DEPICTING ACTS OF TERRORISM: ETHICAL STANDARDSOFPHOTOGRAPHYINTHE PAKISTANI PRESS

Kasim Sharif
Farish Ullah Yousafzai

Photography is an art of presenting visual news material for publication or broadcast in order to enhance the story's effects on the readers. It refers to still imagery as compared to videography which captures moving visuals. In photojournalism, photography is embedded with the text for the purpose of conveying particular information about a topical event. The inclusion of photographs into news reports is so widespread that majority of the stories without photographs seem incomplete to contemporary audience. Photographs make the stories more authentic and reliable for the audience. Media is often severely criticised for showing horrific photography in its coverage. National Press Photographers Association outlined few codes of ethics in photography: accuracy in subject's representation, avoiding manipulation of the picture, subjectivity and stereotyping, consideration for subjects, editing of the picture and influencing the actions of the photographic subject.

'The reason behind the photography of "crying people" is the element of humanism that creates emotions for the victims among the readers. In this way, Pakistani print media sell the pain and suffering of the victims by exploiting the humanistic nature of the masses.'

Terrorism photography is evident in the Pakistani print media because of the involvement of the state of Pakistan as a front line ally in the war on terror against Al-Qaeda network and Taliban. The Pakistani press gave a lot of coverage to terrorism that is going to take place throughout the length and breadth in the form of bomb blasts, suicide attacks resulting in the form of human causalities and destruction of civilian and state property. As

terrorism is a chronic issue in Pakistan, photojournalism captures horrible events and presenting them visually. Cass (1997) points out that there is a strong relationship between terrorism and the media. They manipulate the media to play a crucial part in their propaganda war. So they should adopt a self-regulated, self-imposed policy in response to the acts of terrorism and for that purpose they must work hard to devise a policy that is appropriate and effective. For the mass media, the coverage of terrorism incidents such as hijacking and hostage provide sensational and visually compelling news stories that can boost the audience figures (Clutterbuck, 1981; Miller, 1982; Schmid & Graaf, 1982). However, this study explores the application of ethical standards in the Pakistani print media with reference to terrorism photography.

Problem Statement

The following research questions were posed to investigate whether or not the press observes ethical standards in photography in its coverage of terrorism acts.

- Whether and to what extent Pakistani print media observe ethical standards while depicting acts of terrorism?
- Which newspaper is violating more ethical standards in terrorism photography?
- Which type of photograph – ethical or unethical – is given more space in terrorism photography?

Literature Review

Photojournalism is the branch of journalism that deals with pictorial representation of news report and one photograph is equivalent to 1000 words. Burley (2010) defines photography as the construction of images in front of the camera. Ethics in photojournalism surrounds the definition of photojournalism i.e., to capture as it is. Photojournalist should capture the real world as honestly as possible. Regarding alteration such as smoothing out features of a personality, enhancing colours, and changing contrast, comes under violation of photojournalism ethics. They can spin honesty and can change the literal meaning. Ananny and Strohecker (2002) describe that photojournalism is a dilemmatic practice as whole story cannot be told with just a single image. This incomplete imagery offers a unique kind

of understanding for different communities of people with different ages, literacy levels and backgrounds.

Lester (1995) produced several writings on photojournalism. According to him, shocking images, manipulation of photographs, and visuals with negative stereotyping, violate ethics of photojournalism. This imagery evokes immediate emotional responses from the viewers. It can shock, offend, mislead, and even confuse the viewers. For example, after seeing an image of a dead body or a victim of a disastrous event, viewers usually get offended. "If it bleeds, it leads" is popular in American journalism. But Lester argues that if journalists feel the need to tell the story using violent images then they should cite the reason for using such visuals. Schmid (1989) asserts that the mass media continue to cover the acts of terrorism in order to satisfy the desire of the audiences for stories in which there is a huge public curiosity about both the victimisers and their victims. Keith et al (2006) argues that "use of photographs that have the potential to offend or harm should be carefully discussed before publication".

Lester (1998) further explains that photojournalism is based on truthfulness. He compares truthfulness with faking of photographs. Truth is the standard representation of events whereas faking is distortion through manipulation, which violates ethical standards. This fake photography can produce violent actions and either can summon humanistic issues. Furthermore, this art is trickery on behalf of the photojournalist. Lester (1999) discusses truthfulness as an ethical code followed by print media and argues that there should be some reasoning and logic for capturing any event. The journalist should keep in mind the true representation of an event regardless of journalist's personal perspective. In print media, writers and photographers follow the same ethical standard of truthfulness. Photographer who utilises darkroom tricks for making a false image would be fired for exercising ethical violation. He writes that camera never tells lies but camera tells the truth as the hand guides it. Faking of the photograph is achieved through alteration that can make public mistrustful in journalism. Personal assumptions for telling a story, layout effectiveness, and eye-catching ability of a photograph can deviate photojournalism from ethical standards. He concludes that when truth is put first, photographs become the source of inspiration.

But presenting the true image of violent situation through the eye of camera is also creating horrible feelings among the readers and put some negative social impacts. Stack (2011) describes that photojournalism ethics

have become an important force in news reporting. This force emerged when photojournalists captured World War II. War visuals were shown on front pages for quick attention. Stack writes that those photographs created panic among the audience because the images were violent. The true representation created negative impact on the audience. Griffin (2004) investigation surrounds US magazines' photo coverage of 'War on Terrorism' in Afghanistan and invasion of Iraq and found that magazine photographs portrayed government's version of events and never told the whole truth to the readers. Repetitive images of World Trade Center attack, towers exploding, victims falling to death, survivors running away from buildings, fire fighters, and funerals were included. Moreover, Islam was shown as a source of conflict through the pictures of schools, militants, covered women, demonstrators and boys throwing stones created negative perception of the audience.

Bersak (2006) believes that like editors and writers, photojournalists have to adhere to the standard of ethics. Photographic publication must govern truthful and faithful presentation. Prescribed ethical codes include how photographers should take pictures, what can and cannot be photographed and when or how an image is altered for publication. He argues that organisation-defined ethics are fuelled with violation, and selling more papers is given high priority. This economic interest restricts newspaper in exercising truthfulness. Sjwalsh (2011) notes that emergency is the food for photojournalism to emotionally engage the audience. He suggests that while capturing rescues, fires and car crashes, the photograph should not show extra hardships of the victims. Photographing a deceased is not newsworthy and should not be exaggerated in the coverage. He adds that injuries and fatalities should not be over exposed and events must be captured with taste, compassion and a strong set of photojournalism ethics.

Long (1999) argues that photojournalism reveals truth by exposing wrongdoings through visual language and can cause great harm if these photographs are rigged or manipulated. Photojournalists are accountable for upholding the ethical standards of accuracy, comprehension, completeness, not biased, respect for victims and truthfulness. Cromey (2010) called image manipulation as "tricks". Adhering to ethics regarding picture manipulation is a major concern for journalists. The ease in manipulation has caused more concerns about accuracy, as evident in Time Magazine, Newsweek and National Geographic Magazine's news coverage. Ethical code for photojournalism restricts absurd transformations of images. He suggests five

key issues that are at risk in the news media i.e., identity, privacy, ownership and authorship, credibility, and participation.

From the political point of view, photographs focus on dual meanings to emotionally engage the audience towards one party. This inclination is an act of violation in photojournalism (Starrett, 2003). Butler (2007) explains that photographs are ethically responsive while attending to the sufferings of others. He proposes that sufferings, human figures, shackled bodies and torture should be presented within the boundary of ethics. Graphic pictures of war can exploit the pain of others. It can sensitise the conflict and emotionally influence the viewers. This sensitisation is achieved through alteration in terms of making montages or labelling photographs with catchy captions. In photojournalism, the essence of truth-telling is injured with essence of sensitisation (Burkholder, 2011). In Algeria, photographers are advised to capture events with an ethical form of attention-seeking phenomenon. This advice is given because the photographers not only communicate the realities of Algeria, but also creating deep impacts on social values to the audience (Back, 2009).

Editor of *Aperture* Magazine has divided basic ethics of photography into three main parts: the photograph should be produced for the public; the publication should not cater marketing needs rather it should follow the aesthetic need; the photograph should "be placed in a context increasing the ethical, intellectual, and spiritual commitment of the spectator." Schiller (2008) and White (2002) believe that photojournalism is now being used as a tool of constructing image of individuals after 9/11 attacks. They assert that Muslim community was defamed by publishing photographs showing a typical Afghan with guns as a terrorist. This is an example of ethical violation as it created bad impression of Muslims in the minds of people. Cyton (2004) asserts that photojournalism is associated with war on terror photography. The terror photography affects the community as it sensationalises them with its visual content.

Photojournalism can be used as a documentation of conflict between the oppressed and oppressors. In South Africa, racism was photographically portrayed to limit the black population in certain fields. White population restricted black in the work area and remote towns, and photojournalism was unethically used to portray black lower than the white population (Krantz, 2008). Jordan (1999) quantifies volume, tone and type of images used by U.S weeklies to portray the Iran hostage crisis. Photojournalism acted as a primary vehicle through which American public witnessed Iranian hostages, weeping families and

powerless politicians. It was used as means of affecting human behaviour with its emotional tone.

Theoretical Framework

Social responsibility is the theoretical foundation of the present study. The theory states that media should perform its role for society by following certain guidelines i.e. code of ethics. It states that media should serve the public interests. It defined certain guidelines that the media should follow them in order to accomplish its obligations of serving individual and collective interests of the public. The theory originated in mid-twentieth century and it revolves around ethics in the media – either print or electronic. The emergence of multiple media forms suggested the need for some means of accountability. Thus this theory advocates some obligation on the part of the media to society. It is applicable in this research because it talks about ethical standards to be fulfilled on behalf of print media by the journalists. The study focuses on the application of ethical standards in print media and to what extent ethics of photography are observed in the print media.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis-1:	Print media do not observe ethical standards in the photography relating to showing acts of terrorism.
Sub Hypothesis-1:	Photographs on the top of the page follow less ethical standards in photography.
Sub Hypothesis-2:	Photographs on front page follows more ethical standards as compared to the special edition page with reference to terrorism photography.
Sub Hypothesis-3:	Photographs of crying people is given more space in terrorism photography as compared to destruction and badly injured people.
Hypothesis-2:	The Daily Jang is violating more ethical standards in terrorism photography as compared to The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt.
Hypothesis-3:	Mean size of unethical photographs is more than the ethical mean size in terrorism photography in both the dailies – The Jang and The Nawa-i-Waqt.

Methodology

The study is based on the content analysis of terrorism photography in the two leading Pakistani newspapers namely the Daily Jang and the Daily Nawa-i-Waqt, from June 1, 2010 to September 31, 2010. Within the two-month period, both dailies published 240 newspapers with 428 relevant pictures. They were selected on the basis of their reputation and have the highest circulation rate throughout the country. The reason behind the selection within this period is because Pakistan experienced the worst attacks of terrorism in these four months and print media had given maximum visual coverage to these acts of terrorism.

Population of the study includes all photographs depicting acts of terrorism that are published in these two newspapers during the specified period. The unit of analysis is photograph published in the newspapers. Each picture is coded for topics (badly injured people, deaths, body pieces, bloodshed, destruction, fire or shelling and crying people), pages (front, middle, back, and special edition), placement (top, middle, bottom), space (column cm), ethics (ethical standards followed, ethical standards not followed). Ethical standards were coded in terms of accuracy, censorship, clarity, sensationalism, honesty, and caption and unethical standard were coded in term of absence of accuracy, censorship, clarity, and appropriateness of caption.

Operationalisation of Variables

Accuracy: Accuracy means whether the images are presenting the accurate information or exaggerated the situations.

Censorship: It involves the censorship of images related to burnt and injured bodies, separated body pieces of the victims and bomber.

Clarity: It deals with presenting quality of the images, for example, the images are clear, not blur, the colours of image are fine or not.

Sensationalism: The images and captions are not creating panicky feelings among readers.

Honesty: The coverage of images is the true representation of the disaster mentioned in caption or heading. They are not references of other accidents.

Caption: It means that the caption given to photograph is appropriate and suitable to the theme of the picture.

Results

Finding-1: Pakistani print media gave more space to unethical photography in its coverage of terrorism i.e., 57.2% (245) as compared to the ethical photography, i.e., 42.8% (183) and the difference is statistically significant (chi-square=8.981; p=.003).

Table 1: Ethics Frequency

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Ethics observed	183	42.8	42.8	42.8
Ethics not observed	245	57.2	57.2	100.0
Total	428	100.0	100.0	

Finding-2: The highest amount of photographs was located on the middle of the page (184) as compared the top of the page (176) and bottom of the page (68). However, the highest amount of ethical violation was seen in photographs placed at the top of the page, at 68.8% (121) as compared to the middle and bottom where the violation rate of ethical standards was 50.5% (93) and 45.6% (31) respectively. There is a difference among the three positions (top, bottom and middle pages) and statistical test shows that this difference is highly significant (Chi-square=16.670; p=0.000).

Table 2: Placement - Ethics Cross Tabulation

			Ethics		Total
			Observed	Not Observed	
Place	Top	Count % within place	55 31.3%	121 68.8%	176 100.0%
	Middle	Count % within place	91 49.5%	93 50.5%	184 100.0%
	Bottom left	Count % within place	37 54.4%	31 45.6%	68 100.0%
Total		Count % within place	183 42.8%	245 57.2%	428 100.0%

Finding-3: Front page had the highest number of photographs i.e. 204 as compared to the special edition page that had 158 photographs. On the front page, the violation of ethical standards was found in 107 photographs (52.5%) as compared to the photography in special edition where the violation was found in 114 photographs or 72.2%. Here, ethical standards were carried out in 44 photographs, or 27.8%. The difference is statistically significant (Chi square=34.983, p=.000).

Table 3: Page-wise Table and Test

| | | | Ethics | | Total |
			Observed	Not Observed	
Page	Front	Count % within page	97 47.5%	107 52.5%	204 100.0%
	3	Count % within page	9 40.9%	13 59.1%	22 100.0%
	8	Count % within page	33 75.0%	11 25.0%	44 100.0%
	Special edition	Count % within page	44 27.8%	114 72.2%	158 100.0%
Total		Count % within page	183 42.8%	245 57.2%	428 100%

Finding-4: Out of 428 pictures, 131 photographs are related to "crying people", 93 photographs to "destruction", and 45 to "badly injured" categories. In "crying people" photography, 78 (59.5%) photographs followed ethics whereas 53 (40.5%) did not fulfill ethical standards. In the "destruction" category, 51 (54.8%) photographs followed ethics whereas 42 or 45.2% photographs violated ethical standards. For the "badly injured" category, 71.1% photographs did not observe ethics as compared to ethical standard application, which is 28.9%. Statistical test shows that the difference is highly significant (Chi square=57.879; p=0.000).

Table 4: Various Categories of Photographs

Topic	Ethics Observed	Ethics Not Observed	Total
Burnt bodies	2	21	23
Badly injured	13	32	45
Death	14	27	41
Body pieces	4	26	30
Bloodshed	5	28	33
Destruction	51	42	93
Fire/smoke	16	16	32
Crying people	78	53	131
Total	183	245	428

Finding-5: The daily Jang gave more coverage to the issue of terrorism with 227 pictures as compared to the Nawa-i-waqt with 201 photographs. Jang frequently violates ethical standards in terrorism photography with 58.1% (132) as compared to the Nawa-i-Waqt where the violation rate is 55.7% (113). However, this difference not statistically significant.

Table 5: Newspaper- Ethics Cross Tabulation

Newspaper	Observed	Not Observed	Total
The Daily Jang	95	132	227
The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt	88	113	201
Total	183	245	428

Finding-6: The mean size of the photographs found to be violating ethical standards is 89.19 as compared to the mean size of ethical photographs with 75.35. The difference is statistically significant (t=14.502, p=.000).

Table 6: Size

Ethics	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Observed	75.35	183	135.203
Not observed	89.19	245	104.784
Total	83.27	428	118.796

					Test Value = 0		
	T	df	Sig. (92-tailed)	Mean differece	95% Confidence interval of the difference		
					Lower	Upper	
Size	14.502	427	.000	83.271	71.98	94.56	

Discussion

The study explores the ethical standards of photography in two main Pakistani dailies namely The Jang and The Nawa-i-Waqt. Both dailies are known for their wide circulation and reputation among the readers. Results show both these newspapers violated cannons of ethics for photography in their news coverage of terrorism in Pakistan. Hence, it supports the first hypothesis that Pakistani press does not observe ethical standards in its photography while giving coverage to the acts of terrorism. There are three reasons behind ethical violations by the newspapers:

• There is no comprehensive code of ethics in Pakistan to restrict the press and bound the reporter in this regard.

• Activities of journalistic bodies have been focused on giving protection to journalists against PEMRA and Pakistan Press and Publication Ordinance.

• Pakistani media either press or electronic is in high competition with each other. The media is trying to increase circulation of their newspapers and viewer ship of the channels through sensitising the content of the media.

Placing sensational photographs on the top of the page is highly rewarding for the newspapers from sales point of view because almost all of the readers read this part of the newspaper at least every day in order to update their information. So the ethics violation level is high for photographs located at the top of the page as compared to the middle and bottom of the page. Thus, it supports sub hypothesis-1 that photographs on the top of the page follow less ethical standards in photography.

Photographs on front page follow more ethical standards as compared to the Special Edition page with reference to terrorism photography and the difference is statistically significant. Thus, the result supports sub hypothesis-2. The reason behind this phenomenon seems that the front page consists of hard news and the main source of information for the readers, but the Special Edition usually features the events of terrorism and hardships of the victims and their families. So, these obscene pictures are the basic requirement for these pages and the visual sensitisation in the form of photographs is the only solution to grab the attention of the readers.

Photographs of crying people are given more coverage in terrorism photography as compared to destruction and badly injured people. The highest amount of ethical violation is also seen in the topic of crying people. The result shows that the difference with other selected topics is statistically significant, so it provides support to sub hypothesis-3. The reason behind the photography of "crying people" is the element of humanism that creates emotions for the victims among the readers. In this way, Pakistani print media sell the pain and suffering of the victims by exploiting the humanistic nature of the masses.

Both newspapers are violating ethical standards in visual presentation of terrorism; the daily Jang has frequently violated ethics in this regard. However, the difference is not statistically significant and does not provide support to hypothesis-2. To increase viewership, both have used the notion of attracting audiences visually as to move them at the place where the incident has taken place. So they feel like experiencing the incident. Both newspapers did not cater to journalistic responsibilities by following code of ethics. Photography is believed to be objective and the primary means of visual representation of the news. Public is concerned about clarity and accuracy. Viewers see this unethical photography as authentic information since they are attracted by sensationalisation and the notion of understanding the meaning of the photograph is left behind. The mean size of unethical photographs has a higher percentage than the mean of ethical photographs and it is statistically significant. Therefore, it provides support to hypothesis-3.

The findings reveal that Pakistani print media are not fulfilling its journalistic responsibility regarding the acts of terrorism and usually try to sensationalise the situation. Economic benefit is the major motive behind this violation of ethical standards because print media do everything to sell the news by manipulating and sensitising the issue. In the pursuit of money making, Pakistani print media are promoting the cause of non-state actors such as terrorists by violating the standards of ethics of photography regarding terrorism. In a way, Pakistani print media serve the objectives of the militants in the region. They inculcated fear and terror among the masses and that is the aim of terrorists. It is the social responsibility of the print media to devise not only a code of ethics but also implement it in its true spirit. Constant monitoring should also be done by the journalistic bodies to stop this practice.

References

Ananny, M., & Strohecker, C. (2002). Situated Citizen Photojournalism and a Look at Dilemmatic Thinking. Proceedings of the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education's E-Learn Conference. Montreal, Canada. http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:x8J-ULt6htwJ: Retrieved on April 4, 2011.

Back, L. (2009). Portrayal and Betrayal: Bourdieu, Photography and Sociological Life. The Editorial Board of the Sociological Review. Blackwell Publishing Inc. 9600, Oxford UK, vol. 57 (3), 472-490.

Bersak, D.R. (2006). Ethics in Photojournalism: Past, Present, and Future. An unpublished thesis submitted to Department of Comparative Media Studies, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. web.mit.edu/drb/Public/Bersak_CMS_Thesis_FINAL.pdf Retrieved on April, 4, 2011.

Burkholder, C. (2011). Online Journalism Ethics-Photojournalism. School of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison. http://www.journalismethics.ca/online_journalism_ethics/new_media_trends.htm Retrieved on March 23, 2011.

Burley, S. (2010). The Definition of Photojournalism: Looking at Ethics in Photojournalism. Rhonda Callow. http://www.brighthub.com/multimedia/ photography/articles/93311.aspx Retrieved on March 21, 2011.

Butler, J. (2007). Torture and the Ethics of Photography. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol. 25, 951-966.

Cass, F. (1997) Terrorism and Political Violence, vol.9, No.2 (Summer 1997), 51-64, London,Paul Wilkinson.

Clutterbuck, R.1982). The Media and Political Violence, London: Macmillan.

Cromey, D.W. (2010). Digital Imaging: Ethics. Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, 1-6. DOI 10.1007/s11948-010-9201- y.cbe.ivic.ve/ftp/clasebioest/pdf/ Digital_Imaging_Ethics.pdf Retrieved on March 15 2011.

Cyton, S. (2004). Hometown Photojournalism Can Include The War on Terror. The Digital Journalist. http://digitaljournalist.org/issue0401/assign/sc_0401.htm. Retrieved on April 2, 2011.

Keith, S., Schwalbe, C. B., & Silcock, B. W. (2006). Images in Ethics Codes in an Era of Violence and Tragedy. Journal of Mass Media Ethics Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc, 21(4), 245–264.

Lester, P.M. (1999). Photojournalism an Ethical Approach: The Merger of Photojournalism and Ethics.http://commfaculty.fullerton.edu/lester/writings/pjethics.html Retrieved on March 21, 2011.Lester, P.M. (1995). Photojournalism Ethics Timeless Issues. Mass Communication.

Brown & Benchmark Publishers California. http://commfaculty.fullerton.edu/ lester/writings/ photoethics.html Retrieved on April 4, 2011.

Lester, P. M. (1998). Faking Images in Photojournalism. Media Development, vol. 1, pp. 41-42. commfaculty.fullerton.edu/lester/abacon/faking.doc. Retrieved on April 4, 2011.

Long, J. (1999). NPPA Code of Ethics. National Press Photographers Association. http://www.nppa.org/professional_development/business_practices/ethics.html Retrieved on March 22, 2011.

Miller, A. (1982). Terror, the Media and the Law, Dobbs Ferry, NY: Transaction.

Schiller, A. (2008). Digital Photography and the Ethics of Photo Alteration. Unpublished thesis submitted to Office of Honors Programs & Academic Scholarships Texas A&M University, 1-62.

White, A. (2002). Journalism and the War on Terrorism: Final Report on the Aftermath of September 11 and the Implications for Journalism and Civil Liberties. International Federation of Journalists report, 1-41.
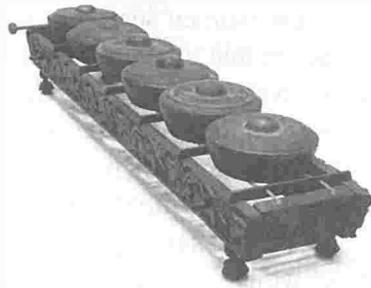
Kasim Sharif is Lecturer at the Department of Communication and Media Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. He holds a MS degree in Media and Communication from International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. His areas of research are Peace journalism, Media ethics, International communication and Environmental journalism.

Prof. Dr. Farish Ullah Yousafzai is Dean Faculty of Arts at University of Gujrat, Pakistan. He holds a PhD degree in Health Communication from Karachi University, Pakistan. He has contributed a number of research articles in national and international journals in the area of development communication.