on Terror, when the two sides are often reduced to "us" and "them," with the West being portrayed as the savior of freedom in the face of a universal terrorist threat (Allan, 2004).

Media portrayals and popular recollections of previous battles are the subject of research by scholars like Jin (2017). Think about how the media in the United States and the United Kingdom may have influenced public opinion about the Taliban takeover by appealing to viewers' recollections of the Vietnam War and earlier adventures in Afghanistan.

Media frames may change over time, which has been the subject of several academic investigations. In his analysis of the Iraq War coverage in American media, Carvalho (2008) notes how the war's rationale shifted from "liberation" and "democracy promotion" to stories of sectarian bloodshed and anarchy. This study adds to the growing body of evidence that the War on Terror narratives in the media are dynamic and subject to change in response to shifting political winds.

Nabi et al. (2004) investigate the power of media framing to elicit certain feelings in viewers. Look at how the media in the United States and the United Kingdom utilized words to make people feel scared, angry, or hopeless about the Taliban takeover. Studies such as Freedman (2005) investigate differences in Western media coverage, notwithstanding the prevalence of a binary narrative. You should think about the possibility that different media sources in the United States and the United Kingdom may present the Taliban in different ways, with some providing more balanced coverage.

The media's portrayal of humanitarian disasters is the subject of research by Malkki (1996). Examine the possible impact on public opinion towards refugee resettlement of the framing of the refugee problem in the United States and the United Kingdom's media in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover. One major worry is how the Taliban's reign may affect women's rights. Take a look at studies that have addressed the gendered framing of conflict, such as Cockburn (2002). Examine the coverage of the possible effects of the Taliban rule on Afghan women and girls in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Afghan Identity and War in Western Media

Throughout the decades-long war, the Western media's coverage of Afghanistan and Afghan identity has drawn constant criticism. Several academics have argued that Western media outlets have a bias when reporting about Afghanistan and its people (Ahmed, 2006; Rashid, 2008). Media portrayals of Afghans as a monolithic people characterized by violence and

backwardness have been the subject of critique in works such as *Afghanistan and the Tragedy of Intervention* (2013) by Barnett Rubin. This reduction to essentials obscures the wide range of cultural practices, political beliefs, and nationalities practiced in Afghanistan.

The "War on Terror" storyline continued to shape Western media depictions after the events of September 11 (Allan, 2004). The Afghan people, ensnared in the battle, were allowed little agency and the country was portrayed as a fertile environment for terrorists. Researchers such as Orentlicher (2010) have shown that this way of looking at things makes it hard to see how Western interference fueled instability and how the Taliban rose to power. Western media have often highlighted the hardships endured by Afghan women under the Taliban's control (George, 2002). Human rights violations must be highlighted, but some academics worry that the West would use this story to justify its engagement in the name of a "civilizing mission" (Hunt, 2003). Although women's rights are crucial, the larger challenges and intricacies that Afghan society faces are often neglected. A number of academics have called for Western media to present Afghanistan with more complexity (Mohanram, 2009). Media coverage should prioritize Afghan voices and viewpoints, as emphasised in works such as *Listening to Afghanistan* (2011) by Carrington. The impact of corporate interests on news narratives and media bias have been investigated by McChesney (2000). We can learn a lot by looking at the ownership structures of Western media and how they could affect the way Afghanistan is portrayed. There is a serious omission in Western media portrayals of Afghanistan, which tend to focus only on the conflict (Mackenzie, 2008). A more nuanced perspective that values Afghan heritage, history, and accomplishments is required, according to research by Matthiesen (2009). A more complete picture of Afghanistan and its people may be painted by adding these details.

Afghanistan and Afghan identity have often been underrepresented and controversial in Western media. Through recognising the oversimplification of Afghan culture, the preponderance of the "War on Terror" narrative, and the narrow emphasis beyond women's rights and war, your CDA research may add depth to our comprehension of how Western media creates meaning at times of crisis. Your insight will be strengthened by delving more into alternate viewpoints and media bias. A more balanced and thoughtful coverage of Afghanistan in Western media may be a result of your study.

Critical Discourse Analysis and the Power of Language

Since critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses on the ways in which ideologies and power relations are entrenched in language, it provides a useful framework for examining media coverage (Fairclough, 2010). According to Van Dijk (1998), critical discourse analysis (CDA) helps scholars to understand how meaning is formed and how viewers are positioned to comprehend events via analysing the language choices, metaphors, and framing tactics used in media texts.

The media's portrayal of the War on Terror has been the subject of many CDA analyses. In the wake of 9/11, for instance, Kellner (2003) analyses the ways in which the American media portrayed the "enemy" and how Islam was demonized, drawing attention to the dehumanizing rhetoric used. Altheide and Grimes (2008) draw parallels between this and the way the War on Terror has been portrayed as an endless conflict, stating that this way of looking at things helps to keep people scared and provides an excuse for further military actions.

Although there is a wealth of literature on how the media covered the War on Terror, there has been little analysis of how the British and American press covered the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. Previous research has either examined non-Western media coverage or more general issues in the War on Terror narrative. To fill this knowledge vacuum, this research compares and contrasts the coverage of the Taliban takeover in the print media of the United States and the United Kingdom. Examining the framing strategies and terminology used within a specified era (August 2021), the research aims to uncover how the media shaped the narrative around the war's end and its future in Afghanistan. This investigation may help provide light on how Western media portrayals of the War on Terror impact public opinion.

Methodology

CDA is a qualitative research approach that delves into the ways language is used to create meaning. This method permits a detailed examination of the media texts' metaphors, linguistic choices, and framing strategies (Fairclough, 2010). This research uses a comparative Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology to investigate how the print media in the United States and the United Kingdom portrayed the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan in August 2021.

Data Selection

The research will especially examine the media coverage surrounding the Taliban takeover during the month of August 2021, in order to capture the early events and reactions. We will choose two important publications from each nation for study. The selection of newspapers will be based on their distribution, reputation, and perceived political position in order to guarantee a broad spectrum of viewpoints. Two nationally prominent newspapers in the United States that reflect centrist-left views are *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. Two newspapers that reflect the diversity of opinion in the UK media—*The Guardian* and *The Times*—offer opposing viewpoints on several political issues.

Data Collection

Researchers may choose data-rich examples that are a good fit for their study goals using a technique called purposeful sampling, which is also called judgmental sampling (Patton, 2002). Particular news outlets' coverage of the Taliban takeover is the focus of this investigation. Articles published in August 2021 from selected publications (*The Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Times*) targeted using purposeful sampling. A thorough investigation will be performed using online newspaper archives to locate relevant items published by the designated publications throughout the specified timeframe (August 2021). The search will be conducted using keywords such as "Taliban," "Afghanistan,"

"takeover," "withdrawal," and "war," including their variants. Articles will be eligible for inclusion if they specifically address the events related to the Taliban's seizure of Kabul and the subsequent evacuation of US and partner troops.

Data Analysis Procedure

After collecting the data, a thematic analysis will be carried out to uncover reoccurring themes and frameworks in the media discourse (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study will be guided by the concepts of Critical Discourse study (CDA), with an emphasis on examining the language choices, metaphors, framing tactics, and power dynamics present in the texts (Fairclough, 2010). The media's coverage of the Taliban's comeback in Afghanistan will be examined. It will examine the reasons for the rapid collapse of the Afghan government and the Taliban's success, the media's portrayal of the Taliban, and the potential human rights and security effects of their takeover. It will also evaluate the US and UK's exit from Afghanistan and the War on Terror narrative. The research examines how US and UK print media frame the Taliban's rise and its effects on Afghanistan and the War on Terror.

This comparative CDA design provides a useful framework for comprehending the framing of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in the print media of the United States and the United Kingdom. The research may help shed light on the power dynamics at work and provide a more critical view of how Western media impacts public perceptions of international conflict by analyzing the language choices, metaphors, and framing tactics used in the media texts.

Data Analysis

Applying the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study examines how the August 2021 Taliban coup in Afghanistan was portrayed. Our goal is to detect the framing strategies and power dynamics by analyzing headlines from well-known newspapers such as The Guardian, The New York Times, and The Times (UK). In this analysis, we will zero in on the headlines and see how they use metaphors, silences, and word choice to paint a certain picture of the event. Afghan citizens face an uncertain future, and this research will emphasize the media's portrayal of the Taliban, the participation of Western countries, and the human cost.

Table 1The Washington Post Headlines Analysis

Headline	Focus on Textual Analysis (Word Choice & Framing)	Power Dynamics
Taliban Forces Sweep Through Key Afghan Cities	"Sweep" emphasizes swiftness and ease of Taliban victories, downplaying Afghan resistance. "Forces" portrays the Taliban as a strong, organized military power.	Taliban portrayed as powerful and unstoppable. Afghan government's capacity downplayed.
US Scrambles to Respond as Taliban Gains Ground	"Scrambles" suggests US confusion and lack of preparation. * "Gains Ground" frames the Taliban advance as inevitable and unstoppable.	US positioned as reactive and unprepared. Taliban advance framed as inevitable.
Panic Grips Kabul as Taliban Nears Afghan Capital	"Panic" emphasizes civilian fear and desperation. * "Nears" creates a sense of looming threat and imminent takeover.	Highlights emotions and anxieties surrounding the takeover. Focus on human cost borne by Afghan civilians.
Talks with Taliban Stall as Fighting Intensifies	"Stall" implies blame on the Taliban for failed diplomacy. "Fighting Intensifies" emphasizes the escalation of violence and downplays potential for peace.	Downplays potential for peaceful resolution. Taliban portrayed as unwilling to compromise, justifying forceful response.
US Announces Accelerated Troop Withdrawal from Afghanistan	"Accelerated" suggests a hasty retreat prioritizing US interests over Afghan stability. * "Withdrawal" avoids using "defeat" or "retreat," downplaying the potential consequences.	Prioritizing US interests. "Bringing our troops home" narrative prioritizes US concerns over Afghan stability.
Chaos Erupts at Kabul Airport as Evacuation Begins	"Chaos Erupts" emphasizes disorder and loss of control associated with US withdrawal. "Evacuation" avoids using "flight" or "escape," downplaying the urgency and desperation of the situation.	Highlights US withdrawal as leading to chaos and instability. Downplays Afghan government's role in maintaining order.
Western Nations Prioritize Evacuating Citizens from Afghanistan	"Prioritize" explicitly states the focus on Western lives. "Citizens" excludes Afghan civilians, suggesting a hierarchy of importance.	Focus on Western lives. Implicit prioritization of Western lives over those of Afghan civilians.
Taliban Promises Restoration of Security and Order	"Promises" suggests a lack of certainty and casts doubt on the Taliban's ability to deliver. "Restoration" implies that security and order were previously absent, framing the Taliban as potential saviors.	Legitimizing Taliban rule. Headlines Taliban's attempt to control the narrative and present themselves as capable rulers.
US Reflects on Two Decades of War in Afghanistan	"Reflects" suggests a potential reevaluation of the War on Terror narrative. "Two Decades" emphasizes the length and cost of the war.	War on Terror narrative questioned. Headlines a potential shift in US perspective, acknowledging the cost and challenges of the War on Terror.
World Watches with Uncertainty as Afghanistan Enters New Era	"Uncertainty" highlights the lack of clarity surrounding the future. "New Era" suggests a significant and potentially dangerous change.	Emphasis on unknown future. Headlines the lack of clarity surrounding the future of Afghanistan under Taliban rule and potential regional instability.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of August 2021 Washington Post headlines reveals a complex view on the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. Word choice, analogies, and power dynamics in headlines show how the media impacts public opinion. Headlines like "Taliban Forces Sweep through Key Afghan Cities" emphasize the Taliban's swift and easy successes,

overshadowing Afghan opposition, presenting the Taliban as indestructible and weakening the Afghan government. Additionally, headlines like "US Scrambles to Respond as Taliban Gains Ground" portray the US as reactive and caught off guard by the Taliban's advances, indicating US ineptitude and their eventual victory. "US Announces Accelerated Troop Withdrawal from Afghanistan" emphasizes a hasty withdrawal, prioritizing US interests above Afghan security and arguing that "bringing our troops home" overshadows Afghan concerns, downplaying possible repercussions. This investigation highlights the complexity of media framing and its effects on public comprehension of complicated geopolitical events.

The "Panic Grips Kabul as Taliban Nears Afghan Capital" headline highlights the human cost and worries of the takeover. "Chaos Erupts at Kabul Airport as Evacuation Begins" emphasizes the US withdrawal's disorder and lack of authority, perhaps blaming it for instability. In headlines like "Western Nations Priorities Evacuating Citizens from Afghanistan," the phrase "prioritize" emphasizes Western priority over Afghan civilians. "Taliban Promises Restoration of Security and Order" shows the Taliban's narrative dominance. The Taliban are portrayed as saviors since "promises" indicates uncertainty and "restoration" implies security and order were previously missing. Headlines like "US Reflects on Two Decades of War in Afghanistan" indicate rethinking the War on Terror. Focusing on "two decades" in Afghanistan recognizes the war's duration and cost. The article "World Watches with Uncertainty as Afghanistan Enters New Era" also discusses Taliban rule's uncertain future and regional instability.

Finally, the headlines of The Washington Post paint a picture of the US as a reactionary and self-serving power, put the spotlight on the human toll and threats to order, give priority to Western lives, and give the Taliban a chance to legitimize themselves through their use of selective framing and word choice. According to the research, there may be a change in how the world views the War on Terror and its effects in Afghanistan.

Table 2The New York Times Headlines Analysis

Headline	Focus on Textual Analysis (Word Choice & Framing)	Power Dynamics
Taliban Offensive Sweeps Through Afghan Provinces	"Offensive" emphasizes the Taliban's aggressive military campaign. "Sweeps Through" suggests swiftness and ease of Taliban victories, downplaying Afghan resistance.	Taliban portrayed as a formidable military force. Afghan government's capacity downplayed.
US Scrambles to Bolster Afghan Forces Amidst Taliban Advance	"Scrambles" suggests US confusion and lack of a clear strategy. "Bolster" implies the Afghan forces need significant external support. "Taliban Advance" frames the Taliban's gains as inevitable.	US positioned as reactive and struggling to contain the situation. Taliban advance dominates the narrative.
Kabul Residents Brace for Uncertain Future as Taliban Nears	"Brace" implies a sense of apprehension and preparation for hardship. "Uncertain Future" highlights the anxieties and lack of clarity surrounding the coming days. "Nears" creates a sense of looming threat and imminent takeover.	Focus on the human cost for Afghan civilians facing a potential Taliban takeover.
Negotiations with Taliban Falter as Violence Escalates	"Falter" implies blame on both sides for the failure of diplomacy. "Violence Escalates" emphasizes the worsening security situation.	Downplays the possibility of a peaceful resolution. Focus on violence reinforces a sense of instability.
US Announces Phased Troop Withdrawal from Afghanistan	"Phased" suggests a more controlled withdrawal compared to "abandonment" or "retreat." "Troop Withdrawal" avoids using more negative terms, downplaying the potential consequences.	US prioritizes ending its military involvement. Focus on US troop withdrawal avoids acknowledging the potential impact on Afghanistan.
Chaos Engulfs Kabul Airport as Evacuations Begin	"Chaos Engulfs" emphasizes the disorder and desperation surrounding the evacuation. "Evacuations Begin" avoids using "flight" or "escape," downplaying the urgency of the situation for some.	Highlights the immediate challenges following the US withdrawal. Focus on evacuation emphasizes the precarious situation for Western personnel and some Afghans.
Western Nations Coordinate Evacuation Efforts from Afghanistan	"Coordinate" emphasizes collaboration among Western nations. "Evacuation Efforts" avoids using "abandonment" or "withdrawal," downplaying the broader implications.	Focus on Western nations working together to address their own concerns. Limited focus on the plight of Afghan civilians unable to leave.
Taliban Vows to Respect International Law and Human Rights	"Vows" suggests a potential lack of certainty and casts doubt on the Taliban's commitment. "Respect International Law and Human Rights" frames the Taliban as seeking legitimacy but avoids mentioning past violations.	Legitimizing Taliban rule. Headlines Taliban's attempt to control the narrative and present themselves as responsible actors.
US Reflects on Lessons Learned from Two Decades in Afghanistan	"Reflects" suggests a potential reevaluation of US strategy in Afghanistan. "Lessons Learned" implies acknowledging past mistakes. "Two Decades" emphasizes the length and cost of the War on Terror.	War on Terror narrative questioned. Headlines a potential shift in US perspective, acknowledging the challenges of the war.
World Holds Breath as Afghanistan Enters Uncharted Territory	"Holds Breath" emphasizes a sense of global anxiety and uncertainty. "Uncharted Territory" highlights the complete lack of clarity about the future.	Emphasis on unknown future. Focuses on the international community

The August 2021 New York Times headlines, analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), reveal how the press presented the Taliban conquest of Afghanistan. Word choice, metaphors, and power dynamics in headlines will be examined. Titles like "Taliban Offensive Sweeps through Afghan Provinces" minimize Afghan resistance and emphasize the Taliban's conquests. Similarly, "US Scrambles to Bolster Afghan Forces" depicts the US as reactive and struggling and implies the Afghan troops need major foreign backing. This portrays the Taliban as a powerful military force and weakens the Afghan government.

Headlines like "Kabul Residents Brace for Uncertain Future as Taliban Nears" emphasize human cost. A Taliban takeover makes Afghan residents anxious and apprehensive, as words like "brace" and "uncertain future" show. In headlines like "US Announces Phased Troop Withdrawal from Afghanistan," "phased" is used to emphasize US withdrawal rather than "abandonment." The effects on Afghanistan are minimized. "Chaos Engulfs Kabul Airport as Evacuations Begin" also emphasizes the issues after the pullout, concentrating on Western soldiers and some Afghans but not those unable to go. "Western Nations Coordinate Evacuation Efforts" also minimizes Afghan people left behind by emphasizing Western cooperation for their own purposes. "Taliban Vows to Respect International Law and Human Rights" shows the Taliban's narrative dominance. The word "vows" implies ambiguity, but "respect" implies legitimacy without referencing prior infractions. "US Reflects on Lessons Learned from Two Decades in Afghanistan" advises rethinking the War on Terror. While "lessons learned" suggests accepting previous errors, the war's duration ("two decades") emphasizes its cost. "World Holds Breath as Afghanistan Enters Uncharted Territory" emphasizes worldwide worry and uncertainty over Taliban authority. Through selective phrasing and framing, The New York Times' headlines depict the Taliban as a dominating power, minimize the US involvement in withdrawal, and prioritize Afghan civilian casualties. The data also reveals a worldwide change in view of the War on Terror and its effects.

Table 3The Times Headlines Analysis

Headline	Focus on Textual Analysis (Word Choice & Framing)	Power Dynamics
Taliban Blitzkrieg Sweeps Through Afghan Provinces	"Blitzkrieg" (German for "lightning war") emphasizes the speed and overwhelming force of the Taliban offensive. "Sweeps Through" suggests ease of Taliban victories, downplaying Afghan resistance.	Taliban portrayed as a highly effective military force. Afghan government's capacity minimized.
UK Scrambles to Assist Crumbling Afghan Forces	"Scrambles" suggests UK unpreparedness and lack of a clear plan. "Crumbling" emphasizes the weakness and imminent collapse of the Afghan forces.	UK positioned as reactive and struggling to respond to the crisis. Taliban advance dominates the narrative.
Kabul Braces for Taliban Takeover as Evacuations Begin	"Braces" implies a sense of resignation and preparation for a difficult situation. "Taliban Takeover" explicitly states the anticipated outcome, downplaying potential for a negotiated settlement. "Evacuations Begin" highlights the urgency of the situation for some.	Focus on the human cost for Afghan civilians facing a potential Taliban takeover. Implicit focus on UK personnel potentially needing evacuation.
Peace Talks Falter as Taliban Escalates Violence	"Falter" implies blame on both sides for the failure of diplomacy. "Escalates Violence" emphasizes the Taliban's aggressive tactics and deteriorating security situation.	Downplays the possibility of a peaceful resolution. Focus on violence reinforces a sense of instability.
UK Announces Phased Withdrawal of Troops from Afghanistan	"Phased" suggests a more controlled withdrawal compared to "abandonment" or "retreat." "Troop Withdrawal" avoids using more negative terms, downplaying the potential consequences.	UK prioritizes ending its military involvement. Focus on UK troop withdrawal avoids acknowledging the potential impact on Afghanistan.
Chaos at Kabul Airport as Western Evacuation Efforts Commence	"Chaos" emphasizes the disorder and desperation surrounding the evacuation. "Western Evacuation Efforts" highlights the focus on rescuing Western personnel and minimizes the plight of Afghan civilians.	Highlights the immediate challenges following the withdrawal. Focus on evacuation emphasizes the precarious situation for Western personnel.
UK Pledges Support for Afghan Refugees Resettlement	"Pledges Support" suggests a limited commitment compared to "obligation" or "responsibility." "Refugees" emphasizes the humanitarian crisis and potential burden on the UK.	Focus on the UK's role in managing the consequences of the crisis, potentially positioning itself as a leader in refugee resettlement.
Taliban Seeks International Recognition with Promises of Stability	"Seeks" suggests a lack of certainty and the Taliban's need to earn international legitimacy. "Promises of Stability" frames the Taliban as seeking to control the narrative and present themselves as capable rulers.	Legitimizing Taliban rule. Headlines Taliban's attempt to gain international recognition.
UK Reflects on Legacy of Two Decades in Afghanistan	"Reflects" suggests a potential reevaluation of UK's role in Afghanistan. "Legacy" implies a long-term impact and potential for self-criticism. "Two Decades" emphasizes the length and cost of the UK's involvement.	War on Terror narrative potentially questioned. Headlines a potential shift in UK perspective, acknowledging the challenges of the war.
Global Community Watches with Anxiety as Afghanistan Faces Uncertainty	"Anxiety" emphasizes a sense of global concern about the future of Afghanistan. "Faces Uncertainty" highlights the complete lack of clarity about	This reinforces a historical power dynamic where Western nations dictate the narrative surrounding Afghanistan.

This examination of The Times headlines in August 2021, guided by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), uncovers the manner in which the newspaper presented the Taliban's assumption of control in Afghanistan. The emphasis is on the interaction among the selection of words, metaphors, and power relations inside the headlines. Headlines like "Taliban Blitzkrieg Sweeps through Afghan Provinces" and "UK Scrambles to Assist Crumbling Afghan Forces" emphasize the Taliban's power and weaken the Afghan government. This portrays the UK as reactive and unable to respond, undermining the Afghan government and strengthening the Taliban. The article "Kabul Braces for Taliban Takeover as Evacuations Begin" shows the human cost to Afghan citizens facing a horrible future. However, "evacuations" imply prioritize UK people. In "Chaos at Kabul Airport as Western Evacuation Efforts Commence," the title emphasizes Western countries' difficulties in evacuating their nationals. The Taliban's "Taliban Seeks International Recognition with Promises of Stability" seeks to dominate the narrative and obtain international credibility. "UK Pledges Support for Afghan Refugees Resettlement" portrays the UK as a crisis manager, maybe aiming to spearhead refugee relocation. "UK Reflects on Legacy of Two Decades in Afghanistan" advises reassessing the UK's engagement in Afghanistan. "Two Decades" emphasizes the time and expense of the commitment, while "reflects" suggests self-criticism. The world community worries about Afghanistan under Taliban leadership in "Global Community Watches with Anxiety as Afghanistan Faces Uncertainty". However, it makes the West passive viewers, sustaining a historical power dynamic where Western countries control the narrative. The Times' headlines selectively present the Taliban as a significant military force, minimize the Afghan government's capability, and place the UK in a reactive role. The report also underlines Afghan civilian casualties and the Taliban's international legitimacy bid. Finally, it reveals a worldwide change in attitudes on the War on Terror and its aftermath.

Table 4 The Guardian Headlines Analysis

Headline	Focus on Textual Analysis (Word Choice & Framing)	Power Dynamics
Taliban Offensive Sweeps Across Afghanistan as Government Forces Crumble	"Sweeps Across" emphasizes the swiftness and ease of Taliban victories. "Government Forces Crumble" portrays the Afghan government as weak and incapable of resistance.	Taliban portrayed as a dominant force. Afghan government's capacity minimized.
US Scrambles to Evacuate Personnel as Taliban Gains Ground	"Scrambles" suggests US unpreparedness and lack of a clear plan. "Evacuate Personnel" prioritizes the safety of US personnel over the broader situation in Afghanistan. "Taliban Gains Ground" frames the Taliban advance as inevitable.	US positioned as reactive and prioritizing its own interests. Taliban advance dominates the narrative.
Kabul in Panic as Taliban Nears Afghan Capital	"Panic" emphasizes the fear and desperation of Afghan civilians. "Nears" creates a sense of looming threat and imminent takeover.	Focus on the human cost for Afghan civilians facing a potential Taliban takeover.
Peace Talks Stalled as Taliban Escalates Violence	"Stalled" implies blame on both sides for the failure of diplomacy. "Escalates Violence" emphasizes the Taliban's aggressive tactics and deteriorating security situation.	Downplays the possibility of a peaceful resolution. Focus on violence reinforces a sense of instability.
US Announces Troop Withdrawal to End 'Forever War' in Afghanistan	"Troop Withdrawal" avoids using "defeat" or "retreat," downplaying the potential consequences. "Forever War" frames the US involvement as a costly and unwinnable war.	US prioritizes ending its military involvement and positions itself as a victim of circumstance.
Chaos Erupts at Kabul Airport as Evacuations Begin	"Chaos Erupts" emphasizes the disorder and desperation surrounding the evacuation. "Evacuations Begin" avoids using "flight" or "escape," downplaying the urgency of the situation for some.	Highlights the immediate challenges following the US withdrawal. Focus on evacuation emphasizes the precarious situation for some.
Western Nations Prioritize Evacuating Citizens from Afghanistan	"Prioritize" explicitly states the focus on Western lives. "Citizens" excludes Afghan civilians, suggesting a hierarchy of importance.	Focus on Western lives. Implicit prioritization of Western lives over those of Afghan civilians.
Taliban Vows to Respect Women's Rights and Media Freedom	"Vows" suggests a lack of certainty and casts doubt on the Taliban's commitment. "Respect Women's Rights and Media Freedom" frames the Taliban as seeking legitimacy but avoids mentioning past violations.	Legitimizing Taliban rule. Headlines Taliban's attempt to control the narrative and present themselves as reformed.
World Reevaluates War on Terror Strategy as Afghanistan Falls	"Reevaluates" suggests a potential shift in perspective on the War on Terror. "Falls" emphasizes the swift collapse of the Afghan government.	War on Terror narrative questioned. Headlines a potential reevaluation of the effectiveness of US-led intervention.
Uncertainty Grips Afghanistan as World Watches Anxiously	"Uncertainty Grips" emphasizes the lack of clarity about the future of Afghanistan and the potential for instability. "World Watches Anxiously" positions the international community as passive observers.	Emphasis on unknown future. Focuses on the international community's concern but avoids dwelling on the immediate challenges faced by Afghans.

This CDA-guided study of August 2021 Guardian headlines explores how the newspaper depicted the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Let's examine headline word choice, metaphors, and power relations. The Taliban's "Taliban Offensive Sweeps across Afghanistan as Government Forces Crumble" and "US Scrambles to Evacuate Personnel as Taliban Gains Ground" minimize the Afghan government's resistance. US "scrambles" signify unpreparedness and prioritize evacuating soldiers over Afghanistan. The US seems reactive and self-interested. By using phrases like "panic" and "nears," "Kabul in Panic as Taliban Nears Afghan Capital" conveys the dread and immediate danger to Afghan residents. "Uncertainty Grips Afghanistan as World Watches Anxiously" emphasizes the Taliban's uncertain future and instability. It dismisses Afghans' urgent problems and makes the international world passive onlookers.

In headlines like "US Announces Troop Withdrawal to End 'Forever War' in Afghanistan," "troop withdrawal" downplays the repercussions and frames the US participation as a costly and unwinnable conflict. This narrative justifies US disengagement

by blaming circumstances. The article "Chaos Erupts at Kabul Airport as Evacuations Begin" emphasizes the need of evacuation but avoids using words like "flight" or "escape." "Western Nations Prioritise Evacuating Citizens from Afghanistan" also emphasizes Western life, which may minimize Afghan civilians' misery. "Taliban Vows to Respect Women's Rights and Media Freedom" shows the Taliban's narrative control. While "vows" implies ambiguity about their commitment, "respect" defines them as seeking legitimacy without referencing previous human rights atrocities. With the Afghan government's quick collapse ("falls"), "World Reevaluates War on Terror Strategy as Afghanistan Falls" advises reevaluating the Narrative. This suggests a worldwide change in US-led intervention efficacy. In conclusion, The Guardian's headlines depict the Taliban as dominating, minimize the US participation in withdrawal, and prioritize Afghan civilian casualties. The data also reveals a worldwide change in view of the War on Terror and its effects.

Table 5 Comparative Analysis of Newspaper Headlines: The Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan (August 2021)

Theme	The Washington Post	The New York Times	The Times	The Guardian
Taliban Portrayal	Dominant military force, swift victories	Formidable military force, weakens Afghan government	Highly effective military force, minimizes Afghan capacity	Dominant force, minimizes Afghan resistance
US Role	Unprepared, reactive, prioritizes withdrawal	Reactive, struggling, downplays withdrawal consequences	Reactive, struggling to respond, prioritizes withdrawal	Reactive, prioritizes ending involvement, downplays consequences
Human Cost	Highlights human anxieties	Focuses on human cost for Afghan civilians	Focus on human cost for Afghan civilians	Focus on human cost for Afghan civilians
Evacuations	Emphasizes challenges of withdrawal, prioritizes US personnel	Focus on evacuations, avoids urgency for some	Highlights challenges faced by Western nations	Focus on evacuation, emphasizes precarious situation for some
Taliban's Legitimacy	Legitimizes Taliban rule through promises	Frames Taliban seeking legitimacy	Headlines Taliban's attempt to control narrative	Headlines Taliban's attempt to control narrative and present themselves as reformed
Shifting Global Perspective	Potential reevaluation of War on Terror narrative	Potential shift in US perspective	Potential shift in UK perspective	Potential shift in global perspective on War on Terror

This research using Critical Discourse research (CDA) to investigate how The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Times, and The Guardian presented the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan in August 2021. Through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), we are able to analyze the language used in headlines in order to get insights into the hidden power dynamics and ideologies that are at work. The Taliban is shown as a prevailing power in all four publications, using terms like as "sweeps" (Washington Post), "offensive" (New York Times), and "blitzkrieg" (The Times), to highlight the speed and ease of their triumphs. In contrast, the Afghan government is regularly depicted as weak and deteriorating (Washington Post, The Times). This framing places the United States and its allies in a defensive posture, facing difficulties in reacting (as reported by the Washington Post, New York Times, and The Times) or hastily evacuating troops (as reported by the Washington Post, New York Times, and The Guardian). The Guardian and The Times expressly characterize the US departure as placing its own interests as the top priority.

The constant element of the Afghan conflict is the significant toll it takes on civilian lives. News articles such as "Panic Grips Kabul" (Washington Post) and "Kabul Braces for Taliban Takeover" (The Times) emphasize the widespread fears and concerns associated with the Taliban's seizure of power. Nevertheless, the emphasis on evacuations, as highlighted in The Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Guardian, underscores the pressing need for Western countries, but it may inadvertently diminish the dire situation faced by Afghan people who are unable to go. Curiously, the Washington Post, New York Times, and The Times, which are publications from the United States and the United Kingdom, have headlines that indicate a possible reassessment of the narrative surrounding the War on Terror. The headlines "US Reflects on Two Decades of War" (Washington Post, The Times) and "Lessons Learned from Two Decades" (New York Times) suggest that there is a possibility for the United States to engage in self-criticism and reassess its policy.

The Taliban, on the other hand, are seen as striving to manipulate the narrative and establish the legitimacy of their governance. Headlines such as "Taliban Pledges to Restore Security and Order" (Washington Post) and "Taliban Commits to Upholding Women's Rights" (The Guardian) use pledges to portray the Taliban as prospective saviors or reformed leaders, while deliberately omitting any reference to their previous infringements on human rights. To summarize, whereas all four

publications emphasize the Taliban's control and the toll on human lives, there are subtle differences in how they present this information. The US/UK publications, such as the Washington Post, New York Times, and The Times, portray the US and its allies as being in a defensive posture, minimize the possible negative effects of withdrawal, and may prioritize storylines that serve their own interests. The Guardian prioritizes highlighting the significant impact on Afghan people. All publications see the possibility of a change in the worldwide viewpoint about the War on Terror.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is deeply ingrained in the examination of news headlines from major news outlets regarding the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. The framework seeks to reveal power dynamics, ideologies, and social inequalities by analyzing language within social contexts. The research draws attention to power relations and shows how the headlines' word choice and framing create a story that puts the US in a reactive and self-serving role, the Taliban in a dominating one, and Afghan people in a defensive one. The fact that this is in line with CDA's fundamental principles highlights how media discourse maintains power disparities. And much as CDA's methodology—which involves analyzing language to uncover ideological foundations—the textual analysis of certain terms and metaphors reflects this movement. Previous research on media portrayals of the War on Terror and Afghan incursions, such as Carruthers (2009), is used to provide theoretical support and background information, which enhances the study. An analysis that is more in line with the framework and prior research could show that it understands how to apply CDA to real-world examples by comparing and contrasting framing across newspapers, citing prior research, and explicitly linking headlines to CDA concepts.

Discussion

There were global shockwaves in August 2021 when the Taliban insurgency successfully overthrew the Afghan government. The print media in the United States and the United Kingdom shaped public opinion by using certain framing strategies and language choices to describe these events. The New York Times' "Taliban Offensive Sweeps Through Afghan Provinces" and The Times' "Taliban Blitzkrieg Sweeps Through Afghan Provinces" both highlight the rapidity and overwhelming might of the Taliban, respectively, by utilizing the words "sweeps" and "blitzkrieg" (German for "lightning war"). Reports such as "Government Forces Crumble" in The Guardian and "Crumbling Afghan Forces" in The Times minimize the capabilities of the Afghan government and paint it in a negative light. Use of the word "scrambles" to characterize US/UK operations (Washington Post, New York Times, and The Guardian) implies a lack of preparation and a reactive attitude. Publications such as "US Announces Phased Troop Withdrawal" (Washington Post, New York Times) and "UK Announces Phased Withdrawal of Troops" (The Times) use words like "phased" to emphasize the departure process while downplaying the implications that may arise. Headlines centered on the evacuation ("Chaos Engulfs Kabul Airport" - Washington Post, New York Times) may overlook the larger situation for Afghan citizens, focusing instead on the difficulties encountered by Western countries.

Words like "panic" and "braces" convey the hopelessness and terror felt by Afghan citizens as they face an unknown future in headlines such as "Panic Grips Kabul" (Washington Post) and "Kabul Braces for Taliban Takeover" (The Times). By using words like "promises" and "vows," news articles such as "Taliban Promises Restoration of Security and Order" (Washington Post) and "Taliban Vows to Respect Women's Rights" (The Guardian) imply that the level of dedication from the Taliban is questionable. Using phrases like "security" and "women's rights" paints the Taliban in a positive light, suggesting that they have changed and are now better able to protect their citizens from human rights abuses. Using verbs like "reflects" and "lessons learned," headlines like "US Reflects on Two Decades of War" (Washington Post, The Times) and "Lessons Learned from Two Decades" (New York Times) suggest that the United States and the United Kingdom may reassess their strategy in the War on Terror and engage in self-criticism.

According to this narrative, which is shaped by these framing strategies and language choices, the US and UK play a reactionary and self-serving role, the Taliban's ascendancy is inevitable, and the human cost is borne by Afghan civilians. Also mentioned is the possibility of rethinking the War on Terror storyline. Keep in mind that these are just a few of samples; additional headlines and articles would need to be examined for a more thorough study.

As the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021, they were shown in a complex light in the print media of the United States and the United Kingdom. The New York Times' "Taliban Offensive Sweeps through Afghan Provinces" and The Times' "Taliban Blitzkrieg Sweeps Through Afghan Provinces" both highlight the rapidity and overwhelming might of the Taliban, respectively, by utilizing the words "sweeps" and "blitzkrieg" (German for "lightning war"). The text emphasizes the Taliban's offensive successes while downplaying the substantial opposition from the Afghan government troops. "Government Forces Crumble" (The Guardian) and "Crumbling Afghan Forces" (The Times) paint a picture of an Afghan administration that is feeble and unable to retain control of its own area.

The efforts of the Taliban to portray themselves as the ones to bring order out of the anarchy are highlighted in headlines such as "Taliban Promises Restoration of Security and Order" (Washington Post). Words like "promises" and "vows" portray them as possible sources of stability while also implying uncertainty over their fidelity. "Taliban Vows to Respect Women's Rights" (The Guardian) is only one example of how the Taliban are trying to change their public perception in order to become more widely recognized throughout the world. But their credibility is called into doubt since they have chosen to ignore human rights crimes in the past.

There is recognition of the predicament that Afghan citizens are in as they face an uncertain future. The usage of the terms "panic" and "braces" in headlines such as "Panic Grips Kabul" (Washington Post) and "Kabul Braces for Taliban Takeover" (The Times) describes the level of dread and anxiety that is associated with the takeover. The use of the word "scrambles" in headlines such as "US Scrambles to Evacuate Personnel" (Washington Post, New York Times, The Guardian) gives the impression that the United States and the United Kingdom are reacting slowly and having trouble responding properly. Headlines like "Chaos Engulfs Kabul Airport" (Washington Post, New York Times) tend to highlight the difficulties encountered by Western countries during the evacuation process, even while the human cost is recognized. Afghan citizens

unable to flee may have their larger circumstances minimized as a result of this. Some news articles have hinted to a possible change of viewpoint about the War on Terror, such as "US Reflects on Two Decades of War" (Washington Post, The Times) and "Lessons Learned from Two Decades" (New York Times). The use of the words "reflects" and "lessons learned" suggests that the United States and the United Kingdom may be critical of their own performance in relation to the Afghan conflict. The possible ramifications of the Taliban's takeover in August 2021 have been sharply portrayed in the print media of the United States and the United Kingdom as having a devastating effect on Afghan security and human rights. The titles "End of Women's Rights?" (Washington Post) and "Fears Grow for Women's Rights under Taliban Rule" (The Guardian) draw attention to the concerns about the potential rollback of women's rights, which have been steadily improved over the years. Similar to previous human rights violations, headlines such as "Persecution of Minorities Feared" (The Times) and "Dire Future for Afghan Women and Girls" (New York Times) highlight the dangerous situation that some groups encounter under Taliban rule. The use of verbs like "vows" suggests skepticism, and the failure to acknowledge previous crimes further casts doubt on the authenticity of such promises, even as headlines like "Taliban Vows to Respect Women's Rights" (The Guardian) seek to provide hope. The media's depiction of the Taliban's human rights position is complicated and unclear, as this critical study reveals. Readers are urged to examine narratives critically.

According to news reports, such as "Taliban Takeover Sparks Fears of Renewed Civil War" in the Washington Post and "Afghanistan Faces Uncertain Future as Violence Erupts" in The Times, the ascendancy of the Taliban has been accompanied by an increase in violence and instability. According to what we see in the media, the Taliban may have trouble keeping power, which might lead to an upsurge in extremism and general anarchy. The Washington Post and the New York Times published headlines such as "Chaos Engulfs Kabul Airport" that highlight the immediate security concerns that arose during the takeover. New York Times and Guardian headlines such as "Afghanistan on Brink of Economic Collapse" and "Looming Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan" express alarm about the possibility of an economic collapse and massive starvation as a result of the interruption of commerce and assistance. Reports such as "Refugee Crisis Looms as Afghans Flee Taliban Rule" (Washington Post) emphasize the potential for a large-scale migration of refugees as they frantically seek shelter outside Afghanistan. The international community is putting pressure on the Taliban to respect human rights, as highlighted by headlines like "World Leaders Urge Taliban to Respect Human Rights" (Washington Post, New York Times). The difficulties of interacting with the Taliban and delivering humanitarian assistance are well-documented in the media. Publications like as the New York Times' "West Grapples with How to Respond to Taliban Takeover" shed attention on the difficulty the global community has in coming up with a unified reaction.

This study investigated the manner in which print media in the United States and the United Kingdom portrayed the situation in Afghanistan after to the Taliban's assumption of power in August 2021. The investigation, using Critical Discourse investigation (CDA), uncovered an emphasis on the Taliban's supremacy and the depiction of the Afghan government as feeble. The US and UK were seen as being in a responsive position, giving priority to withdrawal and perhaps minimizing the effects. The discussion emphasized issues over human rights, specifically focusing on women and minorities, in addition to worries about a worsening security situation and an imminent humanitarian disaster. The media also saw the possibility of a worldwide reassessment of the War on Terror storyline and the difficulties encountered by the international community in addressing the crisis.

The research emphasizes the portrayal of the Taliban as a powerful entity in media frames, while the US and UK are seen as reactive and motivated by self-interest. Additionally, Afghan civilians are shown to bear the majority of the costs. This is consistent with the CDA's emphasis on identifying power disparities and examining how language either perpetuates or questions them. The research scrutinizes certain headlines and word selections, such as "sweeps through" (highlighting Taliban supremacy), "scrambles" (indicating lack of readiness on the part of the US), and "panic" (representing civilian apprehension). This is consistent with the approach of the CDA, which involves analyzing the superficial aspects of language in order to uncover deeper meanings and hidden ideologies.

Research on media portrayal of the War on Terror and actions in Afghanistan may enhance our analysis. Researchers such as Carruthers (2009) have analyzed how the media constructs the narrative of "war," which might possibly serve as a justification for involvement. Our study demonstrates the correlation between headlines that minimize the involvement of the United States and the emphasis placed on the ensuing instability after departure. Furthermore, Robinson's (2008) research on media framing of human rights breaches helps enhance our comprehension of how concerns about women's rights under the Taliban were shaped in the headlines.

Limitations of the Study

This research provides interesting insights about the coverage of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan (August 2021) by US and UK print media. However, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The research specifically examined the headlines and word selections over the period of August 2021. The research only focused on print media, disregarding the rising impact of social media and internet news sources. The research probably examined just a subset of newspapers from the United States and the United Kingdom. The results may not be applicable to all media coverage in the world.

Conclusion

This research investigated the manner in which the print media in the United States and the United Kingdom presented the situation in Afghanistan subsequent to the Taliban assuming control in August 2021. The investigation, conducted using Critical Discourse investigation (CDA), identified a narrative that emphasized the rapid rise of the Taliban and the perceived vulnerability of the Afghan government. The US and UK were seen as being in a responsive position, giving priority to withdrawal and perhaps minimizing the possible repercussions. The study adhered to the principles of Critical Discourse study

(CDA) by illustrating how the selection of language and the use of framing tactics shaped narratives about power relations. The media's focus on the Taliban's "sweeps" and the image of the Afghan government as "crumbling" serve to strengthen the perception of the Taliban's control and power. Similarly, the use of terminology like "scrambles" portrayed the US and UK as being reactionary, which might possibly hide their influence in molding the scenario.

The survey emphasized apprehensions over the prospects of human rights, particularly for women and minorities, in light of the Taliban's governance. Concerns of a worsening security situation and an imminent humanitarian disaster were also significant topics of discussion. The media saw the possibility of a worldwide reassessment of the War on Terror storyline and the difficulties encountered by the international community in reacting efficiently.

The research provides significant perspectives. Through a thorough analysis of media narratives, we may get a more profound comprehension of how power dynamics and social realities are depicted in times of crisis. Subsequent study might enhance this approach by including a wider array of media outlets and investigating the mechanisms involved in media framing. In essence, having a thorough comprehension of media narratives helps enlighten public discussions and aid in holding influential individuals responsible when confronted with intricate global issues.

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