

## The gender crisis in professional photojournalism: demise of the female gaze?

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### Abstract

To date there has been very little research or data available concerning the interests, work patterns or challenges facing women photojournalists, in spite of the profound impact women have had on photography since its inception. As the digital era places professional photojournalists as a whole under more pressure than ever, this study seeks to unravel the particular challenges facing women in the business of visual storytelling. Based on data from 545 women photojournalists from 71 countries collected between 2015 and 2016, this article finds that women photojournalists face even more demanding circumstances than their male counterparts, in spite of the fact that they are generally better educated and have more often received a higher level of training in photography. The data, collected in partnership with the World Press Photo Foundation, suggests the historical underrepresentation of women in photography is ongoing. Structural biases will continue to prevent taking up full-time employment in this area in the future with widespread self-employment among women in the sector, meaning an even smaller proportion of women news photographers presenting visual stories on the world's most pressing issues and the further decline of the female gaze.

### Introduction

The sustainability of photojournalism is already a vexing issue in the light of a range of challenges that can be broadly assigned to the digital era. One of the most significant has been the massification of photography as new technologies have encouraged image capturing and sharing on an unprecedented scale. At present, an estimated 9 billion images are uploaded onto the internet and its many social media platforms every day (Kogan 2016). The flood of images online has coincided with a marked reduction in the number of journalists and photojournalists in full-time employment over the past two decades. Photographers have been particularly hard hit, at times suffering disproportionate cutbacks, especially in America (Mortensen, 2014; Anderson, 2013). Few moments were more iconic in this regard than the *Chicago Sun Tribune* laying off its entire photographic workforce in 2013. The act was symptomatic of a paradigmatic shift away from the total domination of the global media industry by giant conglomerations to other forms of organisation such as co-operatives, collectives, small businesses, freelancing or self-employment.

The development of new forms of business has also been observed in related creative industries such as graphic design and advertising, where they have also led to a shift in work processes and behaviour (Ross 2009). These changes have commonly affected women disproportionately. Scholars have noted not just more versatile work arrangements such as casualisation and zero hour contracts but also a rise in stress, insecurity, ill-health and what they call "precarity", or the precariousness of life in the digital age among its creative producers (Gill 2014, Gill & Pratt 2008). Already, less than half of professional photojournalists earn all their income from photography with most having to resort to an array of activities, only some of which are photography-related, to earn adequate income (Hadland et al 2016). Add to this difficult environment, the ubiquitous theft of copyrighted images online and the high levels

of physical risk faced by photographers in conflict situations, and it's possible to see professional photojournalism is under considerable pressure.

Women photojournalists, however, face even more demanding circumstances than their male counterparts. This is in spite of the fact that they are generally better educated and have more often received a higher level of training in photography. Data for this study indicates women are over-represented in the lowest income brackets and under-represented in the highest income brackets, are much more frequently self-employed than men and generally consider their financial situation to be more precarious. Women photographers tend to think of themselves as visual storytellers rather than photojournalists and they also appear to be more versatile than male photographers deriving income from a wider range of sources and activities, using a more diverse set of technologies but also suffering more acutely from the perils of erratic income and infrequent commissions.

Women have played a central role in the evolution of photography since its invention in the 19th Century, from the powerful portraiture of Annie Leibovitz and the propagandising aesthetic of Leni Riefenstahl to the evocative social commentary of Dorothea Lange. But it is clear from this study and from recent research (Hadland et al 2015, Campbell and Critcher 2017), that women represent only a small fraction of professional photojournalists (around 15%). The main focus of this study is to identify the key obstacles in the employment and advancement of women in the photojournalism industry and to link new and substantial data to theorising around the consequences of the evident distortions.

This article is based on data from 545 women photographers from 71 countries collected between January 2015 and February 2016. Through two online surveys over two years, the participants provided details about their lives from their income and work practices to their perceptions about current and future concerns and threats. We will examine the working practices of these women and offer a commentary on the challenges that they face in the digital era. Very few studies of news photographers have been published that directly concern women photojournalists. The findings are, therefore, groundbreaking.

## Literature review

While there is a plethora of work on the philosophical, social and artistic functions of photographs, there has only been limited scholarly interest in photographers themselves. The people behind the camera tend to be overlooked in studies of both media and creative professionals usually gaining only a fleeting reference (e.g. Tunstall 2001) or being overlooked entirely (e.g. Hesmondhalgh 2013; Hartleys 2005; Deuze 2007). This is in spite of the ubiquity and importance of the visual image in the digital era. Recent research tends to focus on amateur or citizen photographers (Allan 2015, Schmieder 2015, Mortensen 2014, Caple, 2013; Papadopolous & Pantti, 2011, Pantti & Bakker, 2009; Taylor, 2000) or on limited national case studies (Mäenpää 2014, Vaclare and Debeauvais 2015). In the last few years, there has been renewed interest in photography but this research has developed in diverse and eclectic directions from the impact of violent images (Dahmen 2014), to visual gatekeeping (Schwalbe et al 2015) to social media use by conservation photographers (Gervais 2016) to the influence of photographer-subject interactions (Thomson and Greenwood 2016). There remains, however, very little research about the work practices, aspirations and challenges facing photographers themselves and only a small amount of work about women photojournalists specifically. This literature review will, therefore, draw on work from across a range of disciplines in order to contextualize the position of female photographers.

Photography has never been an exclusively male field. From the advent of photography, women have played a pivotal role (Rosenblum 2010). Initially, this took the form of women working alongside their husbands in darkrooms and studios. By the second half of the 19th Century, women were running portrait studios, capturing landscapes and partaking in amateur photography. The first female photojournalist, Jesse Tarbox Beals, gained public attention in 1899 (Cookman 2009). Beals began her career as her husband's dark room assistant. She was hired by the *Boston Post* to photograph a state prison and then took a position with the *Buffalo Inquirer* before opening her own studio (ibid). Cookman (2009) describes how at this time this profession was considered unfit for females due to its lonely and risky nature. Thomas (2007) also describes how historically women have been discouraged from entering photojournalism as a profession because of the perceived dangers in the field.

The idea that women may not be suited to certain occupations is evident in the wider literature on labour. This belief has been labelled 'gender essentialism' and refers to the belief that men and women are essentially different and therefore suited to different societal roles and occupations. Gender essentialism, as recruitment practices into many militaries suggests, has become internalised among both employers and employees resulting in what is known as the horizontal segregation of the labour market (Charles & Grusky, 2004; Hakim, 1979). Charles and Grusky (2005) describe both 'vertical' and 'horizontal' dimensions of segregation. Vertical segregation is defined as when one group holds occupations higher up the occupational hierarchy. They find that men are likely to hold occupations higher up the hierarchy than women that have higher status and income. They argue there is vertical segregation both within and between occupations, as individuals within the same occupations hold different stratification positions but also some occupations have a higher stratification position overall than others. They define horizontal segregation as when one group holds different types of occupations than another. For example they find men are much more likely to work in manual occupations than women.

In addition to physical risk, the profession of photography has many other features that may make it less appealing/open to women. Hakim (2000) argues that while the circumstances of women are becoming less homogeneous many women still opt to undertake traditional female work life arrangements. By contrast, Gash (2008) points out that given the low levels of state support for families, women have little choice but to put their career second in order to provide the needed care. Whether through choice or necessity it is nonetheless the case that on average women still undertake the majority of unpaid household labor. This unequal division of labor in the home is argued to carry over into the workplace. Drawing on the life and career of photographer Margaret Bourke-White and her interviews with American female news photographers, Thomas (2007) describes the ongoing struggle with work-life balance faced by many women photographers. These pressures are heightened if women have young families, a common scenario that has prompted many female photographers to leave the profession.

Historically, Becker (1967) argued that men and women have a rationale to make different levels of human capital investment to make the most of family life and income. Human capital refers to the amount of knowledge and skills a person has accumulated through education, training or experience. Becker's (1985) rational choice theory argues that because women bear children and therefore take time out from the labour market, men have more incentive to gain more human capital than women. Specialised human capital theories were developed from human capital theories. To develop specialised human capital, individuals must invest in occupation, firm, or industry specific training that has little value outside of the setting in which it was gained. It is argued that women will avoid occupations that require large amounts of specialised human capital because they expect to take career breaks and a larger share of household work. Women, instead, will opt to invest in more 'portable' general human capital. For example it has also been found that countries that have 'national skill regimes' that are more specialised than generalised have more gender-segregated labour markets (Estevez-Abe, 2005). Both employees and employers have incentives to uphold this system. For employers, additional training costs may dissuade them from hiring women who may need cover if they take time off work to have children. Female employees may also not be able to apply their specialised skills in other occupations if they wish to return to the labour market after employment breaks. Polavieja (2007) suggests that firms may offer incentives to keep specialist workers from leaving, including long-term contracts with increasing wage-tenure profiles. Differences in education and training may therefore result in different incomes for men and women.

Olsen & Walby (2004) argue that gendered wage inequality is one of the most persistent features of the labour market. There is much research showing that men tend to earn more than women and that they have greater job stability and greater opportunities for promotion (e.g. Blau & Kahn 2006). Bolton and Muzio (2008) have found that women in professional occupations, such as law or management, are concentrated into a small number of female sections of the occupation. Women tend to be over represented in feminised sections of an occupation, for example human resources management or family law. These sections are considered to be somehow more fitting for supposedly female traits like compassion, thoughtfulness and personal support compared to more traditionally male areas like corporate law and its associ-

ation with supposedly masculine traits like ruthlessness, decisiveness and stamina. Feminised sections tend to have worse career prospects, working conditions and pay although they require comparable skill.

Rutherford (2001) argued that 'time- resource' has become important in separating men and women in terms of getting promotions. This was because men tend to have fewer family responsibilities and therefore have more time available. He suggests that because of 'the long hour's culture', the ability to work overtime is an important determinant when hiring for managerial and prestigious roles. When other individual factors such as education and skills are equal, time resource may exclude women from prestigious roles. In elite professions, performing at a high level for only 40 hours a week is not considered adequate. Instead, employees are expected to work 50 to 70 hours (Williams, 2001). This is only possible for those with few obligations beyond the workplace. Reflecting on her own experiences, Thomas (2007 p 8) notes: "Newspaper photojournalism is not a 9 to 5 job with weekends off, and many significant others find long work-related absences hard to bear. For a period of time David and I worked opposite shifts, passing each other like ships in the night. After I unsuccessfully applied for a staff position on a national weekly news magazine that required extensive travel, my husband said, 'If you had taken that job, I would have left'." Presser & Hermsen (1996) argued that business travel was also an important and neglected aspect of gender labour market stratification. They found in America men were far more likely to undertake business travel. In Sweden, Gustafson (2006) also found that men on average will travel more than women and that having children lessens travel for women but has no effect for men.

A key question underpinning this study concerns the impact or consequence of the heavily distorted gender imbalance among professional news photographers. In her landmark essay on Hollywood films, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975), Laura Mulvey argued that male domination of visual communications contributed to the sustenance of a patriarchal order that undermined the importance and equality of women by casting them in a subordinate, objectified and often sexualised role. This order was called 'the male gaze' and commonly featured a powerful male protagonist, a dependent female with little agency and a voyeuristic audience. While Mulvey's thesis has been critiqued and challenged repeatedly over the past four decades, not least its failure to accommodate ethnicity, class or a non-heterosexual 'gaze', many scholars would support the notion that the absence of women in an important cultural activity inevitably has negative consequences.

Geertsema (2009), argues that the lack of women producing news is "a serious problem for democratic media worldwide"(p15), while Dowler (2002) has demonstrated – using the 9/11 attack on New York – how the gendering of war narratives has established a power imbalance in which "women's heroism has been overlooked, effectively marginalising them in public spaces". Lilie Chouliaraki (2014) has written that the increasing "emotionalisation", or new intimacy, evident in war imagery is attributable to the increasing number of photographs being taken by citizen journalists, including women photographers.

Campbell and Critcher (2017) offer empirical evidence of how gender is embedded into the photojournalistic process. They argue that more women wielding cameras "may allow marginalised subjects ... to be represented in a way that does not see them as 'objectified' and 'depoliticised' (p17). In addition, women photographers are likely to have better access to

some subjects, particularly women in patriarchal societies, may be perceived as less threatening than their male counterparts in some contexts and “may bring greater depth and nuance to their portrayals of conflict and its aftermath” (p17). The exclusion of women from the television and film industry denies them the opportunity to influence the ways in which women are perceived and view themselves, according to Anne Ross Muir, an argument that could be extended to women photographers.

Though scholars have suggested there might be significant gender differences in the identification and processing of visual clues (Moore 1988, Lakoff, Henley), the question of whether women ‘see’ differently from men has not been demonstrated decisively. And perhaps this isn’t the point in any case. The point is that the media industry has a history of underrepresenting and misrepresenting women, a tendency Tuchman (1978) termed “symbolic annihilation” (p9). And, as photographs are an increasingly important dimension in conveying the complexity of modern life and its conflicts, it would seem just as important that those who encode and construct narratives about our world through powerful images are drawn from a diverse pool. Identifying the obstacles to this diversity are, therefore, a central objective of this research.

## **Methodology**

We gained access to 545 women photographers through collaboration with the World Press Photo Foundation (WPPH), host of a leading international photography competition. In 2015 and 2016, in excess of 10,000 photographers from more than 100 countries sent in their work to World Press Photo to be judged across a variety of categories. It is this group which was tapped for the data that underpins this article. All entrants to the 2015 and 2016 contests were invited to participate anonymously and confidentially, and around 3,500 answered in excess of 60 questions, some with multiple options or with the opportunity to explain their answers in more detail. Of this cohort of 3,500, 545 indicated they were female.

All potential respondents were informed that participating in the study did not have any bearing on their chances for an award. Entrants were approached by email and asked to link voluntarily to the online, anonymous questionnaire. About half of those who filled in the survey were living in Europe with about a quarter in Asia (including Oceania and the Middle East), 11% in South and Central America and the Caribbean and just under 10% in North America.

The women photojournalists in our study tended to be concentrated in Europe and North America with the United States having the largest cohort (33) followed by the Netherlands (23), Russia (17), Italy (16), the United Kingdom (14), France (14) and Spain (10). Brazil and Argentina, both with 5 women photojournalists, had the biggest cohorts beyond Europe and North America.

The biggest imbalance between male and female photojournalists who participated in the study can be found largely in Asia – India (55 entrants, 1 female photojournalist), Bangladesh (28-2), China (55-3), Indonesia (17-3), Japan (17-1) – though countries such as Portugal (24-

1), Bulgaria (11-0), Mexico (35-3) and Austria (11-0) all had extremely distorted gender profiles. An interesting outlier was Georgia, which had no men photojournalists and 4 women entering the competitions.

By contrast, the smallest gender imbalances tended to be in Europe: Belgium (7 men photojournalists, 5 women), the Netherlands (32 men, 23 women), the United Kingdom (31 men, 14 women), France (42 men, 13 women), Russia (35 men, 17 women) and Spain (64 men, 10 women). There were 105 participants from the United States, comprising 72 men and 33 women. Even in Europe, however, it is clear that twice as many men generally entered the competitions as women photojournalists.

Because of the smallish numbers of women in the sample from a larger number of countries, we have not disaggregated the data by nationality of respondents but rather compared the groups of men and women as a whole. Therefore, results should be treated with some caution as circumstances of photographers have been found to vary by country (Hadland, Lambert, & Campbell, 2016) But, as data on photographers is rare, particularly data on female photographers, gaining any insight into their circumstances is beneficial.

## Results and Analysis

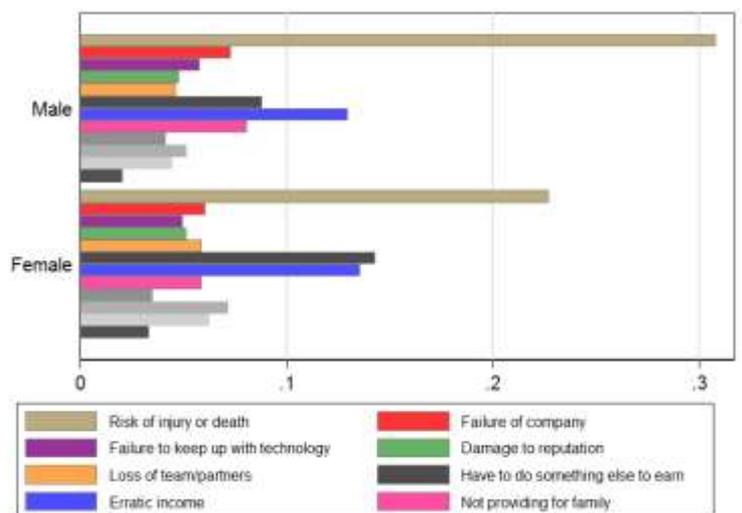
### Risk

As Cookman (2009) notes that one major stalling point for the entry of women into photojournalism was its perceived risk, it is to this we turn our attention first. In this study, 88% of women photojournalists indicated they faced some degree of physical risk during the normal course of their work (compared to 92% of men), while women participants' five most pressing concerns were: failure of company or business, erratic income, not providing for family, decreasing demand for work and failure to keep up with technology. Far more women participants (14%) were concerned about erratic income than men (9%).

Figure 1

Face risk at work

most  
Type of risk worried about



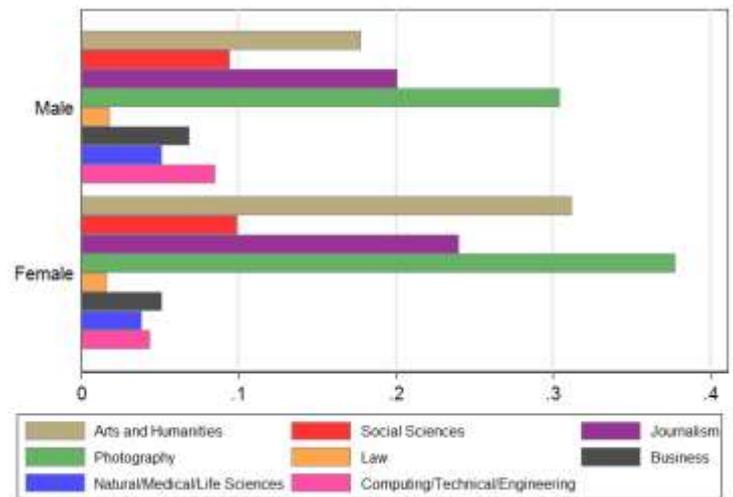
	Male	Female
Never	8.27	12.11
Sometimes	63.1	64.04
About half the time	8.3	8.44
Often	16.2	13.03
Always	4.13	2.39



## Training and Education

Though more women are now achieving higher education qualifications than men (DiPrete and Buchmann 2013), there are still marked differences in the subjects that men and women study (Charles and Bradley 2002). Women are underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) fields possibly as a result of continued gender essentialism. Our study supports these findings. Of those with university educations, 31% of the women in our study have Arts and Humanities degrees (compared to 18% of the men), 25% have Journalism degrees (compared to 20% of the men) and 38% of the women have photography degrees (compared to 30% of the men). Fewer women have law, business, computing, technical or engineering degrees.

Figure 2  
Education



	<i>Male</i> %	<i>Female</i> %
<i>No formal qualifications</i>	2.57	0.92
<i>School level qualifications</i>	8	2.75
<i>Post-school level</i>	18.93	8.44
<i>University level</i>	67.53	83.12
<i>Other</i>	2.97	4.77

Of the women photojournalists who participated in this study, 83% have university education compared to 69% of the men. However many more men received in-house training in photography (26% of the men, compared to 17% of the women). This offers some support for specialised human capital theory that argues that on average women are less likely to be given the opportunity to undertake specialised training are also less likely to pursue as these skills are less portable. And as women are more likely to take career breaks than men, these skills are not as good an investment.

## Income and Employment status

In our data , there were proportionally more women photojournalists in the lowest annual income bracket of US\$0-9,999 than men (44% of women, compared to 33% of men) and considerably fewer women in the highest annual income bracket of US\$70,000 + (2% of women, 8% of men). More female photojournalists described their financial situation as 'difficult' or 'very difficult' (43% of women, 35% of men) and far fewer women described their financial situation as 'good' or 'very good' (16% of women, 24% of men).

Figure 3  
Financial Situation

	<i>Male</i> %	<i>Female</i> %
<i>0 - 9,999</i>	33	44
<i>10,000 - 19,999</i>	23	21
<i>20,000 - 29,999</i>	13	12
<i>30,000 - 39,999</i>	9	8
<i>40,000 - 49,999</i>	7	6
<i>50,000 - 59,999</i>	5	3
<i>60,000 - 69,999</i>	3	2
<i>70,000 - 79,999</i>	3	2
<i>80,000 - 89,999</i>	1	1
<i>90,000 - 99,999</i>	1	0
<i>100,000 +</i>	2	1

Male photojournalists tend to make more money from royalties on their photographs (14% of men, 11% of women) and are more likely to earn all their income from photography (21% of men have no other source of income, compared to 16% of women).

Women photojournalists indicated a much more diverse range of income sources with a greater proportion receiving income from crowd-funding (5% of women, compared to 2% of men), exhibition fees (14% of women, 10% of men), grants (23% of women, 12% of men), the sale of prints (24% of women, 20% of men), teaching (27% of women, 23% of men) and from personal projects (38% of women, 32% of men). This data also indicates the greater breadth of income-earning activities engaged upon by women photojournalists who participated in this study. There were more women receiving the smallest number of monthly commissions (5 or less), with 51% of women falling into this category and 37% of men participants.

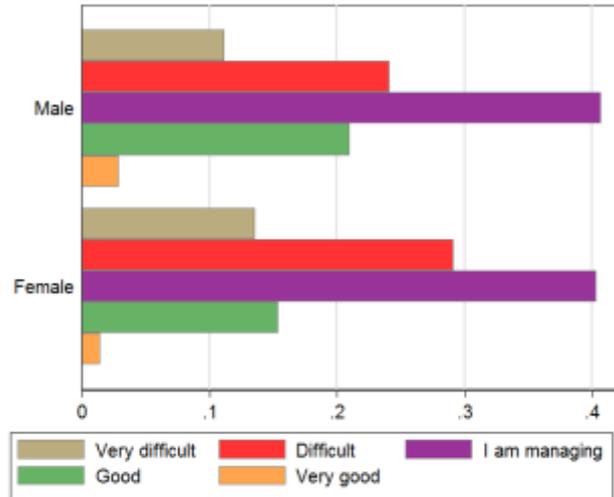
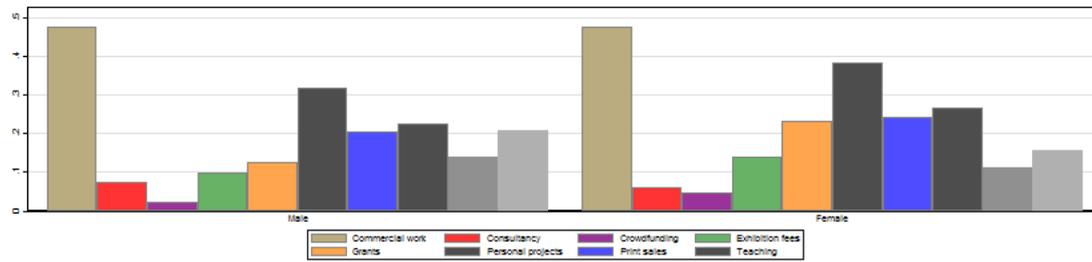
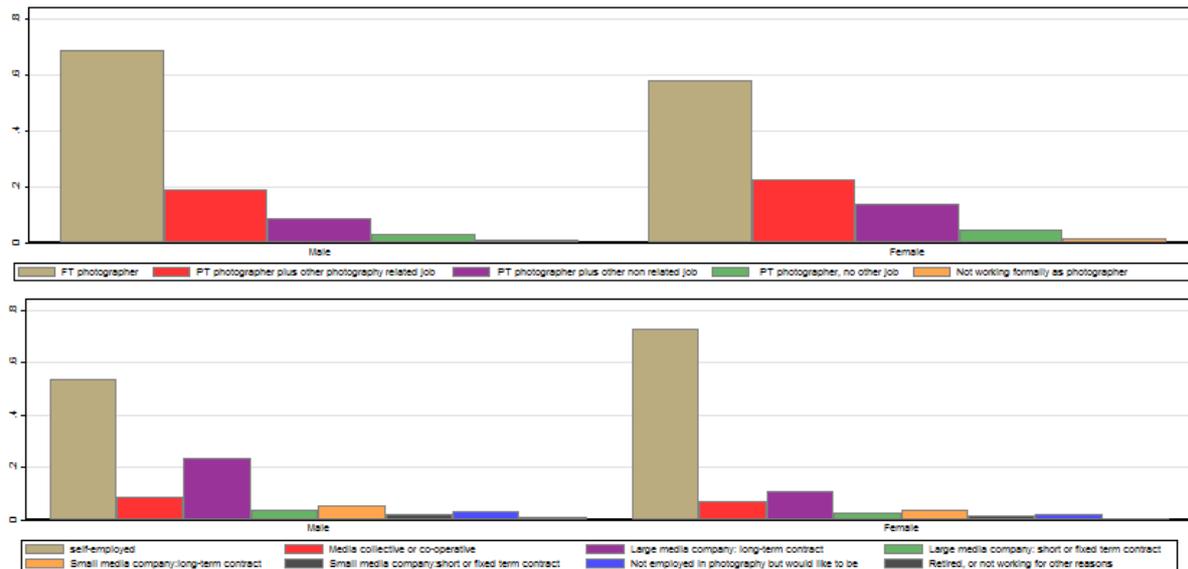


Figure 4  
Sources of income



In our study, more than twice as many men (23%) have long-term employment with large media companies compared to women (11%) while more women are employed on print-only newspapers (34% of women, compared to 25% of men) and fewer women are employed by newspapers that have websites (11% of men, 5% of women). A greater proportion of men are employed by news agencies (6% of men versus 4% of women) and also by photo agencies (12% of men compared to 7% of women).

Figure 5  
Employment type



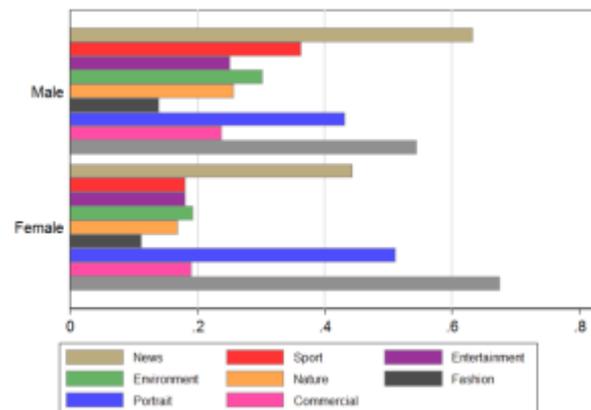
While more than two thirds of the male participating photojournalists (67%) said they worked full-time as photographers, only 58% of women said this was true for them. A larger proportion of women worked part-time as photojournalists and did part-time photography-related work (such as teaching). And a much larger proportion of women did non-photography-related work to supplement their part-time photojournalism (14% of women, compared to 9% of men). When asked how many photographers asked worked at their company or business, almost half of the women photojournalists (47%) said 'just me', compared to 31% of men. In terms of employment patterns, almost three quarters of women photojournalists are self-employed (73%), compared to 54% of men.

The results of the study show that women participants tended to shoot less news (63% of males, 44% of females), entertainment (25% of males, 18% of women), the environment (30% of males, 19% of females) or nature (26% male, 17% female). There was closer to parity in fashion photography (14%

male, 11% female). Female photojournalists tended to take more portraits (51% of women, 43% of men) and worked more on personal projects (68% of women, 54% of men). While the male participants tended to call themselves photojournalists (42% of the males, compared to 30% of the females) or press photographers (16% of males versus 7% of females), more women called themselves documentary photographers (36% of women compared to 28% of men) or visual storytellers (16% of women, 7% of men). This may be related to ideas around gender segregation in employment with women being segregated into roles that are perhaps more associated with supposedly female traits i.e art, fashion, family photography as opposed to more supposedly male areas like sports.

Figure 6  
How describe role

Kind of photography mainly done



	Male	Female
<i>Photojournalist</i>	41.9	30.46
<i>Press photographer</i>	15.57	6.97
<i>Documentary photographer</i>	28.17	35.6
<i>Multimedia journalist</i>	2.47	3.12
<i>Visual journalist</i>	2.17	2.02
<i>Visual storyteller</i>	6.63	15.6

Male photojournalists tended to do more commercial work such as advertising (24% of males, 19% of females) and more often felt they were forced to shoot video when they preferred to concentrate on stills photographs. Women were more likely to work in multimedia teams (7% of women, 4% of men) and were less likely to be assigned work.

## 21 century challenges

**Figure 9**

Use social media as part of work

	<i>Male</i> %	<i>Female</i> %
<i>Never</i>	10.43	7.16
<i>Sometimes</i>	30.67	27.16
<i>Neither</i>	8.7	9.54
<i>Often</i>	29.77	34.5
<i>Always</i>	20.43	21.65

Women photojournalists tended to be far more savvy with social media than men using it more often for marketing and publicity, or to contact other photographers or editors and more had personal websites that they regarded as important tools of their businesses. Women participants used Instagram more often than men (19% of women compared to 14% of men) and felt they benefited directly and indirectly from social media platforms.

**Figure 10**

Personal website important to work

	<i>Male</i> %	<i>Female</i> %
<i>I don't have a personal website</i>	19.77	12.11
<i>Not at all important</i>	3.33	1.1
<i>Only a small bit</i>	10.2	7.34
<i>Neither important nor unimportant</i>	7.53	5.69
<i>Important</i>	33.2	36.88

<i>Very important</i>	25.97	36.88
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While women photojournalists who took part in this study mostly felt their work was valued and were positive about the prospect of new opportunities in the future, fewer wanted their children to become photojournalists (26% of males said they would like their children to take up the profession, compared to 18% of females).

Women photojournalists indicated in the study they tend not to follow any specific ethical guidelines (15% of women compared to 8% of men) and were less often able to get payment or remedy for the unauthorised use of their work (17% of women compared to 22% of men).

Figure 11  
Positive about future of photography

	<i>Male</i> %	<i>Female</i> %
<i>Never</i>	5.1	5.5
<i>Sometimes</i>	19.33	17.43
<i>About half the time</i>	21.63	28.26
<i>Mostly</i>	27.57	30.83
<i>Always</i>	26.37	17.98

Women photojournalists indicated a wider range of skills were necessary for the next generation of photographers including video skills, web design, entrepreneurial skills, financial and budgeting skills, social media skills, administrative skills, communications and networking skills, public speaking and sales and marketing skills. In each of these, women thought these skills were more important for the new generation to acquire than their male counterparts.

The data supports the view that the news industry, and photojournalism specifically, is structured in a way that makes it extremely difficult for women to thrive. Though women tend to be better educated and more versatile, few are able to secure permanent, well-paid jobs in photography. They encounter photo editors who tend to be male and who make their own subjective judgement about the value of their work, the regularity of their assignments and the pay scale for which they will remunerated. Women in photojournalism face a greater array of risks, including the risk of physical injury and death, than men. Under these circumstances, women are unlikely to increase their representation in the industry by any more than a marginal degree. They feel less optimistic about the future than male photojournalists. The data suggests sectors of the industry, such as sports photography, are likely to remain bastions of the male gaze for many years to come, with consequences for the portrayal of women and their interests. Within photojournalism, women will tend to be shifted toward areas that are considered more appropriate such as fashion, portraiture and environmental work and away from news and conflict-reporting. This allocation of tasks is founded on the gender essentialism that characterises the industry.

In spite of indications suggesting increasing numbers of women are taking up photography at college or university, the data from this study suggests fewer women will take up full-time employment in this area in the future given the structural biases, historical underrepresentation and widespread self-employment among women in the sector. This is likely to mean an even smaller proportion of women news photographers presenting visual stories on the world's most pressing issues and the further decline of the female gaze. This decline, scholars argue, will inevitably impact on the scope of photojour-

nalism and the range of narratives it presents, on the representation of the marginalised, on accessing the vulnerable, on the quality of democracy and will present fewer opportunities for women to counter the prevailing gaze that, more often than not, sees them as objectified or depoliticised.

## Conclusion

Photojournalism is a heavily male-oriented profession globally and the overwhelming majority of professional news photographers are male. The industry is evidently structured in a way that supports this distortion.

The lack of women photojournalists and the obstacles with which they must contend throws up a number of questions for critical theorists, not least the impact of a largely male visual perspective on the world's news. It is illustrative that all six prize winners in the 2016 World Press Photo news photographs of the year were male, as were all four of the 'Breaking News Photography' winners in the 2016 Pulitzer Prize. These two awards arguably constitute the pinnacle of recognition in the profession. While it is true that the professional photojournalism industry is aware of the need for greater diversity within its ranks, the gender disparity raises a series of questions about how the great issues of our times, such as the migration crisis, are being captured and represented in visual terms almost exclusively by men. The male visual perspective would appear from our data to be even more dominant in regions such as Asia where women are evidently either not encouraged to work as news photographers or are discouraged from entering photographic competitions. The prestigious World Press Photo awards, for instance, received 56 entries from India in 2016, 55 from men and just one woman among them. Japan had 18 entries including one woman photographer. The People's Republic of China entered 58 photographers including three women.

Women photojournalists, this study suggests, are having to be more versatile and are working on a range of photograph-oriented and non-photography activities from NGO commissions and teaching to grant-funded work and personal projects. They more often describe their financial situation as difficult or very difficult and are more likely to be in the lower annual income brackets of the profession. Gender distortions that are apparent in the West, are even more unbalanced in regions such as Asia and Central and Southern America, testimony to the patriarchal structures that predominate in each of these regions as well as in their news industries.

While there is some optimism about the future of visual storytelling among the women participants and they generally report a degree of happiness with their chosen profession that is equivalent to the men in the study, there are clearly different pressures being applied and a different set of concerns. One concern must be the extent to which the gender imbalance in the industry is having a long term impact on how the the world is viewed and by whom.

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