

**AN IMAGOLOGICAL DEPICTION OF
AFGHANS IN PAKISTANI PRINT MEDIA
CARTOONS: A SEMIOTIC STUDY**

BY

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **An Imagological Depiction of Afghans in Pakistani Print Media Cartoons: A Semiotic Study**, submitted by me in partial fulfillment of my M Phil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in the future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: An Imagological Depiction of Afghans in Pakistani Print Media Cartoons: A Semiotic Study

This research is conducted to analyse the image of Afghan nation depicted in selected Pakistani print media cartoons. With the help of Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic theory, verbal and non-verbal signs are identified to uncover the depicted identity of Afghan nation after Taliban's retaking in government on August 2021. This study also uses an imagological concept to bring out stereotypes about Afghan nation's identity, culture and land, while Van Dijk's ideological square model is used to analyze hetero-stereotypes about Afghan nation and how power dynamics are emphasized by Pakistani cartoonists. The study is qualitative and descriptive in nature. It employs purposive sampling technique. The data of present research includes thirty political cartoons from two selected prominent Pakistani English newspapers: Dawn and Daily Times. The data is collected over a time span of two years from August 2021 to September 2023. The findings of the study reveal that Afghan identity is portrayed as aggressive, violent, unstable and terrorist in the selected cartoons. Media shapes global narratives and public perception while providing important insights into cross-national imagology. The national images have a geopolitical consequence that accentuates further a play of power politics and negative portrayal of 'them'. Political cartoons frequently reinforce a biased conception with the help of comedy and satire.

Keywords: *Afghan Identity, Stereotype, Terrorist, Taliban's government*

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DEDICATION

To my father, who is a strong supporter of my education and career building

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan has long been characterized by historical complexities, border disputes, refugee crises, and security concerns. There is a rise in violence in Pakistan, especially from the Afghanistan-based Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Therefore mentioned issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan shape national discourses including media. Lately, these have become significant subjects of the editorial cartoons published in Pakistani newspapers. In the context of such a strenuous relationship, the present study explores the cartoons to highlight the Afghan image constructed in those cartoons with the help of various signs used in them.

Editorial cartoons are types of political cartoons that are satirical by nature. They use humour to draw attention to a significant social and political issue and are usually featured on the editorial page of newspapers. Editorial cartoons are designed to satirize current political matters and offer subtle criticism cleverly coated with humour and satire (Agberia, 1993).

Editorial cartoons are single panel graphics that comment on political events and policy, and serve both to define the significant topics of political discourse and record them, thus creating a “snapshot” of the political climate in a given period. Cartoons have been seen from the humorous perspective and generally have not been studied for their rhetoric capabilities (Vinson, 1967).

The current study analyzes how Pakistani editorial cartoons depict Afghanistan, revealing underlying ideological constructs and power dynamics. Cartoons serve as both “opinion-molding and opinion-reflecting” tools, simplifying complex political events into easily understood narratives that reinforce societal stereotypes (Caswell, 2004).

By examining the cartoons’ verbal and non-verbal signs, this study aims to identify the ideological underpinnings and power structures embedded within them.

Some scholars see cartoons as an important medium for the formation of public opinion on salient social issues (Agberia, 1993) (Adekanmbi, 1997) (Everette, 1974).

They are seen as “both opinion-molding and opinion-reflecting” (Caswell, 1982) and they provide subtle frameworks within which to examine the life and political processes of a nation (DeSousa, 1982). Cartoons are intended to transform otherwise complex and opaque social events and situations into quick and easily readable depictions that facilitate comprehension of the nature of social issues and events (Agberia, 1993).

Verbal and Non-verbal Language

Verbal language, as pointed out, is significant to convey and express thoughts about observations, feelings, and needs. For this respect, knowing the specific vocabulary words help to choose the best in order to achieve successful spoken and written communication (Leonard, 2012). When people talk without words, it means that they use the language of body. Hence, the body language can talk exactly just like words and may be better in communication of meaning. For this reason, the word “communication” does not refer to “speeches”, “presentations” and “words” only; it also refers to use the body language without articulating any words (Lambert, 2008).

1.1.1 Political Cartoons; Source of Portraying Political Issues

Art, paintings and images have always been used to highlight political, social, economic and religious issues faced by a society. They are integral parts of print and electronic media. Cartoons are those pieces of art or images which are also used to foreground these issues in both print and electronic media. The cartoons provide condensed, sarcastic, and clever impressions of issues on situations occurring in a specific time. The present study steps into the world of political cartoons published in Pakistani print media with an aim of portraying the political relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Political cartoons are considered an integral part of newspapers. They present the existing problems differently. The present study selects political cartoons published in print media as a source to bring out the image of Afghanistan from widely read Pakistani English newspapers. This study identifies and analyzes the verbal and non-verbal signs used in those cartoons. These signs support an imagology of Afghan nation as developed by Pakistanis. Imagology is a branch of comparative literature. Imagology is set perspective on national stereotypes. These stereotypes generate effects on society. Representation of the nations in the chosen newspapers is elaborated while employing semiotic perspective as proposed by Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) and Van

Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model (1943). The cartoons published in the two selected newspapers: Dawn and Daily Times are explored.

1.1.2 Pierce's Icon, Index and Symbol

Pierce's theory is still distinctive and innovative, although there are many significant semiotic theories of sign (Atkin, 2005). Pierce directed the attention to the importance of signs saying that without using them, he could not study any of these sciences: mathematics, metaphysics, ethics, gravitation, chemistry, thermodynamics, comparative anatomy, optics, astronomy, psychology, phonetics, economics, metrology, history, wine, whist, men and women (Pierce, 1958). The semiotic theory presented by Charles Sanders Pierce, sometimes referred to as the theory of signs, provides a framework for comprehending how meaning is generated and conveyed through signs. Pierce's theory is fundamental to the study of semiotics and has impacted many academic fields, including cognitive science, linguistics, philosophy, and communication studies.

Charles Pierce defined sign as something that indicates an item to be interpreted. His model involves three components that are interconnected: i) Representamen ii) Object iii) Interpretant.

i) **Representamen:** Pierce called the physical form of the sign the Representamen. It comes from Latin **representamen**. It is meant to be displayed or performed. It can be a word, image, sound or face expression or any perceivable form. (Pierce, 1894)

ii) **Object:** The object is the actual thing represented by the sign. (Pierce, 1894)

iii) **Interpretant:** The Interpretant refers to the meaning or concept that arises in the mind of interpreter. It is also called the meaning and interpretation of sign. (Pierce, 1894).

According to his theory, each sign is categorized into three primary types based on the nature between the representamen and the object and becomes an icon, index, and symbol.

- An icon is a sign that resembles its object in some way and this relationship is based on similarity and likeness. (E.g. A photograph of a person is an icon because it visually resembles the person, a picture of cat). (Pierce, 1867)

- An index is a sign that has a direct physical or causal link to its object. It indicates that its item is real. For instance, smoke indicates the presence of fire, and a weather vane indicates the direction of the wind. (Peirce, 1867)
- A sign with an arbitrary or customary connection to its object is called a symbol. Social convention establishes the relationship. For instance, words and language are symbols. E.g. the word ‘dog’ is a symbol because it has no inherent connection to the animal. (Pierce, 1867), Hence, the interpretation would be affected by the different cultures. These concepts from semiotics are used as theoretical framework in present research to identify the images and their implications that are interpreted by those cartoons published in the Pakistani context.

1.1.3 Van Dijk’s Ideological Square Model

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a qualitative analytical approach for critically describing, interpreting, and explaining the ways in which discourses construct, maintain, and permit social inequalities. The approach to CDA taken by Van Dijk consists of three dimensions: social analysis, cognitive analysis and discourse analysis. Discourse, here, means a communicative event which may include talks, conversations, and written texts along with the associated paralinguistic features as gestures, images and other such signifier. Within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Teun A. Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model (1993) is a paradigm that looks at how conversation develops and communicates ideological statements. The concept focuses in particular on how speech, by highlighting the good qualities of the "in-group" (self) and the negative characteristics of the “out-group” (others), is used to create and sustain power relations (Van Dijk, 1993). This model is used as a method to analyze the biased structures that are presented in the Pakistanis print media cartoons in selected newspapers.

1.1.4 Imagology in Political Cartoons

After implementing the amalgamation of Pierce’s semiotics and Van Dijk’s ideological square model on selected political cartoons on Afghan subject in Pakistani print media, the image of Afghan nation and the stereotypes associated with them are delineated. This represents the imagology of Afghan nation portrayed by Pakistani print media in front of the world because Imagology is the study of cultural and national

stereotypes, especially how they are created, widely dispersed, and used in media, literature, and other cultural productions. It is frequently used to describe how countries, ethnic groups, or cultures are portrayed and understood in relation to these stereotypes. This field studies the formation of images and narratives about various people and locations, their usage in political, social, and cultural contexts, and their ability to shape and stir public opinion.

The rationale for the selection of these newspapers is that these are widely read newspaper at national level. Both Dawn and Daily Times are English-language Pakistani newspapers. Both are electronically available as well. The publication of the “Dawn” newspaper began on October 26, 1941. It was founded by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the All-India Muslim League at that time and later the founder of Pakistan. “Dawn” was initially established in Delhi, British India, to advocate the creation of Pakistan and to support the political objectives of the Muslim League. After the partition of India in 1947 and the creation of Pakistan, “Dawn” moved its operations to Karachi, which became the new country's capital. Since then, "Dawn" has grown to become one of Pakistan's leading English-language newspapers, known for its comprehensive coverage of national and international news, in-depth analyses, and editorial independence. Daily Times” is another English-language newspaper in Pakistan. It was launched on April 9, 2002. The newspaper was founded by Salman Taseer, a Pakistani businessman and politician, who later served as the Governor of Punjab. “Daily Times” is simultaneously published from Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. “Daily Times” is known for its liberal stance and progressive views on various social, political, and cultural issues. It provides comprehensive news coverage, opinion pieces, and editorials on national and international affairs, making it a significant voice in Pakistan's media landscape.

These newspapers not only carry significance for being reliable source of news but also are known to hold a critical approach on varied political issues like that of Pak-Afghan relations. One may observe that the cartoons become tools of displaying Afghan nation as conservative, illiterate, suppressive, aggressive and terrorist. A number of thirty political cartoons have been selected from these two newspapers for the semiotic analysis. These cartoons are described for the depiction of Afghan nation’s identity by using Pierce's Semiotic Theory. They are also critically evaluated by using Van Dijk’s ideological square model of CDA to investigate the use of language to infer

the power dynamics and ideology in the context of recent political tensions. Finally, Pierce's theory provides a framework for decoding signs while Van Dijk's ideological square model of CDA is essential for uncovering the ideologies and power structures behind these representations. This dual approach offers a more comprehensive understanding of how stereotypes are constructed and maintained.

1.2 Problem Statement

Pakistani print media seems to downplay the image of the Afghan's identity and culture. The cartoons although intended with humor, in the newspapers are examples that represent such imaging of the Afghans. They tend to portray stereotypical image which is explicitly biased against Afghan nation. The study is carried out to analyze both verbal and non-verbal signs in those cartoons that tend to present ideologically oriented discourse in the selected Pakistani print media: Dawn and Daily Times.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify verbal and non-verbal linguistic signs in the cartoons on Afghan's identity and culture
- To investigate the identity and cultural stereotypes represented in those signs in the selected cartoons
- To analyze power structures represented in the selected cartoons

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the verbal and non-verbal linguistic signs employed for Afghan's identity and culture in the cartoons in Dawn and Daily Times?
2. What are the specific stereotypes in the cartoons published in the selected Pakistani print media?
3. How do those cartoons become sites of ideologically oriented structures?

1.5 Significance of Research

This study is significant because it downplays the complicated and frequently tense relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan as indicated in the print media cartoons. The analysis of published cartoons not only probes into the identity of the Afghans but also brings to surface Pakistani perceptions of the Afghans. These cartoons

reinforce societal and the ideological gap between Pakistan and Afghanistan despite their geographical and cultural/religious proximity. The study also highlights the ways in which these portrayals shape more profound cultural biases and prejudices that permeate Pakistani public discourse.

This research is also significant because it applies Pierce's Theory of Semiotics to examine how language and visual imagery impact human cognition and behavior. It investigates both verbal and non-verbal signs in cartoons that were published in two leading Pakistani newspapers, Dawn and Daily Times. Pierce developed three fundamental concepts: icon, index, and symbol that have been helpful in the delineation of Afghan identity. Additionally, Van Dijk's ideological square model helps in deconstructing the discursive practices that reinforce ideological biases.

This study is still relevant in a time when social media and digital technology is dominant because textual and visual narratives continue to reinforce stereotypes and shape cultural perceptions. Even though national ideologies were created and spread in large part by traditional print media, digital platforms magnify these stories on a never-before-seen scale. Unfiltered biases spread quickly on social media because user-generated content is frequently unaccountable, in contrast to print media where editorial control serves as a gate keeping mechanism. Ideological representations that were previously limited to editorial cartoons are now found in memes, GIFs, and other multimedia formats, which are instantly accessible to a worldwide audience due to immediate and interdependent nature of digital platforms. The study paves way to look into digital content on the same subject for uninhabited stereotypes.

Last but not least, this research adds to the larger conversation about media representation, semiotics, and ideological criticism. It highlights the need for a critical approach to media consumption, whether in print or digital forms, and the persistent influence of visual culture in influencing public perceptions.

1.6 Delimitation

This study is delimited to imagological depiction of Afghan nation through political cartoons in Pakistani print media (Dawn and Daily Times) over a time span of two years from August 2021 to September 2023.

Theories: Pierce's semiotic theory and Van Dijk's ideological square model is used to analyze verbal and non-verbal signs in political cartoons in selected Pakistani print media to present the imagology of Afghan nation in Pakistani context.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present chapter builds an argument to emphasize on a research gap in the domain of studying politically oriented cartoons with the help of semiotics and critical discourse analysis. This includes a discussion of works that has already been done on verbal and non-verbal signs in cartoons on different subjects through semiotic theories, analysis of cultural stereotypes and power structures with the help of critical discourse analysis. The first section examines a number of researches on the identification of verbal and non-verbal signs in cartoons on different platforms, specifically print media. The second section illustrates the auto, hetero and cultural stereotypes in political cartoons through critical discourse analysis. The third section examines the power structures in political cartoons by different researchers while using the theories of critical discourse analysis. After this division of sections, an argument has been built on the gap in studying political cartoons; the present research is endeavoring to fill that gap.

2.1 Semiotics and Ideological Construction in Political Cartoons

Political cartoons have emerged as a dynamic visual genre that blends art, satire, and commentary to critique and reflect upon socio-political realities. Scholars across different geopolitical contexts have explored how cartoons encode ideological positions through semiotic studies. A recurring theme in the literature is the use of Roland Barthes' semiotic model, often complemented by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to analyze the verbal and non-verbal signs in cartoons. Barthes' theory serves as a dominant analytical tool across multiple studies, offering insights into the denotative and connotative meanings of cartoon elements. Applied Barthes' and Fairclough's CDA framework to compare how 'Dawn' and 'The Economist' represented COVID-19, revealing ideological discrepancies aligned with national narratives (Alkhresheh, 2020). Similarly, Iraqi political cartoons from the 2018 election campaign are explored and finding reveals that visual satire served as a medium for dissent and an indirect vehicle for public discourse on corruption and political instability (Abdul Wahid, 2022)

Some Studies emphasized how semiotic frameworks like Pierce's triadic model or Kress and Van Leeuwen's social semiotics can decode deeper political messages embedded in cartoons. In both cases, cartoons were found to shape public sentiment and express dissatisfaction toward leadership or national crises, often through indexical and symbolic representations (Hasanah, 2020) and (Marwari, 2023)

In the Jordanian context, the ideological shift in cartoons before and after the Arab Spring has been traced indicating a growing emphasis on democratic ideals and youth empowerment post-2011. This temporal comparison illustrates how cartoon narratives evolve in response to political upheavals, emphasizing the medium's sensitivity to socio-political change (Al Momani, Badarneh, & Migdadi, 2017).

Another emerging trend is the use of multimodal analysis to unpack how textual and visual elements work together to convey meaning. Several Studies reflect this approach, highlighting how elements such as posture, environment, and textual framing contribute to shaping political ideologies and public perception. These scholars underscore the role of cartoons not just as mirrors of society but also as shapers of public discourse, often amplifying fears or resistance through satire (Shahzad, Shamas, & Ahmad, 2023) and (Aazam, Baig, Azam, & Azam, 2020).

2.2 Cartoons, Identity, and Stereotyping: CDA Perspectives

A significant body of research focuses on the representation of auto- and hetero-stereotypes in cartoons, especially in contexts marked by ethnic, political, or national tensions. These studies draw heavily on Van Dijk's ideological square and Wodak's discourse-historical approach to CDA to illustrate how cartoonists construct "us" versus "them" narratives.

It had been examined that editorial cartoons in 'The Nation' highlighting how political elites are depicted through a lens of ideological bias and stereotyping. Their study revealed how in-groups are often portrayed positively while out-groups are demonized, reinforcing existing social divisions (Muhammad, Nawaz, & Khan, 2020) and analyzing cartoons from 'The Jakarta Post', similarly found that political leaders were often undermined through exaggerated imagery and ironic captioning, illustrating how visual discourse can critique authority while shaping collective memory (Aryuni, 2012)

Religion as a political tool is another domain where CDA and semiotics intersect. It had been analyzed caricatures of religio-political parties in Pakistan and argued that these cartoons operate as ideological texts that both reflect and shape political rhetoric. Their findings emphasize the need for critical media literacy to decode the subtle manipulations of power and identity within such texts (Sajid, Khan, Sumaira, & Jamil, 2021). Cross-national studies, explored the Indo-Pak rivalry, concluding that cartoons from both countries echoed nationalistic ideologies, framing the other as antagonistic and irrational. These representations often relied on visual tropes and stereotypes, reinforcing historical enmity and justifying political postures (Asfaq, Ijaz, & Shami, 2019).

2.3 Cartoons as Instruments of Geopolitical Narratives and Power Relations

Scholars have also focused on the role that cartoons play as tools of power, both generative and reflecting. The integration of popular geopolitics into cartoon analysis showing how power relations, race, and neoliberal policies are articulated through satire and repetition (Dodds, 2010).

Several studies focus on how cartoons portray regional and global power dynamics. For instance, examined how cartoons in Urdu newspapers construct the Indo-Pak power narrative, using Pierce's semiotics and Fairclough's CDA model. Their findings suggest that cartoons often act as a nationalistic tool, projecting diplomatic success or moral superiority in times of regional tension (Rehman, Qureshi, & Arshad, 2021). A similar perspective in the Indonesian context where political cartoons critiqued legislative decisions by employing satirical exaggeration. This analysis, grounded in Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model, revealed how media discourse participates in legislative debates and civic activism by framing public dissatisfaction visually (Sulistiyowati, Hidayat, Alek, & Nugraha, 2020).

The scope of cartoon analysis to children's media with 'Burka Avenger', highlighting how even animated series shape cultural perceptions and instill values through carefully constructed symbolic systems. The interplay of signs such as "book" and "pen" with themes of justice and education positioned the show as a pedagogical tool as well as a site of ideological transmission (Shah, Riaz, & Aqeel, 2020).

2.4 Research Gap

Imagological representations of cross-border ethnic or national identities in South Asian media, particularly in relation to Pakistani-Afghan relations, continue to receive little attention despite an increasing amount of work examining political cartoons using semiotic and critical discourse frameworks, which are frequently based on the theories of Barthes, Fairclough, and Van Dijk. With little focus on how ‘the other’ is shaped in local contexts through visual satire, existing researches focus on internal national issues and specific crises (e.g. elections, pandemics, or religious conflicts). Even though stereotypes and power dynamics are frequently studied, few studies look at how these representations have changed over time or how they adapt to shifting geopolitical tensions and migration stories.

This study addresses that gap by offering an imagological and semiotic analysis of how Afghans are depicted in Pakistani political cartoons, with attention to verbal and non-verbal signs in print media cartoons. It also explores how these depictions contribute to the construction of national self vs. foreign other, and how such imagery shapes and reflects public perceptions over time.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter of present research focuses on the methods and strategies to explore and analyze how Afghan identity is depicted in the selected Pakistani print media cartoons. This chapter provides details of the research design, research method, population, and sample and data collection. Furthermore, theoretical frameworks have been explained.

3.1 Research Design

The present study is qualitative in nature. It focuses on identification of verbal and non-verbal signs in selected Pakistani print media cartoons on Afghan subject and how these identified signs are sites for negative image of Afghan nation. It also analyzes an idea of auto- and hetero-stereotypes in the selected political cartoons on Afghan subject. Overall descriptive design/ method is used for the analysis. To guarantee a thorough understanding of the chosen political cartoons, semiotic analysis, discourse analysis, and contextual analysis are used. This triangulation contributes to the reliability and validity of the research. Hence, the aim is to reduce the researcher's bias.

3.2 Research Method

In this method for present study, the data collection is in the form of verbal and non-verbal signs rather than using numbers. For the interpretation of signs and their respective modes in political cartoon in the selected Pakistani print media related to the Afghan's stereotypes are identified with a help of Pierce's Semiotics theory because images play a crucial role in the depiction of identities in particular society. Van Dijk's Ideological Square model also plays a very important role in building the power structure through the representation of Us vs Them. The present research also evaluates the representation of the Afghan's identity through political cartoons in selected Pakistani newspapers; Dawn and Daily Times.

3.3 Data Collection

The data of present research includes thirty political cartoons from two selected prominent Pakistani English newspapers: Dawn and Daily Times. The data is collected over a time span of two years from August 2021 to September 2023. These selected

cartoons are based on Afghan subject more specifically the reflection of stereotypical depiction of their identity and culture. The data collection involves the following steps here under:

- Each cartoon is analyzed with the help of Pierce's semiotics theory to identify representamen, object, Interpretant and mode.
- Identified signs are analyzed into modes as icon, index and symbol.
- The identified signs and their respective modes are further analyzed that how these visual elements construct a stereotype about Afghan nation, their land and more specifically Taliban.
- In the end, discourse analysis is conducted to analyze that how power structures are being practiced in selected Pakistani print media cartoons on Afghan subject.

This study focuses on the representation of Afghan nation, their identity and culture as well and selection of data over specific time period is due to the Taliban's return to power and dominance on Afghanistan, which significantly disturbed political, social, and economic conditions of Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries. All this make it a critical time frame for analysis.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling which is taken as a suitable technique in qualitative research has been helpful in drawing the data according to objectives set for the present study. The thirty political cartoons were published at a crucial time period when the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan. Their ascension to power had an impact on region's political and cultural narratives including political cartoons published in print media. Thus, the cartoons that directly address Afghan identity, culture, and stereotypes are purposively chosen from August 2021 to September 2023. The verbal and non-verbal signs in those cartoons have been subjected to semiotic and discourse analysis in the present study.

3.5 Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the philosophy of Imagology. It is the study of mental pictures of a distant country or nation in literature. According to Ton Hoenselaars and

Joep Leerssen (2009), “Imagology is based on, but not limited to, the inventory and typology of how nations are typified, represented, and/or caricatured in a given tradition or corpus of cultural articulations.” It poses queries on the process of national/ethnic “othering” and the underlying self-images that underlie it, based on the examination of texts or cultural objects. The relationship between character and identity, historical variability, genre, canonicity, irony, as well as intermediality is among the issues brought up. Imagology or image studies, is not interested in whether certain prejudices about particular countries are accurate or not; rather, its aim is to identify those stereotypes about particular nations.

3.5.1 Pierce’s Semiotic Theory

Pierce’s Sign Theory aims to signify, represent, refer and meaning. It is also known as Semiotic. Despite the lengthy history of sign theories, Pierce’s explanations stand out as unique and inventive due to their depth, complexity, and ability to convey the significance of interpretation. The three-dimensional system (triadic/trichotomy), the human mind and sign boundaries, and the relativity of the three typologies or taxonomies of signs (icon, index, and symbol) are the fundamental ideas that comprise Pierce’s theory.

Signs can take many forms. They can be words, numbers, sounds, photographs, paintings and road signs among and more. However, while signs can be many things, they can be categorized as one of a few types.

Pierce said the form a sign takes one of three types an icon, an index, or a symbol.

- An Icon has a physical resemblance to the signified, the thing being represented. A photograph is a good example as it certainly resembles whatever it depicts.
- An Index shows evidence of what’s being represented. A good example is using an image of smoke to indicate fire.
- A Symbol has no resemblance between the signifier and the signified. The connection between them must be culturally learned. Numbers and alphabets are good examples. There’s nothing inherent in the number 9 to indicate what it represents. It must be culturally learned. This theory is about the study of signs and symbols. This is used as a theoretical framework to identify the images

mentioned in the two newspapers of Pakistani print media i.e. Dawn, Daily Times. This helps to understand the physical structure of subject and its relationship with the subject under discussion. This relationship helps to interpret the meaning out of it. These meaning making process through cartoons make it clearer the depiction of stereotypes of Afghan's identity by Pakistani print media.

3.5.2 Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis

Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model is a crucial tool for discourse analysis in media and communication studies. It helps to understand how language expresses power relationships, group identities, and ideological positions. This also helps in understanding and analyzing how various social groups are portrayed in media texts, such as political cartoons, using 'Us' vs 'Them' paradigm. This Ideological Square is also used to analyze how Afghan identity is portrayed in political cartoons that published in Dawn and Daily Times.

The ideological pronouns Us and Them are typically used to represent these representations. Such presentation for self and the other varies considerably if language is analyzed by employing the ideological square.

Emphasize <i>Our</i> good things	Emphasize <i>Their</i> bad things
De-emphasize <i>Our</i> bad things	De-emphasize <i>Their</i> good things

The Ideological Square (Dijk, 2011)

As cartoons are also important form of discourses which are filled with the cartoonist's perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about a particular nation and country, this method of analyzing data is the one that can help to highlight the stereotypes, if any, in the cartoons. As the present study aims to highlight the hetero (Other) stereotypes/images, this method of analysis has been preferred. Both verbal and non-verbal signs that are utilized to create Afghan identity are analyzed. Van Dijk's Ideological Square serves as the framework for this study's political cartoon research. The study investigates how emphasis and de- emphasis influence the discourse on Afghanistan.

Both the theories are significant to trigger out the verbal and non-verbal signs in the cartoons on Afghan subject. First of all, Pierce's semiotic theory is used to make the meanings from drawing of cartoons and Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis is used to identify and analyze the language used by selected Pakistani print media. These theories play an important role in bringing an imagology of Afghan nation.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The analytical frameworks along with imagology serve as the core elements of the fourth chapter that is Data Analysis. However, the contexts of those cartoons are given before the data is analyzed for the purposes of the study.

Context

Context is provided before the analysis of each political cartoon which is extracted from the Dawn and Daily Times. At the same time, some reports on Afghan political scene were published in various journals that have been clearly informative about cartoons. The provided context included information about particular socio-political events and problems. These help in elaborating in both verbal and non-verbal signs of the cartoons.

3.6.1 Stage 1

In Stage 1, there is an identification of signs. In the light of Piece's semiotics, both verbal and non-verbal signs of each cartoon on Afghan subject are first identified in a tabular form. These signs then are analyzed individually on the basis of following significations:

- i. Representamen (Form) that describes the signs' appearance in the cartoon.
- ii. Object (Reference) that describes what the sign is referring to.
- iii. Interpretant (Meaning) that gives an interpretation of signs with reference to the context.

These identified signs are then categorized into three modes for further analysis of verbal and non-verbal signs. These modes are: icon, index and symbol.

3.6.2 Stage 2

According to the interpretation of the signs and their respective modes, an imagological analysis has been conducted. An imagological analysis foregrounds the

stereotypical representation of Afghan nation and Taliban. The Pakistani cartoonists' perspective is taken as the image Pakistani nation builds of Afghans' identity, culture and land.

3.6.3 Stage 3

In this stage, Van Dijk's ideological square model helps in the discourse analysis of the signs. The representation of Us vs Them is emphasized. At the same time, the factors of power and political conflicts between Pakistan and Afghan Taliban become points of attention.

3.7 Conclusion

The chapter aimed to give relevance of the chosen research approach and method. Since the research is supported by multiple frameworks, it also includes the salient features of those theories and their use in the research. Hence, the method, the design and the procedure followed in the next chapter have been justified. By incorporating Pierce's Semiotic Theory and Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model, this research offers a theoretically grounded approach to analyzing media representations. The methodology ensures that findings are systematic, reliable, and critically insightful, setting the foundation for the data analysis in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

An aggregate of cartoons published in Dawn and Daily Times on Afghan subject has been analyzed qualitatively in three stages while keeping in mind the three objectives of this study. The first stage deals with the first objective where both verbal and non-verbal signs present in the selected political cartoons are identified with the help of Pierce's semiotic theory. It not only looks at those signs as representamen, object and Interpretant but also categorizes these identified signs into three modes; icon, index and symbol according to the nature of sign. The second stage, with the second objective as its course of action, analyses an imagological representation of the Afghan nation in the signs identified during the first stage. The third stage, with the third objective as cartoons become the site of ideological oriented structures, analyses representation of 'US' vs 'THEM' in the light of Van Dijk's (1998) ideological square model.

4.1 Analysis of Political Cartoons Published in Dawn

4.1.1 Political Cartoon no 1



Figure 4.1

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1637752/cartoon-30-july-2021>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on July 30th, 2021 in Dawn news. It is based on the news regarding Taliban's foreign minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's meeting in Kabul. China and Taliban are becoming allies but relationship is limited to expand trade and investment (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1637521>).

Stage 1: Identification and Interpretation of Signs

The signs found in the political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified with the help of Pierce's model of signs.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	Two men are in discussion with each other	Taliban and a Chinese diplomat	The Chinese person is being authoritative and Afghani man is trying to give justification and convince him for something.	Icon
2.	A circle at the back of Taliban official	Globe or the world	Taliban intends to hold relations with China amid global socio-political scenario.	Icon
3.	Afghanistan	Sign board	It means Afghan site.	Icon
4.	Facial expressions of two men	Taliban and the Chinese diplomat's facial expression	It means the Taliban is desperate whereas the Chinese diplomat is making the terms explicit.	Index

5.	A tool is fixed on the ground	A dagger on the surface of Afghanistan	The dagger reinforces Taliban's aggression at one end and violence at another even during the diplomatic talks with China.	Icon
6.	Taliban team meets Chinese to allay concerns	The written sentence in the image	It refers to a meeting between representatives of the Taliban and Chinese officials.	Symbol

The modes associated with these signs are described here under:

- i. **Icon:** A clear and visible depiction of the relevant components is represented by the icons. The signboard "Afghanistan" indicates the occurrence of events on its land, the globe highlights the impact of this event all over the world, the picture of the Taliban and the Chinese diplomat indicates a conference or debate between them. The dagger evokes terrorism and conflict on Afghanistan land. Combining them all, they provide a picture of Afghan diplomacy in the context of conflict and bloodshed in the land.
- ii. **Index:** The facial expressions of the Taliban and Chinese diplomat serve as a direct index of the nature of their interaction. These expressions help to understand the emotions and attitudes during the meeting.
- iii. **Symbol:** The symbolic statement that "Taliban team meets Chinese to allay concerns" highlights the context of this meeting that it is based on the issues related to political concerns and economic interests of both countries.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

In the light of identified and interpreted signs and their respective modes in political cartoon number one on Afghan subject in the selected Pakistani print media,

the stereotypical identity of Afghan nation is highlighted. The identified icon of dagger and index of angry facial expression of Taliban portray Afghans as combatants that take no time to spread terror and bloodshed. Although this political cartoon is based on news about China-Afghan talks on economic growth which can be clearly seen in the symbol of statement, the cartoon tends to emphasize the aggressive behaviour of Taliban. This is a stereotypical image that has emerged as a result of Afghan history of civil war and Afghanistan- Pakistan relationship. This also presents that the Afghanistan's urge to develop economically is threatened by its violent identity and history. Imagologically, this political cartoon serves as a tool for reinforcing the stereotypical image of Afghans as violent and aggressive, while overshadowing other features of Afghan identity.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

An icon of dagger and index of angry facial expression of Taliban in the figure 4.1 emphasize on negative them presentation by Pakistani cartoonist. In this context, the selected Pakistani print media is in-group and emphasizes on the negative traits associated with the Afghans particularly Taliban as out-group. The Taliban is presented with the dagger because it is a potent symbol of violence, aggression, and bloodshed. According to Van Dijk, extra attention to a certain attribute is typically offered with the intention of negative-other presentation. The focus is on dagger and it suggests that violence is an inherent and defining characteristic of the Afghan identity and culture.

4.1.2 Political Cartoon no 2



Figure 4.2

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1641546/cartoon-19-august-2021>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on August 19th, 2021. It is based on the news that tells about the miserable and helpless situation of Afghans after Taliban's taking over of the government on August 15th, 2021. The cartoon shows Afghan musician's miserable status and his imagination of seeking help from human rights non-governmental organization "Amnesty International". It is expected from the extremist Taliban regime that it would not allow music related professions (<https://www.boell.de/en/2021/12/09/afghan-musicians>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs found in the second political cartoon chosen on Afghan subject have also been identified with the help of Pierce's model of signs.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A barren land with one plant	Infertile land of Afghanistan and one cactus plant	A clear visual picture of the hostile, dry surroundings and the existence of cacti indicates that the site is suited for it to grow in such conditions.	Icon
2.	A man wearing kurta shalwar, jacket and round cap	Afghani professional musician	It evokes the alarming living circumstances of musicians in Afghanistan during Taliban rule.	Icon
3.	Two drums in front of a man	Afghan professional	After Taliban's ascension of rule, musicians are	Icon

		musician's possession	suppressed and forbidden to play music.	
4.	An unhappy musician	Musician's fear and anxiety	It indicates that the traditional Afghan musician is worried and uncertain regarding his survival.	Index
5.	Amnesty	An international non-governmental organization	An Afghan musician is thinking for help from human rights organization in order to save his life and freedom of choice.	Symbol

The identified signs are analyzed in modes under here:

- i. **Icon:** The icons of infertile land and cactus illustrate the environmental challenges in Afghanistan, the icon of the Afghani professional musician signifies the artistic expression of music in Afghanistan and the icon of two musical drums represents the rhythmic and cultural richness of music in Afghan tradition.
- ii. **Index:** The musician's fear and anxiety serve as an index and highlights an uncertainty of profession in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.
- iii. **Symbol:** The symbol Amnesty evokes the international call for justice and freedom of expression in Afghanistan by Afghani musician.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified signs and their respective modes on Afghans and their land in figure 4.2 in the Dawn emphasize on stereotypical depiction of Afghan nation and

Afghanistan. The icons of infertile land and cactus plant represent environmental and geographical challenges in Afghanistan. These icons indicate one may find it difficult to live in such a harsh condition. The identified index of fear and anxiety of the musician is exaggerated in the cartoon just to represent the stereotypical identity of Afghan that they are against music under Taliban rule. The fear and anxiety represent long term struggle faced by artists and musicians in Afghanistan and loss of freedom under Taliban regime. This reinforces a stereotype that the Taliban are against cultural activities like music to an extent of eradicating it and they want to suppress freedom of choice because of their strict ideology.

Stage 2: Discourse Analysis

In the light of above-mentioned figure 4.2 of Dawn and its identified signs and their respective modes, the image of Taliban in the context of Us vs Them is elaborated. According to Van Dijk's ideological square model, the visual of Afghan musician in traditional attire highlights the oppression and threat under Taliban rule to music and art. The musicians have lost their freedom of choice and expression. Dawn emphasizes on the outcomes of control and imposed ideology on musicians in Afghanistan. The two drums of musician and fear and anxiety on his face reveal the musician's suppression of music and art in Afghanistan because of Taliban's strict reg. According to Van Dijk, a strategy of negative-other presenting negative-other is meant to show the perspective of Pakistani cartoonist about Afghan nation. This strategy is termed as negative topic. Dawn has presented an emotional state of the Afghan musicians along with the image of Taliban strict policy of suppressing cultural activities.

In the light of above-mentioned symbol "Amnesty" in the figure 4.2, Dawn draws an intention towards positive role of International Amnesty because it plays an important role to save human rights and protect individuals from a threatening environment. Amnesty as verbal discourse supports non-verbal language in this context that Afghan musician is thinking to get support from international human rights organization. This highlights the need of external involvement in case of human right abuse in Afghanistan under Taliban government. The focus is on an international organization which can resolve these issues.

4.1.3 Political Cartoon no 3

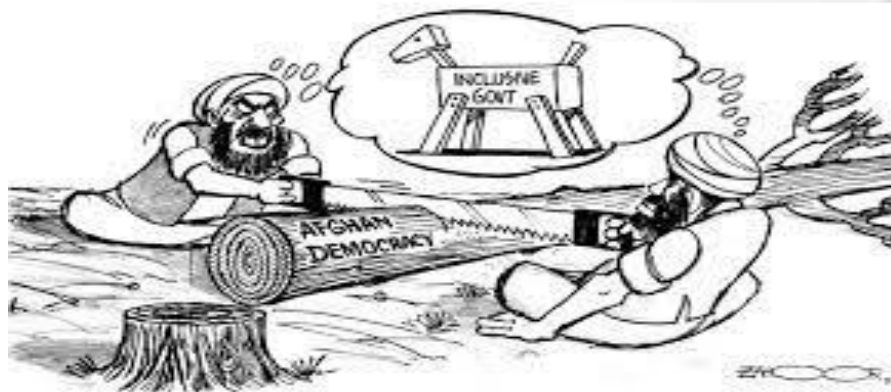


Figure 4.3

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1647753/cartoon-22-september-2021>)

Context

This cartoon was published on September 22nd, 2021. It is about the Taliban who neither want to share power with foreign warlords nor with corrupt former officials. Aljazeera reported on September 4, 2021 where Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the head of the Taliban's political office, has told Al Jazeera the group is in the process of forming an inclusive government following its lightning takeover of the country last month (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/4/afghanistan-mullah-baradar-promises-an-inclusive-government>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs depicted in the third political cartoon related to the Afghan subject have been identified and analyzed below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	Two men wearing shalwar kameez with rolled sleeves and turban are cutting a tree.	Taliban	Taliban's effort to destroy democracy	Icon

2.	Tree is felled lying on the ground.	Trunk of tree	Democracy cannot grow or prosper	Icon
3.	Afghan democracy	The Phrase	It represents the value of democracy Afghanistan held in the past.	Symbol
4.	A wooden toy	Rocking horse	It indicates the idea of Taliban to take charge of the country and bring back the lost innocence of Afghan nation who have grown up in war-torn environment.	Icon
5.	Inclusive Government	The phrase	It refers to Taliban's thinking of making an inclusive government where all significant political, ethnic and social groups will be represented and will be actively involved in making decisions.	Symbol
6.	Taliban's desperation	Taliban's facial expression	It represents the Taliban's resistance to democracy. They also want to formulate an	Index

			inclusive government.	
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- i. **Icon:** The icon of Taliban signifies the presence and influence of Taliban group in Afghanistan. It highlights their role in shaping the country's political and social landscape. The icon of cut trunk of tree signifies the strength of Afghan democracy in Afghanistan before Taliban's retaking on government. The icon of rocking horse signifies stability and national unity.
- ii. **Index:** The index of Taliban's facial expression signifies Taliban's desperation to destroy the democracy in Afghanistan and form an inclusive government.
- iii. **Symbol:** The symbol "Inclusive Government" signifies the formation and development of political system in Afghanistan by Taliban where all the members will be treated equally. The symbol "Afghan democracy" on the felled tree signifies the destruction of democratic system of Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The signs and modes about Taliban in the context of Dawn's coverage (figure 4.3) represent the stereotypical identification of Taliban. The icon of act of cutting down a tree by Taliban presents them with a violent and extremist image. The portrayal in Dawn depicts them as antagonistic forces against democracy, human rights and modern governance. The index of desperate emotional state of Taliban supports the image of an anxious nation that wants to build an inclusive government regime out of democracy.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The signs and modes further reveal how visual and textual elements aid in reinforcing the ideological perspective about Taliban and also the status of democracy in Afghanistan after Taliban's regaining of government. In the context of this cartoon, the negative about Taliban is the action of cutting down the democracy tree from their system. Dawn emphasized on violent and rigid actions of Taliban and d-emphasized the out-come of democracy on Afghan nation and their role to save Afghanistan from influence of foreign policies and control which was strong before their arrival. The felled tree's trunk further adds the loss of democracy in Afghanistan. The l focus is on

Taliban, their appearances, actions and behaviour and this is one of the strategies to emphasize what is different about the other nation, as per Van Dijk.

4.1.4 Political Cartoon no 4



Figure 4.4

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1655195/cartoon-1-november-2021>)

Context

This cartoon was published on November 1st, 2021. Pun is evoked with the help of the title the famous Hollywood movie “Three men and a baby” This movie is about three roommates Peter, Michael and Jack who lived in New York City. They are all successful and happily unmarried, but Peter and Michael get the surprise of a lifetime when a young woman abandons an infant in front of their loft. They also receive a letter stating that the child, named Mary, belongs to Jack, but he's away on business. Michael and Peter are then forced to care for Mary -- and though they make hopeless babysitters, they soon become quite attached to the girl. This political cartoon refers to the relationships of Russia, America and China with Afghanistan. Due to the retake of Taliban in Afghanistan, these countries lost their power in Afghanistan. However, they are seeking power over Afghanistan while offering either openly or secretly capital (<https://ondemand.spectrum.net/movies/10475/three-men-and-a-baby/>) .

Stage 1: Signs

The signs illustrated in the fourth political cartoon concerning the Afghan subject have been identified through Pierce’s model of signs.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	Three men are holding feeders in front of baby.	Men from Unites States of America, Russia and China.	It represents the influence and control of these countries in Afghanistan because of their own resources.	Icon
2.	A man with a feeder and directly showing it to a baby	A Chinese man.	It indicates an offer of resources by China.	Icon
3.	A man hiding a feeder behind his back and standing in front of a baby	A Russian man	It signifies Russia's playful gesture towards Afghanistan.	Icon
4.	Another man hiding a feeder behind his back and standing a side of a baby	An American man	It signifies America's playful act towards Afghanistan.	Icon
5.	A baby at the top and looking at three men	Taliban from Afghanistan	It indicates Taliban's position or current status in Afghanistan in front of China, Russia and America.	Icon
6.	Wide eyes and smiling face of baby	A baby's facial expression	It signifies Taliban's alertness and happiness after	Index

			retake on Afghanistan land.	
7.	Three men & a baby.	The phrase	It signifies influence of China, America and Russia towards Afghanistan after Taliban's retake.	Symbol

- i. **Icon:** This political cartoon has five identified icons. The icon of the three men from the USA, Russia, and China emphasis the crucial roles these countries play in Afghanistan land. The icon of Chinese man with a feeder in his left hand and standing straight signifies care and attention towards Taliban in Afghanistan. The icon of Russian man with a feeder hiding behind his back signifies care towards Taliban but not without gaining benefit from it as well. The icon of American man with a hiding feeder behind his back signifies the nourishment of Taliban in Afghanistan land but in return America also takes an advantage of this care. The icon of baby in this image signifies Taliban, who diverts attention of these three countries towards him after retaking control in Afghanistan.
- ii. **Index:** The index reveals Taliban's happiness because of engaging these three powers (China, Russia and America) towards him.
- iii. **Symbol:** The symbol of "Three men and baby" represents Afghanistan's dependent status in this geopolitical environment, where these nations have keen interest to nurture the land with Taliban's help and support. It also shows these nations attachment with Afghanistan land due to the past influence and control on this land.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified sign of a baby in the figure 4.4 is an icon which depicts the stereotypical identity of Taliban in front of three super powers like China, America and Russia. The position of Baby Taliban at the top indicates its significance for the three super powers however; Taliban on its position seeks strength and growth. It is immature like a baby. The image of Taliban/Afghan nation is clearly weak and lacks

foresightedness. The image portrays the stereotype about Afghan nation and unable to run the government of Afghanistan on their own. Afghanistan still depends on the super powers for its development. They are also unaware of how to deal with the challenges of internal and external nature. This imagological analysis about Taliban reflects Dawn's biased portrayal of Taliban as fragile, helpless and immature child. In the light of above identified phrase as a symbol "Three men and a baby" in the figure 4.4 makes this context more explicit; it creates a narrative regarding the status of Taliban among three super powers. These super powers especially Russia and America were unable to control successfully the Afghans. The Afghans have always been unpredictable and so outwitted these super powers like a baby. The icon of feeders in the hands of these three powers depicts the supply of help being used as temptation given by these notions only to control Afghanistan.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The identified signs and their respective modes in the political cartoon no 4 on Afghan subject have been observed power structure with the help of verbal and non-verbal signs. The icons of three men and a baby emphasize on the strength and stability of global powers like China, America and Russia while highlighting the weakness and helplessness of Taliban as a baby. In this political cartoon, Taliban as a baby is portrayed as "Them" and the Pakistani cartoonist as "Us." As Van Dijk says that people belonging to a specific group or nation tend to speak/write negatively about those nations which they have defined as the Other. Dawn highlighted the global powers as mature, stable and responsible and who are capable enough to handle the difficult nation like Afghans. On the other hand, Dawn also represented Taliban as a baby which reflects the inability to manage internal and external challenges on its own. Dawn also de-emphasized any positive development under Taliban's rule. The strategy through which a specific participant in a discourse gets attention is called focus. In the above-mentioned figure, the focus is on Taliban through non-verbal (an image of baby) and verbal language (the phrase; three men and baby).

4.1.5 Political Cartoon no 5

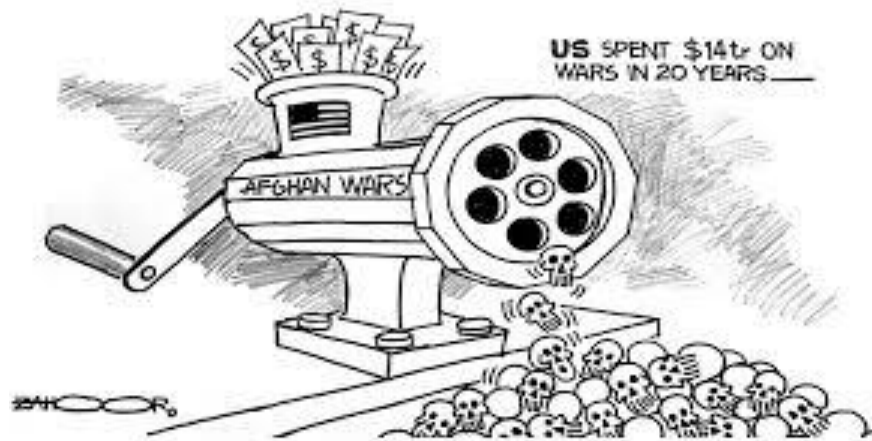


Figure 4.5

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1668115/cartoon-7-january-2022>)

This cartoon was published on January 7th, 2022. It reflects the news that the U.S. lost its 20-year campaign to transform Afghanistan. More than 3,500 US contractors died in Afghanistan and Iraq and more than 7,000 American service members died during two decades of war and this news was published in “The Wall Street Journal” an American newspaper based in New York City, with a focus on business and finance. The news was published on December 21st, 2021(<https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-won-in-afghanistan-private-contractors-troops-withdrawal-war-pentagon-11640988154>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs in the fifth political cartoon on Afghan subject have been recognized in the following table:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A grinding machine	A meat mincer	It indicates an effort and investment to produce desired material.	Icon
2.	Dollars in machine	Currency of America, The American dollars.	It signifies America’	Icon

			investment and support for Afghanistan	
3.	US spent \$14tr on wars in 20 years	The sentence or caption	The financial investment by the U.S. in different wars in Afghanistan.	Symbol
4.	Skulls	Human skulls from machine	The loss of human lives during war in Afghanistan.	Icon
5.	Afghan wars	The phrase	It signifies the occurrence of wars in Afghanistan land.	Symbol

- i. **Icon:** There are three identified icons in this political cartoon. The icon of meat mincer, the icon of dollars and the icon of human skulls. All these icons portray investment of America in Afghanistan and losses of American lives from different domains in Afghanistan.
- ii. **Symbol:** There are two identified symbols in the above cartoon. The first symbol is “US spent \$14tr on wars in 20 years” and it signifies the U.S. involvement in wars on Afghanistan land with the result of bearing immense financial burden. The second symbol is “Afghan wars” and it signifies the conflicts in Afghanistan and difficulties in achieving peace on this land.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified icons of meat mincer and skulls in the above-mentioned figure 4.5 represent the stereotypical representation of Afghan's identity and culture. The grinding machine and skulls emphasize on the loss of human lives during wars in Afghanistan. The cartoonist has emphasized on the loss of human lives in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is represented as a deathbed of human lives despite the 20 -year war on controlling terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The above-mentioned signs in table 4.5 illustrate the negative representation of Afghans, their country and culture. The icon of grinding machine symbolizes the continuous wars in Afghanistan and represents this place as destructive land where wars and violence are the outcome. The icon of human skulls from grinder also emphasizes on the loss of life of Americans and Afghans and portrays them as victims of the ongoing wars and conflict in Afghanistan. The phrase “Afghan wars” further emphasizes on their bad actions because of their conflicts and historical and geopolitical complexities as Van Dijk also focused on negative-other presentation is to describe a threat about other nation.

4.1.6 Political Cartoon no 6



Figure 4.6

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1669763/cartoon-16-january-2022>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on January 16th, 2022. It was based on the news that was published in TOLO news on January 16th, 2022. The news was that Imran khan ordered and directed Pakistani authorities to overcome humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and help them to improve medical, IT, finance and accounting issues (<https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-176310>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs presented in the fifth political cartoon about the Afghan subject have been analyzed through Pierce's model of signs.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man is in the van.	Taliban	Taliban's retake of Afghanistan	Icon
2.	Another man is carrying the van from back.	Imran khan	A sense of effort, support and concern of Pakistani ex-prime minister	Icon
3.	A van without back wheels	A broken wheel van	It signifies Afghanistan's unstable condition.	Icon
4.	A troubled man in the van	Helpless and exhausted facial expressions	It signifies Taliban's current situation in Afghanistan after retaking of charge of the country.	Index
5.	Another man's effort to push the van	Imran khan's readiness of action	His willingness to support Taliban during crisis in Afghanistan	Index
6.	Afghanistan	The word	It signifies that Afghanistan is like a van without wheels which is dependent on external support for a smooth drive.	Symbol

- i. **Icon:** There are three identified icons in this political cartoon: the icon of van without wheels, the Taliban and Imran Khan. All signify the current miserable condition of Afghanistan which is run by Taliban and need of external help. Imran Khan plays an important role to take an initiative and help Afghanistan in this difficult time period.
- ii. **Index:** The two identified indexes in this political cartoon signify at one end the Taliban's helplessness after retaking the charge of already destroyed Afghanistan and at another end Imran Khan's willingness to support Afghanistan in this situation.
- iii. **Symbol:** The symbol "Afghanistan" in this context signifies the instability of Afghanistan land due weak government system.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The icon of Taliban in van without wheels and an index of his helpless and exhausted facial expression portray the stereotypical identity of Afghan nation and Afghanistan after Taliban's retaking of the government. Afghanistan is portrayed as a victim of destruction but in this image the broken wheels are stereotypically associated with Afghanistan just to highlight that no progress is possible in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. The exhausted facial expression of Taliban further supports this context that Taliban's emotional and physical fatigue presents their inability to handle difficulties in their own land without external help.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

According to Van Dijk's ideological square model, the figure 4.6 above shows that language and visuals shape power relations and public opinion in certain context. The icon of the van (Afghanistan) with front wheels only shows the damaged system of Afghanistan. The cartoonist negatively portrays Afghanistan as destroyed and unstable. The exhausted and helpless man in the van (Taliban) is portrayed as in struggling phase to run the ruined state with least available resources. The focus is on Taliban being inefficient in managing and controlling the worst circumstances. The Pakistani print media cartoonist portrays the role of Ex- Prime Minister Imran Khan as a supportive figure who can carry the van (Afghanistan). It reflects the positive image of a neighbouring country in the time of difficult situation in Afghanistan.

4.1.7 Political Cartoon no 7



Figure 4.7

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1670145/cartoon-18-january-2022>)

Context

This cartoon was published on January 18th, 2022. This image is based on the news which was published in Aljazeera on August 19th, 2021. The news was about deteriorating economic condition in Afghanistan after Taliban's takeover in 2021 because The Taliban has little access to Afghanistan's central bank reserves which are held abroad despite controlling the government (<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/8/19/what-will-happen-to-afghanistans-economy-under-taliban-rule>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs found in the political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified here under:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A skeleton	Afghanistan's current economic situation	It shows Afghanistan's economy is not growing due to Taliban's influence.	Icon

2.	A skeleton is waving a weapon in the air.	Afghanistan's condition	It signifies Afghanistan's economy is affected by wars and bloodshed.	Icon
3.	Afghanistan	A sign board	The signboard labeled "Afghanistan" is related to the state of Afghanistan.	Icon
4.	Economy	A word	It highlights the terrible loss in the economic and financial position of Afghanistan.	Symbol
5.	Worried and sorrowful skeleton	Taliban's anxiety in the facial expressions	It refers to Taliban's helpless situation due to economic instability and violence in Afghanistan.	Index

- i. **Icon:** The three icons in this political cartoon are: The icon of skeleton, a skeleton waving a weapon and Afghanistan- a signboard. All these icons depict the Afghanistan's financial and economic weakened background due to past wars and occupation of various nations.
- ii. **Index:** The index signifies the pitiful and helpless situation of Afghan nation due to poor economic condition of the country.
- iii. **Symbol:** The word "Economy" symbolizes the poor economy of Afghanistan in this context because it is represented with the skeleton.

Stage 1: Imagological Analysis

The above-mentioned figure 4.7 highlights the worst economic status of Afghanistan. It is a stereotypical representation through the icon of skeleton that signifies the economy of Afghanistan is in extreme decay and failure due to Taliban's influence. The icon of skeleton waving the weapon is also a stereotypical representation of Taliban as violent and they are responsible for the collapse of economy in Afghanistan. The cartoonist further exaggerates the emotional status of Taliban as an index to show sorrow, helplessness and despair. It is an identity stereotype about Taliban that they are unable to manage the economy of Afghanistan as well.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The signs and their respective modes in the image are identified and it has been observed that power structures are being practiced. The icon of skeleton negatively represents the economy of Afghanistan and how Taliban's governance has disturbed the financial status of Afghanistan. The focus of cartoonist is on the Taliban's mismanagement and violence in Afghanistan. According to Van Dijk, when the negative properties of 'Other' are represented in detail, this is called granularity. The icon of skeleton's weapon also represents the focus on conflict and bloodshed in Afghanistan. The symbol of "Economy" on skeleton generates the narrative about deteriorating economic situation in Afghanistan under Taliban regime. The cartoonist draws skeleton to represent Taliban's influence on the land and they are also the root cause of declining financial status of Afghanistan.

4.1.8 Political Cartoon no 8



Figure 4.8

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1686703/cartoon-25-april-2022>)

Context

This cartoon was published on April 25th, 2022. It is based on a report that was published in Council on Foreign Relations, an American journal, in 2022. It included a conflict between IS and Taliban. IS terrorist group belongs to The Islamic State in Khorasan, which is a province in Afghanistan and it has four thousands members. This group has also emerged as main threat for Taliban regime in Afghanistan and formed to oppose Taliban's rule. After taking over Afghanistan, Taliban are also trying to eradicate this group (<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan>)

Stage 1: Signs

The signs in the eighth political cartoon on Afghan subject have been evaluated hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	Two men are standing straight.	A Taliban and IS member	They signify presence of both Taliban and IS in Afghanistan.	Icon
2.	Two men with weapons	Rifles	They signify that both Taliban and IS group are armed and they may use them at any point in time.	Icon
3.	A plant with thorns	A cactus plant	It signifies the cruelty and savagery practiced in Afghanistan.	Icon
4.	AfghanIStan	Title	It signifies that IS group exists in Afghanistan.	Symbo l

5.	A skull on the ground	A human skull	It represents an ongoing conflict between two extremist groups and threat to humans in Afghanistan.	Icon
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- i. **Icon:** A Taliban and IS member, rifles, cactus plant, and human skull as identified icons. All these icons together signify presence of Taliban after regaining power and an emergence of another terrorist group, IS in Afghanistan that bears cruelty, violence and death. Both groups are threat for the people of Afghanistan.
- ii. **Symbol:** The word ‘AfghanIStan’ a symbol signifies an existence of an extremist group IS, within Afghanistan. The capitalized “IS” within the name directly highlights the presence of the Islamic State group in Afghanistan and its terrorist activities.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified signs and their respective modes in the figure 4.8 are analyzed with the focus that they represent a stereotypical image of Taliban and Afghanistan land. The icons of Taliban and IS with rifles represent both groups’ identity stereotype as violent and extremist. The rifles on their shoulders represent their dominance and threat to people of Afghanistan. The icon of cactus plant is the stereotypical representation of land of Afghanistan; the people living in this land are generally harsh and cruel. The focus is to portray this land naturally dried and cruel that it is a threat to survival. The icon of human skull lying on the ground again typifies that Afghanistan is a land of mass killing where survival is extremely difficult.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

A negative portrayal of Taliban and the militant group IS had been focused. The icon of Taliban and IS with guns on their shoulders reveal the focus of Pakistani cartoonist. His emphasis is on their violent behaviour and so presents Afghans as ‘them.’ The cartoon reveals Afghans, that is both Taliban and IS, cannot resist to create violence and bloodshed. The icon of human skull on the ground in this context

highlights the outcome of their conflict. The skull directly refers to the loss of human life due to ongoing conflict between two the extremist groups simultaneously present in Afghanistan. According to Van Dijk, the other (Taliban and IS) are emphasized with their negative attributes as they are a threat to the life and prosperity in the land of Afghanistan.

4.1.9 Political Cartoon no 9



Figure 4.9

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1687534/cartoon-30-april-2022>)

Context

This cartoon was published on April 30th, 2022. It reflects news that was published in Islamabad Post on July 5th, 2022. It was about the movement of terrorists across border into Pakistan from Afghanistan and it highlights a commentary on the statement made by the Inspector General (IG) of Police of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, Pakistan those terrorists were infiltrating from Afghanistan (<https://islamabadpost.com.pk/terror-attacks-against-policemen-in-khyber-pakhtunkhwa-increasing/>).

Stage: 1 Signs

The signs in the eighth political cartoon related to the Afghan subject have been analyzed and categorized using Pierce's model of signs.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man is standing, wearing uniform,	Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-	It signifies the role of The Pakistani Taliban against	Icon

	shoes and hat on his head.	Pakistan solider	secular governments and Western forces.	
2.	Four men are running behind the military man.	Afghan Taliban behind TTP.	It signifies Afghan Taliban's struggle to make strong ties with TTP to perform their terrorist activities on border easily.	Icon
3.	Another man is behind the border	Pakistani man	It signifies the observation of activities on other side of border by Pakistani man.	Icon
4.	Durand Line	A sign board	The Durand Line is the 2,640-kilometer (1,640-mile) border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. People live on both side the border face problems and violence.	Icon
5.	A plant	A cactus plant on Afghanistan land	It represents the dry land of Afghanistan and harsh and difficult environment.	Icon
6.	Terrorists infiltrating from Afghanistan; IG police, KP	The phrase	It signifies that terrorists start to enter KP from Afghanistan and it is a serious threat to region security.	Symbol
7.	Anger on military man's face	TTP's facial expression	It signifies the denial of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan to support	Index

			Afghan Taliban in terrorism.	
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- i. **Icon:** The above-mentioned cartoon has five icons: the icon of TTP military man, the icon of four Afghan Taliban, the icon of a Pakistani man, the icon of cactus plant and the icon of Durand line sign board. These icons signify the conflict between TTP and Afghan Taliban on the international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan called Durand line. It reflects the ongoing conflict between two nations regarding safety and security concerns across the border. The cactus plant signifies the harsh and dry environment of Afghanistan. The icon of Pakistani man signifies the concern about the safety and the protection of Pakistani side of the border.
- ii. **Index:** The military man's anger serves as an index and signifies the rejection to help Afghan Taliban in terrorism.
- iii. **Symbol:** The phrase "Terrorists infiltrating from Afghanistan; IG police, KP" signifies the concern of the Inspector General police of the KPK that Afghan Taliban can spread terrorism across the border and be a threat to the security of Pakistan.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

Some of the signs and their respective modes in the figure 4.9 highlight the stereotypical identity of Afghans. The icon of Afghan Taliban running behind TTP carries the stereotypical identity of Taliban that they are linked to other violent groups and are involved in cross-border violence and terrorism. The phrase as a symbol "Terrorists infiltrating from Afghanistan; IG police, KP" also creates a notion of stereotypical identity of Afghanistan that it is a serious concern to not let Taliban enter in their land because they are meant to spread terror on even beyond the border.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The icons of TTP and Pakistani man have been observed as an in-group in this specific context by cartoonist. It has been emphasized on the positive portrayal of them that they are on the border for security and protection of Pakistan. The icon of four Taliban is considered as out-group and emphasis on the violent role of Taliban on

Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The icon of Durand line represents the role of two nations in maintaining peace and stability but in this context, Pakistan and its militant groups are representing with positive attributes and they are trying their best to maintain the peace but on the other hand Taliban from Afghanistan are in the favour of spreading terror.

4.1.10 Political Cartoon no 10



Figure 4.10

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1688747/cartoon-9-may-2022>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on May 9th, 2022 in Dawn news. It may be situational call from Taliban to Ukrainian official to declare Kyiv and Kabul sister cities because it was time of Taliban government to gain power and dominance in Afghanistan (August 2021) and Russia's concern towards Ukraine. It includes the news that was published in Hindustan Times on February 26th, 2022. The news published Taliban's call for 'peaceful means' of resolution to Ukraine- Russia conflict (<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/russia-ukraine-crisis-taliban-call-for-peaceful-means-of-resolution-to-ukraine-russia-conflict-101645868836341.html>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs investigated in the tenth political cartoon on Afghan subject have been studied with the help of sign theory.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
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1.	Two men are on phone call.	Ukrainian and Taliban are talking to each other on telephone.	It signifies that there is a discussion going on between Taliban and Ukrainian representatives.	Icon
2.	One of the men in shalwar kameez is concerned.	Taliban's anxiety	It signifies Taliban's desire to approve the ties between Kabul and Kyiv during interaction with Ukrainian after Ukraine-Russia conflict.	Index
3.	Another man is surprised.	Ukrainian man's wonder	It signifies the effect of Taliban call on Ukrainian man after Taliban's retaking of government.	Index
4.	Let's declare Kabul and Kyiv sister cities!!	The phrase	It signifies Taliban's call of mutual cooperation and cultural ties between Kabul and Kyiv.	Symbol

- i. **Icon:** The identified icon of Ukrainian man and Taliban signifies conversation between two officials going on.
- ii. **Index:** Taliban' concern and Ukrainian man's wonder are identified index in the above-mentioned cartoon. The depiction of Taliban's concern reflects his internal feelings of enforcement and brutality to apparently maintain friendly ties with Ukraine. The Ukrainian man's emotional state is indicated as an index that signifies his anxiety and nervousness after having conflict with Russia.

- iii. **Symbol:** The identified symbol signifies a formal bond between Kabul and Kyiv. It represents a symbol of unity or cooperation between the two cities.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The Taliban's posture in this figure 4.10 as an icon represent the stereotypical identity of Taliban official being forceful and authoritative while on call with Ukrainian man. In this context the statement as a symbol and Taliban's wonder as an index represent the Taliban's concerned and dominance to make a tie with Ukraine forcefully. This is the stereotype about Taliban's brutality and enforcement.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The Taliban on phone call with Ukrainian man as an icon represents the negative image of Taliban to force Ukraine for friendly ties but due to their aggressive behaviour and violent nature, it is not effective for Ukraine to accept their friendship. The negative-other representation is highlighted to focus on the negative traits of Taliban.

4.1.11 Political Cartoon no 11



Figure 4.11

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1693582/cartoon-7-june-2022>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on June 7th, 2022 in Dawn news. There was news about Afghan musicians in Dawn news. It was published on June 6th, 2022. After Taliban's retake of the government the Afghan musicians had made Peshawar their home since previous August last year. Most of the musicians came through Chaman border but without Visa due the fear of Taliban in Afghanistan. According to Capital

City Police Officer Muhammad Ijaz Khan, the Afghans were being arrested because they did not have valid documents for their stay in Pakistan (<https://www.dawn.com/news/169337>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs present in the political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified in the table below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	An animal	A crocodile	It represents a crocodile that is known for its ferocious appearance and aggressive behaviour.	Icon
2.	A man in uniform	A Pakistani police man	It signifies the implementation of law of the state.	Icon
3.	A man wearing kurta shalwar, traditional cap and holding musical instrument	A traditional Afghani musician	It represents cultural identity and art of music in Afghanistan.	Icon
4.	An opened jaws crocodile	A crocodile's exposed mouth	It indicates aggressive and threatening attitude of crocodile and is ready to attack.	Index
5.	AFGHAN MUSICIAN IN PESHAWAR:	An idiomatic phrase	It represents the situation where Afghan musicians are	Symbol

	BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE		stuck between two difficult choices.	
6.	AFGHAN REGIME	A phrase	It signifies Taliban government and its brutal policies against artist.	Symbol

- i. **Icon:** The icon of crocodile signifies the physical feature of it being a dangerous and wild animal. The icon of Pakistani policeman signifies an implementation of law and order on Afghan musician who was illegally staying in Pakistan. The icon of Afghani musician signifies a typical artist with his musical instrument lute.
- ii. **Index:** The crocodile's exposed mouth as an index signifies the threatening behaviour of crocodile.
- iii. **Symbol:** The idiomatic expression as a symbol shows that the Afghani musicians are faced with two equally untenable options. They are neither willing to go back to Afghanistan because the regime there does not support their art nor are they accommodated by the state of Pakistan. Afghan regime as a symbol signifies the threatening and violent punishments set by the Afghan state and / or Taliban.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

A crocodile as an icon and "Afghani regime" as a symbol written on it in the above figure 4.11 represent the stereotypical image of Afghan government as imagined by Pakistani media. Afghans are violent and extremely ferocious towards musicians. Afghan regime is a threat to the survival of poor artists and their art. The phrase "Afghan musician in Peshawar: Between a rock and hard place" represents the stereotypical identity of Afghan musicians as victims of political and cultural suppression. They are struggling for their survival in their own land. After facing life-threatening situation, they are illegally moving to the neighboring country, Pakistan.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The cartoon highlights the positive aspects of “Us” vs negative aspects of “Them” in the light of Van Dijk’s ideological square model. The icon of Pakistani policeman forcing the musician represents the law of the state and initiatives taken by the state with the help of law and forcing agencies. These musicians are among those illegal residents in Pakistan who had to be evacuated by the state in order to maintain stability and protection in land. The choice of crocodile, an animal, to portray Afghan government by cartoonist emphasizes the negative portrayal of Afghan government after Taliban's take over. The idiomatic expression represents the helplessness and dilemma of Afghan musicians. The cartoonist portrays them as a victim of the political situation in their own land whereas; the Pakistani police is performing its duty for the land. Thus, a positive ‘Us’ is presented.

4.1.12 Political Cartoon no 12



Figure 4.12

(Source:<https://www.dawn.com/news/1699724/cartoon-15-july-2022>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on July 15th, 2022 in Dawn news. This cartoon highlights Woman’s status of women in Pakistan and Afghanistan. According to a report published on July 14th, 2022, Pakistan is termed second worst country for gender parity whereas “the only worse performer than Pakistan was Afghanistan” (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1699528>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs in the twelfth political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man is holding a gun and is standing on a top position.	An Afghan Taliban	Taliban is leading in exercising its violent dominating regime among nations of the world.	Icon
2.	Another man is standing on a second position.	A Pakistani man	It indicates Pakistan's ranking in comparison to Afghanistan's. Pakistan stands closer to Afghanistan on the subject.	Icon
3.	Woman's biological representation	Female gender symbol	The biological representation of woman depicts that women are targeted by Taliban and they want to hide their individual identity.	Icon
4.	Female gender symbol in a worried state	Women's anxiety	The concerned expression of a woman shows the worrisome state of women in Pakistan and Afghanistan.	Index
5.	Pakistan 'second worst' state for women_____	A phrase	It indicates the report on Pakistan exercising gender discrimination and suppression of women in its society.	Symbol

6.	A man with frown on his face.	A Taliban's thunderstruck	It signifies Taliban's intense emotional response to Pakistani man.	Index
7.	The other man seems sad, frightened and angry.	The Pakistani man's grief and depression	His expression of despair is due difficulties and hardships brought on by the Taliban.	Index

- i. **Icon:** There are three icons in this political cartoon. The icon of Taliban standing on a top position, icon of a Pakistani man standing on second position and icon of female biological symbol on third position signify the poor status of women in both countries.
- ii. **Index:** There are three identified indexes. The worried facial expression of female gender symbol reveals the status and struggle of women for their basic rights in Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- iii. **Symbol:** The identified symbol "Pakistan 'second worst' state for women _____" signifies Pakistan as second most unfavorable state for women.

Stage 2: Imagological analysis

There is a stereotypical representation of Taliban in the figure 4.12. It shows that Taliban use arms and force to promulgate their authority over women. The current status of Taliban in Afghanistan reveals their dominance in the land and its impacts on women's status in the country. Their influence in this regard can be seen on the neighbouring state of Pakistan as well. A stereotype about their identity has also been analyzed that they are in top position in ranking because of their strict behaviour with Afghan women.

Stage 3: Discourse analysis

The ideological square model emphasizes on the role of participants with reference to the ideology practice by them. This results in the exercising of us vs them in a specific context. The depiction of Taliban as an authoritative force indicates the power and control of Taliban in Afghanistan and its neighbouring country, Pakistan. The Pakistani man is portrayed as being dominated by Taliban's practices in subjugating women. The cartoonist de-emphasizes the negative attributes of Pakistani man and represents him as if he is affected by Taliban's violent policies and so Pakistan cannot be directly accused of being a gender discriminating country. The icon of biological representation of woman emphasizes the vulnerability of women. They are deprived of their basic human rights and stand at the lowest ties in these patriarchal states.

4.1.13 Political Cartoon no 13



Figure 4.13

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1712815/cartoon-1-october-2022>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on October 1st, 2022 in Dawn. It covers the news and the evidence of this news was mentioned in an article that was published on May 2022 in The RAND Cooperation, an American website. It highlighted an American's objectives in Afghanistan after Taliban's takeover in government. The

United States guided U.S. policy makers about its decision and after these three strategies were established; engaging with the Taliban, isolating the regime, or actively opposing the Taliban to seek their removal from power. These policies might work to fulfill U.S. interests in Afghanistan. (https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PEA1500/PEA1540-1/RAND_PEA1540-1.pdf)

Stage 1: Signs

The signs in the thirteenth political cartoon have been identified in the form of table below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	Three men are shaking hands with one another.	Taliban, U.S and Pakistani men	The holding of hands is the prediction of unity, friendship and harmony among the members of represented nations.	Icon
2.	US asked to engage not isolate, Afghan Taliban regime.	It is the linguistic expression.	It signifies US policies to have good terms with Afghanistan after Taliban's retaking of government. A complete isolation with them is threat for the stability of other nations.	Symbol

Icon: There is one identified icon in the image and it shows that the members from US, Pakistan and Afghanistan are shaking hands with one another. It also signifies the relationship and concern of US and Pakistan towards Taliban after retaking of them in Afghanistan regime.

Symbol: The statement "US asked to engage not isolate, Afghan Taliban regime" symbolizes a specific diplomatic approach or policy. It conveys that how US wants to

carry on ties with Afghanistan to keep any eye on Afghanistan land and for peace and stability.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

In the above image, an icon of shaking of hands of US and Pakistani man with Taliban has been observed with the depiction of a stereotypical representation of Taliban. The cartoonist portrays Taliban as threat for the stability of Afghanistan and US and Pakistan as well after retaking of charge of the country. It also shows their violent and aggressive attitude towards other nations so its better for other nations to keep good terms with them for peace.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

It has been observed in figure 4.13 that Taliban are being portrayed by Pakistani cartoonist as a source of instability for Afghanistan after retaking of government. In this context, an icon of three men is shaking hands with one another and one of the Men is Taliban whose efforts for stability and peace are de- emphasized. The Pakistani man is being portrayed in this context by cartoonist to emphasize “our” positive attributes that how Pakistan is trying to maintain friendly relationship with Taliban regime so they can motivate them to bring positive change in Afghanistan and ongoing roles of US and Pakistan for regional stability and peace.

4.1.14 Political cartoon no 14

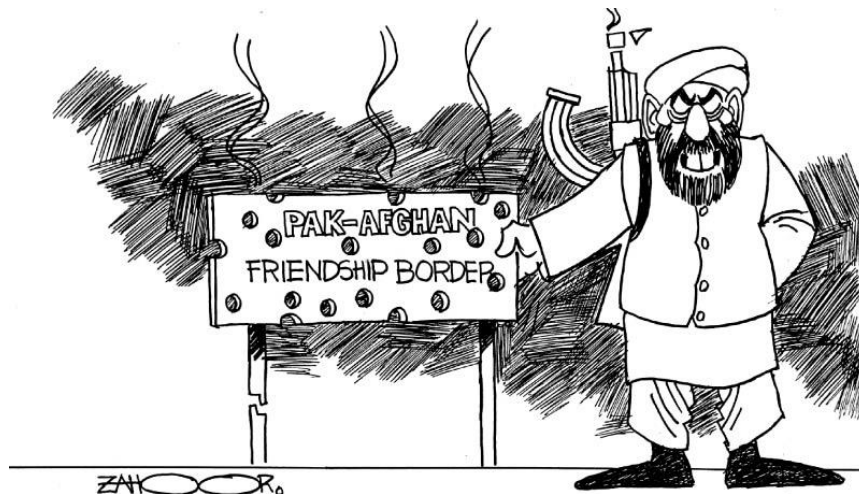


Figure 4.14

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1723180/cartoon-26-november-2022>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on November 26th, 2022 in Dawn news. It highlights the news that was published in Dawn on November 22nd, 2022. It was about Pak-Afghan border in Chaman which was closed for indefinite period after an armed suspect from the Afghan side opened fire on Pakistani security personnel at Friendship Gate. It resulted in the martyrdom of one Pakistani soldier and injury of two. Later on, the decision to reopen the border was taken at a meeting between Pakistani border authorities and Taliban officials held in Chaman(<https://www.dawn.com/news/1722315>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs presented in the fourteenth political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified in the table.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man in culture specific attire with a weapon hanging on his shoulder.	Taliban	Taliban is agitated and violent despite peace keeping initiatives taken by the border security forces at both ends.	Icon
2.	A signboard with bullet holes	A destroyed signboard	The notion of friendship between the two nations across the border is paradoxically prone to violence and terrorism	Icon
3.	Pak- Afghan Friendship Border	A phrase	It shows desire to have peaceful and harmonious ties after the episode of irrational firing from Afghan end	symbol

			at Pakistani security forces.	
4.	A man with an angry face	Taliban's annoyance and frustration	It signifies Taliban's dissatisfaction to accept friendship between Pakistan and Afghanistan.	Index

The identified signs are further interpreted in modes:

- i. **Icon:** There are two icons in this political cartoon. The image of Taliban is an icon and it represents their hold on Afghanistan land. A sign board of Pak- Afghan Friendship border signifies the friendship between two nations but due to the influence of Taliban on this border, it is in danger.
- ii. **Index:** A Taliban's anger and annoyance is an index and signifies the imposition of strict laws and violence on border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- iii. **Symbol:** The phrase Pak-Afghan Friendship border serves as a symbol. It conveys an abstract concept highlights the friendly relationship between two nations despite ignoring the conflicts but after Taliban's retake in government, it is difficult to continue this friendship.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The icons of Taliban and Pak-Afghan Friendship border; a sign board are used as a stereotypical representation of Taliban by cartoonist to express their control over Afghanistan and its impact on the neighbouring country. His presence near the sign board indicates the violence, extremism and instability on both sides of the border. The sign board represents the physical boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan but it is represented by cartoonist as a stereotypical representation of Afghanistan region due to the influence of Taliban to bring out threat for people on both sides of border. The Taliban's anger is an index and it is stereotypical representation Taliban's identity as their desire to enhance restrictions across the border.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

This political cartoon is analyzed that how figure 4.14 portrays in-group and out-group representations. The icon of Taliban focuses on their control over Afghanistan and the threat they impose to disturb stability at the border. The bad action of Taliban (body language) is being focused to impose harsh laws across the border. The icon of the sign board; Pak- Afghan Friendship border indicates the cooperation between two nations but Taliban's influence is highlighted and its impact on two nations' friendship. Pakistan in this context is portrayed as a symbol of peace and to maintain that friendship but Taliban's aggression is being emphasized as their resistance to friendship between two nations. The cartoonist de-emphasizes any negative portrayal of Pakistan and its policies just to represent the negative image of Taliban.

4.1.15 Political Cartoon no 15



Figure 4.15

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1728285/cartoon-26-december-2022>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on December 26th, 2022. It highlights the Taliban's violence against educated women in Afghanistan. The reference news related to this cartoon was published in Dawn newspaper on December 21st, 2022. The headline of news was "KABUL: The Taliban authorities on Tuesday ordered a nationwide ban on university education for females, as the hard line Islamists continue to crush Afghan women's right to education and freedom" (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1727489>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs are being identified in the table hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A bare-footed and half naked man is holding a big stone.	Stone age man	Taliban intends to crush highly educated women.	Icon
2.	Two women wearing graduation caps	The highly qualified Afghan women	They show that women in Afghanistan are capable of achieving higher qualification.	Icon
3.	Afghanistan	A signboard	It signifies Afghan land.	Icon
4.	A man's furious and angry action.	Furious Taliban	Taliban is determined to end education for women in their society. They will not tolerate women with higher educational degrees.	Index
5.	Two women are scary and frightened.	Afghan women's facial expression	It signifies reaction of Taliban's threat as the highly educated women are scared to death.	Index

- i. **Icon:** The first icon signifies the militant image of Taliban, his uncivilized lifestyle and conflict with the Afghan nation. The second icon represents the struggle and devotion of Afghani women to get education under Taliban rule. The third icon signifies the nation of Afghanistan, its location and national identity.

- ii. **Index:** The index extremist and violent behaviour of Taliban signifies aggression and imposition of restrictive laws on educated women forcefully. The second identified sign as an index is Afghan students' scare and fear" signifies the current psychological state of students after Taliban's retake in government.
- iii. **Symbol:** The word "Afghanistan" as a symbol represents the country, collective identity and current conflict in Afghanistan.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified signs and their modes are further explored that how stereotypical depiction of Taliban, Afghani women and Afghanistan is being portrayed. The representation of Taliban as bare footed and half naked portrays the negative image of Taliban's identity that they are uncivilized and barbarian. They are involved in violence and terrorist activities. His furious and eruptive behaviour is the stereotypical reflection of Taliban's violent and extremist characteristics. The Afghani women and their scary and suppressive facial expression as an index indicate the complex realities of Afghani women and their struggle for education. This is the stereotypical image of Afghani women in Afghanistan that how they are surviving being an oppressed victim of Taliban.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The above-mentioned image 4.15 is analyzed through signs and their respective modes that how they are involved in the depiction of bad properties of Taliban, their people and land. The icon of Taliban with an improper look indicates the uncivilized lifestyle of Taliban who is far away from modernity and acceptance of modernism and freedom in Afghanistan. Afghan women as an icon is also represented as suppressed and frightened. Although they are educated but focus is on their struggle and suffering for the sake of knowledge and freedom of choice rather than on their freedom and empowerment. The Taliban's violent and threatening body gesture serve as an index and focus is on the imposition of strict laws on women and stop them from getting education and women's basic rights. The fear on women's face emphasizes the psychological state of women as victim under Taliban's rule.

4.2 Analysis of Political Cartoons Published in Daily Times

4.2.1 Political Cartoon no 16



Figure 4.16

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/792703/todays-cartoon-3168/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on July 17th, 2021 in Daily Times. It includes the information that was published in an article by Voice of America, an international broadcasting media, on July 3rd, 2021. The report highlighted that after imposing travel restrictions on women, Taliban also imposed restrictions for Afghan men as well. Even they restricted barbers from shaving and trimming their beards, claiming that such actions are forbidden in Islam. It was also mentioned that beard is natural and growing of beard is Sunnah. The order was signed by the minister for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, Sheikh Muhammad Khalid Haqqani (<https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-call-on-barbershops-to-not-shave-trim-beards-/6376027.html>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs present in the sixteenth political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man distributing a paper	A Taliban is spreading the word of law.	It signifies Taliban disseminates their ideas in black and white.	Index
2.	Another man	An Afghan citizen	It signifies that Afghan men are also	Icon

			target of Taliban's undue restrictions.	
4.	"Grow beard"	A phrase	It signifies the authoritative command given by Taliban to the citizens of Jalabaad.	Symbol

Icon: The icon signifies that Afghan citizens including men are targets of Taliban's extreme policies.

Index: The index represents an action of Taliban against Afghan men. It shows they make it certain that Afghan men must know the policy they are going to enforce. The policy is to maintain an appearance which is clearly proclaimed a choice for a Muslim.

Symbol: The phrase 'GROW BEARD' as symbol signifies that growing beard is an instruction to be followed by Afghan men. Taliban's regaining control of Afghanistan enforces the growth of beard as a mandatory action to be followed.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The index of Taliban distributing a paper is stereotypically portrayed with the intention of imposing strict societal norms on Afghan citizens regarding personal grooming and outward appearances. Afghan citizen as an icon represents that he is a victim of dictatorial and autocratic Taliban regime. A stereotype of Afghan citizens is that they are oppressed and subject to Taliban's strict policies regarding personal identity that cannot enjoy liberty and freedom of choice. The phrase "Grow Beard" as a symbol is a stereotype about Taliban's undemocratic command imposed on Afghan citizens. It creates an image of Taliban's political propaganda and their desire to control not only Afghan citizens' actions but also their identities and appearances.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The index of Taliban distributing a paper and the icon of Afghan citizen reflect Taliban's role as an extremist to enforce Afghan citizens for following Islamic principles and cultural norms. The phrase "Grow beard" emphasizes Taliban's attempt

to control Afghan citizens in every possible way. This time it is the personal appearance and expression which underscores their oppressive policies. The cartoonist portrays Taliban as ‘Them’ to highlight their unfair ways of controlling Afghan citizens in the most tyrannical manner. The growing of beard is a personal choice according to the faith. Such an unwarranted order influences individual freedom of choice regarding his identity.

4.2.2 Political Cartoon no 17



Figure 4.17

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/794855/todays-cartoon-3172/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on July 21st, 2021 in Daily Times. It includes the news from article that was published in Daily Times on February 16th, 2024. It analyzed the condition of Afghanistan after Taliban’s retake in government. It also highlighted the negative impact on neighbouring countries, e.g. Pakistan. Pakistan is experiencing increased terrorist activities near Pak-Afghan border. This all is happening because of a prolonged instability in Afghanistan. Afghan terrorists are practicing bloodshed, outside Pakistan’s constitutional framework (<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1170774/afghanistan-under-the-shadows-of-terrorism/>).

Stage 1: Signs

Following signs present in the seventh political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man is watering a plant that has terrorism written on it	An Afghan man	It signifies Taliban's act of growing, nurturing and promoting terrorism in Pakistan.	Icon
2.	AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND TERRORISM	words	It signifies that Afghanistan and Pakistan are neighbouring countries and both are facing terrorism in Taliban regime.	symbol

Icon: There is one identified icon in this political cartoon, a Taliban is watering the plant with 'Terrorism' written on it and it signifies Taliban's conspiracy to grow and expand terrorism in Pakistan through the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Symbol: AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND TERRORISM as symbols signify a conflict between two nations because of Taliban's efforts to grow terrorism in Pakistan.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

An icon of Taliban and his act of watering a plant with "TERRORISM" written on it represents a stereotypical identity Taliban and their presence. The cartoonist represents Taliban that they are cultivating terrorism in Pakistan with the intentions to make it unsafe place for people. The word 'TERRORISM' represents the growth of terrorism in Pakistan is like a growing plant with deep roots that makes it harder to eliminate from Pakistan. AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND TERRORISM as

symbol also represent a stereotype of Afghanistan that terrorism is cultivated in this land and spread in the neighbouring countries. E.g. Pakistan.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

An icon of Taliban and his act of watering the plant with terrorism written on it emphasizes on continuous and active nurturing of terrorism in Pakistan under Taliban regime. It has also been analyzed Taliban's negative role in promoting terrorism beyond their region and creating vast environment for terrorism growth. The cartoonist portrays Taliban as 'Other' and emphasizes on their negative attribute that they are intentionally destroying peace of Pakistan. This is also told by Van Dijk that people belonging to specific nation talk negative about those nations which they have defined as other. On the other hand, Pakistan is depicted as victim terrorism spread by Taliban. This notion is strengthened in the above analysis based on identified signs and their respective modes.

4.2.3 Political Cartoon no 18



Figure 4.18

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/816407/todays-cartoon-3225/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published in Daily Times on September 15th, 2021. It depicts the news published in Daily Times on September 13th, 2021 in which Taliban officials have said women will be able to study and work in accordance with sharia law

and local cultural traditions. They also emphasized following of strict dress codes will apply (<https://dailytimes.com.pk/815549/taliban-allow-women-to-study-at-universities>)

Stage 1: Signs

The signs found in the political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified underneath:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A veiled (burka) woman is showing an arm and a book in her hand.	An Afghani woman with a book	It represents an Afghan woman's access to education during Taliban regime but with restrictions pertaining to dress code.	Icon
2.	University of Kabul	A title written on a book	It suggests the Afghani woman's access to higher education.	Symbol
3.	Taliban allow women to study at universities.	A sentence	It indicates Taliban's decision for allowing Afghan women to achieve higher education.	Symbol

- i. **Icon:** The visual representation of a woman in a veil shows her struggle to get her right for higher education in the most rigid regime of Taliban. The book in her hand is a gateway to privilege of education that was until now not granted to the women of Afghanistan.
- ii. **Symbol:** The symbol "Taliban allow women to study at universities" signifies a change in educational policy for women and at the same time the title emphasizes on the stepping of women in the higher academia.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The icons of woman in veil and book together represent the stereotypical identity of Afghan women in Afghanistan. The veil represents the impractical restrictions for Afghan women who have to be updated with modern sciences and the practical fields. They are bound to follow traditional norms only to oblige Taliban and their approach. They are not given liberty to wear a dress of their own choice. The phrase “Taliban allow women to study at universities” as a symbol portrays the stereotypical identity of Taliban who act as masters of a society. They exercise their power in determining the extent of women’s right for education. They are too cautious of letting women to have their basic human rights including education.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The above icon of woman in a veil and the statement as a symbol in the figure 4.18 highlight the negative portrayal of Afghan Taliban as they continue to dominant women in their practices and policies. The emphasis of the cartoonist is on the women’ struggle for getting higher education and Taliban’s regulatory policy about Afghan women’s education. The focus is on Taliban as ‘other’ and emphasis is on the contradiction between their policies and the restrictions which they impose on women. Gender disparity and suppression of women’s emancipation is more highlighted through the veil and Taliban’s leniency is less emphasized or de- emphasized in the cartoon published in Pakistani newspaper. Taliban’s statement of permission is in the background whereas the woman’s veil is in the foreground while emphasizing the oppressed condition of women in Afghanistan to take them away from gender equality and freedom of choice. In this context, the progressive step for women education in Afghanistan under Taliban rule is de- emphasized and the restrictions for women are being emphasized.

4.2.4 Political Cartoon no 19



Figure 4.19

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/982796/todays-cartoon-3552/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published in Daily Times on August 17th, 2022. It includes the information that was published on February 8th, 2022 in The Jamestown Foundation, which is an American journal. It highlighted TTP's deep rooted relationship with Afghan Taliban. When Pakistan handed over the list of most wanted TTP figures to Afghan Taliban in August 2021, Taliban responded with indifference. This became a point of concern for the Pakistani security establishment. As a result, tensions increased on Pak-Afghan border. (<https://jamestown.org/program/ties-that-bind-deconstructing-the-afghan-and-pakistani-talibans-partnership-and-counter-terrorism-options-for-pakistan/>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs found in the political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified with the help of Pierce's model of signs.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A covered face man	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	It signifies TTP members hide their identities by covering their faces.	Icon

2.	A weapon and bullets possessed by the man	Gun held by the TTP and cartridge of bullets hung on his body	It signifies that TTPs are well armed just like Afghan Taliban who are identified as violent killers.	Icon
3.	Pakistan	A small signboard	It signifies that Pakistan is weaker in front of TTP.	Icon
5.	Sitting posture of a TTP	TTP is sitting on Afghan land.	It signifies that TTP is strongly based in Afghanistan.	Icon

Icon: There are four identified icons in this political cartoon. The first icon of TTP member signifies that TTP members do not want to disclose their identities. They cover their faces just like dacoit do. It also signifies their concern for not being revealed to and detected by security forces. The second icon of gun and bullets signifies terror and threat from TTP. The third icon of a small signboard of Pakistan signifies Pakistan's weak position before the violence created by Afghanistan and TTP. The sitting posture of TTP on Afghan land signifies that TTP is strongly linked and based in Afghanistan. It shows that both TTP and Afghan Taliban are from the same ground.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The icon of a covered face man who is a TTP member indicates the stereotype about identity of the Taliban as combatant and warrior who are ready to fight and spread terror among others. The icon of weapon and bullets held by him is stereotypically portrayed. It indicates the image of a Taliban, may he be TTP or Afghan Taliban, as the one who cannot move or be identified without his primary tools of brutality. This also evokes the feeling of fear and constant threat of violence from TTP to Pakistan and other neighbouring countries. The icon of sitting posture of a TTP in Afghanistan is yet another stereotype which shows TTP is deeply rooted in Afghanistan.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The icon of a covered face TTP member emphasizes on TTP's negative traits as they are creators of violence and also do not want to reveal their identities. Since they cause violence and terror and can be caught by the security agencies, they do not want to be recognized. The arms possessed by TTP once again assert that they are 'Them'. They do not hesitate to violate peace by covering their faces and showing of their weapons. The entire cartoon focuses on presenting the negative image of both Afghanistan and TTP who are always ready to spread terror. The cartoonist, hence, emphasizes the oppressive and dominant nature of the Taliban regime with added dimension of TTP supported by Afghan Taliban.

4.2.5 Political Cartoon no 20

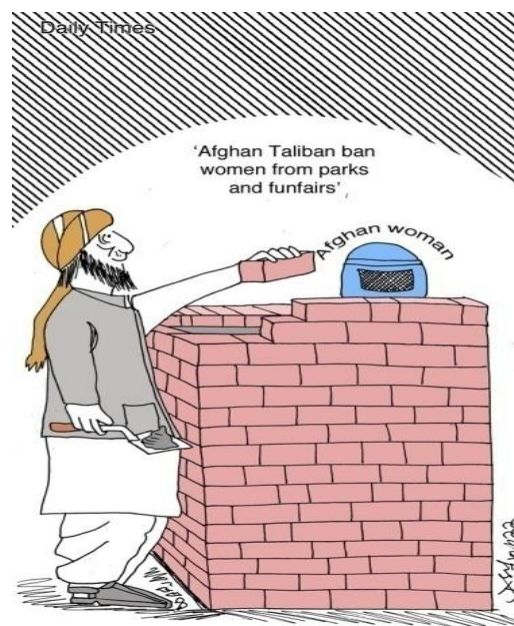


Figure 4.20

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1027901/todays-cartoon-3641/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published in Daily Times on November 16, 2022. It covers or includes news that was published in Daily Times on November 10th, 2022 in which Taliban declared that women in Afghanistan are not allowed to enter the capital's public parks and funfairs, just months after ordering access to be separated by gender.

They were also banned from traveling without a male custodian and forced to wear a hijab or burqa whenever they go out of the homes

(<https://www.thetimes.com/world/article/taliban-ban-women-from-parks-and-gyms-in-kabul-qndcvt2bn#:~:text=The%20Taliban%20have%20banned%20women,including%20those%20with%20male%20chaperones>).

Stage 1: Signs

Following signs are identified from political cartoon on Afghan subject hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A woman in veil	An Afghan woman	An Afghan woman is oppressed and confined within the prescribed dress code.	Icon
2.	A four-sided wall	Confinement	It signifies a boundary for Afghan women to keep them away from outer world.	Icon
3.	Afghan Taliban ban women from parks and funfairs.	A sentence	Under Taliban rule, the women in Afghanistan are not allowed to visit the public areas.	Symbol
4.	A Taliban is constructing a wall around a veiled woman	Taliban's effort to immure a woman who is already veiled	It signifies Taliban's initiatives to confine women within walls of their houses so that they cannot enjoy their time in parks and fairs. wants to hide the woman and	Icon

			her freedom to go outside.	
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Icon: The first icon represents the impact of Taliban's policies on women regarding dress code and freedom of choice. The second icon signifies the restrictions and limitations imposed by Taliban on women in Afghanistan. The third icon signifies the active role of Taliban in creating a barrier for women in Afghanistan and suppresses their rights.

Symbol: The identified sentence as a symbol signifies the restrictions of Taliban to ban Afghan women from park and funfairs.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified signs and their respective modes in figure 4.20 represent a stereotypical image of Afghan women, Taliban and status of Afghan women under Taliban rule. The icon of Afghan woman in a veil behind the wall represents cultural limitations that are imposed on Afghan women by Taliban forcefully. It indicates that women cannot enjoy their life just men can and they have totally lost their right over life and freedom of choice. The action of construction of the wall represents a stereotypical identity of Taliban who are oppressive and want to hide Afghan women from public. The construction of wall represents narrow-mindedness of Taliban and that is presented as their prejudices against Afghan women and their basic human rights.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The Pakistani cartoonist portrays Taliban as 'them' to represent their government, policies and influence on Afghan women. The Afghan woman in veil as an icon represents the suppression and control faced by Afghan women under Taliban regime. The construction of wall around woman by Taliban represents the physical barrier to limit Afghan women's roles and freedom. Afghan Taliban ban women from parks and funfairs as a symbol represents the strict Afghan's policies towards women. The focus is on Taliban's oppressive policies and their intentions to take the basic rights of women and make them puppet.

4.2.6 Political Cartoon no 21

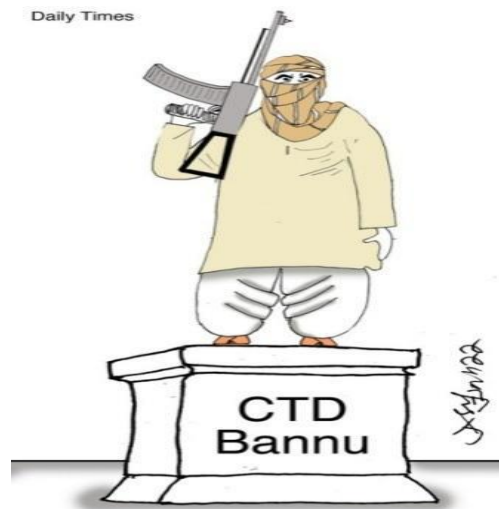


Figure 4.21

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1041362/todays-cartoon-3675/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published in Daily Times on December 20th, 2022. It includes information from an article that was published in Daily Times on June 8th, 2024. It is about the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) that killed a most wanted terrorist, Umar Alias Mustafa, of the banned Tehreek-e- Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In return, they wanted to take revenge for the life of their leader (<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1198988/ctd-kills-most-wanted-ttp-terrorist-in-bannu/>).

Stage 1: Signs

The extracted sign from this political cartoon on Afghan subject have been presented hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A covered face man with weapon on his shoulder	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan	It signifies the TTP's readiness to take revenge on CTD, Bannu.	Icon

2.	A pedestal with a phrase	Counter Terrorism Department, Bannu	It signifies TTP 's takeover of the department.	Symbol
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Icon: The icon of armed TTP signifies a strong and controlling position of TTP to take payback from CTD, Bannu.

Symbol: The symbol of CTD Bannu signifies the Counter Terrorism Department in Bannu District, KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). It also signifies the department is under threat of TTP.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The covered face armed TTP as an icon represents a stereotypical identity of TTP as extremists, who are ready to exert control and spread fear. TTP is depicted as revengeful in this context against CTD Bannu, a security department. It represents an identity stereotype of TTP that they are aggressive and are even actively rebelling against peace and security department.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The above identified signs and their respective modes highlight negative portrayal of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and positive image of Counter Terrorism Department Bannu in Pakistan. The covered face armed TTP with weapon on his shoulder as an icon represents the reality of Taliban behind his hidden face as terrorist and they are ready to cause bloodshed. They are represented as an enemy of peace in KPK province, Pakistan. The cartoonist emphasizes on TTP as 'Them' and it has been analyzed that they are a threatening force and an enemy of societal peace and stability. On the other hand, the CTD Bannu is depicted as an institution with its role and efforts to control terrorism in KPK. It is also portrayed as victim of rebellious extremist group, TTP.

4.2.7 Political Cartoon no 22



Figure 4.22

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1044354/todays-cartoon-3683/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published in Daily Times on December 28th, 2022. It covers the news that was published in Aljazeera on December 21st, 2022. It highlighted the decision about Afghan women's higher education that was made by Taliban administration's cabinet. The decision was that women would be suspended from tertiary education (<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2022/12/21/photos-female-students-turned-away-from-afghan-universities>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs in the twenty-two political cartoons on Afghan subject have been identified hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A locked book Or A book with a lock	A book	It signifies prohibition that Afghan women are banned from pursuing higher education.	Icon

2.	A veiled woman drawn on a book cover	A book cover	It signifies Afghan woman and her restricted access to education.	Icon
4.	Woman Education, Afghanistan	A book title	It signifies that women's higher education in Afghanistan is being targeted since Taliban's retaking government.	Symbol

Icon: There are two identified icons in the figure 4.22. The first icon signifies that higher education is banned for Afghan women and the second icon Afghan woman in veil signifies the same idea that women are not allowed to attend college and universities.

Symbol: The symbol “Woman Education, Afghanistan” signifies the sensitive educational issue of Afghan women during Taliban regime.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The icons of a locked book and veiled woman represent a stereotypical identity of Afghan women and their problems related to higher education. This first icon represents complete ban of getting higher education for Afghan women. The second icon represents that even if the women wear veil or *bhurka*, they are not allowed to attend universities. The stereotype about gender inequality is being observed under the rule of Taliban in Afghanistan. Women are restricted despite following restrictions of all kind in Afghanistan.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

A locked book and a veiled woman on a book cover as icons have been portrayed with the intention of negative representation of educational status of Afghan women in Afghanistan. They highlight oppressive and restrictive conditions for Afghan

women where their rights for getting higher education are severely curtailed. The cartoonist has portrayed Taliban and its government as ‘Them’ particularly in relation to Afghan women’s higher education rights because Taliban’s strict policies regarding Afghan women’s education are hindrance in their equality and empowerment within a society.

4.2.8 Political Cartoon no 23



Figure 4.23

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1045447/todays-cartoon-3686/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on December 31st, 2022 in Daily Times. It includes the information related to Afghan women’s suppression of rights under Taliban regime. It was published in Radio Free Europe /Radio Liberty, which is an international broadcasting organization, on September 6th, 2021. It highlighted multiple problems that are faced by Afghan women under Taliban regime. For example, the imposition of new dress code for Afghan women that includes black colour garments and gloves to cover their hands. Taliban ban Afghan women from working outside their homes oppress women and severely restrict their rights of getting higher education. It also highlighted Afghan Taliban’s brutality against Afghan women who are demanding equal rights (<https://www.rferl.org/a/taliban-dress-code-segregation-women/31446726.html>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs in the political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified in the table below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A veiled woman	An Afghan woman	It signifies Afghan women under Taliban rules are restricted.	Icon
2.	A weapon near a veiled woman's feet	A riffle	It signifies Afghan Taliban's brutal action towards Afghan women.	Icon
3.	Afghan woman; No secondary education, can't go to park and gym, No colourful clothes	Multiple phrases	It clearly states the restrictions that are imposed on Afghan woman by Taliban government.	Symbol

Icon: The two icons are identified in the above political cartoon. The first icon signifies the cultural and regional identity of Afghan woman under Taliban regime and gun near her feet signifies the presence of threat for Afghan woman after Taliban's retaking of government.

Symbol: No secondary education, can't go to park and gym, no colourful clothes are the **symbols that signify** the specified limitations by Afghan Taliban imposed on Afghan women to restrict their personal and professional choices.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The icon of a veiled Afghan woman represents a stereotype that Afghan women as oppressed. The cartoonist represents Afghan women as a victim of Taliban's strict policies who want to keep them away from freedom of choice and access to

opportunities. The weapon as an icon near woman's feet further represents the challenging situation for Afghan women to not to live their life freely under the regime. Taliban are violent and their actions are threatening. A stereotype of Taliban's identity of carrying weapon is established to show their oppressive and cruel perspective in making policies for Afghan women. "Afghan woman; No secondary education, can't go to park and gym, no colourful clothes" as symbols represent the image of Taliban as oppressive force who ban Afghan women from getting higher education and wearing colourful clothes. Afghan women are shown to be living in the most oppressive and subdued circumstances in which they are unable to enjoy the mentioned privileges of life. The cartoonist depicts Taliban as anti-progressive who makes life difficult for Afghan women and abuse their basic human rights and freedom.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

Taliban and their restrained policies for women in Afghanistan are being portrayed with the negative others representation. As Van Dijk said, the negative actions of other as them are emphasized with the intention of portraying them as negative. The multiple phrases in this image, as symbols are used as a discourse created by Taliban about Afghan women and make them realize that they cannot avail choices. The weapon as an icon near woman's feet emphasizes the restrictions imposed by Taliban is hurdles and barrier for their emancipation. The presence of gun also emphasizes on the ongoing danger and threat and because of fear Afghan women are trapped in this system of suppression. The veil is portrayed by cartoonist with a focus on Afghan women leading alive inside a veil.

4.2.9 Political Cartoon no 24



Figure 4.24

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1047025/todays-cartoon-3690/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published in Daily Times on January 4th, 2023. It is based on a news which was published on January 4th, 2023 in Aljazeera. The news report was on Pakistan's terrorist group, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It clearly stated the number of attacks by the TTP across Pakistan. It was mentioned in a meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) that in at least 150 attacks dozens of people were killed. The United States emphasized Pakistan's right to self-defense against terrorism and reaffirmed its support for Pakistan's position. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was also targeted by the TTP. The minister Zardari had said he would be in need of support from the United States. He said this at the backdrop of his mother's assassination by TTP in 2007. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is the son of late ex-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The report also mentioned that many political leaders faced a similar threat during Pakistan's 2013 elections as well

(<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/4/pakistan-taliban-threatens-top-political-leadership-including-pm>).

Stage 1: Signs

Signs in the political cartoon number twenty-four are presented in the table below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A walking man	A Pakistani man	It signifies Pakistan.	Icon
2.	A shadow	A TTP member	It signifies that TTP is a deathly shadow or spirit.	Icon
3.	A knife in the shadow's hand	A knife	It signifies that TTP aims to kill Pakistani citizens.	Icon

Icon: The first identified icon of a Pakistani man walking signifies Pakistan and its people. An icon of a shadow of TTP member behind this walking man signifies a ghost or a shadow that is after this harmless man. It depicts an abstract force that brings fear, killing and violence to Pakistan. The third identified icon of a knife in the shadow's hand signifies that TTP is armed to target the life of common people of Pakistan.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The shadow of TTP with a knife represents the stereotypical image of Taliban and their influence. The presence of this shadow in Pakistan expresses TTP's hostile and terrifying character. The knife in the shadow's hand accentuates the TTP's willingness to cause damage and threat to Pakistan. The cartoonist stereotypically portrays TTP as a threat of terrorism in Pakistan. Hence, TTP, which is an extension of Afghan Taliban ideology, is a violent and threatening organization in Pakistan and is supported by Afghanistan.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The identified icon of a walking Pakistani man constructs a positive image of Pakistan that believes in peaceful existence in this context. The cartoonist portrays Pakistan as peaceful and calm individual who desires stability. On the other hand, a shadow of a TTP member is portrayed with a knife. Such an image of TTP emphasizes on the negative representation that evokes fear and agitation. An icon of a knife in the shadow's hand further emphasizes the TTP's violent intentions and they are an active threat to the lives of Pakistani people.

4.2.10 Political Cartoon no 25



Figure 4.25

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1071755/todays-cartoon-3756/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on March 12th, 2023 in Daily Times. It is based on the information that was published in an article by National Public Radio, an American broadcasting organization on December 20th, 2022. It reported the issue of education for Afghan women. They were banned to attend universities for getting higher education. The Taliban government issued a statement in which women were evicted from universities on short notice. That statement came from the Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada. It was confirmed by a spokesman for the ministry of higher education, Ziaullah Hashmi. The decision was implemented abruptly. At that time, many students had already reached their classes but teachers

were compelled to banish the female students from the classes. Many students became worried as Taliban had taken away their last hope (<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2022/12/20/1144502320/the-taliban-took-our-last-hope-college-education-is-banned-for-women-in-afghanis>).

Stage 1: Signs

Signs in the twenty fifth political cartoon on Afghan subject have been identified in the table below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man holding a gun stands in front of a university gate.	A Taliban guard	It signifies that Taliban has created a threatening situation by monitoring university entrances.	Icon
2.	Afghan Universities; Out of bound for girls	A phrase	It signifies the strict implementation of a policy for Afghan girls to pursue higher education in universities.	Symbol

Icon: The icon a Taliban guard with a riffle on his shoulder stands in front of a university gate signifies power, control and enforcement of Taliban’ policy to prevent girls from getting higher education.

Symbol: “Afghan Universities; Out of bound for girls”as a symbol signifies the abrupt restriction imposed by Taliban for Afghan girls. They have been clearly instructed to be away from universities as Taliban do not allow them to have their basic right to get education.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

A stereotype about Taliban’s identity is depicted as a Taliban guard is with a rifle on his shoulder. His standing in front of a university gate highlights dominance,

power and restriction with an aim to suppress Afghan women education. A stereotypical representation of Taliban's physical strength with a weapon poses a threat to Afghan women if they dare to acquire education. Who are strictly banned to enter universities? The phrase "Afghan Universities: Out of Bounds for Girls" as a symbol also creates a stereotypical representation of Taliban with a reflection of their gender-biased approach. It represents their final and abrupt decision regarding Afghan women's education while restricting them from being progressive and advanced academically. Just like the icon this symbol also puts a strict ban on women's entering universities.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

A Taliban guard with a weapon stands in front of university gate as an icon represents Taliban's negative image. It represents their dominance, threat and repression towards Afghan girls. The cartoonist highlights implementation of Taliban's forceful policies in order to oppress Afghan girls' right to higher education. According to Van Dijk's ideological square model, the Pakistani cartoonist portrays Taliban as 'Them' and emphasizes on Taliban's negative role in controlling Afghan society and more specifically their restriction to ban higher education for Afghan girls.

4.2.11 Political Cartoon no 26



Figure 4.26

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1084795/todays-cartoon-3790/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on April 18th, 2023 in Daily Times. It reflects to the evidence collected and reported in the website of Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies on June 14th, 2023. The report includes a number of attacks in which the confluence of Baloch separatist insurgents and Islamist group has been proven, a think tank organization, on June 14th, 2023 by militant group. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has expedients cooperation in Baloch insurgency which is taking part in various security attacks in Baluchistan. The report includes reference to numerous challenges faced by Pakistan at Baloch front and a reference to deep concern on the emergence of TTP in Baluchistan (<https://www.picss.net/articles/ttps-expansion-in-balochistan-an-alarming-threat-to-pakistans-national-security/>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs observed on Afghan subject in the political cartoon number twenty sixth are detailed below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	TTP	A Pakistani Taliban	It signifies TTP is active.	Icon
2.	Baloch insurgents	A Militant from Baloch community	It signifies a rebellious and revolting Baloch group emerging in Balochistan.	Icon
3.	A TTP militant is carrying Baloch insurgents on his shoulders.	A connection between Militant Balochi man and TTP member	It signifies TTP supports Baloch insurgents in spreading terror in Baluchistan.	Index

Icon: There are two icons identified in this political cartoon. The icon of TTP member signifies their presence and their support of terrorism in Baluchistan/Pakistan. The icon

of Baloch insurgents shows the existence of the terrorist group which is operating in Baluchistan.

Index: The action of a TTP militant carrying Baloch insurgents on his shoulders as an index signifies a support and assistance of TTP to the Baloch militants. This also shows their strong bondage and affiliation in carrying out violent operations.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The depiction of TTP member as an icon represents a stereotype of Taliban's identity as violent and an active force behind chaos and conflict. The Baloch insurgents as an icon represent a stereotype about an apparently emerging terrorist group in Baluchistan. The cartoonist portrays both as forces of resistance in Baluchistan specifically and Pakistan generally. Their resistance is an open threat to the security and stability of Pakistan. An action of carrying Baloch member on TTP's shoulders as an index represents the constant terror inflicted by the rebellious TTP in Pakistan. And this time, as the image enforces, they have taken Baloch insurgents on board only to spread violence and threat in Pakistan. TTP is parallel to Afghan Taliban as both are against the state of Pakistan.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

In this context, the depiction of TTP militant as an icon represents the negative image of Taliban. The cartoonist depicts TTP as 'Them' and represents them as an external force with an agenda of growing terrorism in different regions of Pakistan. TTP's extension in Baluchistan is a threat for stability of the province as well as the state. The icon of Baloch insurgents also emphasizes on the image of relatively new terrorist group within Baluchistan. The cartoonist portrays them as strongly supported by an anti- Pakistan group that is TTP. There by causing pressures and risks to the security of the province. An act of holding Baloch man on TTP's shoulder as an index represents Taliban as an exploiting force that is at the basis of all the threat and terror activities taking place in Baluchistan. Their involvement in violence in Pakistan has been empathically shown in their strong hold of the insurgent growth in Pakistan.

4.2.12 Political Cartoon no 27

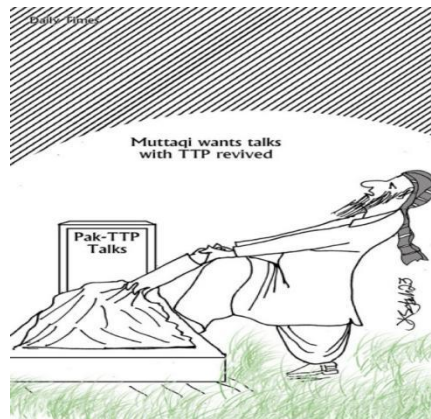


Figure 4.27

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1092626/todays-cartoon-3813/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published in Daily Times on May 13th, 2023. There is news based on this cartoon published in Dawn news on May 9th, 2023. It reports current Afghan Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi's concern about revival of talks between Pakistan and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) a militant group. In the report, he also denies that the TTP is using Afghan soil to carry out attacks in the neighbouring country, Pakistan. He also urges that the government of Pakistan and the TTP sit together and find a solution to Pakistan's security problems on their own (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1751726>).

Stage 1: Signs

Signs related to Afghan subject have been identified in the table below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A grave	A grave constructed for Pak- TTP talks	The grave signifies an end of relationship between Pakistan government and TTP. Death or ceasing of resting place for	Icon

			deceased person and associated thoughts of mourning, death and lost	
2.	Muttaqi wants talks with TTP revived.	A sentence	It signifies Muttaqi's urge to restart talks between Pakistan government and TTP (a militant group)	Symbol
3.	A man is dragging an arm from a grave.	Muttaqi is pulling life out of grave	It signifies Muttaqi's effort to revive discussion between Pakistan government and TTP.	Icon

Icon: Four icons are identified in this political cartoon. Together they signify the visual representation of all the happening in this context.

Index: The Taliban is standing on the grave site and dragging the arm of someone from grave. It signifies the Taliban's enforcement to make it possible the talk between Pakistan and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan to resolve the conflicts.

Symbol: The two identified symbols signify the need of talk between Pakistan and TPP and it's the demand of Taliban to conduct a meeting because Taliban is worried about the destruction caused by TTP on Afghanistan land.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The Taliban member on grave as an icon represents a stereotype about Afghan identity as dominant and authoritative. It also represents the feeling of discomfort and fear in the presence of Taliban in surrounding. The act of dragging of arm from grave also represents force and aggression towards others. Taliban are portrayed with the intention of destroying other's peace and stability.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

Identified signs and their respective modes represent the dark side of Taliban, their nature and attitude towards others. The presence of Taliban on grave emphasizes the disrespectful and violent act of Taliban towards dead bodies. The dead body of TTP as an icon de-emphasizes the destruction caused by them to portray them as 'US' and emphasizes on their passive role of chaos which is also happening with the enforcement and support of Taliban. The action of Taliban to drag the arm of TTP member's dead body emphasizes Taliban's forceful nature and his willingness to violate the peace across the border.

4.2.13 Political Cartoon no 28



Figure 4.28

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1115185/todays-cartoon-3878/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on July 19th, 2023 in Daily Times. It highlights the Taliban's concern to create violence on Afghanistan and its neighboring country Pakistan. The cartoon is based on the news which was published on July 17th, 2023 in The News. It includes a reference to a meeting held at GHQ. During the meeting, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir gave a statement, "The sanctuaries and liberty of action available to the terrorists of proscribed TTP and other groups of that ilk in a neighboring country and availability of latest weapons to the terrorists were noted as major reasons impacting security of Pakistan." The report also

includes that there is an Afghan involvement in terrorist attack in Pakistan (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1091451-army-labels-terrorist-sanctuaries-in-afghanistan-key-concern-to-pakistan-s-security>).

Stage 1: Signs

Signs are identified on Afghan subject in the political cartoon no twenty-eight through Pierce's sign theory hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man holding weapon on his shoulder	A Taliban	Taliban's readiness to attack the people of both Afghanistan and Pakistan	Icon
2.	Another man with a covered face	TTP terrorist	Attack of advanced military equipment to spoil Afghanistan and Pakistan	Icon
3.	Taliban's hand movement	Body gesture	Taliban is supporting TTP.	Index
4.	Pakistan	A signboard	This signifies Pakistan is under threat.	Icon
5.	Afghanistan	A signboard	This evokes the land of Afghanistan occupied by Taliban	Icon
6.	Terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan key concern to Pakistan's security	A phrase	This refers to the statement made by the COAS of Pakistan who openly condemns the terrorist sheltered by Taliban and the activities supported by them.	Symbol

Icon: There are four identified icons in the above table of figure 4.28. The icon of a Taliban with weapon on his shoulder and the icon of another Taliban with carrying missile on his shoulder signify terror and bloodshed. The icons of Pakistan and Afghanistan; signboards signify Taliban's terrorism to make these lands unstable.

Index: The one identified index signifies the Taliban's command to other member that how to handle weapons and cause destruction.

Symbol: This statement as a symbol symbolizes the geopolitical issue where terrorist in Afghanistan pose a significant security threat to Pakistan, highlighting the interconnected nature of security concerns between the two countries.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified icons of Taliban members represent the presence of Taliban on Afghanistan and ready to spread threat and terror in Afghanistan and its neighbouring country Pakistan. They target Pakistan with intentions to spread terror and violence beyond the border due to their violent and extreme behaviour. It depicts a stereotypical identity of Taliban to disturb peace of Afghanistan and its neighbouring country, Pakistan. The weapons and missiles are their possessions to carry on with them. This is an identity stereotype about Taliban to create fear among people and cause bloodshed in the lands.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The identified signs of Taliban, their possession of missile and weapon as icons signify a negative image of Taliban. Their possessions emphasize on their violent and extreme behaviour and intention to spread terror on Afghanistan and Pakistan. The identified phrase 'Terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan key concern to Pakistan's security' portray Taliban as them. The cartoonist emphasizes on Pakistan as innocent and a victim of Taliban's terrorism.

4.2.14 Political Cartoon no 29



Figure 4.29

Source:(<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1116422/todays-cartoon-3882/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published on July 23rd, 2023 in Daily Times. There was an article which was published on December 12th, 2023 in Asia Dispatches, a journal. This article highlighted the evoking relationship between Taliban and India. It also pointed out that India is getting closer to Taliban with the interest of limiting Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan (<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/bjp-taliban-ties-and-their-implications>).

Stage 1: Signs

The signs identified on the Afghan subject in figure 4.29 are presented below:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A man is holding weapons in both his hands	A Taliban	It signifies that Taliban is ready to regain his power and dominance in Afghanistan.	Icon

2.	Representatives of India and Afghanistan, with their flags on their arms, are holding watering pots.	Collaborative support of India and Afghanistan regime to Taliban	It signifies that Afghanistan and India are providing financial and militant support to Taliban.	Icon
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Icon: The above-mentioned political cartoon has two identified icons. They collectively signify the presence of Taliban in Afghanistan and the major support behind them is of India and Afghanistan governments. They also signify continuous support of India and Afghanistan in the growth and nourishment of this terror group.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified icon of Taliban holding weapons in both his hands depict the stereotypical identity of Taliban that they are always ready to spread terror and danger in their occupied land. It also evokes a sense of Taliban's power and dominance in Afghanistan after re-taking of the government.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The identified icon of Taliban holding weapons in both his hands represents the negative image of Taliban as their readiness state to spread violence and terror. They are represented as threat for the stability and peace of Afghanistan. The focus of cartoonist is on the violent nature of Taliban as presenting 'them'.

4.2.15 Political cartoon no 30



Figure 4.30

(Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1130458/todays-cartoon-3929/>)

Context

This political cartoon was published in Daily Times on September 9th, 2023. This is based on news which was published in Arab News on September 7th, 2023. The news was John Kirby, who was National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications, spoke in a briefing at the White House. He declared that no military equipment had been left behind by American forces in Afghanistan. This statement was passed in response to a statement made Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. He had said, "US military equipment left behind during the American withdrawal from Afghanistan was now emerging as a new challenge (<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2368931/pakistan>).

Stage 1: Signs

Signs in the figure 4.30 are given hereunder:

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant	Mode
1.	A uniformed man	A Taliban	It signifies Taliban is using uniform of American soldiers.	Icon
2.	A uniformed man is holding various	Armed Taliban	It signifies Taliban's excess on American	Icon

	types of weapons e.g. missiles, rifles and rocket propelled grenade launcher all over his body.		weapons which they had left behind.	
3.	US denies leaving any weapon in Afghanistan	A statement	An official denial from the US that they had not left any weapon or military help for Afghan Taliban.	Symbol

Icon: The identified icons of uniformed and armed Taliban signify the threat Taliban possess for its neighbouring countries. The excess to weapons of all kinds is a security risk.

Symbol: The symbol of the statement signifies that the US defends its position of leaving Afghanistan without any weapon.

Stage 2: Imagological Analysis

The identified sign of uniformed Taliban as an icon represents a stereotypical identity of the militant Taliban. With the access to American weapons, Taliban is likely to use those weapons and confirm their terrorist image who does not hesitate in taking lives.

Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The icon of Taliban in the military uniform gives the negative portrayal of Taliban. They are making use of left behind US army uniforms, military equipment and other belongings. The cartoonist portrays Afghan Taliban as a threat to the security concerns of Pakistani government. Although, the symbol signifies the US denial of leaving any of their weapons behind, Pakistan maintains that the Afghans possess and make use of the weapons. ‘Them’ in this context are the enemies who may abuse any control or power they possess whereas, ‘Us’ is afraid of becoming a target to their abuse of power.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter gives a conclusion based on the analysis of the political cartoons on Afghan subject. It includes a critical review of the findings of this research. Also, it aims to give answers to the posed three research questions and /or objectives. The purpose of the study was not just to identify verbal and non-verbal signs in those cartoons but also to investigate the portrayal of Afghan identity, cultural stereotypes for Afghans and power structures in the selected cartoons. The last part of this chapter includes few recommendations for future researchers.

The present research focused on how Pakistani print media targets Afghan nation in the cartoons. The identified verbal and non-verbal signs were interpreted to see the imagological representation of Afghan nation. Furthermore, they also uncovered the play of power structure at Pakistani end. The significant turn in the history of Afghanistan discloses the exploitation of power by Afghan Taliban. Hence, Pakistani cartoonists portray clearly a negative image of the Afghan Taliban who extremely suppresses women and cultural practices. Their identity drawn by the Pakistani cartoonists is marked with violence and rigidity in their land as well as in their relationship with neighbouring nations and the US and China.

5.1 Findings

The findings of the study are based on the qualitative content analysis of the thirty political cartoons on Afghan subject which were published in Dawn and Daily Times. All the thirty cartoons are illustrated in the fourth chapter. Each cartoon is followed by a sub heading of context which is information and a background related to the cartoon. Then three-stage elaborations of the three objectives are carried out. At first stage, Pierce's semiotics is applied to identify and analyze verbal and non-verbal signs. At second stage, imagological analysis is carried out and at third and last stage; Van Dijk's ideological square model is employed to analyze the negative image of the Afghans. Following is delineation of those three stages.

In the light of Pierce's Semiotic theory, a clearer distinction in the categorization of the identified signs was first presented in a table in the first stage of the analysis. The signs were divided into representamen (visible components), object

(points of reference), interpretant (derived meanings) and modes. These modes label both verbal and non-verbal signs as icon, index and symbol. One of the most frequent examples of non-verbal signs in those cartoons is a veiled Afghan woman. She is an icon of the subjugated position of feminine gender and her and her constrained life in Afghanistan. There are other icons like daggers, skulls, and skeleton that show violence, aggression and loss of human life. The icon of cactus and barren surroundings become a comment on Afghan Taliban's harsh nature and the survival challenges faced by common people in Afghanistan. Characters' facial expressions of dread, worry, or rage are examples of indexical signs that refer to the emotional and societal difficulties of Afghans. Themes of repression, instability, and cultural battles in Afghanistan are openly conveyed through verbal signs/modes/ symbols, such as textual captions and words like 'Afghan democracy' and 'Afghan woman, no secondary education, can't go to parks and gyms, no colorful clothes.' Such verbal signs highlight the struggle for education and restricted freedom of choice under oppressive system of the Afghan Taliban. Afghan identity is further contextualized in relation to diplomatic and international security issues by symbolic expressions such as 'Terrorists infiltrating from Afghanistan' and 'Taliban team meets Chinese to allay concerns.' Furthermore, terms and titles like 'Economy' and 'Inclusive Government' reflect significant socioeconomic issues and provide a glimpse into Afghanistan's social climate.

Together, these signs create a stereotyped picture of Afghan identity and culture that is centered on themes of violence, repression and instability. They frequently support the perception of Afghanistan as a war-torn, broken country that faces difficulty in overcoming its sociopolitical problems. The interaction of these signs offers an analysis of the complex reality of Afghan identity as shaped by historical, cultural, and political influences.

One other stereotype is that Afghan Taliban are violent and aggressive. For example, the identified signs of weapons such as daggers and guns that stand for cruelty and bloodshed. The Taliban are frequently shown with enraged facial expressions, which further strengthened their connection to terrorism and war. Further portraying the Taliban as hostile forces opposed to development and government. Another significant stereotype about Afghan women is also presented that they are downtrodden and enslaved under Taliban rule. Signs of veiled women or books that are locked, together with spoken subtitles like "Afghan woman; No secondary education, can't go

to parks and gyms, no colorful clothes,” highlight their lack of independence and limited access to opportunities and education.

These cartoons reinforce a narrative of gender oppression by continuously portraying Afghan women as victims of a patriarchal and deteriorating culture. Afghanistan's dependency and instability are frequently shown through signs of wrecked vehicle, skeletons, and barren landscapes which represent Afghanistan as a place that cannot establish on its own without outside assistance. Symbols like the globe or depictions of global powers like the US, China, and Pakistan engaging with Afghanistan serve to further emphasize this stereotype. According to these portrayals, Afghanistan is a weak nation that depends on outside help to maintain peace and government.

The verbal and non-verbal signs that depict Afghanistan as a dangerous, repressive, and dependent country are reinforced by these stereotypes. The attention paid to these particular stereotypes highlights the difficulties and complexities of Afghan identity as seen through the lens of Pakistani media and reflects larger sociopolitical viewpoints.

In the third stage of the analysis, it is shown that these cartoons become sites of ideology. Both verbal and non-verbal signs in the selected Pakistani print media cartoons reinforce particular power dynamics, socio-political ideologies, and cultural narratives. According to Van Dijk's ideological square model of 'Us vs Them' representation, it has been analyzed that the representation of Pakistan and other countries is positive whereas the Afghan Taliban's identity is negative which is supported by the modes in the cartoons. For instance, the icon of a skeleton shows the Afghan economy in a state of decay and a broken vehicle represents Taliban ruler ship with poor management and incomplete infrastructure. A positive narrative for the in-group is created by the depiction of Pakistani institutions or politicians, such as Imran Khan pulling 'Afghan van' which emphasizes on Pakistan's position as a supporter.

Secondly, these identified signs in the selected cartoons frequently develop ideological viewpoints on issues like gender, cultural identity, and government. Icons of veiled women or books that are locked, for example, highlight the Taliban's strict policies and portray them as harsh and anti-progressive. This supports the Taliban's rule and its effects on Afghan society. Daggers and landscapes also portray

Afghanistan as a violent and cruel country, which makes Afghanistan as a war-torn nation in front of the world. Lastly, the uses of identified verbal signs also support particular political and ideological goals. The signs and discourse frequently emphasize on Afghanistan as a threat to regional peace because of border terrorism and the Taliban's cross-border operations. These cartoons therefore, serve to match public perception with certain political narratives by reinforcing preexisting prejudices and ideas.

5.2 Conclusion

Hence, the political cartoons under study create and convey narrative about Afghan's identity and hard life effectively. These cartoons have a huge impact on public opinion because they reinforce stereotypes, assumptions and also spread beliefs. The study emphasizes how media actively shapes regional narratives, especially in situations that are sensitive to foreign affairs. The cartoons present Afghanistan as a country filled with violence, cultural repression, and sociopolitical instability using a blend of verbal and non-verbal signs.

5.3 Recommendations

There are several suggestions for further studies on political cartoons on Afghan subject. The present study includes only 30 political cartoons from two Pakistani English newspapers; Dawn and Daily Times. This study conducts semiotic analysis of these selected political cartoons to bring out and analyze verbal and non-verbal signs. Further it also amalgamates imagology and discourse analysis to analyze how the image of Afghan nation is negatively portrayed by Pakistani cartoonist. Further studies can work on this subject with variations as suggested hereunder:

1. Roland Barthes's semiotic theory can also be applied by future researchers to identify denotative and connotative meanings of verbal and non-verbal signs and analyze how these specific signs shape identity, culture and norms of targeted nations.
2. The present study conducts discourse analysis of identified verbal and non-verbal signs to emphasis on Us vs Them. Future researchers can apply Edward Said's Orientalism to analyze the representation of 'other' particularly Afghan nation by foreign countries.

3. Comparative analyses can also be conducted in order to examine the ways print and digital media of Iran, Afghanistan, and India present Pakistan. They can focus on themes such as cultural narratives, bilateral ties, and political conflict as presented in those cartoons. Those analyses can also incorporate Critical discourse analysis (CDA) which reveals the play of power dynamics rooted in media portrayals.
4. Apart from the semiotic and imagological analysis based on political cartoons, further studies can be based on other illustrations, headlines and news reports to draw an image of any nation.
5. Future researchers can also examine how Indian, Afghan, and Iranian media depict gender-related issues in Pakistan. They can pay attention to topics like women's rights, education, and empowerment, and contrast these stories with the ways Pakistani media covers these topics in different nations.

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