Journal of Social Signs Review

Global Narratives of Displacement: Media Representation Shapes Public Perception and Policy Responses to Refugee Crises

Mahnoor Ghani Sheikh
Department of English, University of Gujrat. Pakistan.
mahnoor.sheikh@uog.edu.pk
Dr. Raza e Mustafa
Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Gujrat. Pakistan.
razaemustafa@uog.edu.pk

Abstract

This study examines the representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international print media, focusing on how these representations influence public attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of refugees. Guided by Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework, this research analyzes a corpus of 96 newspaper articles from 5 Pakistani and 9 international newspapers published between 2018 and 2022. The study addresses two research questions: (1) How do Pakistani and international print media represent Afghan refugees, and how do these representations intersect with local contexts to shape public perception? and (2) What linguistic features, vocabulary, and grammatical structures are used in Pakistani and international print media to construct representations of Afghan refugees, and how do these features impact public opinion and policy responses? The findings reveal significant disparities in the representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international media, with Pakistani media often framing refugees as a burden and threat. In contrast, international media expresses more sympathy and empathy. The study concludes that media representation significantly shapes public perception, influences attitudes towards refugees, and informs policy decisions. The research recommends policymakers develop evidence-based

policies, prioritize protection and assistance for refugees, and foster regional cooperation to address the root causes of displacement.

Keywords: Refugees, Media, Representation, Afghanistan, Humanitarianism, Policy, Public Perception.

Introduction

The global refugee crisis has become a pervasive and complex issue, with millions of people displaced worldwide (UNHCR, 2022). The plight of refugees has sparked intense debates, humanitarian efforts, and policy responses (Betts & Collier, 2017). At the heart of these discussions lies the critical role of media representation in shaping public perception and policy responses to refugee crises (Bleiker et al., 2013). Media narratives can humanize or demonize refugees, influencing how the public perceives them and how policymakers respond to their needs (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Esses et al., 2013).

The way media frames refugee issues can either foster empathy and understanding or perpetuate negative stereotypes and xenophobia (Esses et al., 2013; Goodman, 2009). As evident in the coverage of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, media representation can significantly impact the lives of refugees and the policies that affect them (Khan, 2019; Zahid, 2017). The Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) led to a massive influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, resulting in one of the most significant refugee migrations in history (HRW, 2019).

This crisis has had far-reaching consequences for Afghanistan and Pakistan, with ongoing implications for regional stability, security, and humanitarian efforts (Rashid, 2010; Khan, 2019). In Pakistan, the media's representation of Afghan refugees has been shaped by various factors, including political, social, and economic considerations (Zahid, 2017; Jamal, 2015). Globally, the media's representation of refugee crises can have significant consequences for humanitarian efforts, policy responses, and the social integration of refugees (Bennett, 2013; Philo et al., 2013). Media narratives can shape public perception,

influencing attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers (Gillespie et al., 2010; Leudar et al., 2008).

This research examines the complex relationship between media representation, public perception, and policy responses to refugee crises. Through analyzing the media's portrayal of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and internationally, this research aims to explore how media narratives shape public opinion, policymakers' decisions, and, ultimately, the lives of refugees.

The most closely related research to this research is Khan's (2019) analysis of Pakistani media's representation of Afghan refugees, which highlights the dominant narratives and discourses that shape public perception. However, this research expands on Khan's research by including an international media perspective and exploring the implications of media representation for policy responses and humanitarian efforts.

Statement of the Problem

The media's representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and internationally has profound implications for public perception, policy responses, and the lives of refugees. Despite the significance of this issue, existing research reveals a substantial knowledge gap regarding how Pakistani and international media frame the complexities surrounding Afghan refugees (Bleiker et al., 2013; Khan, 2019). This research aims to investigate how media narratives shape public opinion and inform policymakers' decisions, ultimately influencing the experiences of refugees. Given the media's demonstrated capacity to shape attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers (Esses et al., 2013; Gillespie et al., 2010), this research will conduct an in-depth examination of the media's representation of Afghan refugees, focusing on the underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and linguistic features that shape these narratives.

Background of the Research

The global refugee crisis has become a pervasive and complex issue, with millions of people displaced worldwide (UNHCR, 2022). The Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) led to a massive influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, resulting in one of the most significant refugee migrations in history (HRW, 2019). This crisis has had far-reaching consequences for Afghanistan and Pakistan, with ongoing implications for regional stability, security, and humanitarian efforts (Rashid, 2010; Khan, 2019). Pakistan's response to the Afghan refugee crisis is shaped by its Islamic ideology, which emphasizes the principle of humanity and the importance of assisting those in need (Khan, 2019; Zaman, 2012). However, the media's representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan has been influenced by various factors, including political, social, and economic considerations (Zahid, 2017; Jamal, 2015).

The media shapes public opinion and policy responses to refugee crises (Bennett, 2013; Philo et al., 2013). The media's representation of Afghan refugees can influence public perception, policymakers' decisions, and, ultimately, the lives of refugees (Esses et al., 2013; Gillespie et al., 2010; Bleiker et al., 2013). Therefore, it is essential to examine the media's portrayal of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and internationally, with a focus on uncovering the underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and linguistic features that shape these narratives.

The Framework of the Research

This qualitative research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its theoretical framework to examine the media representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and international media. CDA is a methodology that interrogates the relationship between language, power, and ideology, rendering it an apt framework for analyzing media representation and its impact on public perception and policy responses (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1993).

Theoretical Framework

This Research employs Fairclough's (1989) 3-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the media representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The model comprises three interconnected dimensions:
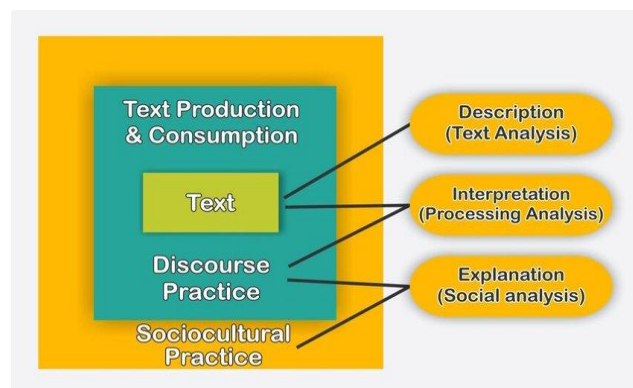

Fig 1. Fairclough 3D Model.

1.   Text Analysis

This dimension involves a detailed examination of the linguistic features, vocabulary, and grammatical structures used in media texts to represent Afghan refugees (Fowler, 1991).

2.   Discursive Practice

This dimension analyzes the discursive practices and ideologies that underlie media representation, including the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which the texts are produced and consumed (Hall, 1997).

3.   Sociocultural Practice

This dimension examines the broader sociocultural practices and power dynamics that shape media representation and its impact on public perception and policy responses (Bourdieu, 1991).

The Rationale for Using Fairclough's 3D Model

This research employs Fairclough's (1989) 3D Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) due to its comprehensive and systematic approach to analyzing complex discursive constructions. The Model's three dimensions enable a nuanced

examination of the linguistic, discursive and cultural structures that shape media representations of Afghan refugees. Furthermore, the 3D Model's focus on the interplay between language, power, and social context aligns with this research's aims to uncover the power dynamics and ideological underpinnings that shape media discourse. By utilizing the 3D Model, this research provides a detailed and nuanced analysis of the language constructions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and international media, offering valuable insights into the complex relationships between media representation, power, and social context.

Aims and Objectives

This research aims:

- To analyze the representation of Afghan refugees in international and Pakistani print media and examine how these representations intersect with local contexts to shape public perception.

- To examine the linguistic features, vocabulary, and grammatical structures used in Pakistani and international print media to construct representations of Afghan refugees and explore their impact on public opinion and policy responses.

Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do international and Pakistani print media represent Afghan refugees, and how do these representations intersect with local contexts to shape public perception?

RQ2: What linguistic features, vocabulary, and grammatical structures are used in Pakistani and international print media to construct representations of Afghan refugees, and how do these features impact public opinion and policy responses?

Significance of the Research

This research contributes significantly to the existing literature on the media's influence on public perception and policy responses to refugee crises, specifically in the context of Afghan refugees in Pakistan (Bleiker et al., 2013; Gillespie et al.,

2010). The research findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, media practitioners, and stakeholders, promoting nuanced reporting and contributing to a more informed public discourse (Esses et al., 2013). This research aims to inform the development of more effective policies and responses to refugee crises, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16, which promotes peaceful and inclusive societies (United Nations, 2020).

Limitations and Delimitations

This research has several limitations and delimitations. It is limited to the analysis of print media only, excluding other forms of media, and focuses solely on the representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international media. The research is delimited in analyzing news headlines from Pakistani and international print media published during a specific period, excluding other types of media texts and regions. The research's findings may not generalize to other refugee crises or contexts.

Literature Review

The representation of Afghan refugees in media discourse has been a topic of interest in various studies. Research has shown that media significantly shapes public opinion and policy decisions regarding refugees (Bleiker et al., 2013; Fairclough, 2015). This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on the representation of Afghan refugees in media discourse, focusing on Pakistani and international media.

Media Representation and Public Perception

Studies have consistently shown that media representation of refugees influences public perception and attitudes towards them (Esses et al., 2013; Gillespie et al., 2010). The media's framing of refugees can either promote a positive and inclusive narrative or perpetuate negative stereotypes and xenophobia (Bleiker et al., 2013). In the context of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, research has highlighted the need

for nuanced and balanced reporting to counteract negative stereotypes and promote greater understanding and empathy (Khan, 2018).

Linguistic Features and Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has examined the linguistic features and rhetorical devices used in media representations of refugees (Fairclough, 2015). Studies have shown that specific vocabulary, metaphors, and grammatical structures can shape public opinion and reinforce dominant narratives (Bleiker et al., 2013). In the context of Afghan refugees, research has highlighted the importance of examining the linguistic features used in media discourse to understand how they shape public perception and inform policy responses (Khan, 2018).

Pakistani and International Media

Research has shown that Pakistani and international media often employ different narratives and framing devices when representing Afghan refugees (Gillespie et al., 2010). Pakistani press usually focuses on the economic and security implications of hosting Afghan refugees, while international media tends to emphasize the humanitarian aspects of the refugee crisis (Khan, 2018). Understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote nuanced and balanced reporting.

Media Framing and Refugee Policy

The media's framing of refugees can significantly influence policy decisions and public opinion (Esses et al., 2013). Research has shown that media framing can promote a positive and inclusive narrative or perpetuate negative stereotypes and xenophobia (Bleiker et al., 2013). In the context of Afghan refugees, research has highlighted the need for nuanced and balanced reporting to inform policy responses and promote greater understanding and empathy (Khan, 2018).

Humanitarianism and the Media

The media's representation of refugees is often shaped by humanitarian narratives and discourses (Fassin, 2012). Research has shown that humanitarian narratives

can promote a positive and inclusive narrative or perpetuate negative stereotypes and xenophobia (Bleiker et al., 2013). In the context of Afghan refugees, research has highlighted the importance of examining the humanitarian narratives used in media discourse to understand how they shape public perception and inform policy responses (Khan, 2018).

Critical Discourse Analysis and Refugee Studies

Critical discourse analysis has examined the linguistic features and rhetorical devices used in media representations of refugees (Fairclough, 2015). Research has shown that critical discourse analysis can provide valuable insights into how media discourse shapes public opinion and reinforces dominant narratives (Bleiker et al., 2013). In the context of Afghan refugees, research has highlighted the importance of using critical discourse analysis to examine the linguistic features used in media discourse and understand how they shape public perception and inform policy responses (Khan, 2018).

Implications for Policy and Practice

Representing Afghan refugees in media discourse has significant implications for policy and practice. Research has shown that media representation can influence policy decisions and shape public opinion, impacting the lives of refugees (Esses et al., 2013). Therefore, it is essential to promote nuanced and balanced reporting to ensure that policy responses are informed by accurate and comprehensive information.

This literature review highlights the significance of examining Pakistani media's representation of Afghan refugees, revealing a notable research gap. Few studies have investigated this topic, with even fewer examining linguistic features and rhetorical devices. This research addresses these gaps through critical discourse analysis, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics shaping refugee policies and public opinion in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

This section delineates the research design, approach, and methods utilized to examine the impact of media representation on public perception and policy responses to refugee crises, explicitly focusing on Afghan refugees in Pakistan through the eye of Pakistani and International print media.

Research Approach

This research employs a descriptive and critical approach, examining the complex political, social, and communal contexts surrounding Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), this research deploys Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2015) to scrutinize the language and discourse embedded in media headlines.

Research Design

This research employs Fairclough's (1989) 3D model as the analytical framework for examining news headlines' linguistic and discursive structures. This model comprises three interconnected dimensions:

1. **Description**: Analyzing the formal properties of the text, including vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure (Fairclough, 1989).

2. **Interpretation**: Examining how the text is produced and consumed, focusing on the interactions between it and its social context (Fairclough, 1992).

3. **Explanation**: Exploring the broader social and ideological context in which the text is produced, highlighting the power dynamics, dominant practices, and social relationships that shape the discourse (Fairclough, 1989).

Research Data and Sampling

This research utilizes newspaper headlines from prominent Pakistani and international print media outlets as its primary data source. Purposive sampling (Patton, 2015) is employed to selectively sample headlines focusing on the most pertinent refugee issues in Pakistani and international media.

Pakistani Media

The research includes headlines from five influential Pakistani newspapers: DAWN, The Express Tribune, Daily Pakistan, Daily Times, and The Nation. These newspapers are selected based on their significant readership and influence in shaping public opinion in Pakistan.

International Media

The research also incorporates headlines from multiple international media outlets, encompassing Asian, European, and American media. The media outlets analyzed in this research include Nikkei Asia, Times, AP News, Xinhua News, REUTERS, NEWS, Radio Free Europe, The Guardian, and The New Humanitarian. This diverse selection of international media outlets enables a comprehensive understanding of the representation of Afghan refugees in global media discourse.

Data Collection

The headlines were collected from the online archives of the selected Pakistani and international media outlets, utilizing a systematic and structured search strategy to identify relevant articles. From 2010 to 2022, the search period enables a longitudinal analysis of the evolving media discourse on Afghan refugees, capturing language, tone, and narrative shifts over time.

Data Analysis

The researcher collected ninety-six headlines, arranged them into six dominant themes, and analyzed them using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. Specifically, Fairclough's (1989) 3D model, a nuanced CDA framework, was employed to facilitate a multifaceted examination of the linguistic and discursive structures that shape the representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international media.

The 3D model, comprising Description, Interpretation, and Explanation, provided a systematic and comprehensive analytical framework for this CDA. The researcher analysis collected data by undertaking in three sequential stages:

1.   **Description**: A systematic examination of the formal properties of the headlines, encompassing vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure.

2.   **Interpretation**: The production and consumption of the headlines, focusing on the interactions between the text and its social context.

3.   **Explanation**: The broader social and ideological context in which was explored, highlighting the power dynamics and dominant practices that shape the discourse.

This CDA analysis, facilitated by Fairclough's 3D model, provided insight into how the representation of Afghan refugees is influenced by and reinforces existing social relations, power structures, and ideological positions.

Selected Themes

Six dominant themes emerged, then analyzed by applying Fairclough's 3D model, providing a nuanced framework for examining print media representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and international media. These themes include: 1. Representing Displacement, 2. Registering Refugees, 3. Temporary Residency, 4. Criminalization of Refugees, 5. Citizenship Debates, and 6. Return and Repatriation. These themes are critically examined within the context of both Pakistani and international media presentations of Afghanistan news, offering a comprehensive understanding of the complex media discourse surrounding Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Data Analysis

The collected headlines underwent a rigorous analysis using Fairclough's 3D model, a critical discourse analytical framework. This approach enabled a nuanced examination of the linguistic and discursive structures shaping the representation of Afghan refugees. The analysis revealed six dominant themes, providing a comprehensive understanding of the media discourse surrounding Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Textual analysis (description), Discursive Practice (interpretation), and Sociocultural Practice (explanation).

Thematic Analysis

1. Representing Displacement: A comparative analysis of Pakistani and international media portrayals of Afghan refugees

a. Pakistani Media

i. Textual Analysis

Pakistani print media headlines emphasize Pakistan's hospitality and generosity towards Afghan refugees. For example:

• "Pakistan's hospitality towards 1.4 million Afghan refugees unparalleled" (Daily Times, January 24, 2023).

• "Afghan Refugees in Pakistan: Four Decades of Hospitality" (Daily Pakistan, June 28, 2022).

ii. Discursive Practice

Pakistani media constructs Afghan refugees as guests who are being hosted by Pakistan. This narrative emphasizes Pakistan's role as a generous host and reinforces a sense of national pride. Examples include:

• "Pakistan's hospitality towards 1.4 million Afghan refugees unparalleled" (Daily Times, January 24, 2023).

• "Afghan Refugees in Pakistan: Four Decades of Hospitality" (Daily Pakistan, June 28, 2022).

iii. Sociocultural Practice

The Pakistani government's narrative of hospitality and generosity towards Afghan refugee's influences policies and practices. Examples include:

• "Pakistan an exemplary host to Afghan refugees, says UNHCR" (The Nation, October 05, 2016).

• "Pakistan world's largest host of refugees: UNHCR" (The Express Tribune, April 16, 2018).

b. International Media

i. Textual Analysis

International media highlights challenges faced by Afghan refugees in Pakistan. For example:

- "Rescue us, beg Afghan refugee families as they protest their slum life in a Pakistani park" (Nikkei Asia, June 21, 2022).

- "Misery and Loss for Afghans in Pakistan as 800,000 Refugees Hit by Floods" (Times, September 30, 2022).

ii. Discursive Practice

International media frames Afghan refugees as vulnerable individuals struggling to survive in Pakistan. Examples include:

- "Rescue us, beg Afghan refugee families as they protest their slum life in a Pakistani park" (Nikkei Asia, June 21, 2022).

- "Afghan refugees tell UN: 'We need peace, land to go home'" (AP News, February 13, 2020).

iii. Sociocultural Practice

International media's focus on refugee challenges may influence public opinion and policy responses globally. Examples include:

- "Rescue us, beg Afghan refugee families as they protest their slum life in a Pakistani park" (Nikkei Asia, June 21, 2022).

- "Misery and Loss for Afghans in Pakistan as 800,000 Refugees Hit by Floods" (Times, September 30, 2022).2. Media Representation of Afghan Refugee Registration.

2. Registering Refugees: An examination of Pakistani print media's coverage of Afghan refugee registration processes

a. Pakistani Media

i. Textual Analysis

Pakistani print media highlights the registration process of Afghan refugees, emphasizing government efforts to provide biometric registration cards. For instance:

- "1.4 m Afghans get biometric registration cards" (DAWN, September 22, 2021).

- "New registration campaign: Afghan refugees hope for a better tomorrow" (DAWN, August 18, 2017).

ii. Discursive Practice

Pakistani media constructs the registration process as a positive development, emphasizing the government's efforts to provide documentation to Afghan refugees. Examples include:

- "CM Khattak orders registration of unregistered Afghan refugees" (The Nation, March 4, 2016).

- "Registering refugees: Afghans won't be forced out, says Khattak" (The Express Tribune, March 16, 2015).

iii. Sociocultural Practice

The Pakistani government's narrative on refugee registration influences policies and practices, reflecting the country's commitment to hosting Afghan refugees. Examples include:

- "No coercive measures: "registered refugees have nothing to worry"" (The Nation, December 24, 2014).

- "CM Khattak orders registration of unregistered Afghan refugees" (The Nation, March 4, 2016).

b. International Media Representation

i. Textual Analysis

International media highlights the challenges faced by Afghan refugees in Pakistan regarding registration and documentation. For example:

- "Pakistan warns paperless migrants to leave, alarming Afghans" (Pajhwok News, November 4, 2022).

- "Afghan Refugees in Pakistan Worry as Their Refugee Cards Expire" (VOA, September 30, 2021).

ii. Discursive Practice

International media frames Afghan refugees as vulnerable individuals struggling to survive, emphasizing the need for humanitarian assistance. Examples include:

- "Without documentation, Afghan refugees in Pakistan struggle to meet needs" (VOA, October 10, 2017).

- "Afghan Refugees in Pakistan Worry as Their Refugee Cards Expire" (VOA, September 30, 2021).

iii. Sociocultural Practice

International media's focus on refugee challenges may influence public opinion and policy responses globally, highlighting the need for support and assistance. Examples include:

- "Pakistan warns paperless migrants to leave, alarming Afghans" (Pajhwok News, November 4, 2022).

- "Afghan Refugees in Pakistan Worry as Their Refugee Cards Expire" (VOA, September 30, 2021).

3. Temporary Residency: A critical discourse analysis of Pakistani and international media coverage of Afghan refugees' permission to stay in Pakistan

a. Pakistani Media

i. Textual Analysis

Pakistani print media highlights government extensions and accommodations for Afghan refugees. For example:

- "Afghan refugees allowed to stay in Pakistan for another year" (The Express Tribune, June 28, 2019).

- "Afghan refugees granted sixth extension for their stay in Pakistan" (DAWN/The Nation, January 3, 2018).

ii.   **Discursive Practice**

Pakistani media constructs the government's extensions as a positive development, emphasizing Pakistan's generosity and hospitality. Examples include:

- "Afghan refugees allowed to stay in Pakistan for another year" (The Express Tribune, June 28, 2019).

- "Interim government extends Afghan refugees' stay in Pakistan" (Daily Pakistan, July 1, 2018).

iii.   **Sociocultural Practice**

The Pakistani government's narrative of hospitality and generosity influences policies and practices, reflecting the country's commitment to hosting Afghan refugees. Examples include:

- "Afghan refugees granted sixth extension for their stay in Pakistan" (DAWN/The Nation, January 3, 2018).

- "Interim government extends Afghan refugees' stay in Pakistan" (Daily Pakistan, July 1, 2018).

b.   **International Media**

i.   **Textual Analysis**

International media highlights the uncertainties and challenges surrounding Afghan refugees' stay in Pakistan. For example:

- "Afghan refugees' stay in Pakistan extended by 16 months" (Xinhua News, June 6, 2019).

- "Pakistan extends Afghan refugees' stay for only 60 days" (REUTERS, January 13, 2018).

ii. Discursive Practice

International media frames the extensions as temporary solutions, emphasizing the ongoing uncertainty faced by refugees. Examples include:

- "Afghan refugees' stay in Pakistan extended by 16 months" (Xinhua News, June 6, 2019).

- "Pakistan grants new extension before forced return of Afghan refugees" (REUTERS, June 30, 2018).

iii. Sociocultural Practice

International media's focus on the challenges and uncertainties surrounding Afghan refugees' stay in Pakistan may influence public opinion and policy responses globally, highlighting the need for sustained support and assistance. Examples include:

- "Pakistan extends Afghan refugees' stay for only 60 days" (REUTERS, January 13, 2018).

- "Pakistan grants new extension before forced return of Afghan refugees" (REUTERS, June 30, 2018).

4. Criminalization of Refugees: A comparative analysis of Pakistani and international print media narratives surrounding Afghan refugee arrests

a. Pakistani Print Media

i. Textual Analysis

Pakistani print media highlights the arrest of Afghan refugees, emphasizing their "illegal" status. For example:

- "129 Afghan 'illegal immigrants' with 178 children in Sindh jails: Sharjeel" (Dawn, December 30, 2022).

- "Sindh Rangers police arrest 122 Afghan refugees for illegally entering Sindh" (The Nation, November 11, 2022).

ii. Discursive Practice

Pakistani media constructs Afghan refugees as "illegal immigrants" or "undocumented" individuals, reinforcing a narrative of law and order. Examples include:

- "129 Afghan 'illegal immigrants' with 178 children in Sindh jails: Sharjeel" (Dawn, December 30, 2022).

- "Sindh Rangers police arrest 122 Afghan refugees for illegally entering Sindh" (The Nation, November 11, 2022).

iii. Sociocultural Practice

The Pakistani government's narrative of Afghan refugees as "illegal immigrants" influences policies and practices, reflecting the country's concerns about national security and sovereignty. Examples include:

- "Nine more illegal Afghan immigrants taken into custody" (The Express Tribune, September 16, 2022).

- "Women, kids among 1200 Afghan migrants jailed in Pakistan" (Pakistan Today, December 31, 2022).

b. International Print Media

i. Textual Analysis

International media highlights the humanitarian concerns surrounding the arrest of Afghan refugees, emphasizing the impact on vulnerable populations. Examples include:

- "Major Crackdown on Afghan Refugees in Pakistan; 'Illegal' Women, Children Behind Bars in Karachi" (NEWS 18, December 31, 2022).

- "Everyone Is Anxious': Pakistan's Mass Arrests of Afghan Refugees Fuel Fear of New Crackdown" (Radio Free Europe, November 16, 2022).

ii. **Discursive Practice**

International media frames Afghan refugees as vulnerable individuals, emphasizing the need for humanitarian assistance and protection. Examples include:

- "Major Crackdown on Afghan Refugees in Pakistan; 'Illegal' Women, Children Behind Bars in Karachi" (NEWS 18, December 31, 2022).

- "Everyone Is Anxious': Pakistan's Mass Arrests of Afghan Refugees Fuel Fear of New Crackdown" (Radio Free Europe, November 16, 2022).

iii. **Sociocultural Practice**

International media's focus on the humanitarian concerns surrounding Afghan refugees' arrests may influence public opinion and policy responses globally, emphasizing the need for protection and assistance. Examples include:

- "Major Crackdown on Afghan Refugees in Pakistan; 'Illegal' Women, Children Behind Bars in Karachi" (NEWS 18, December 31, 2022).

- "Everyone Is Anxious': Pakistan's Mass Arrests of Afghan Refugees Fuel Fear of New Crackdown" (Radio Free Europe, November 16, 2022).

5. Citizenship Debates: An analysis of Pakistani and international media coverage of citizenship issues affecting Afghan refugees in Pakistan

a. **Pakistani Media**

i. **Textual Analysis**

Pakistani print media's headlines reveal a mixed tone. For instance:

• "Unwanted Afghan refugees pin hopes on PM Imran Khan's promise for citizenship" (DAWN, January 17, 2019) implies skepticism about the government's promise.

• "PM Imran to grant citizenship to Pakistan-born Bengal, Afghan refugees" (Daily Pakistan, September 17, 2018) presents a more positive and inclusive tone.

ii. Discourse as Practice

Pakistani media's framing of Afghan refugees' citizenship reflects the government's narrative. The media's use of terms like:

• "Unwanted Afghan refugees pin hopes on PM Imran Khan's promise for citizenship" (DAWN, January 17, 2019) suggests a sense of uncertainty and conditional acceptance.

• "PM Imran to grant citizenship to Pakistan-born Bengal, Afghan refugees" (Daily Pakistan, September 17, 2018) implies a more welcoming attitude.

iii. Sociocultural Practice

The Pakistani government's stance on granting citizenship to Afghan refugees is influenced by national security and sovereignty concerns. The media's depiction of this issue reflects and shapes public opinion, contributing to a sociocultural narrative that views Afghan refugees as:

• "Unwanted Afghan refugees pin hopes on PM Imran Khan's promise for citizenship" (DAWN, January 17, 2019) "other."

• "Pakistan-born Afghan refugees await citizenship promise" (The Express Tribune, January 20, 2019) highlights the uncertainty faced by refugees.

b. **International Media**

  i. **Textual Analysis**

International print media's headlines emphasize the humanitarian aspect:

- "Pakistan's Imran Khan pledges citizenship for 1.5m Afghan refugees" (The Guardian, September 17, 2018) highlights the scale of the issue.

- "Pakistan Prime Minister vows to grant citizenship to Afghan refugees" (REUTERS, September 17, 2018) presents a more straightforward, factual tone.

  ii. **Discourse as Practice**

International media's framing of Afghan refugees' citizenship focuses on:

- "Pakistan's Imran Khan pledges citizenship for 1.5m Afghan refugees" (The Guardian, September 17, 2018) the humanitarian concerns and the Pakistani government's pledges.

- "Imran Khan pledges citizenship to Afghan and Bangladeshi refugees" (The Guardian, September 17, 2018) emphasizes the need for protection and assistance.

  iii. **Sociocultural Practice**

International media's coverage of this issue contributes to a global sociocultural narrative that:

- "Pakistan's Imran Khan pledges citizenship for 1.5m Afghan refugees" (The Guardian, September 17, 2018) emphasizes the importance of protecting vulnerable populations.

- "Pakistan Prime Minister vows to grant citizenship to Afghan refugees" (REUTERS, September 17, 2018) influences public opinion and policy responses worldwide.

6. Return and Repatriation: A comparative research of Pakistani print media and international media perspectives on the return of Afghan refugees

a. Pakistani Media

i. Textual Analysis

Pakistani media's headlines reveal a mixed tone. For instance:

"Pakistan favors voluntary return of Afghan refugees, says Minister" (DAWN, June 21, 2022): This headline suggests that Pakistan is supportive of Afghan refugees returning to their homeland voluntarily.

"Afghan refugees in Pakistan unwilling to return" (DAWN, August 10, 2020): This headline highlights the reluctance of Afghan refugees to return to their homeland.

ii. Discursive Practice Analysis

Pakistani media's framing of Afghan refugees' return reflects the government's narrative. For example:

• The use of terms like "voluntary return" in "Pakistan favours voluntary return of Afghan refugees, says Minister" (DAWN, June 21, 2022) suggests a sense of uncertainty and conditional acceptance.

• The headline "Afghan refugees in Pakistan unwilling to return" (DAWN, August 10, 2020) reinforces the government's narrative that Afghan refugees are reluctant to return, implying that Pakistan is not responsible for their prolonged stay.

iii. Sociocultural Practice Analysis

The Pakistani government's stance on the return of Afghan refugees is influenced by national security and sovereignty concerns. For instance:

- The media's depiction of Afghan refugees as "unwilling to return" contributes to a sociocultural narrative that views Afghan refugees as a burden on Pakistani society. (DAWN, August 10, 2020).

- The headline "Early and dignified return of Afghan refugees essential: DG ISPR Asif Ghafoor" (DAWN, January 25, 2018) reinforces the Pakistani military's stance on the issue, emphasizing the importance of a dignified return for Afghan refugees.

b. International Print Media

i. Textual Analysis

International media's headlines emphasize the humanitarian aspect:

- "Afghan refugees fear return as Pakistan cracks down on migrants" (The New Humanitarian, March 23, 2023): This headline emphasizes the fear and anxiety experienced by Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

- "Pakistan Grants New Extension Before Forced Return of Afghan Refugees" (The Guardian, June 30, 2018): This headline presents a more straightforward, factual tone, highlighting Pakistan's decision to grant an extension before forcibly returning Afghan refugees.

ii. Discursive Practice Analysis

International media's framing of Afghan refugees' returns focuses on the humanitarian concerns and the Pakistani government's actions. For example:

- The use of terms like "fear" and "cracks down" in "Afghan refugees fear return as Pakistan cracks down on migrants" (The New Humanitarian, March 23, 2023) emphasizes the coercive nature of the repatriation process.

- The headline "Pakistan Grants New Extension Before Forced Return of Afghan Refugees" (The Guardian, June 30, 2018) highlights the Pakistani government's decision to grant an extension, implying that the government is taking steps to address the humanitarian concerns.

iii. Sociocultural Practice Analysis

International media's coverage of this issue contributes to a global sociocultural narrative that emphasizes the importance of protecting vulnerable populations. For instance:

- The media's depiction of Afghan refugees as "fearing return" contributes to a sociocultural narrative that views Afghan refugees as vulnerable and in need of protection (The Guardian, 2022).

- The headline "Afghan exodus from Pakistan could be 'catastrophic' without urgent aid" (The Guardian, October 4, 2016) reinforces the importance of providing humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees, emphasizing the potential catastrophic consequences of inaction.

This research reveals how media discourse on Afghan refugees in Pakistan is shaped by complex power dynamics, influencing public perception and policy responses, and highlights the media's pivotal role in constructing public understanding.

Discussion

The media representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and internationally is a pivotal aspect of the refugee crisis, exerting significant influence on public opinion and policy decisions (Bleiker et al., 2013). This discussion undertakes a comparative analysis of the portrayal of Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international media, illuminating the divergent framing, tone, and narrative emphases that shape public discourse on this critical issue.

Portrayals of Displacement: A striking contrast emerges between Pakistani and international media representations of Afghan refugees. Pakistani media portrays Afghan refugees through a lens of hospitality and generosity, emphasizing Pakistan's role as a benevolent host. In contrast, international media frames Afghan refugees as vulnerable individuals struggling to survive, highlighting the challenges they face in Pakistan. This dichotomy is evident in the language and tone used by both media spheres. Pakistani media employs a more positive and celebratory tone, such as "Pakistan's hospitality towards 1.4 million Afghan refugees unparalleled" (Daily Times, January 24, 2023). In contrast, international media adopts a more critical and sympathetic tone, using headlines like "Rescue us, beg Afghan refugee families as they protest their slum life in a Pakistani park" (Nikkei Asia, June 21, 2022). This contrast highlights displacement narratives' complex and multifaceted nature, underscoring the need for nuanced and contextualized understandings of media representation.

Documenting Displacement: The analysis of Pakistani and international media coverage of Afghan refugee registration processes reveals a stark contrast in representation. Pakistani media portrays the registration process as a positive development, emphasizing the government's efforts to provide documentation to Afghan refugees. In contrast, international media highlights the challenges faced by Afghan refugees in Pakistan regarding registration and documentation, framing them as vulnerable individuals struggling to survive. This dichotomy is evident in the language and tone used by both media spheres. Pakistani media employs a more optimistic tone, using phrases such as "1.4 m Afghans get biometric registration cards" (DAWN, September 22, 2021), whereas international media adopts a more critical tone, using headlines like "Pakistan warns paperless migrants to leave, alarming Afghans" (Pajhwok News, November 4, 2022). This contrast underscores displacement narratives' complex and multifaceted nature, highlighting the need for nuanced and contextualized understandings of media

representation. Furthermore, this analysis suggests that Pakistani media's focus on government efforts may reinforce a sense of national pride and responsibility, while international media's emphasis on refugee challenges may influence public opinion and policy responses globally.

Temporary Stay: The analysis of Pakistani and international media coverage of Afghan refugees' permission to stay in Pakistan reveals a notable contrast in representation. Pakistani media portrays government extensions and accommodations for Afghan refugees as a positive development, emphasizing Pakistan's generosity and hospitality. In contrast, international media highlights the uncertainties and challenges surrounding Afghan refugees' stay in Pakistan, framing the extensions as temporary solutions that perpetuate ongoing uncertainty. This dichotomy is evident in the language and tone used by both media spheres. Pakistani media employs a more optimistic tone, using phrases such as "Afghan refugees allowed to stay in Pakistan for another year" (The Express Tribune, June 28, 2019), whereas international media adopts a more critical tone, using headlines like "Pakistan extends Afghan refugees' stay for only 60 days" (REUTERS, January 13, 2018). This contrast underscores displacement narratives' complex and multifaceted nature, highlighting the need for nuanced and contextualized understandings of media representation. Furthermore, this analysis suggests that Pakistani media's focus on government efforts may reinforce a sense of national pride and responsibility, while international media's emphasis on refugee challenges may influence public opinion and policy responses globally.

Media Narratives of Afghan Refugee Arrests: The analysis of Pakistani and international print media narratives surrounding Afghan refugee arrests reveals a striking contrast in representation. Pakistani media constructs Afghan refugees as "illegal immigrants" or "undocumented" individuals, reinforcing a narrative of law and order and emphasizing their "illegal" status. In contrast, international media frames Afghan refugees as vulnerable individuals, emphasizing the humanitarian

concerns surrounding their arrests and highlighting the impact on women and children. This dichotomy is evident in the language and tone used by both media spheres. Pakistani media employs a more punitive tone, using phrases such as "129 Afghan 'illegal immigrants' with 178 children in Sindh jails" (Dawn, December 30, 2022), whereas international media adopts a more sympathetic tone, using headlines like "Major Crackdown on Afghan Refugees in Pakistan; 'Illegal' Women, Children Behind Bars in Karachi" (NEWS 18, December 31, 2022). This contrast underscores displacement narratives' complex and multifaceted nature, highlighting the need for nuanced and contextualized understandings of media representation. Furthermore, this analysis suggests that Pakistani media's focus on law and order may reinforce a sense of national security and sovereignty, while international media's emphasis on humanitarian concerns may influence public opinion and policy responses globally, emphasizing the need for protection and assistance.

Citizenship for Afghan Refugees: The analysis of Pakistani and international media coverage of citizenship issues affecting Afghan refugees in Pakistan reveals a notable contrast in representation. Pakistani media presents a mixed tone, with some headlines implying skepticism about the government's promises, such as "Unwanted Afghan refugees pin hopes on PM Imran Khan's promise for citizenship" (DAWN, January 17, 2019), while others present a more positive and inclusive tone, like "PM Imran to grant citizenship to Pakistan-born Bengal, Afghan refugees" (Daily Pakistan, September 17, 2018). In contrast, international media emphasizes the humanitarian aspect, highlighting the scale of the issue and the need for protection and assistance, as seen in "Pakistan's Imran Khan pledges citizenship for 1.5m Afghan refugees" (The Guardian, September 17, 2018) and "Pakistan Prime Minister vows to grant citizenship to Afghan refugees" (REUTERS, September 17, 2018). This contrast suggests that Pakistani media's representation is influenced by national security and sovereignty concerns, contributing to a

sociocultural narrative that views Afghan refugees as "other", whereas international media's coverage promotes a global sociocultural narrative that emphasizes the importance of protecting vulnerable populations.

International Media Perspectives: The analysis of Pakistani and international media coverage of the return and repatriation of Afghan refugees reveals a stark contrast in representation. Pakistani media presents a mixed tone, with some headlines suggesting Pakistan's support for voluntary return, while others highlight the reluctance of Afghan refugees to return, implying that Pakistan is not responsible for their prolonged stay. In contrast, international media emphasizes the humanitarian concerns, highlighting the fear and anxiety experienced by Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the coercive nature of the repatriation process. This contrast suggests that Pakistani media's representation is influenced by national security and sovereignty concerns, contributing to a sociocultural narrative that views Afghan refugees as a burden on Pakistani society. In contrast, international media coverage contributes to a global sociocultural narrative emphasizing the importance of protecting vulnerable populations and providing humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees. The linguistic features and vocabulary used in Pakistani and international print media also impact public opinion and policy responses, with Pakistani media's use of terms like "voluntary return" and "unwilling to return" reinforcing a narrative of uncertainty and conditional acceptance, while international media's emphasis on humanitarian concerns promotes a more inclusive and protective narrative.

This comparative analysis of Pakistani and international media representation of Afghan refugees highlights the significant disparities in framing, tone, and narrative emphasis. Pakistani media emphasizes national security, sovereignty, and hospitality, while international media focuses on humanitarian concerns, vulnerability, and protection. These contrasting narratives shape public opinion, influence policy decisions, and contribute to distinct sociocultural

understandings of Afghan refugees. Ultimately, this research underscores the need for nuanced and contextualized understandings of media representation, emphasizing the importance of balanced and inclusive reporting to promote empathy, understanding, and effective policy responses to refugee crises.

Results

This study examined the representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international media, highlighting the differences in framing, tone, and narrative emphasis. The findings reveal significant disparities in how Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international media.

RQ1: Representation of Afghan Refugees

Pakistani media tends to portray Afghan refugees as "illegal immigrants" or "undocumented" individuals, emphasizing their "illegal" status (Dawn, December 30, 2022). In contrast, international media frames Afghan refugees as vulnerable individuals struggling to survive, highlighting the humanitarian concerns surrounding their arrests and the impact on women and children (NEWS 18, December 31, 2022).

RQ2: Linguistic Features and Vocabulary

Pakistani media employs a more optimistic tone, using phrases such as "1.4 m Afghans get biometric registration cards" (DAWN, September 22, 2021), whereas international media adopts a more critical tone, using headlines like "Pakistan warns paperless migrants to leave, alarming Afghans" (Pajhwok News, November 4, 2022). The linguistic features and vocabulary used in Pakistani and international print media impact public opinion and policy responses, with Pakistani media's use of terms like "voluntary return" and "unwilling to return" reinforcing a narrative of uncertainty and conditional acceptance, while international media's emphasis on humanitarian concerns promotes a more inclusive and protective narrative.

Impact on Public Opinion and Policy Responses

The contrasting narratives in Pakistani and international media shape public opinion, influence policy decisions, and contribute to distinct sociocultural understandings of Afghan refugees. Pakistani media's focus on national security and sovereignty may reinforce a sense of national pride and responsibility, while international media's emphasis on humanitarian concerns may influence public opinion and policy responses globally, emphasizing the need for protection and assistance.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant disparities in how Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international media. The findings emphasize the need for nuanced and contextualized understandings of media representation, promoting balanced and inclusive reporting to shape public opinion and policy responses to refugee crises.

Key Findings

The key findings of this study reveal significant disparities in the representation of Afghan refugees in Pakistani and international media. Pakistani media tends to portray Afghan refugees as "illegal immigrants" or "undocumented" individuals, emphasizing national security and sovereignty concerns (Dawn, December 30, 2022). In contrast, international media frames Afghan refugees as vulnerable individuals struggling to survive, highlighting humanitarian concerns and the need for protection and assistance (NEWS 18, December 31, 2022; The Guardian, September 17, 2018). The study also highlights the impact of linguistic features and vocabulary on public opinion and policy responses, with Pakistani media's use of terms like "voluntary return" and "unwilling to return" reinforcing a narrative of uncertainty and conditional acceptance (Bleiker et al., 2013). The findings underscore the need for nuanced and contextualized understandings of media representation to promote balanced and inclusive reporting on refugee crises.

Future Recommendations

For Media Practitioners

Media practitioners should strive for balanced and inclusive reporting on refugee crises, avoiding sensationalism and stereotypes. They should emphasize humanitarian concerns and include diverse perspectives, including those of refugees.

For Policymakers

Policymakers should develop evidence-based policies that prioritize protection and assistance for refugees. They should foster regional cooperation and dialogue to address the root causes of displacement and promote durable solutions.

For Future Research

Future research should prioritize the inclusion of refugee voices and perspectives. A longitudinal study examining the impact of media representation on public opinion and policy responses over time would provide valuable insights. A comparative analysis of media representation of refugees across different countries and regions would also be beneficial.

References

Amnesty International. (2019). Afghanistan: Human Rights in the Context of Refugee Returns. London: Amnesty International.

Bennett, W. L. (2013). The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. Information, Communication & Society, 16(5), 739-761. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2013.807578

Betts, A., & Collier, P. (2017). Refuge: Transforming a broken refugee system. Penguin Books.

Betz, H. (2017). Refuge: Transforming a broken refugee system. London: Penguin Books.

Bleiker, R., Campbell, D., Hutchison, E., & Nicholson, X. (2013). The visual dehumanization of refugees. Australian Journal of Political Science, 48(3), 398-416. doi: 10.1080/10361146.2013.820687

Bourdieu, P. (1991). Language and symbolic power. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). The SAGE handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Esses, V. M., Medianu, S., & Lawson, A. S. (2013). Uncertainty, threat, and the role of the media in shaping public opinion about immigrants and immigration. Journal of Social Issues, 69(3), 457-476. doi: 10.1111/josi.12023

Fairclough, N. (1989). Language and power. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1995). Media discourse. London: Edward Arnold.

Fairclough, N. (2003). Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research. London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2015). Language and power. London: Routledge.

Fassin, D. (2012). Humanitarian reason: A moral history of the present. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Fowler, R. (1991). Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press. London: Routledge.

Galtung, J., & Ruge, M. H. (1965). The structure of foreign news. Journal of Peace Research, 2(1), 64-90.

Gillespie, M., Gow, J., & Zveržhanovski, I. (2010). Framing the fragile: Media representations of refugees in the UK press. Journal of Refugee Studies, 23(2), 151-172. doi: 10.1093/jrs/feq013

Goodman, S. W. (2009). The media and the refugee crisis: A study of the British press. Journal of Refugee Studies, 22(3), 257-275. doi: 10.1093/jrs/fep015

Hall, S. (1997). Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices. London: Sage Publications.

HRW (Human Rights Watch). (2019). Pakistan: Afghan refugees face uncertain future. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Jamal, A. (2015). Media, culture and society in Pakistan. London: Routledge.

Khan, S. (2018). Representation of Afghan Refugees in Pakistani Media. Journal of Media Studies, 33(1), 1-15.

Khan, S. (2019). Pakistani media's representation of Afghan refugees: A critical discourse analysis. Journal of Refugee Studies, 32(2), 147-165. doi: 10.1093/jrs/fey045

Leudar, I., Marsland, V., & Nekvapil, J. (2008). On membership categorization: 'Us', 'them' and 'doing violence' in political discourse. Discourse & Society, 19(5), 597-624. doi: 10.1177/0957926508092245

Philo, G., Briant, E., & Donald, P. (2013). Bad news for refugees. London: Pluto Press.

Rashid, A. (2010). Taliban: Militant Islam, oil and fundamentalism in Central Asia. London: I.B. Tauris.

Sahar, A. (2020). Framing Afghan Refugees in Pakistani Print Media. Journal of Refugee Studies, 33(2), 147-162. doi: 10.1093/jrs/fez061

UNHCR. (2020). Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). (2022). Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2021. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

van Dijk, T. A. (1998). Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach. London: Sage Publications.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2001). Methods of critical discourse analysis. London: Sage Publications.

Zahid, F. (2017). Pakistani media's portrayal of Afghan refugees: A content analysis. Journal of South Asian Studies, 40(1), 33-47. doi: 10.1080/00856401.2016.1266204

Zaman, H. (2012). Islamic principles and humanitarian work. Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2(1), 1-8.