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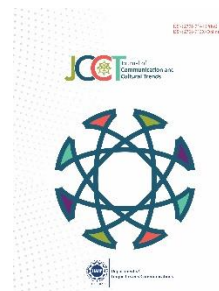
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Ethical Dilemma Created by Media Circulation of the Graphic Images of Child Refugees: A Case Study of Aylan Kurdi

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Abstract

This study examines the coverage of the iconic graphic images of children (who died an unnatural death) in the media, particularly in newspapers. Precisely, it focuses on an iconic graphic image of Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy who was drowned and whose body was washed up on a beach in Turkey, while his family was attempting to reach Greece. The circulation of this image in the media and how it has been presented in different newspapers is the subject of the current study. The researchers discuss the possibility of publishing this photo in newspapers in relation to the Codes of Ethics of SPJ. The findings reveal that the photo of Aylan Kurdi changed the world's point of view about the Syrian refugee crisis. They also signify the fact that it is important to provide appropriate context to the graphic images circulating in the print media. Indeed, the context written under the images published in newspapers and the one that circulates in the media are significant because it hails a large number of audience.

Keywords: refugees, iconic graphic images, newspapers, portrayal, war

Introduction

According to the current study, images that shatter our souls and tend to affect our subconscious memory can be regarded as “tragic images”. With the passage of time, our experience based memories become the strongest images in our mind and remain fixed in our memory. These memory images, especially, direct our attention towards specific situation. These tragic images take root in the memory of a generation and arouse people worldwide to take action. Given that, this study focuses on specifically selected images that provokes strong emotions of sympathy, anger, rage,

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or sadness in the subconscious mind of the audience. According to Hariman and Lucaites (2001), images that are recognized by everyone and represented historically in terms of significant events are termed as tragic images. These specific images activate strong emotional responses, and are regularly reproduced across a range of media, genres, and topics. According to the current study, these images help to generate new ideas and ignite a strong public action based on democratic values (Hariman & Lucaites, 2003).

Throughout the history of media, certain iconic graphic images of children, caught in confrontations, tragedies, natural catastrophes, and man-made calamities like wars, poverty, and famines have been used to spread awareness. These iconic graphic images can contribute toward a positive change and trigger the widespread public opinion toward large-scale political events. For instance, the iconic image of a nine year-old girl, Kim Phuc, running naked with scars on her body due to a Napalm attack in 1972, see Figure 1. This photo has been used to change the opinion of American public of the Vietnam War. Harris (2019), laments that the tragic “napalm” Ut’s photograph of a girl, Kim Phuc in 1972, helped to immortalize the horrendous aftermaths of war waged against the innocent civilians. Meanwhile, Lee-Koo (2018), exposed the fact that war must not be intended to cause collateral damage, as it poses a higher risk of mental trauma for the future generation/Napalm Ut’s photograph of Kim Phuc has highlighted the massive loss of lives in wars.

Figure 1

A Nine Year-Old Girl, Kim Phuc, Running due to a Napalm Attack in 1972



In another case of a twelve-year-old boy named, Muhammed Aldurra, a Palestinian boy who was killed by an Israeli gunfire during the Second

Intifada in 2000, as shown in the Figure 2. Muhammad's father tried to protect him from the bullets while shouting for rescue. The boy was crying horribly and then later, he was mercilessly shot several times until he died in his father's lap. This photo became the second Intifada's symbol of the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation. This photo helped to spread awareness of the cruelty of occupation.

Figure 2

Muhammed Aldurra, A Palestinian Boy Who was Killed by an Israeli Gunfire in 2000



The current study is specifically based on Aylan Kurdi's heart rending iconic image and the whole narrative is woven around it to spread awareness worldwide through news and media. The iconic image of a three-year-old Syrian boy, Aylan Kurdi, gained noteworthy attention globally due to the fact, that he was just a little child who was drowned, died, and washed up on a shore in Bodrum, Turkey. The image was very sensitive, heart-breaking, horrible, and reflected the ill-fated country, Syria. This country was plagued and devastated by the war, injustices, terror, dictatorship, and poverty. Thousands of Syrian citizens had fled from the said war, sought safety, and physical security in European countries, Canada or elsewhere. Abdullah Kurdi, the father of Aylan Kurdi, told to the *ZeeNews* that "I have buried my soul with my children" (Jha, 2015). Abdullah Kurdi lost his entire family including Galip, the older brother of Aylan, a five-year-old, and his wife, Rehan, a thirty-five-year-old woman. They all lost their lives in the Turkish sea while attempting to flee from the war in their hometown in Kobane, Syria. Abdullah Kurdi tried his best to save his family, however, all his efforts went in vain, seeing them embracing death in front of him. (Sykes, 2015). The iconic image of Aylan Kurdi became borderless, as it reached the artists' interests around

the world. In South America, one of the artists made a graffiti in Sorocaba, Brazil, which depicted the image of Aylan Kurdi's harrowing death (Paraszczuk, [2015](#)).

Statement of the Problem

There exists a great debate in media, among researchers and journalists, on the publication of iconic graphic images of the children who died in tragic incidents. Scholars such as, Go and Thiessen ([2006](#)), believe that sharing photos, depicting dead children is appropriate if it is advancing a cause and is not only "pandering to lurid curiosity". They also believe that both principles of obligation to the public and minimizing harm must be weighed. However, the fact that the way journalists are being pressurised in order to capture the attention of audiences or to get the story, cannot be ignored. This topic appears to be highly sensitive as it deals with the vulnerable or more delicate group, which is, refugee children. Therefore, the current study made an attempt to highlight a phenomenal issue, which is, Aylan Kurdi's case. It sheds light on different perspectives, for instance, publishing his iconic photo in several online newspapers. Certain authors are of the view that by providing solutions and suggestions on the current issue, may prove to be beneficial, as it can help to spread the word worldwide. The current study attempts to contribute to the fields of humanities, migration studies, and media studies simultaneously. On the other hand, it also seeks to gain recognition towards one of the most phenomenal matters in the world presently, which is, the refugee crisis.

Objectives and Research Questions of the Study

This study endeavours to bring forth the coverage of iconic graphic images of children who died a tragic death through the power of media. It highlights the specific purpose of the iconic graphic image of Aylan Kurdi, which took social media by storm. It sets to examine the different perspectives with which his photo was being portrayed in different newspapers. The researchers also discussed the possibility of publishing this photo in relation to the Code of Ethics of SPJ. Thus, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How is the photo of Aylan Kurdi portrayed in different newspapers with different perceptions?
- (2) Is it morally justifiable for journalists to publish iconic graphic images of dead children, specifically the image of Aylan Kurdi?

Literature Review

The publication of different iconic graphic images depict a particular tragedy or suffering which can hardly be forgotten, as these images cling to ones' psychological sensation. It may sometimes penetrate deep into ones' soul and leave them in a never ending trauma. However, these images may be difficult for many readers to process. Kim and Kelly (2010), maintained the fact that in some cases, these photos are left for the public to decide whether it is morally justified to publish them rather than intervening to help the victim or sympathize with him/her. According to the Code of Ethics of SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists, 2014), there are clear guidelines for journalists to minimize harm on fellow human beings. Examples of specific codes which relate to this topic include: "Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief", "Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects", and "Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity".

Mäenpää (2021) studied, how the ethical reasoning is being reflected in the circle of photojournalist professionals' in the application of ethical consideration of images portraying death in three levels of operation, namely: (1) at a global picture agency, (2) at a national picture agency, and (3) at a local news magazine. Mäenpää (2021), concluded in his research, that the ethical decision-making of photojournalism professionals is more often based on these processes, namely: the shared ethics, the relativistic ethics, and the distributed ethics. Shared ethics consider the sharing of graphic images to the public while weighing them for ethical considerations. On the contrary, relativistic ethics consider the ideal impacts to publish graphic images that are sensitive to social and cultural boundaries while at the same time balancing with the ethical practice in media. Meanwhile, distributed ethics deal with the discussion of graphic images fed to the public, based on the professionals' opinion, and sometimes on public opinion. The research identified the reasons for the rejection of images or selection of said images are based on the practicality of preconditioned situations such as the availability and accessibility of images, the expectations of the public, and cultural

relativity. (cf. De Smaele et al., [2017](#); Fahmy, [2005](#); Kratzer & Kratzer, [2003](#); Nilsson, [2020](#)).

Miller and Dahmen ([2020](#)) used the method of in-depth interviews with the photojournalists in their research. They explored the decision-making process and ethical norms in photojournalism in order to capture images and to publish such images as well. They observed that the photojournalists' justification and publication of graphic images is to empower their subjects, while providing relevant information to the public-audience. They also observed that the photojournalists emphasized on the ethicality to care and sympathize with their subject and focused them while taking their photos. The photojournalists were less concerned with upsetting the audiences, and they were more concerned about caring for their subjects and providing information to the public.

Barroso ([2020](#)) espoused that all the languages have their own specific codes being assigned to them. He put forth the idea that the photographs are a medium of conversation between people but they don't have any code and are only perceived by senses, the eyes. Media photographs portraying death, suffering, violence, and war easily caught the attention of the audience in the modern visual world. These images have ethical implications and considerations for instance, highly morbid iconic violence. Rhetorically, they are simulacra which is provocative to the senses, which could make the real images less stimulating and less violent than the actual scenario or the event. Borroso laments that the provocative violent images are fetish products. He also said that their real power lies in a way that how they are being perceived by the senses, ideologically and aesthetically. Borroso agrees with Han ([2017](#)), who claimed that "nowadays, images do not trigger shock, and even repulsive images are supposed to entertain. Even certain upsetting images have been made consumable, and the totalization of consumption is eliminating every form of immunological recoil" (Han, [2017](#)). This means that provocative images are being capitalized for entertainment purposes in the capitalistic society.

Smits and Ros (2021), in their recent study, tried a distant reading approach to study iconic photographs. They used a new research technology which is the Google Cloud Vision Programming Interface (GCV API) to collect from 940,000 online sources, this yielded 26 iconic images that were circulated between the years 1995-2020. They used data

embedding system which is a natural language processing technique to map out the contexts iconic photographs that are available online. They suggested that iconic images may not be explained via captions as these images speak volumes of information. However, analysis of long texts explaining about the iconic images remains vital to provide clearer information on certain iconic images that are presented and circulated. They also probed that the iconic images that are circulating, strongly depend on other related iconic images, already circulating online. For instance, the iconic image of Aylan Kurdi, and the iconic image of Óscar Ramírez and his daughter Valeria are thematically related iconic images in a way that both the images portray children who were drowned and died.

Many previous researches have explored the possibility of publishing iconic graphic images based on media ethics. Most of these studies focused to publish a substantial number of photos to examine the decision-making process or the ethical norms in photojournalism. However, the present study investigates one important image which has given much attention to a specific matter, namely, refugee migration. It is rather essential to pay heed to this matter in order to raise awareness and to highlight one of the phenomenal issue in the world.

Methodology

This research used a qualitative approach which is involved in “the analysis of the subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices. It is done by the collection of non-standardised data and the analysis of texts and images rather than numbers and statistics” (Flick, [2014](#)). Qualitative research methods are focused on the exploration of different perspectives and thoughts, meanings, or realities (Hiatt, [1986](#)). Therefore, qualitative methodology was employed in order to analyse the different approaches that the current study seeks to investigate. Through textual analysis, the researcher would be able to comprehend the different ways in which particular cultures, at particular times make sense of the world around them. It enables the researchers to study a variety of methods through which the interpretation of reality and different cultures is being made possible (McKee, [2003](#)). The current qualitative research is particularly focused on the case study of Aylan Kurdi and different methods which can be considered to conduct it. According to Baxter & Jack ([2008](#)), a qualitative case study deals with the exploration of a specific phenomenon through variety of lenses to manifest multiple facets

of the phenomenon. The current research is specifically focused on Aylan Kurdi, a child refugee, who has suffered a tragedy. The data of this study was collected from Western newspapers including The Independent, The New York Times, the Guardian, The Los Angeles Times, Vox, The Mirror, The Washington Post, and Daily Mail, Gulf News, The Globe, Daily Telegraph and The Sun. These popular newspapers are published in English language and hence, their contents have access to a great number of viewers. The researchers analysed Aylan's Kurdi iconic photos which were displayed in the aforementioned Western newspapers. They also gathered details on different perspectives of journalists and editors regarding viewing the iconic photo.

Case Study

The case study primarily revolves around the triggering photo of the three-year old Syrian kid, Aylan Kurdi. He was washed up and drowned on a beach in Turkey during his family's attempt to flee and reach Greece for safety (see Figure 3). The publication of his image got extreme popularity on media and newspapers. This photo was considered as an iconic photo, since it became a symbol of the refugee crisis and the humanitarian crisis.

Figure 3

A Three-Year Old Syrian kid, Aylan Kurdi Who was Drowned on a Beach in Turkey



Results and Discussion

Journalists' Outlook

According to the present research, many newspapers such as *The Independent*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Los Angeles Times* believe that it is ethically justified to publish Aylan Kurdi's photo. The editor of *The Independent* said that, *The Independent* chose to run the photo because "among the often glib words about the 'ongoing migrant crisis,' it is all too easy to forget the reality of the desperate situation faced by many refugees". The executive editor of *The New York Times*, Dean Baquet, said that, "We debated it, but ultimately we chose to run a powerful version of this photo because it brings home, the enormity of this tragedy", (Mackey, 2015). Kim Murphy, the assistant managing editor of *The Los Angeles Times* reported that "The image is not offensive, it is not gory, it is not tasteless — it is merely heart-breaking, and stark testimony of an unfolding human tragedy, that is playing out in Syria, Turkey and Europe, often unnoticed". She added that,

We have written stories about hundreds of migrants who died in capsized boats, sweltering trucks, lonely rail lines. On the contrary, it took a tiny boy on a beach to really bring it home, to those readers, who may not yet have grasped the magnitude of the migrant crisis.

On the other hand, Vox Media decided not to publish the photo by speculating that its popularity was "less about compassion than voyeurism". The foreign editor of Vox Max Fisher said that, "I understand the argument for running the photo as a way to raise awareness and call attention to the severity of the refugee crisis. He also further stated that, "I don't begrudge outlets that did," "but ultimately I decided to stand against running it because, the child in that photo might not have any consent to become a symbol had he been alive." All the editors of the newspapers agreed that the misery being inflicted upon the child, Aylan Kurdi was heart-breaking. The majority of the editors agreed on publishing this image to raise public awareness on refugee crisis as mentioned earlier.

The Way the Photo was Portrayed

Many newspapers, including *The Mirror*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *Daily Mail* published a less jarring image of the kid. The image reflected the kid being carried by a Turkish police officer, but they concealed his face (see Figure 4).

On the other hand, other newspapers, including *The Independent*, *Gulf News*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The Los Angeles Times* published more jarring photos of the kid. They used a full-page photo of Aylan Kurdi lying face down on the beach while waves come in. They showed the police officer staring at Aylan Kurdi's dead body (see Figure 5).

Figure 4

The Portrayal of Aylan Kurdi's photo in The Mirror, The Washington Post, The Guardian, and Daily Mail



Figure 5

The Portrayal of Aylan Kurdi's Photo in The Independent, Gulf News, The Globe and Mail, and The Los Angeles Times



The *Sun* used two side-by-side similar photos in the front page, depicting the cruelty inflicted upon children. One photo of an infant “born in a Hungarian station yesterday” and another photo of a Turkish police officer carrying Aylan Kurdi, who “died on a Turkish beach yesterday”, and the face of Aylan Kurdi was not revealed. “It’s Life & Death” was the caption of the two photos (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

The Portrayal of Aylan Kurdi’s Photo in The Sun



The Telegraph did not publish the photo of Aylan Kurdi, instead it used a photo of a soldier carrying a crying kid through a crowd (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

The Portrayal of Aylan Kurdi's Photo in The Telegraph



The previous mentioned newspapers chose to portray the image of Aylan Kurdi, except the *Daily Telegraph*, which chose to replace another photo as shown in Figure (7). The researchers believe that these newspapers portrayed the refugee migration in Europe, utilising this iconic image to serve their own political agenda.

In the following section, the researchers have answered the second research question. The question goes by, “is it ethical or unethical for journalists to publish iconic graphic images of dead children, specifically the image of Aylan Kurdi?”.

Perspectives Regarding the Publication of Iconic Image of Aylan Kurdi

The researchers are of the view that, it is ethical to publish the photo of Aylan Kurdi in the media. They agreed with other journalists, as mentioned earlier, who established the fact that this photo is ‘not gory’, ‘not offensive’ ‘not tasteless’, and it is only ‘heart breaking’ or ‘shocking’. The body of the child was not maimed or broken into pieces, and his body was not covered with blood. He looks like he is sleeping peacefully as other normal children. He was not naked where he dresses up in a proper way. Therefore, the photo is peaceful and publishing it does not violate the

sacredness of the body. This makes the photo iconic and so special comparing to other photos.

It is the right of the public to witness this photo, as the Code of Ethics of SPJ asks journalists to “seek truth and report it”. In relation to the code of “minimize harm” where journalists are encouraged to “show compassion”, and “use special sensitivity when dealing with children”. The researchers also believe that publishing a photo like that of Aylan Kurdi’s is the need of the hour. The reason to publish this photo is the need to represent a situation that a refugee has to face and the world must act accordingly. Hence, this photo stirs the emotions up for actions. It helps to raise awareness to the severity of refugee crisis. The researchers also believe that hiding photos like Aylan Kurdi’s photo can serve to blind the unpleasant policies that produce them.

The researchers agree that publishing the photo alone without a good context of explanation cannot raise awareness and attention on the refugee crisis, and it can be worse than not publishing it at all. The researchers, thus, agree with the editor of *Vox*, Max Fisher, that “the best journalism combines compassion and voyeurism”. The following examples show how journalists used proper and better explanation for the photo, which show their compassion to the victim:

SOMEBODY’S CHILD: The tide of desperate humanity seeking safety in Europe is rising. Yesterday’s victims include this Syrian boy, drowned in his family’s attempt to reach Greece from Turkey. The EU is deadlocked; our Prime Minister is in denial. A vast human catastrophe is unfolding. Do we really believe this is not our problem? (The Independent)

“The shocking, cruel reality of Europe’s refugee crisis” (Smith, [2015](#)). The heart-breaking human face of a tragedy the world can no longer ignore “Unbearable.” (The Mirror)

In addition, publishing the photo with a context which does not show compassion may not help to raise attention to the refugee crisis. In other words, journalists must not exploit the photo. They should *show humanity* and *challenge hate*. For instance, the *Daily Mail* published the photo of Aylan Kurdi with the caption, “Tiny victim of a human catastrophe, the image could not be more harrowing – but must be seen to comprehend the gravity of the migrant crisis engulfing Europe”. This newspaper published

an article entitled (The ‘Swarm’ On Our Streets) describing the refugee as ‘Swarm’. It used the word ‘migrant’ instead of ‘refugee’(see Figure 8).

Figure 8

The Daily Mail’s Titles After The Death of Aylan Kurdi



As previously shown in Figure (6), The *Sun* newspaper used two side-by-side photos in the front page, one photo of an infant “born in a Hungarian station yesterday” and another photo of a Turkish police officer carrying Aylan Kurdi who “died on a Turkish beach yesterday”, The newspaper indirectly pointed out the increasing number of refugee through its caption “It’s Life & Death”. This caption does not express compassion for Aylan Kurdi. This newspaper hence, seems to trivialise the refugee issue. The *Sun* newspaper published an article by Katie Hopkins calling refugees “Cockroaches”. Therefore, publishing graphic photos need a proper explanation to highlight the importance of publishing it.

The researchers think that, sharing photos of dead children as a result of war or catastrophe without the permission of their families is different from sharing private photos of victims of rape or accident. They believe that families of children affected by tragedy, want others to know the reality so that they can help others facing the same problem. In case of Aylan Kurdi, his aunt said that, “My dead nephew’s picture saved thousands of lives”, "God put the light on that picture to wake up the world". His father also said that, “We want the world’s attention on us, so that they can prevent the same from happening to others. Let this be the last” (Toksabay, [2015](#)).

In relation to consequentialism theory, the journalists who published the photo concentrate only on the outcome of an action. They think about the benefits of publishing this photo. The outcomes of publishing this photo include the following:

1. The photo prompted a shift in the conversation concerning the “refugees” and “migrants”, according to a study by the Visual Social Media Lab, backed by Google (Vis & Goriunova, [2015](#)).
2. An increase in donating money, dropping off goods or volunteering to help refugees. For example, “Refugee aid charities see surge in donations after image of drowned Syrian toddler Aylan Kurdi moves the nation”, according to *The Independent*.
3. The photo was extremely powerful; many people commented that, “He could have been my child.” In addition, the photo has conveyed a very powerful message: “The image of Aylan Kurdi has made ‘everyone become human’. ‘Image of drowned Syrian boy echoes around the world”, and “Aylan Kurdi, and many other photos that change history”, (Ramgobin, [2015](#)).
4. The iconic images of Aylan Kurdi's death have appeared in hundreds of newspapers and media, showing his washed up dead body on a Turkish beach. This image has sparked an international sympathy and attention among many politicians across the world. UK’s Prime Minister, David Cameron has promised that the United Kingdom (UK) will take in “thousands more” Syrian refugees. He has announced that UK will take 20,000 Syrian refugees over the next five years round. He hailed and boasted that, Great Britain is “a country of extraordinary compassion”, during his speech in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister, David Cameron has also announced that the new Syrian refugees will be offered five-year humanitarian visas. The cost of their living within the first year in Great Britain will be provided, the budget for the humanitarian project will be taken from the Government's aid budget, David Cameron says. (Parfitt, [2015](#)).
5. Different social movements have been formed on Aylan Kurdi’s death. Tom Parfitt says in *Express* news, “This is a heart-wrenching moment, dozens of people paid tribute to drowned youngster Aylan Kurdi just days after his death, sent shockwaves around the world (Parfitt, [2015](#)).” In Morocco, there were around 30 Moroccans of varying age

who laid their face-down on a beach in Rabat, they re-created the harrowing scene of Aylan Kurdi's passing. The image of Aylan Kurdi has triggered an international outcry over the refugee crisis in the Middle East. These 30 individuals wore the same combination of clothes which Aylan Kurdi had worn when he was drowned, a red shirt and blue trousers, he wore shoes too. These 30 individuals stayed in the position similar to the position of Aylan Kurdi when he was found by a police officer in Turkey's beach. They stayed in their laid face-down position for around 20 minutes in their heartfelt support and sympathy to Aylan Kurdi. Latifa Ahrar, a Moroccan actress helped in organizing the said re-enactment event, she says: "As an artist, my duty is to react and to come here with my colleagues to say that a small gesture can be worth a lot." Aylan Kurdi's death reminded the international community to sensitively react to the migration crisis and devastating war in the Middle East. A journalist, Rachid el-Belghiti says: "We are here to say that the Mediterranean should remain a space for sharing and exchanges, not a barrier for those who are victims of dictatorships, civil wars and terrorism." (Evans & Wheatstone, [2015](#)).

6. In Gaza Strip, the other end of the Mediterranean, several Palestinians artists had built a sand sculpture of Aylan Kurdi's image when he was found dead on a Turkish beach. The sculpture is built nearby distance from where four Palestinian children died while they were playing football during last year's 50-day Gaza war. Resident Arwa Arbijan said:

When I saw this statue representing Aylan Kurdi, the child drowned while fleeing Syria, I felt a deep sadness and great emotion. It reminded me of the children of the Bakr family who were killed on the Gaza beach during the last war. (Parfitt, [2015](#))

Finally, the researchers believed that sharing graphic photos on social media makes it easy for print media to publish these photos because people are going to see it anyway. Hugh Pinney, from the picture agency Getty Images, thought that without social media users sharing the photo of Aylan Kurdi first, it is unlikely that newspapers would have printed it. He said, "The fact that it has been circulating on social media... gave mainstream traditional media editors the courage of their convictions to put this onto the front page and break a huge social taboo." Meanwhile,

Nilsson (2020) stated that, “Media professionals cannot ignore social media visibility, but they need to act according to the journalistic values, such as objectivity and truth-telling, that are particularly crucial when it comes to graphic images”. The main objective of media professionals is to seek truth about the events and then share them with the public.

Conclusion

Iconic photos are very powerful in drawing attention, in exposing and understanding specific political events. In this case, the iconic image of Aylan Kurdi, published in various newspapers gave awareness on the immigration crisis on a global level. The immigration crisis was also prompted by the wars going on in the Middle East. Hence, iconic images can motivate public actions to help refugees who seek security and physical safety in the European countries. We agree with (Go & Thiessen, 2006) that sharing dead children photos is appropriate if it is advancing a cause. However, there is a difference between using less graphic photos and more graphic photos. That is, sharing less graphic photos which are special in conveying specific messages are better than sharing more jarring photos which violate the sacredness of the body. Moreover, it is important to provide appropriate contexts to these graphic photos as they attempt to explain why these photos are important to be shown. Journalists have to expose hidden truth and convince the public to face them. This topic is very interesting because it shows how such photos have changed the world’s view about the refugee crisis. Indeed, “Photographs are the screams of the world.” Moreover, publication of iconic images as in the case of Aylan Kurdi, has provided us information that such published image could revolutionize the world’s politics. This study showed that due to Aylan Kurdi’s incident, many social and political changes have occurred. For instance, the United Kingdom through Prime Minister, David Cameron, has made effort to receive Syrian refugees and planned to take 20,000 Syrian refugees over the next five years since the incident took place.

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